

INTERFACE

Volume 65 • No. 3 • Spring 2026

Journal of the WTEA



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SPECIAL FEATURE:

◆ WTEA State Awards

Other Highlights:

◆ Joe Ciontea Steps Down
as Executive Director

◆ WTEA Conference Highlights

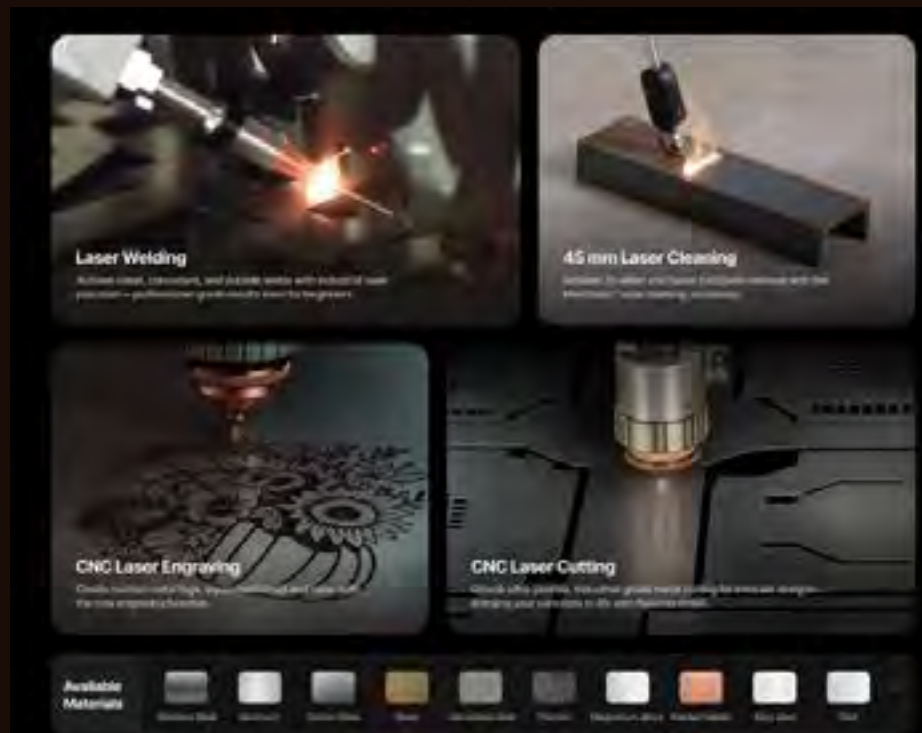
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Pulaski High School*

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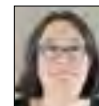
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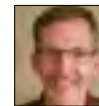
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Building the Next Generation of TE Teachers

By Alan Mamerow, WTEA President; Hamilton School District



Thirteen years ago, when I was a freshman at UW-Stout, there were around 20 students in my Intro to Tech Ed class. Three years later there were nine of us that graduated between fall and spring semester. For my entire career as a Tech Ed teacher, one reality has remained constant: We have had more retirees from our profession than we have had new graduates to replace them.

The world of Tech Ed teaching is a unique dichotomy. We give students amazing hands-on opportunities that few other classes can match—opportunities which often lead to apprenticeships, technical schooling, or directly to careers—and yet our profession requires a four-year degree. We actively encourage students to take a variety of the classes that we offer and earn certifications and transcribed credit with our tech colleges, which doesn't give them as much time in their schedule to take AP and other classes that mirror the coursework that we had to take during our first years of college.

We work hard to connect students to industry by inviting in speakers, creating connections for industry tours, and hosting career fairs and yet many of us rarely talk to students about what it takes to be a teacher.

And then there is what students actually see. Our most engaged and future teacher-worthy students spend a lot of time in our shops. They often help oversee the cool projects that our classes work on, they share the excitement that we have when our student competitors earn trophies, and they recognize the added bonus of having access to some pretty awesome equipment. But they also see the unplanned machine maintenance, budget cuts, curriculum work, stolen and vandalized projects, and students that would rather be lazy and distracting in our classes than actually learn what we are teaching. When industry professionals visit, they often highlight only the positives of their careers, while our students actually see firsthand both the pros and cons of being a teacher.

So how do we as teachers encourage students to even consider this path? As I write this, I am also thinking about what I am going to tell students at the 53rd Annual SkillUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference about teacher recruitment, and it has made me realize that I haven't done a great job of talking to my own students. My goal is to make my message there and to my own students clear: We have the best job in the world.

And I truly believe that. Is every day perfect? Abso-

lutely not. But that goes for any profession. Does teaching pay as much as most skilled trades right now? No. We see recent former students doing machine maintenance driving F-150 Platinums and buying brand new snowmobiles and boats, while having no college debt. But at the same time, we get summers off, are on the winning end of supply

"We work hard to connect students to industry by inviting in speakers, creating connections for industry tours, and hosting career fairs and yet many of us rarely talk to students about what it takes to be a teacher."

and demand right now, our career is much less impacted by economic downturns, and the quality of our pension cannot be overstated. We do have to sit through more meetings and do more desk work than our hands-on students might like, but teaching is less stress on the body than the average blue-collar career. And as for the knuckleheads that we so frequently encounter in shop classes, if our students think that they aren't going to have to deal with people of

that same caliber in the trades, they're in for a rude awakening.

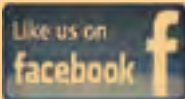
As I embark on the journey of the next two years in this role as WTEA president, I know that one of the main focuses of our organization will continue to be recruiting the next generation of Tech Ed teachers. So, when you find those students that are mechanically inclined, try to fit every class that you teach into their schedule, and that can always be found helping their classmates, start the conversation. Encourage them to consider teaching. Be honest about both the rewards and the challenges. Direct them to the WTEA Student Ambassador Program. Contact me or WTEA Board member, Randy Way, for details. (*See our contact info on page 1*).

Our profession needs passionate, skilled educators. Our best students that already thrive in our classrooms might be the perfect fit. They should be encouraged to consider how cool of a career being a shop teacher is, and there's no one better to do it than us.

Editor's Note: See table on page 24 for current data on the number of students currently enrolled in the Technical Education Programs at UW-Stout and UW-Platteville.

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WTEA BOARD MINUTES

By Mac Chopin, WTEA Secretary/Treasurer; Waterloo High School

Winter Board Meeting: January 9-10, 2026

1. Call to order: 7pm
2. Approval of 2026 winter agenda
3. Approval of past minutes
4. Board changes - Mike Paquette
 - a. Approval of Abe Allen - Director at Large
5. President's Report - Mike Paquette
6. Vice President's Report - Anna Vitale
7. President-Elect's Report - Alan Mamrow
8. Program Coordinator Update - Steve Johnston
9. Exhibit Coordinator Report - Tom Barnhart
10. Awards Coordinator Update - Matt Schultz
11. Project Showcase & Make & Take Update - Steve Hadfield
12. WTEA Advisory Committee Update - Mike Cattellino
13. Associate Executive Director Report - Jesse Domer
14. Foundation Report - Jesse Domer
15. Social Media Upstate - Mac Chopin
16. *Interface* Report - Duane Apel
17. University Reports - Edward Wiegman
18. DPI Report/SkillsUSA - Jake Mihm
19. District Director Reports
 - a. District A - Emily Fransway
 - b. District B - Brian Schiltz
 - c. District C - Brennan Mickelson
 - d. District D - Jon Larson
 - e. District E - Abe Graziano
 - f. District F - Eric Sutkay
 - g. District G - Stephen Hadfield
 - h. District H - Art Pronschinske
 - i. At-Large - Randy Way
 - j. At-Large - Rebecca DuBois-Zeck
 - k. At-Large - Abe Allen
 - l. At-Large - Heather Keifer
20. New Business - Mike Paquette:
 - a. Marketing Campaign to promote Tech Ed as a career
 - b. Approval of executive director contract
 - c. Approve quote for video about becoming a TE Teacher
 - d. Approval to extend free conference registration to 1st-yr teachers
21. Adjournment.

General Membership Meeting: March 13, 2026

1. Call to order - 7:45am
2. Approval of 2025 General Membership mtg minutes
3. Reports
 - a. President's report - Mike Paquette
 - i. Thanks: Breakfast sponsors, UW-Stout & UW-Platteville
 - ii. 25-Year Award winners - Bob Warner
 - iii. Installation of new Vice President - Anna Vitale
 - iv. List of district directors and directors at-large
 - v. List of WTEA Advisory Committees
 - b. Executive Director's report - Joe Ciontea & Jesse Domer
 - i. WTEA Financial Report for 2026
 - ii. WTEA Foundation Financial Report
 - c. *Interface* Report
 - i. Winning *Interface* cover design
 - d. Student Ambassador Program Report - Randy Way
4. New Business:
 - a. Installation of new WTEA Executive Director - Jesse Domer
 - b. Installation of new WTEA Executive Advisor - Joe Ciontea
 - c. Installation of new president - Alan Mamrow
5. Adjournment.

