



LAKE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE



STUDENT VOICE AT THE LEGISLATURE

Members of Lake Area Tech’s Student Voice were in Pierre in February to experience the legislative process first-hand. On the evening of their arrival, they went to dinner with legislators and lobbyists to hear about the behind the scenes work of the legislature. The next day was filled with committee meetings, bill hearings, and the technical college system’s budget hearing in the Joint Committee on Appropriations. They saw both the Senate and House in action Tuesday afternoon.

Representing LATC were Ashleigh Baker (Surgical Technology), Preston Singrey (Business), Kalen Godel (Business), Samantha Palmer (Surgical Technology), Kristen German (Associate of Social Work), Victoria Gollnick (Auto Body & Paint), Ciara Neuman (Graphic Design), Vice President Cam Corey, and President Tiffany Sanderson.

DUAL CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS

In December 2025, the Lake Area Technical College Foundation announced the availability of Dual Credit Scholarships. These scholarships help eligible high school students enrolled in dual credit courses reduce the cost of tuition based on financial need. The initiative aims to support wider participation in college-level coursework by lowering financial barriers for high school juniors and seniors.





BUILDING A BETTER LAKE AREA TECH

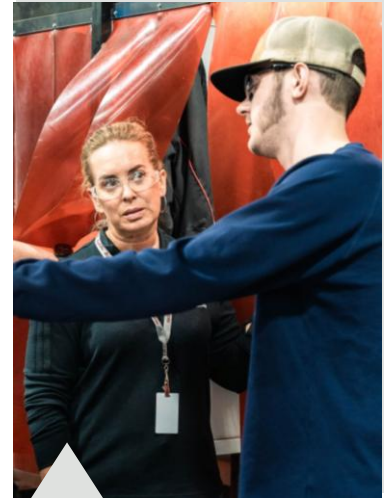
Student for a Half Day

The Lake Area Tech Foundation’s **Student for a Half Day** event was held on March 12, 2026 and welcomed industry and community participants. The event is designed to give attendees an in-depth, first-hand look at the LATC’s programs and the hands-on learning experiences that students receive. For many of those who attended, it was their first visit to campus.

Participants represented a wide range of sectors, including municipalities in South Dakota, manufacturing, construction, automotive and diesel mechanics, agriculture organizations, school districts in South Dakota and Minnesota, and law enforcement agencies. In addition to program experiences, attendees received a full campus tour and had the opportunity to connect with student ambassadors who shared their experiences and insights about life at LATC.

Ready, Set, GO!

The Foundation’s 2nd annual **Ready, Set, GO!** event was held on January 15, 2026, and welcomed more than **275 guests to campus**, including prospective students, parents, high school counselors, and representatives from over **50 Stretch-the-Million (STM) industry partners**. The event was designed to help students and their families better understand the opportunities available through the **Build Dakota Scholarship Program**. Attendees learned about eligibility requirements for Build Dakota, the application process, and the commitment between students and sponsoring industry partners. For many prospective students, Ready, Set, GO! serves as an important step in understanding how the scholarship program can make a debt-free education possible while preparing them for in-demand careers.



Student for a Half Day, Class of 2026



STUDENT LEARNING & ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

VITA Tax Services Offered by Financial Services Students

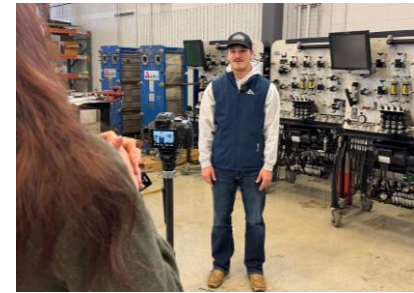
Since 1988, Lake Area Tech has operated an IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) tax program each winter. With the IRS' strict procedures, it is a great opportunity for Financial Services students to learn tax preparation and serve community members who are eligible.

Second year students in the Accounting option prepare for the experience through their Applied Tax class. They learn the most current tax laws, pass the IRS Advanced Certification exam, and then spend evenings and weekends preparing taxes.

This tax season, 10 students prepared 531 free tax returns. The service continues to grow; in 2025, 529 returns were prepared, up from 459 in 2024.



2nd Year Financial
Services Students



Associate of Social Work Program

The South Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners officially took action to approve Lake Area Tech's Associate of Social Work AAS program (formerly Human Services Technician) to meet the qualifications of SDCL 36-26-16. That action will allow LATC grads from the program to earn their state license as "social work associates." The program was updated for 2025-26 to require additional skills and knowledge to align with better paying careers in the field.

