

May - August 2023

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC)



Upcoming Events

- 05.30 - Summer Classes Begin
- 06.22 - Build Dakota Scholarship Recipient Orientation & Signing Day
- 06.05 - 07.07 - EMT 4-Week Bootcamp at WDTC

Graduations Ceremonies & Events

- 05.12 - Native American Honoring Ceremony - WDTC Event Center | 5pm - 7pm
- 05.13 - Law Enforcement Pinning Ceremony - Central High School Theatre | 8am - 9:15am
- 05.13 - Commencement Ceremony | 10am - 11:30am
- 05.13 - Nursing Pinning Ceremony - Central High School Theatre | 12:30pm - 1:45pm

Students Excel at SkillsUSA South Dakota



Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC) students demonstrated their exceptional career readiness during the SkillsUSA South Dakota Skills Championships, at WDTC, April 13-14, 2023. WDTC placed in 12 competitions and swept medals in four events - Architectural Drafting, Automotive Service, Diesel Equipment Technology, and Heating, Ventilation, AC & Refrigeration. WDTC students competed against fellow students from Lake Area Technical College, Mitchell Technical College, and Southeast Technical College. WDTC SkillsUSA SD Skills Championship medal winners listed below:

SkillsUSA SD competition gold medal winners qualify to compete in the national SkillsUSA Championships, June 19-23, in Atlanta, Ga.

We are asking for your help to fund travel costs for our qualifying students and their advisors to attend the national competition and represent WDTC on the national stage! Every donation helps us get closer to our \$25,000 goal. These funds will be used for registration fees, travel expenses, and future support for WDTC Students who wish to participate in the National SkillsUSA competitions.

Donate and support our students today!

Donate Now! SkillsUSA Travel Fund

Winners

- **Architectural Drafting:** Gold – Careen Smith, Silver - Spencer Anderson; Bronze – Shalie Weaver; Automotive Service: Gold – Micah Kooiman, Silver – Caine Svarstat, Bronze: Caden Parnow.
- **Cyber Security:** (WDTC only team competing.) Gold – Thomas DeJong & Kalob Seal.
- **Diesel Equipment Technology:** Gold – Nick Krebs, Silver: Jace Klempel, Bronze – Carlos Gonzales.
- **Heating, Ventilation, AC & Refrigeration (HVAC-R):** Gold – Raulie Rojas, Silver – Richard Long, Bronze – Dawson Craig.
- **Information Technology Services:** Gold – Austin Evans; Silver – Lance McNeese.
- **Internetworking:** (WDTC only competitors.) Gold – Thomas DeJong, Silver – Danielle Garland.
- **Plumbing:** Gold – Alex Hamaker; Bronze – Greg Hamblin.
- **Related Technical Math:** – (WDTC only entrant.) Gold: Austin Evans.
- **Technical Drafting:** (WDTC only competitors.) Gold – Jeremy Lewis; Silver: Zane Austin.
- **Welding Individual:** Silver – Lex Zuniga.
- **Welding Team Fabrication:** Gold – Team W - Cale Benson, Dylan Buechler, and Jaxon Tabert; Silver: Team R - Braevry Davis, Adam Patton, and Tanner Brunskill.

Kudos - Staff & Student Accomplishments



WDTC Receives Three Awards at National ATEA Conference

We have GREAT NATIONAL NEWS to share! We received three national American Technical Education Association (ATEA) awards at the national ATEA conference today in Huntsville, Ala. Congratulations to, L-R: Outstanding Technical Student Award winner Kuwaaupe "Julius" Morris, Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement student; Outstanding Technical Program Award winner WDTC Practical Nursing with the award accepted by Nursing Program Director Kristen Hybertson; and Outstanding Technical Instructor winner Roger Habermann, Medical Simulation.

[Julius Morris Interview with Black Hills Fox News](#)

WDTC's Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement Program earned the prestigious Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc., (CALEA) Accreditation. CALEA congratulates the Western Dakota Technical College for demonstrating a commitment to professional excellence through accreditation. "The motto for the CALEA organization is 'The Gold Standard in Public Safety' and WDTC's Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement Program has met this gold standard by earning initial CALEA accreditation," said Tiffany Howe, WDTC Vice President for Teaching and Learning. "CALEA accreditation is common in the law enforcement industry for individual agencies, but it is not common for law enforcement academic programs. WDTC's program is one of just a handful of programs across the country to earn this high distinction."



Alumni Feature - Jim Manternach, Computer Networking Class of 2011

Please tell us about yourself. Who are you and what do you do?

My name is Jim. I'm a Systems Engineer for Monument Health, specializing in Epic Client Systems. Epic is the name of the Electronic Health Record (EHR) software that Monument Health uses. In my role, I maintain many different types of servers associated with Epic, as well as storage systems and load-balancing appliances.

What made you choose to attend Western Dakota Tech?

I had done a few years of school at another college but didn't know what I wanted to ultimately do. I was directionless until I started working at a local computer repair shop. At the time I had very little computer knowledge, I was just the guy answering the phone and running the register. At one point all our technicians quit, so I started learning more about computer systems to cover the role and discovered that I enjoyed it! One of my good friends had already made plans to attend WDT, and when I saw the school had a program that aligned with my new-discovered interests, I decided to join him.