Vice President's Report (Continued from page 5)

cool 'stuff' we do than to show high school students, contemplating their future, the videos of award-winning educators and programs?

Do you have an athletic student who loves working in the wood shop, but needs a Plan B apart from his goal of becoming a professional football player? Discuss the benefits and versatility of teaching Tech Ed and coaching. Do you have a female student who is skilled in graphic arts, but hesitates on a wood shop machine? Talk to her about the options and benefits of a teaching career and how laser engraving is changing the landscape of woodworking.

If you are not familiar with these videos, I recommend checking them out. We have a lot of amazing things happening in our schools, we just need to talk about it, get it out to the general public and let Wisconsin know that Technology Education in Wisconsin ROCKS.

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VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

How to Get Word Out About Our Great Profession

By Anna Vitale, WTEA Vice President; Riverside Middle School - Watertown



This article begins with a QR code. This link will bring you to our YouTube channel. Did you know the WTEA has a YouTube channel? No, there's not a lot there (yet), but the videos that are there are packed with important information.

Many of our members do not attend the awards banquet at the state conference. (I strongly recommend it, I have learned a lot from this banquet and its emphasis on celebrating the outstanding things happening in our state) Thus, I'm not sure many of our members are aware of these videos. These videos feature teachers, and both high school and middle school programs that have been recognized by our professional association to be chosen for various awards.

Two things are driven home for me when I think of those videos. The first is: Every school board member, administrator and potential industry partner should see these videos. Anyone who doesn't understand or value CTE should be aware of what other districts are doing to, not only promote a skilled workforce, but act upon their conviction by truly supporting and upholding all that we do in our classrooms. These are districts—and people—who are dedicated to providing strong, solid CTE programs.

I am fortunate enough to work for a district who advocates technology education in a big way. But, if I didn't, I would be sharing those videos with administrators with a message, "We can do this. We should be doing this. This is how valuable Tech Ed is to the students and community."

The second thought is: These videos show the best moments of what we do and why we love what we do. Several Tech Ed teachers verbalize those sentiments in these videos. The poignant video shots of a kid smiling and a teacher working with a student are not just reminders to help us get through difficult days when we're frustrated. They become a keystone with the spoken words and visual action scenes that shout to the world, "Being a Tech Ed teacher is FUN!!"

As you know, we are facing a future that does not bode well for technology education. The possibility of a Tech Ed teacher shortage in the near future is dire. Our post-secondary education partners in the Wisconsin Tech College System and in the UW System have shared their concerns (past articles, conference sessions) and are forecasting a serious problem.

The WTEA is part of a campaign, in partnership with our post-secondary representatives and other entities and or-

ganizations, to promote our career.

We know that despite the usual trials and tribulations our jobs are kinda cool. There's always going to be challenges and struggles—every career has that—but, what other career is as dynamic, flexible, and ever-changing as ours? We introduce young people to hands-on machine and technology learning, helping them build valuable knowledge and skills while creating a tangible final product. That's a fun day on the job.

Let's revisit that QR code. I've watched many of those videos after the awards banquet because I'm looking for the "how." I want to learn from those who have been recognized by their peers and colleagues for attaining such a level of success. Then, I think about the message these TE teachers are consistently saying. We know we have awesome 'jobs' so what better way to show the super

Continued on page 4...



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Thanks for the Memories!

During the annual WTEA membership meeting Friday morning at the conference I stepped down as your executive director after serving in that capacity for 31 years. I joined the WTEA my first year teaching when attending the fall conference in October, 1976. Little did I know how our professional association would affect the rest of my career. In the fall of 1988 my colleague, John Schrum, walked up to me before school and announced that he had been elected to serve as the next president of the WTEA. As part of that meeting they reorganized the board of director representation boundaries and I was appointed to serve as the new regional representative for our part of the state. I sure didn't see that coming. John said "Joe, you're going to work with some really great teachers—you'll like it."

I guess I did, because I stuck around a long time. From 1991-94 I served as WTEA Vice President (2 terms). During that second term, while serving with President Pat Lutz I was very active in several WTEA initiatives. Those years as VP gave me the background for what came next. A year later (after I completed my time as VP) Dr. Tom Baldwin, the executive director, announced he was leaving UW-Stout for a new position in Kansas. He held that position for 20 years.

In the summer of 1995 I was contacted by President Greg Quam and President-Elect, Dennis Skurulsky, who told about Dr. Baldwin's departure and asked me to assume that position. I was very hesitant, but after numerous conversations and some arm twisting, I eventually agreed to serve as executive director for one year on a trial basis. The WTEA had some real financial issues that needed to be resolved.

My first year, 1995-96, we held two conferences—one in October and one in March—both at Chula Vista Resort. Moving to a spring conference required a lot of changes but it really made a difference for the membership and the association. By 2015 we had grown strong enough to host the ITEEA Conference in Milwaukee in conjunction with our annual state conference.

I have seen many changes and lots of growth in our association during my time as executive director. I have made many friends and worked with some of the best Technology Educators and education leaders in our state. There are a few people I haven't mentioned that I need to thank: Jeff Dowd, our Trade Show guru, who was my mentor during those first few years as we worked to reshape and grow our conference. I still miss him. Doug MacKenzie, who became the Interface Editor also in 1995. We sure worked together well. Dr. Bryan Albrecht and Pete McConnell—the three of us—were the driving force behind our 2015 ITEEA event. What a ride that was! All the WTEA presidents and board members who were part of the team throughout my time on the Board. And most importantly, my wife Jaye, who supported me, did my proofreading and gave up three vacation days annually for over 20 years to sit at the conference registration table where she typed name tags, answered questions, and kept me on task. I couldn't have done this without her.

I want to thank everyone who tapped me on the shoulder during the conference, handed me a token, shared a memory, and thanked me for my service. I have agreed to stick around for a while as the executive advisor to mentor my replacements, help out where needed, and serve as a historian. I think that one-year trial that started in 1995 is now over.

Professionally Yours,

Joe Ciontea

Joe Ciontea



Joe



Joe



Joe & Steve Johnston



Jeff Dowd



Bryan Albrecht, Pete McConnell, Joe Ciontea



Joe Ciontea



Jaye Ciontea



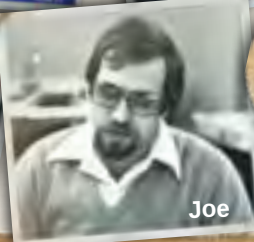
Joe



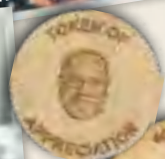
Joe & Jesse Domer



Joe



Joe



Executive Director's Message

Wanted! WTEA Operations Coordinator; ...and Future TE Teachers

By Jesse Domer, WTEA Executive Director, Watertown High School



Leadership Forward

The WTEA has been a staple in my career going back 27 years when I first joined, what at the time was known as, TECA (Tech Ed Collegiate Association) and began my leadership journey. I currently serve as a Technology Education teacher at Watertown HS, and it is truly an honor to step into the role of WTEA Executive Director. While I am excited for this opportunity, I am humbled to be following in the footsteps of Joe Ciontea and grateful for his mentorship over the past few years, with that support continuing into the near future. I also know we have an amazingly passionate leadership team in the WTEA from our conference coordination team, executive board, board of directors, conference exhibitors, and many more, to support and lift up our association.

Update #1 - Operations Coordinator Job Posting

We have an opening for a new WTEA Operations Coordinator. This position was created for me when I started mentoring under Joe, and moving forward will be the second head of the WTEA. The executive director and the operations coordinator will work closely to keep the WTEA ship moving forward. We still have Joe on staff as executive advisor—but with the goal that he can eventually step away and know we have the WTEA in sustainable hands. If you are interested in taking on this paid, part-time position to support the WTEA, please see the job posting (on this page) and consider applying. Our goal is to hire by June 1st.

Update #2 - Future Educators

One of the most important challenges we face as a profession is the need to actively encourage the next generation of Technology Education teachers. We do an excellent job promoting careers in welding, engineering, or the trades. We must also be intentional about promoting teaching as a meaningful and impactful career path.

The WTEA has been ramping up our own efforts and I see that effort growing like a bonfire currently. Shout out to Matt Schultz for starting our Student Ambassador Program a few years ago, that Randy Way is now overseeing, with four high school students that attended this year's WTEA State Conference. Shout out to our WTEA Foundation for supporting college scholarships to high school seniors pursuing a career in Tech Ed for over the past decade. Shout out to Duane Apel who designed and produced a promotional poster to become a Tech Ed teacher which we gave out at the WTEA Conference and the SkillsUSA State Conference! Shout out to the four Inspire Award winning teachers this year at our banquet for being recognized for their former

students pursuing a career in Tech Ed teaching.