Accreditation Site Visits

In March, LATC's Nursing program went through its accreditation site visit and received positive recommendations for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) Board's consideration. Final designation for the well-established program is expected in October 2026.

The initial accreditation site visit for the Dental Hygiene program also took place in March with the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). The review team identified no required actions; LATC expects the report of final action around August 1, 2026.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS



Ag Safety Day

Lake Area Technical College hosted its annual Ag Safety Day on Wednesday, March 11th bringing together 62 industry professionals and 92 Lake Area Tech students for a full day of safety education and hands-on training on campus. The event began with an opening presentation from Cadrien Livingston, an agricultural communicator and safety advocate, before participants rotated through breakout sessions focused on critical agricultural safety topics.

Session options included load securement with the South Dakota Motor Carrier Enforcement; equipment extraction and towing safety; slips, trips and falls; livestock safety; ATV safety; confined space awareness; lockout/tagout procedures; and a hands-on grain entrapment rescue demonstration provided by Agtegra. By combining classroom instruction with practical demonstrations in the ag labs and shops, the event reinforced Lake Area Tech's commitment to preparing students and industry partners with the safety knowledge and skills essential for today's agricultural workforce.



Mitchell Technical College



Theresa Kriese, MTC President
S.D. Board of Technical Education Report

March 2026



Introducing the New Drone Racing Program

Mitchell Technical College is expanding student engagement in innovative ways with the addition of a new collegiate Drone Racing activity. Designed as a structured, competitive program, Drone Racing offers students the opportunity to participate in high-speed FPV (first-person view) competitions that combine advanced technology, precision control, and strategic teamwork.

Organized as an official collegiate sport, the program features multiple race formats, including individual competitions, dual team races, and 3v3 combat team events. Students compete virtually against colleges nationwide through the Fenworks platform, which provides a structured league environment and regular-season matchups. The season culminates in an in-person national championship event held at the end of the spring semester.

Through the generous support of Mitchell Telecom, Mitchell Tech supplies all necessary drone equipment. This removes financial barriers to participation and ensures students can focus on developing piloting skills, mastering technical controls, and refining competition strategies rather than purchasing their own technology.

The Drone Racing team aligns directly with Mitchell Tech's mission of hands-on, workforce-focused education. Students gain real-world experience with drone systems, build critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and strengthen teamwork under pressure — all within a competitive STEM environment. The activity is especially well-suited for students interested in automation, electronics, and emerging technologies.

Mitchell Day at the Legislature

Students from Mitchell Tech had the opportunity to actively engage in the legislative process during Mitchell Day at the Legislature in Pierre on Thursday, February 19. Traveling alongside local business leaders, students represented the Mitchell community while gaining firsthand insight into how state government and industry intersect.

Throughout the day, students connected with Mitchell-area business leaders and constitutional officers, participating in meaningful conversations about workforce needs, industry growth, and the future of South Dakota.



“It was an incredibly informative and unique experience for me. We had the opportunity to sit in on a Senate Agriculture Committee meeting, which I found especially interesting given my background in agriculture,” commented Dan Soukup, Electrical Construction & Maintenance student at Mitchell Tech. “I felt truly humbled and excited to observe the legislative process firsthand while representing the City of Mitchell.”

South Dakota SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference

The South Dakota SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference returns for a third consecutive year to Mitchell Tech on Thursday and Friday, April 9-10, 2026. More than 350 students—including 200+ secondary and 150+ post-secondary students—will participate in leadership development activities and hands-on trade skills competitions.

The event brings together students from across the state to demonstrate proficiency in 42 competitions spanning building trades, automotive, electrical, welding, public speaking, and other career and technical fields. Sponsored in part by the South Dakota National Guard, Marmen Energy, Titan Machinery, Spartan Motors, Twin City Fan, and Butler Machinery, the conference highlights the importance of career and technical education (CTE) in building South Dakota’s skilled workforce. State winners will advance to the national SkillsUSA Leadership and Skills Conference this June in Atlanta, Georgia.



Student Turns Personal Experience into Advocacy

Mitchell Tech student Artika Franklin was recognized for turning her life experiences into advocacy. After spending much of her childhood in foster care, Artika recently stood in the Capitol in Pierre for Children’s Day — not as a spectator, but as an advocate representing Lutheran Social Services. As a Social Services student at Mitchell Tech, she’s preparing for a career in social work with a heart for supporting teenagers in the foster care system.

