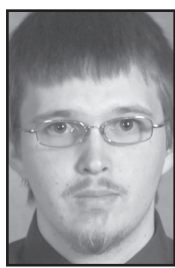


Communications students praise college

Editor's note: The following short articles were written as memos for a writing assignment for Leland Williams, technical writing instructor at Northwest Kansas Technical College. This is a continuing series of short articles split up by program at the college. These memos are from communications technology.



Collins



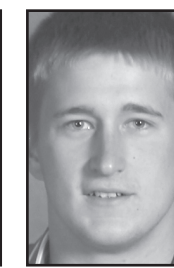
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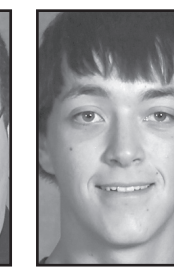
Ardilla



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Kerchal



Wark

From: Allen Collins

I have been coasting along the last few years with no particular direction in my life. The time came when I realized I needed to make some changes in my life, or I would be working at a job I hate for the rest of my life. I looked at my options and decided the Communications Technology program at Northwest Tech was the best place for me.

The instructors care about what happens to me. Tuition costs are far more affordable, and the class size allows for a better learning experience. Besides the school being great, coming here allowed me to be closer to my family.

I have always been interested in computers, and going to school allows me to dig deeper. I really enjoy the hands on learning. I have hooked up regular phone lines. I have run several network cables in different places around campus for computer connectivity. I'm finding I have a real passion for learning how our world is connected. Now I have a solid direction. When I graduate, I will have a career in a field I love.

From: Brady Frewen

I'm a student at Northwest Tech and it is my first year, and I am planning on going for the whole two years here. I'm the Telecommunications program. I am from Saint Francis, KS, which is only about 30 miles west of here.

I always heard good things about the school and had friends who went to the school. Another reason why I chose this school was because it was close to home and I heard the Telecommunications program was one of the better ones in the state.

Throughout the year, we have covered a variety of things. Some things that we have talked about are the standard color code, binary numbers, drop wires, fiber optic cables, coaxial cables, and many of other things those are just some of the basic things we have talked about.

Northwest Tech is a good school to come to and I would recommend anyone to come to it. Instructors are good at getting things across to you and do it in a way to where you understand; they try their best to get you a job and get you going in the right path.

From: Jamika Teel

I am currently enrolled in the Communications program. I plan on staying both years to obtain my associate degree. I am from Horton, a small town in northeastern

Kansas.

Northwest Tech is my second college that I have attended. I was enrolled at Highland Community College for one year on a football scholarship. I decided that I wanted to continue my education at a place where I could have a good job when I was done with school. I have met a lot of people who attended this school, and they all said it was a good college and good place to get your foot in the door for good jobs.

Northwest Kansas Technical College has been a good choice because of the smaller classes where it is easier to get hands on training. The classes and instructors are a lot more laid back then at Highland Community College, which makes it easier to learn and understand the material.

From: Jeremy Ardilla

I chose Northwest Kansas Technical College because it was the best option for the situation I was placed in. Looking to further my education at a college level, I jumped on board and attended Northwest Tech.

I also chose Northwest Tech because my father and friend both attended this school and program. They both were very successful and placed into jobs after attending. With support from them, I attended the school and program.

Northwest Tech was my final college choice because of the cheap tuition and being an hour and half away from home. Two people that I know personally have ended up in great jobs after this school. So it was a win overall, and I attended Northwest Tech.

From: Mark Ostmeyer

I am writing this letter to tell you why I am going to college for diesel technology at Northwest Tech in Goodland.

I am going to college simply because I would like to have a successful career in diesel technology. I have had lots of experience in diesel technology working at our family farm, Colby Fertilizer/GHK Farms.

There are a lot of job opportunities out there, and going to college will help you find a good job. People who graduate from college are more likely to find a good job. They also will most likely make more than someone who didn't go to college.

After I graduate, I plan to either keep working for our family farm or find a job working on diesel equipment. Going to college will



Kleinknecht



Ostmeyer



Thomas



Robinson

help expand my knowledge in diesel technology, making me a good employee.

From: Tyrone Robinson

I chose this school because I want to have a better life than I have now. It was close to home and didn't cost as much as out of state schools.

Another reason I chose this college is because I heard the instructors are great and help you out as much as they can, which is wonderful. From the time that I have been attending here at Northwest Tech, I have found out that the administration was right: Northwest Tech does have great instructors!

Most of all, I want my kids to know that if I can succeed in higher education, they can too, and it's an outstanding feeling when you accomplish good things in life.

From: Ethan Kinner

I chose Northwest Kansas Technical College because I heard that this college was one of the best around Colorado Springs that was in my price range. I came to this college to get a degree so that I can have a good job after I graduate. Northwest Tech has a really high job placement for graduates.