There is more work ahead, and more ideas in the works from the WTEA Board that I am excited to push, support, and implement soon. Let's all start working together and add Tech Ed teaching as a "high need" area for future careers with our students! Together, we can make a meaningful difference in shaping the future of our profession.

Rolling Up My Sleeves

Thank you to Mike Paquette as past president for leading the charge the past two years in helping to successfully transition the executive director role. Thank you to Joe Ciontea for his decades of dedication and continued support. Thank you to Alan Mamerow as current president for keeping the ship afloat while moving forward.

My leadership style may differ in some ways, but it is rooted in a deep passion for this work and a commitment to moving the WTEA forward. I am excited to roll up my sleeves to ensure our WTEA leadership has another decade of strength and success moving forward as your next WTEA Executive Director.

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Paul Carlsen Newest Board Member

Submitted by Paul Carlsen, Ph.D; WTEA Technical College Representative; President - Lakeshore College



I joined Lakeshore College as its fourth president in 2017 and am excited to begin serving as the technical college representative on the Wisconsin Technology Education Association Board.

I'm fortunate to work with nearly 300 faculty and staff who are deeply committed to student success and community impact. Lakeshore has been consistently recognized among the top two-year colleges in the nation, including rankings by Washington Monthly (#2) and Forbes (#17). The Aspen Institute has named us a Top 150 college four times, and in 2024 we received the Bellwether Award in Planning, Finance, and Governance. That same year, I was invited to the White House to share our leadership in competency based education.

A priority of my presidency is ensuring Lakeshore helps shape higher education policy at the regional, state, and national levels. I serve on the American Association of Community Colleges Board of Directors and chair its Commission on Rural and Small Colleges. In Wisconsin, I have been elected chair of both the WTCS Presidents Association and the Northeast Wisconsin Education Resource Alliance. I currently serve on the executive committee of the Sheboygan

County Economic Development Corporation and am active with the Manitowoc Noon Rotary. In my personal capacity I serve as board president for the Kohler School District.

Before joining Lakeshore, I worked for Louisiana's Community and Technical Colleges and taught as an adjunct instructor at River Parishes Community College. Earlier, I served in statewide economic development roles in Louisiana in Governor Jindal's administration and South Carolina in Governor Haley's administration.

I hold degrees from the University of Colorado (BA), University of Denver (MPP), and University of Georgia (PhD). My wife, Christina, and I are proud parents of two daughters (ages 12 and 8) and we enjoy traveling, volleyball, soccer, and finding new adventures together.

Interface Cover Design Contest Winner!

By Duane Apel, Interface Editor



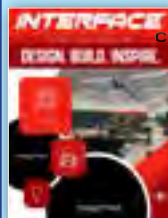
Crewe Figlinski

For the third consecutive year the *Interface* cover was designed by a student. Over forty designs were submitted, making the WTEA Board's decision very difficult. The winning designer is Crewe Figlinski, a student of Rick Kamps, at Pulaski High School. Cover designs had to meet all technical specifications and reflect our new theme for the year, "Design. Build. Inspire." Crewe received \$50 for his efforts, and his cover will be used for three issues (spring, fall, winter).

Crewe, a senior, has taken metals, architecture, CAD, and graphic communications courses. He enjoys snowboarding, skateboarding, and selling clothes online. After high school he plans to attend either UW-Eau Claire or UW-Whitewater for a Business Degree.

Congratulations to Crewe! Watch for details in the fall *Interface* for the 2026-27 cover design contest information.

Runners-up Designs:



2nd Place (left):
Bryce Bohm, Brady Hronek, Keegan Bouchea
Pulaski H.S.
Teacher: Rick Kamps



3rd Place (right):
Riley Martinez
Westosha H.S.
Teacher: Garrett Pongratz



Tech-Ed Teachers
All about Boats!



Tech Ed Teachers:
Visit & tour 2 marine builders in Door County & Manitowoc.

June 11, 2026

Free event

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9:30 am Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding
11:00 am DCM Museum
1:30 pm Burger Boat

Registration Deadline May 31, 2026

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INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

Empowering the Next Generation: WTEA and Milwaukee Tool Partner for Student Success

By Ryan Seichter, Fall River High School



The Wisconsin Technology Education Association (WTEA) is proud to announce a significant donation of oscillating tool blades from Milwaukee Tool. This contribution represents more than just a delivery of hardware; it is a direct investment in the technical proficiency and career readiness of students across the state.

In an era where the demand for skilled trades is at an all-time high, partnerships between industry leaders and ed-



Teachers at the state conference pick out various oscillating blades donated by Milwaukee Tool for their labs.

ucational institutions are essential. By providing professional-grade consumables, Milwaukee

Tool is helping WTEA bridge the gap between classroom theory and job-site reality.

Alleviating the Burden on School Budgets

For many technology education departments, the primary constraint on curriculum isn't imagination—it is the cost of "consumables." Items like drill bits, sandpaper, and saw blades are depleted rapidly in a high-traffic shop environment.

- **Strategic Reallocation of Funds:** High-quality oscillating blades are a premium expense. This donation allows instructors to pivot their limited budgets toward long-term investments, such as advanced machinery, updated safety equipment, or specialized materials for student capstone projects.
- **Professional Standards Without the Price Tag:** Tight budgets often force schools to rely on lower-tier accessories that dull quickly or underperform. Access to Milwaukee Tool's industrial-grade blades ensures that students learn on the same equipment they will encounter in the workforce, without straining district finances.

Expanding Classroom and Shop Opportunities

The oscillating multi-tool is widely regarded as the "Swiss Army Knife" of modern construction and renovation. Having an ample supply of blades allows instruc-

tors to introduce complex techniques that were previously cost-prohibitive:

- **Precision and Specialty Cutting:** Students can now master intricate tasks such as plunge-cutting electrical boxes into drywall, undercutting door jambs for flooring, and flush-cutting copper piping—skills that are essential in the modern remodeling industry.
- **A Safer Introduction to Power Tools:** Because the oscillating tool is highly controllable and lacks the kickback risk of larger circular saws, it serves as an excellent entry point for younger students to build confidence and "tool sense" in a safe, controlled manner.

From the Shop Floor to a Successful Career

The true value of this donation lies in the long-term career success of the students. When a student uses professional equipment, they are doing more than completing a project; they are building a professional identity.

1. **Technical Mastery:** Proficiency with specialized tools makes a graduate "Day 1 Ready" for apprenticeships. Understanding which blade to select for specific materials (wood, metal, or masonry) demonstrates a level of material science knowledge that employers prize.
2. **Mechanical Aptitude:** Hands-on experience helps students develop an intuition for feed rates, vibration, and torque. This physical "literacy" is a foundational skill for careers in construction, manufacturing, and mechanical engineering.
3. **Workforce Confidence:** There is a psychological shift that happens when a student uses a tool branded with a name they see on professional job sites. It validates their work and reinforces the standard of excellence expected in the industry.

A Sincere Thank You

The WTEA extends its deepest gratitude to Milwaukee Tool for their generous support and commitment to Wisconsin's technical education programs. By putting professional tools

into the hands of our students, Milwaukee Tool is not just supporting a classroom—they are



Thousands of oscillating blades donated by Milwaukee Tool await teachers at the recent state conference.

helping to build the future of the American workforce.

WTEA STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Small Acts Cast Long Shadows

By Randy Way, WTEA Director At-Large & Student Ambassador Chair; Madison College



My job offers insights into the career progressions of lots of folks. The person who takes a linear path from plan to objective is nearly non-existent. Most of the people I know have fallen into their current roles through some combination of effort, luck, and the right person being in their life at the right time.

Teachers are impactful. I'd like to share a story here of a few that made all the difference. In 1967 my old man was a senior at Madison West High School. The son of a carpenter and a homemaker, he had no plans to do anything other than to parlay his high school job at Klein-Dickert Honda into a career, a career that would have been short-lived, as the dealership closed soon thereafter.

One day, two of his then, Industrial Arts teachers, who's names have been lost to history, pulled him aside. Seeing the breadth of his enthusiasm for the discipline, they asked him if he had ever considered teaching. He had, of course, not. He had not taken a single college preparatory class. His guidance counselor let him know that he "was not college material." Somehow, however, the few prescient moments his teachers spent with him that day forever altered his trajectory. He went to Stout, became a teacher, and eventually the first technology director of the school district he worked for.

Fast forward nearly 30 years to fall, 1995. I'm a high school senior, and I'm totally burned out on school. I also

have no plans for anything other than sticking to my high school job at the local machine shop that would subsequently be acquired and liquidated in the early 2000s.

Then one day I got a letter from some guy named Ken Welty at UW-Stout. It stated that one of my teachers thought I might be a good fit for the Tech Ed program, and invited me for a tour. The next day I asked around, but none of my teachers confessed to writing the letter. Eventually, I got it out of my old man—he was worried about the path I was on and thought maybe touring the university could change my mind, so he dropped a note to Ken.