“I want other kids in the system to know they can have someone in their corner — just like I did,” Artika shared.

January Exploration Day

Mitchell Tech Admissions hosted high school juniors and seniors for an Exploration Day on Wednesday, January 21. Students and guests from South Dakota and surrounding states came to explore the campus and experience life at Mitchell Tech. Throughout the day, they had the chance to visit classes and labs in the programs of their choice, learn about financial aid and scholarship opportunities, and attend an information session to discover the unique qualities of Mitchell Tech.

Coinciding with the Exploration Day event, Mitchell Technical College hosted 16 companies at the Build Dakota Industry Connection Fair. Organizations from qualifying programs had an opportunity to meet and engage with students wanting to learn more about partnership opportunities. This event, in addition to the Exploration Day, allowed students to better understand potential careers and their connections to programs at Mitchell Tech.



Career Fairs

Mitchell Tech hosted three career fairs on Thursday, February 26. The Energy Division Career Fair, Health Sciences Career Fair, and General Career Fair gave over 113 employers the opportunity to interact with more than 375 first- and second-year Mitchell Tech students attending the career fairs. Holding three separate career fairs at different locations on campus allowed companies to better focus their search and target students from programs where they most needed candidates.



College Lineman Rodeo

Mitchell Technical College will host the 2026 College Lineman Rodeo on Friday, April 24, welcoming powerline students from across the region for a day of hands-on competition that tests the core skills developed in their energy and utilities training programs. Participants will compete in team-based events such as cross-arm change-outs, obstacle climbs, and structural framing, in addition to completing a written exam that reinforces technical knowledge and safety standards.



Weekend Snack Pack Program

Mitchell Technical College students and staff will come together on Tuesday, March 31, to stock and pack 500 food packs to distribute to Mitchell PreK-8th grade students for the long Easter weekend. As Mitchell Tech's annual service project partner, Weekend Snack Pack provides consistent, nutritious, and easy-to-prepare food to children who may face food insecurity on weekends or school breaks.

Through donated food items and volunteer time, the MTC community works assembly-line style to prepare and package kid-friendly meals. The initiative reflects the college's ongoing commitment to service, partnership, and strengthening the Mitchell community beyond the classroom.



Mitchell Tech Students Offering Free Income Tax Preparation Service

Mitchell Technical College Accounting students are sharpening their tax preparation skills while helping the community through the federally funded Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The program offers free tax preparation and electronic filing for individuals and families earning less than \$67,000 in 2025 or those needing help filing their returns.

Mitchell Tech students are IRS-certified to prepare basic tax returns, completing tax law training that meets or exceeds IRS standards. Every return is reviewed for accuracy, and volunteers are trained to protect taxpayer privacy and confidentiality.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Mitchell Tech Accounting Program students will provide FREE income tax filing every Tuesday from Jan. 27 - April 14 (except Tuesday, March 17).

ELIGIBILITY

- Individual income under \$67,000 in 2025

SCHEDULE

- Scan to self-register or call the number below

Annika Russel-Manke 605-995-7120



Commodity Classic

Mitchell Tech Precision Ag students had the opportunity to attend the Commodity Classic in San Antonio, Texas as part of the On-Farm Precision Experimentation (OFPE) program, where participants from five colleges gathered in person for the first time. During the meeting, students presented results from their on-farm precision agriculture experiments to peers and industry partners who had supported the projects with fields, products, and technical expertise. Industry representatives praised the quality of the student work and engaged in discussions about their findings.

Following the presentations, students explored the Commodity Classic trade show floor, where they were able to see the latest innovations in commodity crop production and precision agriculture.



Foundation Donors Honored at Reception

The 18th annual MTC Foundation Donor Appreciation Reception was held on Thursday, December 11, 2025. The tradition of the annual event is to express gratitude and recognize the generosity of individuals, families, and businesses who have made donations to Mitchell Technical College throughout the past year. Donors are treated to upscale heavy hors d'oeuvres prepared and served by the students from Mitchell Tech's own Culinary Academy of South Dakota.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of special awards to select donors. These awards serve as a token of appreciation for their generous contributions to MTC. The recognition ceremony is an opportunity to celebrate the collective efforts of the MTC community in supporting the college's mission and vision.

This year's honorees were:
Individual Donor Award – Women in Blue Jeans
Corporate Donor Award – Solventum
Volunteerism & Service Award – Sheryl Plagmann
Industry of the Year Award - Touchstone Energy Cooperatives



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives showcased Mitchell Tech's "Industry of the Year" award at the East River Electric all-employee meeting. Over 50 Mitchell Tech graduates work at East River and were represented in the photo.