What was your experience like at the school?

My time at WDT was one of the best chapters of my life. I had a ton of fun in class and made many friends, some of whom I still work with today. I did participate in SkillsUSA, placing high enough locally that I was sent to represent the school in a larger event in Kansas City. Both the local and Kansas City competitions were a great time and helped me practice skills outside of the classroom.

What was your experience of gaining employment in your field like after graduation?

I was very fortunate that one of the local SkillsUSA judges was the IT Director at Crazy Horse Memorial. After the competition, he offered me a job! I worked at Crazy Horse Memorial part-time until I graduated, and then full-time for over a year after. One of my classmates obtained a job at Monument Health, and when another position in his team opened, he told me to apply. I was hired and have stayed with Monument Health ever since.

How was the bond between you and the faculty at the schools?

I found the staff that helped with enrollment and registration very helpful. I've always been more of a shy and anxious type, so their patience and willingness to help me really made a difference. One of

my teachers remained in touch with me and volunteered to be a proctor for my future online tests, even though they were for classes at another school.

What is something at Western Dakota Tech that you absolutely loved participating in?

My favorite group to be a part of at WDT was my second-year Computer Networking class. Those of us who made it through year one and returned for year two really came together as a tight-knit team. We worked together on school projects and met outside of school to help each other prepare for certification exams. I owe a lot of my success to that group, and the friends I made there was a large factor in my getting the job I still love today.

Has anyone in your life been a mentor to you? How did their advice help you?

I've been fortunate enough to have many great mentors, throughout school, civilian employment, and the military. There is too much to unpack from all the mentoring to summarize in a short answer, but I think the largest takeaway was the practice of leadership. My mentors not only demonstrated strong leadership, but they developed it in me and expected me to practice it as well.

What advice do you have for anyone considering attending Western Dakota Tech?

Do whatever you can to form close bonds with your classmates, especially the ones in your major! It not only makes the schoolwork easier but makes the experience more enjoyable and helps you to network after graduation. Also, look into four-year programs at other schools once you've graduated. After transferring my WDT credits to another school, it didn't take me much longer to also earn a bachelor's degree.

2023-2024 Build Dakota Scholarship and Summer/Fall 2023 WDT Foundation Scholarships



The WDT Foundation is grateful to our donors who support our current and future generations of Western Dakota Technical College students and provide real-life changes.

- 138 Scholarships (not counting Build Dakota Scholarships) will be awarded through donations directly to the WDT Foundation for Fall 2023.
- Donors interested in impacting the lives of our students, can gift to existing scholarship fund(s), make a one-time gift, or make annual contributions to a specific fund, or establish a named scholarship. For more information, please contact Nora Leinen, Foundation Director, at 605-718-2436 or Nora.Leinen@wdt.edu.

The Build Dakota Scholarship at Western Dakota Technical College pays all students' tuition, fees, books, tools, equipment, and uniforms/scrubs and prepare our students for a career that is in demand and growing in South Dakota.

- We will award over 100 full-ride Build Dakota Scholarships to WDTC students for the 2023-2024 academic school year.
- If you want to impact our students and contribute to our community, consider being part of WDTC Industry Partners to sponsor our students through the Build Dakota Scholarship. For more information, contact Andrew Kapelewski, Assistant Director of Scholarship, at 605-718-3061 or Andrew.Kapelewski@wdt.edu.



WDTC in the News

Western Dakota Technical College Aims To Tackle South Dakota's Crucial Worker Shortage

WDTC Offers Many Scholarship Opportunities, Including Build Dakota Full-Ride Scholarships

Meals on Wheels and Western Dakota Technical College Use Fish To Bring Produce To The Community

Share your story!
Contact: Chutima Supboon
605-718-3064
Chutima.Supboon@wdt.edu

STAY CONNECTED!
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GET INVOLVED!

Visit:
<https://www.wdt.edu/alumni/>

More WDTC Highlights



Eight Students Graduated from WDTC Trucking Driving Program

These graduates will help fill the high and projected increasing need for truck drivers. The Class-A Professional Driving Program graduates, and their South Dakota hometowns:

- Charles Brooks – Black Hawk
- Creyous Carnarvon – Rapid City
- Dustin James – Piedmont
- Andrew Karinen – Spearfish

- Clay Laposky – Burke
- Christopher Roselles
- Zachary Semple – Rapid City
- Timothy Splonskowski – Deadwood

Electrical Trades Alumni Event

THANK YOU to everyone who attended the recent Electrical Trades Alumni Networking Social. It provided a great opportunity for former classmates, industry peers, current students, and faculty to connect. Watch for future Alumni events.



Rent One Of Our Rooms For Your Event!

WDTC offers room rentals to host anything from small meetings to large-scale events.

- Brochure: <https://www.wdt.edu/assets/docs/uploads/news/event-rooms.pdf>
- Room Request Form: <https://www.wdt.edu/machform/view.php?id=28169>

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