He was right. Once I saw Stout's labs I was hooked. The rest, as they say, is history. Fast forward another 30 years, and here I am—leading the School of STEM at Madison Area Technical College. It's been work to get here, for sure, but I can't discount the way fate has been steered by



two generations of teachers who cared. Dad's been gone eight years now, but sometimes I'm struck by how profoundly different my life is because two teachers took the initiative to spend a few minutes with him at West High nearly 60 years ago.

There are students in your classes waiting to live out similar stories. So, please look around. Find the folks who just need a little course correction, and encourage them to consider the profession that enables all other professions—teaching.

You can find details about the WTEA Student Ambassador Program at <https://www.wtea-wis.org/wordpress/student-ambassador-program/>

WTEA Scholarship Applications Due May 1st

The WTEA Foundation offers a renewable \$1,000 scholarship for a high school senior or graduate who commits to pursue a career as a K-12 Technology & Engineering Educator.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Wisconsin resident
- Enroll in Technology Education at a Wisconsin university and start in fall semester
- Submit completed application form and 250-word essay by May 1st

Details of the scholarship and an application form can be found on the WTEA Foundation website at www.wteafoundation.org



WTEA MAKE and TAKE

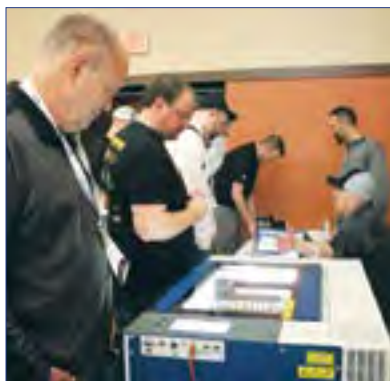
By Stephen Hadfield, WTEA District G Director; Make & Take Coordinator

This year's WTEA Make & Take was hosted by Madison College and included hands-on learning in electronics, laser engraving, and design. Participants were able to make mini LED candles, laser engraved hats, and photovoltaic circuits.

A huge thank you to Mac Chopin (Waterloo HS), Alberto Rodriguez and Andy Kurth (Madison College), Stephen Hadfield (Pittsville HS), and Larry Granec (First Technologies), for putting on the hands-on learning sessions.



Interested in participating in Make & Take during the WTEA 2027 Conference? Please contact Stephen Hadfield at hadfiste@pittsville.k12.wi.us



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Project SHOWCASE

*By Stephen Hadfield, WTEA District G Director;
Project Showcase Coordinator*

WTEA Project Showcase 2026 was again a huge success. Thank you to all the schools and teachers who participated, and our sponsor, Madison College. We once again had winners for: Best of Show, Best Design, and Best Craftsmanship. We look forward to Project Showcase 2027 and hope to grow this portion of our annual conference with more teachers and schools participating. For more information, contact Project Showcase Coordinator, Stephen Hadfield at hadfiste@pittsville.k12.wi.us



Summer WTEA Events: Teacher Tours-June 11 • WATDA Training-July 14-16 • Golf Outing-July 30



WTEA

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WTEA 2026 AWARDS

Awards and Recognition Presented at State Conference



WTEA MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*"For 30 Years of Partnering
with the WTEA"*



Dennis Kittleson

Owner - Inkworks, Inc.
Presenters (left): Doug
MacKenzie - former *Interface*
Editor; (right) Joe Ciontea -
WTEA Executive Director

WTEA LEADERSHIP AWARD

*"For Commitment and
Service to the WTEA"*



Roger Stanford

WTEA Tech College Rep
Western Tech College
Joe Ciontea (left) -
WTEA Executive Director

WTEA AWARD of EXCELLENCE

*"For Exemplary Achievement in
Technology Education"*

Sponsored by Goodheart-Willcox Publisher



Brent Hug

Slinger High School



Brian Hawn

McFarland HS

Presenter: *Eric Sutkay - WTEA District F Director*

WTEA 25-YEAR AWARD *"For 25 Years of Service to Education"*

Sponsored by First Technologies, Inc.



From left: **Greg Granberg**-Sun Prairie Schools; **Eric Morrow**-Wilmot HS;
Jeff Griffey-Valders Area Schools; **Jason Jischke**-South Park MS; **Doug Devine**-Eau Claire North HS; **William Losch**-Rhineland HS; **Bob Werner**-First Technologies. **Not pictured: Jason Buchholz** -Waupun Jr/Sr HS; **Jon Ralph**-Eau Claire Memorial; **Brock Rumohr**-Waukesha North HS.



Jacob Haag

Two Rivers HS



Joe Premo

Arrowhead HS

FUTURE TECHNOLOGY EDUCATOR SCHOLARSHIP

Sponsored by WTEA Foundation, Inc.

Sophia Cook, UW-Oshkosh (Rhineland HS 2024)

WTEA SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD *"For Contributions and Service to Technology Education"*



Kim Leannais

Oak Creek High School
Associate Principal



Elizabeth Roddy

Associated Builders &
Contractors of Wisconsin



Jacob Schenk

Milwaukee Tool
Lead Supply Chain Planner



**Doosan Bobcat of
Johnson Creek STEM**

Johnson Creek, Wisconsin

Presenter: *Anna Vitale - WTEA Vice President*

WTEA TECHNOLOGY EDUCATOR of the YEAR

*"For Outstanding
Contributions to
Technology Education"*

Sponsored by
Goodheart-Willcox Publisher



Ben Morey
New Lisbon HS;
Left: Mike Paquette -
WTEA President

WTEA HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM of the YEAR *"Outstanding High School Technology Education Program"*

Sponsored by
Goodheart-Willcox Publisher



The Lincoln Academy, Beloit
Matt Schultz (right).
Not pictured: Brian Marx.
Presenter: Alan Mamerow -
WTEA President-elect

WTEA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM of the YEAR *"Outstanding Middle School TE Program"*

Sponsored by
Goodheart-Willcox



**Forest Park Middle
School, Franklin**
From left: WTEA
President-elect, Alan
Mamerow, Craig Adams,
Doug Johnson.

WTEA APPRECIATION AWARD *"For many years of loyal and dedicated service to Technology Education."*



**Bob Werner (center) &
Mike Kawczynski**
First Technologies
Presenter (left): Joe Ciontea
WTEA Executive Director

WTEA INSPIRE AWARD *"For Fostering Future Technology Educators"* Sponsored by H2I Group



Matt Beschta
Oconto Falls HS



Chris Prahl
Oregon School District

Presenter: Phillip Papadantonakis - H2I Group



Gerald Sorce
West Bend West HS



Mike Wojtusik
Rhineland High School

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients:

Len Sterry - 2002	Pete McConnell - 2015
M. James Bensen - 2004	Joseph Ciontea - 2016
Jeff Dowd - 2005	Bob Abitz - 2017
Fred Schroedl - 2007	Mike Roth - 2019
Doug MacKenzie - 2008	Bryan Albrecht - 2023
Dennis Skurulsky - 2012	Steve Johnston - 2024
Carl Hader - 2013	Duane Elfering - 2025

(*No nominees this year)

KNOW ANY DESERVING CANDIDATES? If you know of an educator, Tech Ed program, or a partner in business or industry that is deserving of an award, the WTEA encourages you to nominate them! Contact Matt Schultz, Awards Coordinator, or go to the WTEA website for more information: wtea-wis.org

Special Thanks to Our Awards Program Sponsors!

The WTEA and WTEA Foundation thank the 2026 Awards Program sponsors:



WTEA STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Ethan Bahmann
The Lincoln
Academy
Mentor: Matt Schultz

Dylan Barnhart
Bay Port HS
Mentor: Aaron Rettler

Adam Hartman
Lake Mills HS
Mentor: Jeff Leher

AnnaMarie Laade
Milton HS
Mentor: Terry Schindler

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WTEA Foundation Scholarship Deadline

May 1, 2026 wteafoundation.org

SkillsUSA National Conference

June 1-5, 2026 Atlanta, GA

TE Instructors Tour: All About Boats!

June 11, 2026 (Register by May 31)... Details on p 9

ACTE Region 3 Leadership Conference

June 15-17, 2026 UW-Stout

WiFab - Teacher Workshops

July 13 & July 14-16, 2026 UW-Stout

WATDA Summer Teacher Training Institute

July 14-16, 2026....Fox Valley Technical College

WTEA Foundation Charity Golf Outing

July 30, 2026 Wisconsin Dells

Interface - Fall Magazine Articles Due

August 17, 2026 to Duane Apel

ACTE CareerTech VISION 2026

Dec. 2-5, 2026 New Orleans, LA

58th Annual WTEA State Conference

March 3-5, 2027 Chula Vista, Wis Dells

ITEEA Annual Conference 2027

March 31-April 3, 2027.....Louisville, KY

WTEA CONFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

- 1) 95% satisfied or very satisfied with the conference program book.
- 2) 96% satisfied or very satisfied with the program agenda and timeline.
- 3) 90% satisfied or very satisfied with the general quality of the presenters.
- 4) 89% satisfied or very satisfied with the relevance of material presented.
- 5) 84% satisfied or very satisfied with the selection of vendors in the trade show.
- 6) 94% satisfied or very satisfied overall with the 2025 WTEA Spring Conference.
- 7) 82% satisfied or very satisfied with Chula Vista as our conference center.
- 8) 89% satisfied or very satisfied with Project Showcase.
- 9) 22% of respondents used Yapp to view the conference program at least 50% of the time.
- 10) 96% of conference attendees are TE teachers.