Foundation Cornhole Tournament to Support MTC Legacy Scholarship

Mitchell Technical College Foundation will host the 3rd Annual Alumni Gathering and Cornhole Tournament on Friday, April 17, in the World's Only Corn Palace. The event, which hopes to raise \$50,000 for alumni scholarships, offers competitive and recreational cornhole brackets, as well as food, games, and a silent auction.

While the focus of the cornhole tournament is raising funds for the Alumni Legacy Scholarships given to incoming children, grandchildren, and siblings of Mitchell Tech alumni, a secondary goal is bringing alumni and the community together to celebrate the affordable, high-quality college education available at Mitchell Tech. The event will also be a great time for guests who just want to relax, socialize, or participate in the additional side games and raffles.



March 2026

Board of Technical Education
Dr. Cory Clasemann, STC President



Wells Fargo Named Southeast Tech Industry Partner of the Year

Wells Fargo has been named as the Southeast Technical College's Industry Partner of the Year, honoring the company's long-standing commitment and instrumental support in creating the new homebuilding lab on STC's campus. Wells Fargo will formally receive the recognition during STC's spring 2026 commencement ceremony on May 8.

WELLS FARGO

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2026/stc-names-industry-partner-of-the-year.php>

Southeast Tech Hosts 1,080 for Women in Science

More than 1,000 middle-school girls and their teachers were at STC March 11 for the annual Women in Science Conference, an event designed to promote a positive image and stimulate interest in science and technology careers for young women, who are historically underrepresented in science and math-related fields.

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2026/stc-hosts-2026-women-in-science.php>



STC Hosts Annual Perkins Consortium Meeting

Southeast Technical College hosted the 2026 Eastern South Dakota Perkins Consortium annual meeting on March 9. The consortium brings school districts together to strengthen Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming and collectively collaborate with the support of Perkins V funding. Sessions at this year's conference were Architecture, Construction and Engineering focused, including a panel discussion with industry representatives. This year's conference was sponsored by Journey Group. The consortium began in 2020 with 21 schools, and now has 36.



STC Early Childhood Students Attend Sioux Falls WOW

Southeast Technical College students in the Early Childhood Specialist program attended the Sioux Falls WOW event at the Orpheum theater on Jan. 17. LeAnn Soucy and Kathy Gallo, veteran early childhood educators, content creators and speakers known as “Two Pushy Dames,” spoke at the event.

Sioux Falls WOW featured seminars titled “Embrace the Muck and Yuck” and “PLAY is not just a four-letter word,” for students to learn more about how to incorporate fun, engaging activities into their future classrooms.



<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2026/sf-wow-2026.php>



Student Veterans Grow Giving Tree Project

What started as a simple idea--giving in the spirit of the holiday season-- has blossomed into one of the most meaningful service projects Southeast Technical College has seen in recent years. First-year Horticulture Technology students Destiny Wallace-McClintock and Megan Wallace-McClintock organized a Giving Tree initiative that united STC's trades and Horticulture programs,

all housed in the Ed Wood Trade and Industry Center. This project turned the Wood Center lobby into a powerful symbol of Christmas and inspired generosity that delivered critical donations to Sioux Falls veterans.



IN THE NEWS

- **How Scholarships are Opening Doors**

Each year, Southeast Tech invests millions of dollars in scholarships to help students step confidently into career-focused programs.

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2026/how-scholarships-are-opening-doors.php>

- **With Move to Sioux Falls, First-Generation College Student Starts on New Career Path**

Daniel Jimenez has a history of putting in the work it takes to succeed.

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2025/student-spotlight-daniel-jimenez.php>