Since I have been here, I have met a lot of people who are really nice to work with. Everyone is really nice around here. Instructors and peers like trying to help you out anyway they can, and I'm glad I have met them.

With my education, I plan to go work in the diesel field because I have great hands-on training. With my training, I will be more prepared for work in the diesel field. I plan to work at a Cat dealership when I graduate from college; they have already told me that once I graduate, I will have a job with them.

From: Kyle Kleinknecht and Kaid Wark

We choose the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology because it is considered to be one of the best diesel programs in the state. When we finish school, we will go to work

for a diesel shop. The degree we will receive from the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology will help us find better jobs quicker and help us advance quicker.

While attending Northwest Kansas Technical College, we have worked with many good people and have been taught by very great instructors. These instructors are Mr. Kaus, Mr. Unger and Ms. Williams. They have helped us learn many of the traits of diesel technology.

So far, our education at Northwest Kansas Technical College has gone very smoothly with very little problems. We have completed the first semester of the first year, and we are about half way done with the second semester. We both are excelling very well in the program.

We are both good leaders and both want to be in the position of leadership someday in the future. We are both easy to work with and are very quick learners and grasp information very well.

From: Nick Thomas

I have chosen Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology at Northwest Tech for my higher education. This is a great college to attend for a technical school. It is the hands-on experience that you obtain, while attending this school, which makes this college great.

Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology has given me the opportunity to achieve an associate's degree in the Diesel Technology program. With this, I can have a better chance of receiving a good job with a business in this field. I will graduate with other certifications which are also a great asset like MACS and ASE testing.

The instructors at this program are very knowledgeable and have experience in the diesel field. They allow us to work on customer equipment that is suitable for us and gives us the hands-on experience which is valuable.

The college is great and has a lot of outstanding programs. It is affordable and in a small town community which I like. The college

the customer has internet access, television and telephone.

My favorite subject that we did was learn how to repair and splice copper pairs, where the color code comes into play; it's crucial to know these color codes in this industry.

I have selected Northwest Tech because I heard great things about the Telecommunications Program, and they offer multiple certificates as well. This is a great road to go down in this industry; you can go wherever you want because communication is everywhere.

From: Zachary Ogrady

There are a few different reasons why I decided to continue my education. I didn't really have any significant plans on going back to school, but I signed with the golf coach. I didn't think I had the money to go back, or even possibly the time to make it all work. But, as the counselors and teachers all said, I can do it and will make it happen.

One of the biggest reasons I chose to continue my education at Northwest Tech is because they have a Diesel Tech program at the school. After research on what I would be learning and the job opportunities there are after completing the course, I found that Northwest Tech was the perfect fit for me. I found that there are job opportunities all over the world in the field of Diesel Technology and I will be highly qualified to do the job that is desired.

The other big reason for me choosing Northwest Tech as the school of my choice is that they have a golf program along with other sports and activities that you can compete in. It is almost a luxury being able to go to school full time along with being able to play golf competitively.

After all I decided to continue my education at Northwest Tech because I love the lifestyle of being a student in a small town along with knowing that I will have a long future ahead of me in diesel technology where I will be able to travel the globe while doing things that I like doing most.

From: Jesse Kerchal

I chose a higher education for my future. I have always wanted to work for Kiewit, and in order to work there, I have to go to college.

I chose Northwest Tech because it was close to home, and I have had family go here. I feel that college is very important because of all the benefits that it offers in the long run; education looks good on a resume, and it helps you get that much further in life.

I think college was a good choice for me because I knew a lot about diesel, but here I get a lot of hands on training. I'm excited to let Northwest Tech take me further in my future.

From: Mitchell Unger

I am here to tell you why I chose the Kansas Institute of Diesel Technology.

I have been watching this program for 3 or 4 years, and it has grown tremendously. I wanted to get in as soon as I could so I arranged to do the Jr./Sr. option; so far, it has been a good experience.

The one thing I really like is all the shop time and the hands-on learning.

Overall, I think Northwest Tech was a good decision, and I feel like I'm getting a jumpstart on my career.

From: L. Price DeMint

I chose Northwest Kansas Technical College because it is one of the few two year colleges that are accredited for a degree in Communications Technology. The other important reason I chose Northwest Tech was because of its relatively small campus. So far I am happy with my choice in attending Northwest Tech. I am learning what I wanted to learn and I am having fun while doing so.

I chose to continue my education so that I could obtain employment in my field. My field of study is a little different from most of my class. I am here for the networking courses so that I can have the knowledge needed to build or maintain any size of network.

While attending Northwest Tech, I plan to get an Associate of Applied Science in Communications Technology and a CCNA certification. After I finish college, I am not sure where I will move or for whom I will work.

From: Mitchell Welch

I'm attending the two year program at Northwest Tech for Telecommunications. We learn the inside and out of the Telecom network.