WTEA EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Ben Morey—New Lisbon Junior High/High School



My name is Ben Morey and I am the recipient of the 2026 WTEA Educator of the Year award. I have been teaching Technology Education for 23 years and have been a teacher at New Lisbon Junior High/High School for the past 22 years. I have been a proud member of the WTEA for 22 years.



Rachel and Ben Morey, homecoming dress-up.

Why Teach?

When people ask me why I chose to become a teacher, I tell them that I like kids and I get to play with power tools! I enjoy teaching students about the skilled trades and working with students as they learn high level skills that help them become contributing members of the workforce. I am passionate about exposing students to new skills, new technologies,

and new opportunities that are available in industry today.

My Beliefs About Tech Ed

This I believe about technology education in preparing students for their future: Technology education provides students with unique challenges and opportunities that require “hands-on, minds-on” problem-solving. Technology education introduces students to tools, industry-relevant skills, and real pathways that connect learning to meaningful careers. Through designing, building, testing, and refining, students develop confidence in their ability to create solutions that improve their communities and influence the world. Technology education creates adaptable, innovative thinkers—the future workforce who will lead, design, and transform the world.

My Acceptance Speech Says It Best

God is Good! I am thankful and honored to receive this award. I have a poster in my classroom that talks about careers and it is broken down into four parts: The World Needs IT, You Get Paid for It, You Are Great At It, and You

Love It. If you can find a career that hits all of those four parts—you have found your purpose. I have found my purpose—helping kids better themselves, teaching them skills, believing in them, and watching them go out into the world and make a difference.

I am so thankful to my family, my three awesome children and my wife, Rachel. Rachel is the best teacher I know. She brings high energy, high standards, and high effort. They say, “Iron sharpens iron”—I am a better teacher because of her. I’ve told

people in the past that I teach next to my wife, and they say, “How can you teach next to your wife?” After 22 years, I don’t know how I could not teach

next to her. She makes me a better teacher!

I need to give a shout out to the Phillips Tech Ed Department—Mr. Brown and Mr. Laurila, my two Tech Ed teachers—thank you! The Tomah Professional Learning Community Facilitators, Janet Woodward and Roger Stanford. Thank you for modeling what excellence in education looks like. Thank you to my Tech Ed colleagues, Terry Bores, Wisconsin Rapids; Greg Gritt, Plymouth; and Johnny Peterson, CF-C. Thank you for all you do to make me a better teacher.

Thank you to the WTEA for all the ideas, presentations, and project ideas. I have learned from the best: Steve Johnston, Brian Schiltz, and Pete McConnell—giants in the

WTEA. My motto is, “Beg-Steal-Borrow,” as an educator. I have done that with the WTEA and am a better teacher because of that organization.

A wise person (my wife) once told me, “Teaching is a verb. Teaching is action, teaching is movement, teaching is presence. Let’s Teach ‘em Up!”



Morey family, Christmas 2025



Tech Ed projects donated to a local fundraiser

WTEA HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

The Lincoln Academy; Beloit

Instructors: Matt Schultz & Brian Marx



The mission of The Lincoln Academy Technology Education Department is to empower scholars through a comprehensive, career-focused curriculum that promotes exploration, innovation, and workplace readiness. Through rigorous, hands-on learning experiences supported by strong theoretical foundations, we prepare scholars to succeed in an ever-evolving technological landscape. In partnership with Black Hawk Technical College, we further enhance scholar opportunities by offering dual-credit pathways that support advanced learning and post-secondary success. Additionally, all scholars complete a 450-hour, work-based learning youth apprenticeship prior to graduation, ensuring authentic industry experience and real-world skill development.



Two senior students program the CNC lathe to make axles for their electric endurance vehicle.

Twenty Courses, Three Pathways, Dual-Credit

The Tech Ed program offers a comprehensive selection of 20 courses across three career pathways: Construction, Manufacturing, and Engineering. Each pathway includes courses designed to provide scholars with a well-rounded, hands-on educational experience. Scholars may begin exploring Technology Education as early as sixth grade through introductory exploratory courses. In addition, The Lincoln Academy has strategically aligned its Technology Education curriculum with Blackhawk Technical College, providing scholars with access to more than 22 dual-credit opportunities.

Six labs are dedicated to Tech Ed on two floors throughout the school, including a Construction Lab, Welding Lab, Robotics Lab, Advanced Manufacturing Lab, Engineering

Lab, and an Innovation Lab. All labs are equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and tooling offering scholars a safe opportunity to learn multiple disciplines.

Multiple Extracurricular Opportunities

TLA offers a diverse range of extracurricular opportunities that allow scholars to extend their learning beyond the classroom through hands-on, competitive experiences. Scholars on the SumoBot Robotics Team design and build robots to compete in the annual SumoBot competition at Gateway Technical College. Construction Team scholars showcase their skills by participating in construction challenges at the Dare to Dream competition. Scholars interested in welding and fabrication can compete in the annual Junk Yard Wars competition hosted by Blackhawk Technical College. Scholars with a passion for engineering participate on the Supermileage Vehicle team, competing in ChallengeUSA events held throughout the Midwest.

Giving Back: Community Service

The Lincoln Academy is committed to giving back through meaningful community service. Each year, the entire school participates in Service Learning Day, during which scholars work throughout the Beloit community on projects that support local organizations and residents. Tech Ed scholars contribute by building buddy benches, picnic tables, and helping maintain the YMCA playground.

In addition to Service Learning Day, scholars complete service projects throughout the year, including constructing

Continued on page 29



A Metal Fab student uses a pizza oven he made in class at the "Tech Ed Cookout."



A Robotics 2 scholar programs a robot to open a bottle.



High school scholars test fit a 5-point harness on their electric endurance vehicle.



A high-schooler works with an elementary scholar to build tool boxes during construction month.

WTEA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF THE YEAR

Forest Park Middle School: Franklin School District

Instructors: Craig Adams & Doug Johnson



Forest Park Middle School is a 6-8th grade middle school with an enrollment of about 1100 students in Franklin, Wisconsin. The Tech Ed department consists of two teachers, Craig Adams and Doug Johnson. We are very fortunate to have a new facility, completed in 2019, consisting of three classrooms including a manufacturing area, engineering area, and robotics lab.

6th, 7th, 8th Grade Courses

There are two semester-long classes that meet every other day for each grade level. Both teachers are teaching at the same time, one in the engineering room and one in the manufacturing room. Classes spend one quarter in each room. At the end of first and third quarters, classes are “flipped” to the other room.

In sixth grade students take an introductory “Engineering and Technology” course. During the engineering half of the class, students do an exciting “Egg Crash Car” engineering activity. They are also introduced to 3D modeling software and 3D printing. Finally, students design and make the “Puzzle Cube.” On the manufacturing side they use mostly hand tools and learn basic skills while making a wood key holder, wood photo board and a tic tac toe game. Students are also introduced to injection molding.

In seventh grade, students can take a follow-up elective Engineering and Technology class. Over 90% of students take this class. In the engineering classroom students complete an advanced 3D modeling activity where they design a 3D printed key chain, an architecture activity where they design a cottage, and finally, a vinyl heat transfer T-shirt design. In the manufacturing room students make a thermoformed acrylic napkin holder and a light-up picture frame where they learn how to solder a series LED circuit. They are also intro-

duced to vacuum forming and blow molding.

About 70% of eighth-graders take the two elective classes, “Manufacturing and Design” and “Engineering in Action.” Manufacturing class students make a custom designed acrylic clock, forged screwdriver, custom designed CNC plasma-cut grill spatula, custom keepsake box and wood pen set. In the engineering class, students work on a custom designed 3D printed LED glow phone/AirPod holder, custom model rocket, custom CO2 car and robotics and mechanisms activities.

Integrating Engineering & Manufacturing

Our goal in the Tech Ed department is to provide students with many hands-on experiences that provide technological awareness and understanding, promote good craftsmanship and pride, prepare them for high school and introduce career opportunities. All of our courses are hands-on project-based that are designed with a strong engineering component integrated with a manufacturing component. We believe it’s important for the students to understand the close relationship between the two. Our projects are also designed to give students exposure to a variety of materials including woods, metals and plastics. We feel plastics is often overlooked in schools but yet is extremely important since it is a very large industry in Wisconsin. Students are exposed to a number of different plastic processes including injection molding, thermo forming, vacuum forming, blow molding and, of course, 3D printing. We would like to thank the Society of Plastics Engineers for their support!