- **Virtual Reality is Now a Student's Reality**

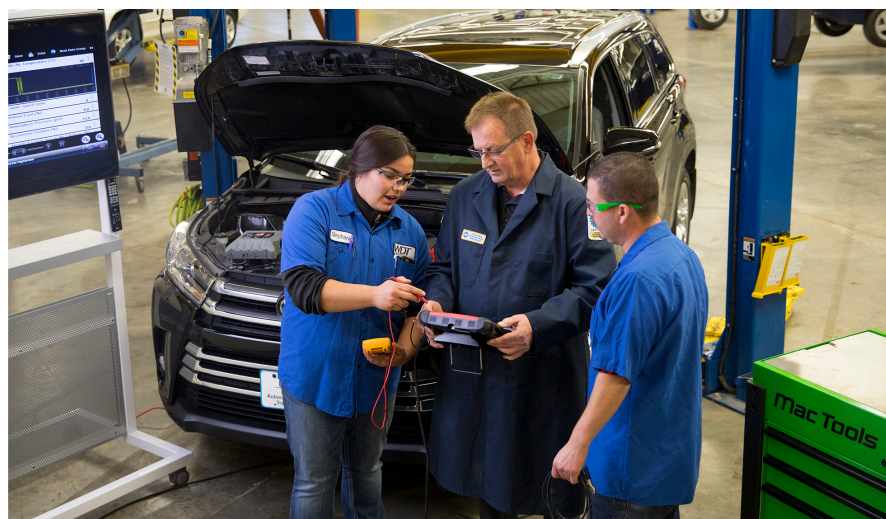
When Jett Yaggie first came to college, she didn't quite know what to think about virtual reality simulations, but was quickly won over by the use of virtual reality (VR) in STC's Collision program.

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2025/virtual-reality-now-students-reality.php>

- **Student Spotlight: Passion Sparked by Personal Story**

Ariana Edwards, who grew up in foster care and moved around eastern South Dakota before graduating from Jefferson High School, sees a small piece of herself every day she goes to work in the field she's convinced is where she's meant to be.

<https://www.southeasttech.edu/news/2025/student-spotlight-ariana-edwards.php>



March 2026

S.D. Board of Technical
Education Report

Dr. Kendra Ericson
WDTC President

WESTERN
DAKOTA
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) Partners with WDTC for Scrubs Camp

In January, Western Dakota Technical College (WDTC) hosted 200 local High School 10th grade students for the Rapid City Area Schools Scrubs Camp. Students explored a variety of healthcare careers through hands-on activities. WDTC programs highlighted included Surgical Technology and Nursing, giving students a hands-on look at labs and classrooms.



Employers Seeking to Hire for High-Need Careers Participate in Spring Career Fair



On February 4, WDTC hosted its Spring Career Fair, with 50 employers in attendance to network with students, promote their organizations, and recruit for current and future workforce needs. Employers included BankWest, Johnson Controls,



Krohmer Plumbing, Monument Health, Orchard Meadows Family Dental and Denture Clinic, Rapid City Police Department, RDO Equipment Co., RPM & Associates, Sanford Health, Scull Construction Service, Inc., and Tessiers Mechanical Contractors.

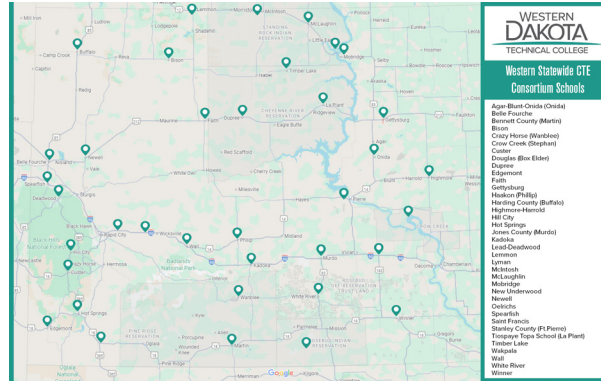
Weld to Win Competition for High School Juniors & Seniors Inspires Future Welders



The WDTC Welding and Fabrication program hosted its annual Weld to Win competition on February 3. Seventy-four competitors, from high schools throughout the Black Hills, were welcomed to campus to demonstrate their talents in a hands-on, competitive setting. Congratulations to the top 12 competitors and thank you to our industry sponsors who make this event possible.

Western Statewide CTE Consortium Annual Meeting

On March 9, Fawn Wilde, Director of Western Statewide Consortium, hosted the Western Statewide Career and Technical Education (CTE) Consortium Annual Meeting at WDTA. Approximately 80 people attended this year's meeting, which included CTE teachers, administrators, and counselors/advisors from the



25-member school districts, Department of Labor Regional Specialists, and AI experts. The meeting provides an opportunity for participating districts to gather for professional development, networking, collaboration,

data evaluation, and to review and plan to improve and enhance CTE programs.

Elevate Rapid City & WDTA Partner in Hosting Legislative Cracker Barrels

Western Dakota Technical College was honored to host two Elevate Rapid City Legislative Cracker Barrels, which provided the community with direct access to local legislators as they shared insights and updates regarding key legislative topics. Representatives and Senators from S.D. Districts 30, 32, 34, and 35 participated in the January 31 and February 28 events which were well attended by the community.

