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News

Career program wins awards

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By Diane Kubiak

Post-Tribune correspondent



VALPARAISO — Officials announced Wednesday that the Porter County Career and Technical Education Center captured two top “Awards for Excellence” from the state, which has been recognizing outstanding secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs for 22 years.



The center’s Modern Machining Technology program received the outstanding vocational program award, placing first among 1,500 vocational programs.

The program was revamped by Greg Carmack and industry advisers not only to include such up-to-date technologies as Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) drilling, but also to include job acquisition and retention skills.

“It’s a benefit to the region,” said Cory Mack, production supervisor at Task Force Tips, one of many area machine shops which employs the program’s graduates. “Greg brought the new technology in and they hit the ground running with us.”

Career Center Principal Jon Groth let Carmack unveil the program’s name on a plaque which contained many previous state “Awards for Excellence” winners from the 30 programs offered at the center.

Also unveiling her name on the plaque was Portage High School senior Lisa Whitworth, 18, named the top student in the Indiana Technical Education Award of Excellence competition. She was one of two

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nominated locally from about 1,000 students in the county's career programs.



In all, she topped about 60,000 other students statewide for the award, said Groth.



Whitworth became interested in vocational education as a junior but switched from medical terminology to the dental trades her senior year. She now plans to go to Indiana University Northwest for a pre-medical degree and to enter dental school and become an orthodontist.



"I'm thankful for the career opportunity in Porter County," Whitworth told the small crowd of students, teachers, administrators and family members gathered for the award presentation Wednesday afternoon. "I wouldn't have been interested in the field of dentistry without it."



"We've worked very hard," said senior Alex Childers, 18, of Valparaiso, who already works for King Headz, a spin-off shop of Task Force Tips. He machines coolant heads and hop-up parts for remote control trucks. "They work a lot better than the stock parts that come with the trucks," he said.



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