The “Can’t Wait to Take It Home Test!”

When choosing projects they must pass the “Can’t wait

Continued on page 29



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FUTURE EDUCATORS AT WTEA STATE

Students Gain Insight & Make Invaluable Connections

UW-Stout - *By Naomi Domer, UW-Stout TEECA President*

This conference is transformational for students entering the teaching profession, new teachers, and veteran teachers alike. From the many breakout sessions to the one-on-one connections people make, it's no wonder UW-Stout's TEECA sends students each year. This year, Stout sent 17 students, nine of whom were first-time attendees.

When asked how they felt, the students responded that the conference provided valuable information which they plan to use as they continue their schooling as future teachers. From one student, "I was able to interact with numerous teachers across the state and further my understanding of my future job." Others commented, "So many different topics were covered to appeal to everyone and provide more resources to teachers!" and, "I thought the presenters seemed more interactive this year and there were more opportunities for hands-on experiences at the conference."

It is no wonder that WTEA is so well supported. A session for new teachers titled, New Teacher Seminar, was particularly beneficial. This session breaks down building lesson plans, provides examples of scheduling, discusses the benefits/ challenges of teachers in the industry, and explores the breakdown of classroom budgeting. Two experienced teachers, Mike Paquette and Alan Mamerow, have been leading this session for years.

Students leave this session prepared and excited about the challenges that teaching can offer. Another benefit is the socializing

that occurs throughout, particularly at the president's reception. From one of Stout's student teachers, "I thought it was nice to bond with everyone." The time provided to connect with current teachers is pivotal in students' success. Without connections, it would be a struggle to find places, ask questions about equipment, and get advice on lesson plans. Many students are looking for a school to teach at, and with the connections made at WTEA, there is an easier time not only to get placed but also to ask the challenging questions that arise during teaching.

Overall, we thank WTEA and the wonderful teachers who make this conference possible every year. I, along with many others, can agree that this conference is a pivotal point in our educational careers.



UW-Stout students / TEECA members with instructor, Mike Mills (back left).

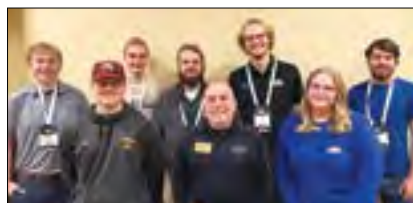


UW-Platteville - *By Danny Borkowski Jr, UW-Platteville*

Seven students from UW-Platteville attended the WTEA Conference in Wisconsin Dells. Members participated in a variety of breakout sessions covering topics such as establishing industry connections, addressing the ongoing teacher shortage, and integrating Industry 4.0 concepts into the high school classroom. These sessions provided valuable insight into both the challenges and emerging opportunities within technical education.

The presentations also gave students a better understanding of how classrooms across the state operate, including differences in teaching resources, industry partnerships, and curriculum development. Hearing from experienced educators allowed members to gather practical ideas and strategies that they can apply in the future.

In addition, the conference provided valuable networking opportunities. Students were able to connect with teachers from a wide range of specializations across the state, gaining perspective on different career paths while also identifying potential employment opportunities after graduation.



UW-Platteville Technology Education students with instructor, Ed Wiegman (front center).



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Collaboration In A Time of Uncertainty

By Mike Mills, Ed.D; WTEA University Representative; UW-Stout



Across the U.S., teacher preparation programs are confronting an era of unprecedented uncertainty. Declining birth rates, shifting workforce demands, and growing skepticism toward the teaching profession have converged to create what many have termed a demographic cliff for higher education. Career and Technical Education (CTE) licensure programs are particularly vulnerable to these pressures, as they compete directly with industry pathways that offer immediate employment and competitive wages to high school graduates. Institutions must move beyond program silos and adopt collaborative, adaptive strategies to ensure both program sustainability and quality.

A Strategic Response

At UW-Stout, collaboration has emerged not simply as a cost-saving measure, but as a strategic response to systemic change. This article describes how the CTE licensure programs, Technology Education, Marketing and Business Education, and Family and Consumer Sciences Education, have restructured professional education coursework to address declining enrollments, align with statewide policy changes, and expand pathways for a broader range of learners.

Declining enrollment in education majors is a well-documented national trend, and UW-Stout's CTE licensure programs are no exception. Historically, when enrollment levels were stronger, each program offered its own sequence of professional education courses. With declining enrollment in CTE licensure programs, course enrollment numbers have dropped below the university's acceptable minimum threshold. UW-Stout minimum course enrollment is 18, and the CTE licensure programs fall below this metric. For example, in fall 2025 there were a total of 9 students in the Methods course, which serves STEM programs, including Tech Ed and Math Ed. Currently, we have one required course that all on-campus CTE licensure students take, which is CTE 302 Principles of Career and Technical Education. In fall 2025, CTE 302 had an enrollment of 21 students. Based on what CTE 302 enrollment is indicating, by combining all three CTE licensure programs into the same professional education courses, we should see that all CTE professional education courses run above the minimum enrollment threshold. See Table 1 (see next page) for the new professional education required courses.

The updated program plan that will go into effect for fall 2026 incoming students also includes a revised general education model, an accelerated pathway to the M.S. Career and Technical Education degree, and the development of a Tech Ed non-licensure track that focuses on fields adjacent to K-12

education.

Required Gen Ed Credits for TE Reduced

Wisconsin legislative Act 15 brought the restructuring of the Universities of Wisconsin curriculum requirements including general education credit transferability. In part, this will create alignment across all the UW schools' general education requirements. The Tech Ed program's Gen Ed requirements will go from 40 credits to 34 credits, which is a win, as Tech ed graduates often cite the wish for more technical courses, which this model will allow for.

The accelerated pathway to the M.S. CTE degree will allow undergraduate students who have 45 credits or fewer remaining in their program to apply for the master's program. The students can take up to 12 grad credits their senior year. There are four professional education courses that will be used for this pathway.

New: Non-Licensure Concentration

Lastly, the development of a non-licensure concentration will hopefully draw a new group of students to the Tech Ed program. This new concentration will be targeted towards developing people for roles as Corporate Trainer, Technical Trainer, Instructional Designer / eLearning Developer, Workforce Development Specialist, Registered Apprenticeship Coordinator, Technical College Instructor, EdTech Sales and Support, Community Education Instructor, Museum/Science Center Education Specialist, Youth Program Director (Boys & Girls Clubs, scouts, nonprofits), FabLab or Engineering Lab Manager (non-K-12), OSHA Outreach Trainer, Community Development Program Coordinator, etc. The modified coursework takes place in the professional education coursework and can be found in Table 2 (see next page).

In a time marked by demographic shifts, workforce competition, and policy change, collaboration is essential for the sustainability of CTE teacher preparation programs.

Continued on next page...

2025-26 TECH ED PROGRAM NUMBERS

NOTE: The numbers below represent only students in Tech Ed at UW's Stout & Platteville. Recently, other schools have created partnerships, 2+2 programs, etc. to provide more avenues to pursue a TE degree.

	2025 Frosh	2026 Grads
Stout	8	16
Platteville	*4	*2

*UW-P now offers a combined Ag/Tech Ed path not included here. That would add four freshmen and two graduates to the totals.

Table created by *Interface* Editor with data provided by WTEA Board University Representatives, Mike Mills and Ed Wiegman.

...Continued from page 24

Collaboration at UW-Stout

Table 1. Professional education sequence for CTE licensure programs (44 credits)

CTE 101 Introduction to CTE Secondary Education	3 cr
CTE 302 Principles of CTE	2 cr
CTE 212 Pre-Student Teaching I	1 cr
CTE 312 Pre Student Teaching	1 cr
CTE 360/560 Coordination of WBL Program	3 cr
CTE 405/605 Methods of Teaching CTE	3 cr
CTE 438/638 Course Construction	3 cr
CTE 440/640 Instruction Evaluation	2 cr
CTE 455/655 Emerging practices in K-12 CTE	3 cr
EDUC 303/503 Educational Psychology	3 cr
EDUC 390 Laboratory & Classroom Management	3 cr
RDGED 382/582 Content Area Reading	2 cr
SPED 430/630 Inclusion of Students w/ Exceptional Needs	3 cr
TECED 409 Student Teaching or	12 cr
TECED 489 Internship Teaching	

Note: This sequence applies to students pursuing Wisconsin DPI Teaching licensure in CTE fields.