The first semester, we study about the basics of electronics and how resistance plays a big factor in Telecommunications, along with learning the color codes dealing with copper pairs and fiber optics. We also learned how to run overhead drops to provide service to the Network Interface Device so

House working on KPERs reform package

Last week the House only met Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. These were three very long days, Wednesday adjournment was not until 9 p.m. This week the House will continue to pass legislation which will be coming from conference committees after the bills have been agreed on between the House and Senate.

Some of the bills passed last week were:

KPERs

The House worked on reforming the states retirement system known as Kansas Public Employee Retirement (KPERs). KPERs reform has been a legislative priority for the last two years. The legislature developed a study commission to develop a KPERs reform plan last year. KPERs has a huge unfunded liability of over \$8 billion. This week the House passed SB 259, which will not change the plan for those currently paying into the KPERs system, however, the bill has a new option for new hires beginning Jan. 1, 2014. One of the options is a cash balance plan, which provides a contribution of 6 percent from the employee and 4 percent from the employer with a 5 percent guaranteed return.

Employees will have two choices of the plan and will be allowed six months to choose which plan works best for them. New employees will have a seven-year vesting period. Retirement age will be 65 with 5 years of service or age 60 with 30 years of service. The other option for new employees to choose would be a defined contribution (DC) plan. The major difference is the investment return is based on market returns with no guarantee return rate (the cash balance guarantee 5 percent). This plan is much like a



rick billinger
state rep.

401(k) plan like many private sector employers provide.

HB 2773 - Schools Unencumbered Funds
The House took action on HB 2773, which extends the authority for school districts to use unencumbered funds to backfill for the reduction in the base state aid per pupil. Last year the legislature passed legislation to allow schools to tap into their unencumbered funds. This will provide approximately \$156 million in unencumbered funds for school districts to use, 65 percent of those funds are to be expended in the classroom as defined by KSDE.

Redistricting

There are no official congressional maps under consideration by the Kansas House at this time. Last week the Eisenhower B map was sent to the full House for consideration. A motion was made to replace the Eisenhower map which had concerned legislatures over the design on the big first district which spanned from the Kansas, Colorado state line east to include Wyandotte county. The amended map called Capitol I received sufficient votes to replace the Eisenhower B map. However, the Capitol I map failed to gain sufficient votes on final action, Wednesday, to pass out of the House. Redistricting committee

members promptly began drawing new congressional map proposals to better reflect the sentiments of the House.

HB 2766 - Creative Arts Industries Commission

HB 2766 was introduced to create the Creative Arts Industries Commission in the Department of Commerce and Absolve the Kansas Arts Commission and the Kansas film commission. The new commission would be the official state program for the arts. Citizens for the Arts and Stakeholders from the Arts Foundation worked over the interim with the Brownback Administration to reach an agreement on the future of arts and arts funding in Kansas. HB 2766 is the result of their compromise. I believe this a positive step forward in stabilizing the arts industry in Kansas.

SB 262 - Grandparents Rights

This bill requires the court to consider the wishes of the parents, child and grandparent and must also review the extent of the involvement of the grandparents in the child's life. Physical and mental health of all individuals must be taken into consideration by the judge. If, for any reason, the court decides it is in the child's best interest to be placed in SRS custody the bill allows the grandparents who request custody of the child to still have preference in the placement of the child.

Thank you for the honor of serving you! Representative Rick Billinger, 889-4700 rick.billinger@house.ks.gov

Deadline extended for teaching program

Kansas high school students interested in careers in education have an extra two weeks to apply for the Kansas Future Teacher Academy.

This summer, as it has done since 1989, Emporia State University will host the Kansas Future Teacher Academy. Applications are available online from www.emporia.edu/jones and will be being accepted through Friday, April 20. High school counselors, educators or students interested in the academy would like more information can call Emporia State University's Jones Institute for Educational Excellence at (877) 378-5433.

Every year the state's nationally renowned Teachers College at Emporia hosts 25-60 high school students for five days. During the academy, participants learn about opportunities for careers in education, problem-solving and leadership skills, personal goal setting, and the use of technology in education.

For the last 10 years the academy has been held at two locations - Emporia State and Dodge City Community College - to accommodate summer schedules and geographic distance.

This year the academy will be held Sunday to Thursday, June 10 to 14, at Emporia State University and Sunday and Thursday, June 10 to 14, at Dodge City Community College.

Funding for the academy is provided by the Kansas legislature. Students are allowed into the academy based upon their academic standing, involvement in school and community activities, and interest in exploring a career in teaching.

The academy is coordinated by the Jones Institute for Educational Excellence at Emporia State University. For more information about the academy, visit www.emporia.edu/jones/kfta/ or contact Terri West at (620) 341-5372.

It's time for spring cleaning and garage sales. Place an ad for your garage sale in The Goodland Star-News for great results. Call 785-899-2338 or stop by our office at 1205 Main, to place your ad today.