Table 2. Training, instruction, and development coursework for the non-licensure concentration (31 credits)

CTE 101 Introduction to CTE Secondary Education	3 cr
CTE 302 Principles of CTE	2 cr
CTE 360/560 Coordination of WBL Program	3 cr
CTE 405/605 Methods of Teaching CTE	3 cr
EDUC 303/503 Educational Psychology or EDUC 403/605 Educational Psychology of the Adult Learner	3 cr
CTE 438/638 Course Construction	3 cr
CTE 440/640 Instruction Evaluation	2 cr
EDUC 210 Impacts of Technology on Learning	3 cr
INMG-400 Organizational Leadership	3 cr
PSYC-382 Human Resource Management	3 cr
TRHRD-360 Foundations of Talent Development	3 cr

Note: This coursework replaces the professional education sequence and is intended for students pursuing careers in training, workforce development, and instructional design outside of K–12 licensure.



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Why WTEA is Moving to Microsoft Teams for Statewide 2-Way Communication



By Jake Mihm, TEE Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Full disclosure about this article: What we are seeing is a failure to communicate! In order to adapt, change, and keep up with the times we need to learn to use new tools. In that, this is my first time truly utilizing AI to assist me in generating a document to help all of us communicate more clearly. I utilized ChatGPT to assist me in writing this article. Who says an old dog can't learn new tricks? See you soon on TEEChat!

Introduction: A New Chapter in Communication

For more than two decades, Wisconsin's Technology and Engineering educators relied on a familiar and dependable tool: the statewide email listserv hosted by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). This system provided a simple way to share ideas, ask questions, and connect with colleagues across the state.

However, as technology and security expectations evolved, so too did the need for a more modern, secure, and dynamic communication platform. Following the discontinuation of the DPI-hosted listserv last year, the Wisconsin Technology Education Association, in collaboration with DPI, has officially adopted Microsoft Teams—specifically the CTE TEEChat space—as the new statewide communication hub.

While change can be challenging, it also presents opportunity. This transition is more than just a replacement—it is a significant upgrade in how we collaborate, communicate, and build professional community.

This 2-way platform is a way for the field to engage with one another. GovDelivery, our 1-way communications email platform, will still serve as my monthly communications from my desk. Monthly announcements will continue to include information such as: “news from around the state,” “learning opportunities,” “WTEA and SkillsUSA reminders,” and more.

Why Microsoft Teams? Key Advantages for Educators

1. Real-Time Communication

Unlike traditional email listservs, Microsoft Teams allows for instant, threaded conversations. This means:

- Faster responses to questions
- Organized discussions by topic
- Less clutter in your email inbox

Instead of scrolling through long email chains, conversations are grouped and easy to follow.

2. Organized Channels for Focused Discussion

Teams allows conversations to be organized into “channels,” helping educators quickly find relevant discussions

such as:

- Curriculum resources
- Classroom management strategies
- Equipment and lab ideas
- Professional development opportunities

This structure keeps communication streamlined and purposeful.

3. File Sharing and Collaboration

Members can upload and share:

- Lesson plans
- Project guides
- Safety documents
- Assessment tools

Even better, files can be edited collaboratively in real time—eliminating version confusion and improving teamwork.

4. Accessibility Across Devices

Microsoft Teams is accessible on:

- Desktop computers
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Smartphones

Whether you're in your classroom, workshop, or on the go, you can stay connected to the WTEA community.

5. Enhanced Professional Community

TEEChat is designed to function similarly to a professional social network—offering a space where educators can:

- Ask for advice
- Share successes
- Highlight student work
- Build meaningful professional relationships

In short, it brings the spirit of the listserv into a more engaging, interactive environment.

Understanding TEEChat: Our Shared Space

TEEChat is the official Microsoft Teams environment for Wisconsin Technology and Engineering educators.

Purpose:

To provide a collaborative, respectful, and resource-rich environment for communication across the state.

Think of it as:

A blend of email, discussion board, and professional learning network—all in one place.

Community Guidelines (TEEChat Rules)

To ensure a positive experience for all members, please

Continued on next page...

follow these guidelines:

- No solicitation
- Be kind and courteous
- No hate speech or bullying

These expectations help maintain a professional and welcoming environment for all educators.

How to Join TEEChat

<https://dpi.wi.gov/te/listserv>

1. Visit the DPI website link:
"Join TEEChat here"
2. Submit your request to join
3. Wait for confirmation that you've been added to the Microsoft Teams environment

Once approved, you're ready to get started!

Getting Started: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Access Microsoft Teams

You can access Teams in one of two ways:

- **Web Browser:** Go to <https://teams.microsoft.com>
- **App:** Download Microsoft Teams app on your device

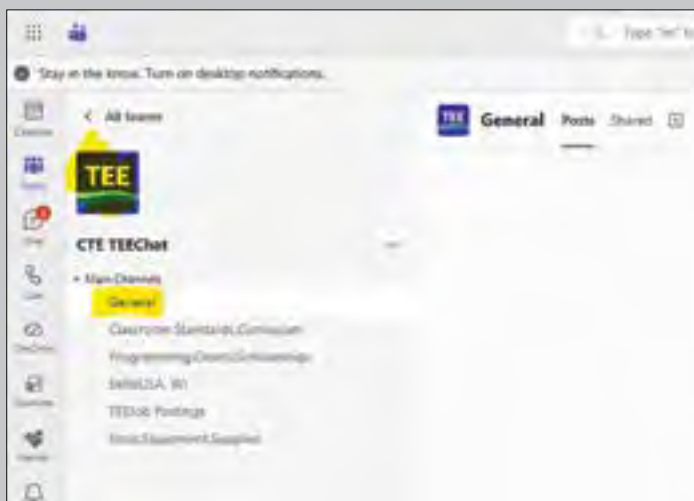
Step 2: Sign In

Use your school or organization email to log in. If prompted, follow your district's authentication process.

Step 3: Locate "CTE TEEChat" Team

Once logged in:

- Click on the **"Teams"** icon on the left-hand sidebar
- Look for **"CTE TEEChat"** in your list of teams



Navigate to the Teams section and select CTE TEEChat. The General channel is the central hub for communication within TEEChat.

Step 4: Participate in Conversations

To engage:

- Click **"Start a new conversation"**
- Or reply to an existing thread

Tips:

- Use the **Reply** button to keep discussions organized
- Tag colleagues using **@name**
- Use formatting tools to make posts clear & readable

Step 5: Adjust notifications

Stay informed without being overwhelmed:

- Click your profile icon → **Settings** → **Notifications**
- Customize alerts for mentions, replies, and posts

Looking Ahead

The WTEA Board of Directors fully supports this transition and believes Microsoft Teams will strengthen communication across Wisconsin's Technology and Engineering education community. We encourage all members to join, explore, and contribute. Let's move forward—together!



Wisconsin Diesel Student & WATDA Foundation Scholarship Recipient Represents USA at WorldSkills Shanghai 2026

By Brent Kindred, Vice President, WATDA Foundation

SkillsUSA has selected Benjamin Strupp of Holmen, Wisconsin, as the official U.S. competitor in the Heavy Vehicle Diesel competition at the 2026 WorldSkills Competition, September 22-27 in Shanghai, China. Since 1950, WorldSkills, often called the “Olympics of Skilled Trades,” has brought together the world’s best young technicians in a biennial global competition. Competing at WorldSkills represents the highest standard of technical skill and workforce excellence.



Benjamin Strupp, Wisconsin SkillsUSA Representative at WorldSkills Competition

Strupp, a diesel technician, and graduate of Madison Area Technical College and Holmen High School, is also a proud recipient of a Wisconsin Automobile and Truck Dealers Association (WATDA) Foundation scholarship, which supports students pursuing careers in diesel, automotive, and collision repair careers. His record with SkillsUSA is impressive. He earned a gold medal at the Wisconsin State Championships in Diesel Equipment Technology at both the high school level in 2023 and the postsecondary level in 2025. Strupp went on to place second at the 2025 SkillsUSA National Championships, held in Atlanta.

The WATDA Foundation plays a key role each year by helping coordinate the diesel, automotive, and collision repair State Championships at the Alliant Energy Center.

The SkillsUSA Championships are designed to mirror real-world industry demands. Competitors rotate through a series of stations that test their ability to diagnose and repair engines, electrical and electronic systems, and powertrain components, including transmissions, carriers, and chassis. Additional skill areas include hydraulics, brake systems, air-conditioning, vehicle inspections, failure analysis, general

shop practices, a written examination, and a formal job interview.

Over the next several months, Strupp’s training schedule will be demanding and intensive, involving extensive travel, hands-on technical preparation, and a high level of self-discipline. Success at WorldSkills requires total focus and sustained effort, and Strupp is preparing accordingly.

The WATDA Foundation is proud to support the next generation of technicians on their educational and professional journeys. The last time Wisconsin was represented at the WorldSkills in a transportation competition was in 2015, when Kieron Kohlman of Park High School in Racine competed in Automotive Technology in Leipzig, Germany. During high school, Kohlman worked at Martin’s CDJR in Union Grove and today serves as Master Technician International Training Manager at Stellantis.

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WTCS & WTEA COLLABORATE

Tech College Deans Connect With WTEA at State

By Randy Way, WTEA Director At-Large & Student Ambassador Chair; Madison College



TEAMS meetings will only get you so far. Sometimes it's necessary to bring people together to a common place at a common time to let the magic happen. That's exactly what played out at this year's WTEA State Conference for the Wisconsin Technical College System Trade and Industry Deans group. T&I, in the parlance of the system, is the group of academic leaders of programs of the WTCS that align with Technology and Engineering Education in Wisconsin.

The event was a homecoming of sorts. The last time the T&I group gathered in person was pre-pandemic. The conference provided the opportunity to reforge old connections, and to initiate new ones. The Deans' group was treated to a session with Jake Mihm of Wisconsin DPI, along with a panel discussion with Joe Ciontea, Jesse



Teachers explore Tech College programs at State Conference in Chula Vista.

Domer, and Mike Paquette of the WTEA. Participants remarked on how valuable the connections made were, especially in the face of an ever-diminishing number of young people entering the colleges of the WTCS.

In addition to the meeting of the T&I group, the WTCS also generously sponsored tables for each of the technical colleges. Chris Martin and Mandy Mayek of the WTCS were instrumental in securing this funding, and in leading the planning for the T&I event. Please be sure to pass along our collective appreciation for their efforts and generosity. It's my hope that this will be a long-running partnership between the Association and the System.

The Lincoln Academy: HS Program of the Year

(Continued from page 20)

sheds for community partners. Past projects include constructing a shed featured on the TV series, Betting on Beloit, which highlights community revitalization efforts in the city. Scholar teams designed and built an ADA-accessible flower planter for the special ed program and Buddy Benches for the elementary playground to promote inclusion and friendship. Construction III scholars collaborated to design and construct an aquaponics system for K4 classrooms, giving younger scholars hands-on learning opportunities in sustainable agriculture. Metal Fabrication scholars built a grill used by the NJROTC program for the annual Last Day of School Picnic, while CNC Manufacturing scholars produced 25 bags boards for the local YMCA's annual tournament. Scholars apply technical skills while making a positive impact on the community.

Acknowledgments

The Lincoln Academy says thank you to the WTEA for honoring the Tech Ed program with this prestigious honor. The Lincoln Academy also thanks the Beloit community and industry partners that help make the vision of TLA a success.

To learn more about TLA Tech Ed program, visit their website. [The Lincoln Academy Technology Education](https://www.lincolnteched.org/)

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Forest Park Middle School: MS Program of the Year (Continued from page 21)

to take it home test." We try to keep students excited and motivated throughout the progression of our classes by making sure students have a customization option for projects. We are constantly amazed at their ideas and designs.

Students start taking Tech Ed in sixth grade not knowing what to expect. For most students it quickly becomes their favorite class. One of our favorite student quotes which we hear often is: "Tech Ed is the only reason I come to school!" Re-

cently, an eighth-grader mentioned when she started Tech Ed in sixth grade she thought it was going to be a "dumb" class, but quickly discovered how much she liked it and then took every elective we offered. She has signed up for three Tech Ed classes next year at the high school!

Interested in learning more? Our curriculum, including lessons, templates, reviews, rubrics, etc. is at: <https://tinyurl.com/fpms-teched2026>

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Hot Take #2: AI is Awesome!

By Randy Way, WTEA Director At-Large; Madison College



Part two of two parts. (Continued from the Winter Interface.)

This article continues exploring ideas about artificial intelligence presented in the last issue of the *Interface*. For decades, the striking similarity between three fundamental mathematical formulas—Standard Deviation (SD), Root-Mean-Square (RMS) voltage, and the Radius of Gyration (RG)—created for me a profound cognitive dissonance, as academic experts from different disciplines failed to explain their connection. It took the interdisciplinary lens of AI to reveal a unifying, elegant truth.

As an undergraduate, I encountered and dutifully memorized three seemingly disparate formulas:

1. Standard Deviation (SD): A measure of data dispersion around the population's mean in statistics.

2. Root-Mean-Square (RMS) Voltage: The effective voltage of an alternating current (AC) circuit, calculated by squaring and rooting instantaneous voltages.

3. Radius of Gyration (RG): A term in statics describing a beam's cross-sectional property that dictates its resistance to bending.

Over thirty years, I asked experts from statistics, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering for the connection. Each specialist provided a siloed, discipline-specific justification for their formula's structure (e.g., using squares because $P=I^2R$ for RMS, or because stress is twice proportional to distance from the neutral axis for RG), but none could bridge the gap between the three concepts. Their deep-dive, orthodox explanations, confined to their own worldviews, obscured the broader mathematical principle at play.

The AI Epiphany

A single session with an AI, after about a dozen prompts, yielded the profound truth that unifies the formulas: RMS voltage and Radius of Gyration aren't just similar to Standard Deviation; they are the standard deviations of their respective measured quantities.

- RMS Voltage as SD: The mean voltage of an AC wave form over a full cycle is zero volts. The RMS voltage is mathematically equivalent to the Standard Deviation of all the instantaneous voltage measurements taken

throughout the cycle, which are dispersed above and below that zero-volt mean.

- Radius of Gyration as SD: For a vertically symmetric beam, the mean vertical position of all infinitesimal material bits is the neutral axis. The Radius of Gyration is the Standard Deviation of the vertical distance (Y-coordinate) of all those infinitesimal bits from the neutral axis.

The Power of Interdisciplinary Expertise

The success of the AI lay in its ability to transcend the arbitrary boundaries of academic disciplines. Because AI is trained on more data than any single human could ever consume, it possesses elements of expertise in statistics, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering simultaneously. This holistic training allows it to see through the "smokescreen of orthodoxy" and surface profound, unifying truths that are invisible to highly specialized human experts. The ability of AI to smash these academic barriers promises a future where complex, interdisciplinary knots can be untied in minutes instead of decades, fundamentally accelerating knowledge discovery.



"The ability of AI to smash these academic barriers promises a future where complex, interdisciplinary knots can be untied in minutes instead of decades..."

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DIRECTORS' REPORTS

Students Fabricate Holiday Decorations for Community

By Brian Schiltz, WTEA District B Director; Tomahawk School District



The Light Up Christmas project is a collaborative partnership with Main Street to enhance areas of Tomahawk and promote community holiday spirit through a grant received from the STAR Foundation. The STAR Foundation is a community chest for Tomahawk area businesses and individuals by making charitable grants to community groups, clubs and non-profit organizations that contribute to the health and vitality of our area.

Several decorative trees were fabricated the previous year, and additional pieces were completed using materials purchased by the district this year. The decorations were well received by the community. Therefore, the future of this program is to continue as an ongoing partnership that provides both community beautification and authentic, project-based learning opportunities for metals students. Moving forward, decorations will be designed and fabricated annually as part of the curriculum, allowing each new group of students to contribute to the project.

This program provided meaningful benefits to the community by enhancing public spaces with student-fabricated decorations that contributed to a welcoming and festive

downtown atmosphere. It strengthened community pride by showcasing the talent and craftsmanship of local students while reinforcing positive partnerships between the school district and community organizations. In addition, the project provided students with authentic, hands-on learning experiences in design and fabrication, allowing them to apply technical skills in a real-world setting that directly served and benefited the broader community.



State Conference Reflections

By Jon Larson, WTEA District D Director; Little Chute High School



Every year after the WTEA Spring Conference I try to take time and reflect on the conference and see what I did to become a better teacher. It's always a great way for me to measure the success of the conference. This year I was able to sit in on sessions that will enhance my courses and also some that reaffirmed what I am doing in my classes already. I was able to find projects in the Project Showcase that I will be able to use in the future, this is always one of the highlights for me and my department. It's always great to make connections with teachers around the state, especially with those from our districts.

April 22nd we hosted a WTEA District D Meeting/Tour at New London High School. The Tech Ed department gave a tour of their renovated spaces and held a discussion about needs in our area and professional development they would like to see from the WTEA.

This classroom poster was distributed at WTEA State Conference. If you would like one, email Duane Apel, Interface Editor.



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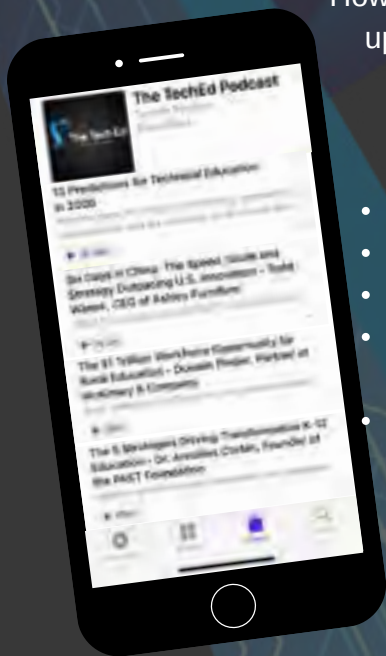
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