

President Chipps plans to build on past College successes

Building on the success of the past, Northeast Community College's new president, Dr. Michael Chipps, is eager to work with area residents and business owners and managers to address the training needs of the area and to offer exceptional programs for our students.

"Northeast Community College has been a leader in community college education for decades," stated Dr. Chipps. "My job is to continue this leadership and build upon past successes so the people and communities in northeast Nebraska can survive and thrive," he continued.

After more than 30 years in higher education, Dr. Chipps brings his passion for community colleges to Northeast. "Community colleges are the primary engines of America's economic growth from the smallest farm to the largest industry," states Dr. Chipps. "We play a major role in preparing the country's workforce, and in retraining those who have lost their jobs. We provide Americans with open door access to higher education, including all kinds of opportunities to develop new sets of skills to stay marketable during the ebb and flow of challenging business and economic cycles."

Dr. Chipps will be spending much of his time in the next several months getting to know the people in the area, as well as the needs of employers. "I will work with

the Board of Governors and staff to prioritize those initiatives that best serve our students and our region's workforce," he said.

"Although the funding we receive through property taxes, state aid, and tuition sustains our current operations, it is the investments from our donors and grantors that allow us to implement new and innovative technologies and programs. These investments make Northeast stand apart from other institutions," explains Dr. Chipps. "The College of Nursing is an excellent example. Investments from people and businesses throughout the area have not only addressed a severe nursing shortage, but the partnership with the University of Nebraska Medical Center has put Northeast in the spotlight, and now others want to emulate our community college."

Dr. Chipps will also be advocating for Northeast at the national level. He serves on the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Board of Directors, and on the Board of Trustees for the Higher Learning Commission in Chicago. Both of these organizations are primarily focused on improving the quality of higher education.



Dr. Michael Chipps



Northeast in top 10 percent

For the second year in a row, Northeast Community College was named as one of the top 120 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute.

According to the Aspen Institute's website, the top community colleges were selected from a national pool of over 1,000 public two-year colleges using publicly available data on student outcomes.

"The success of our nation's community colleges is more important than ever before," said Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Executive Director Josh Wyner.

"At a time when a college degree is essential to entering the middle class, community colleges offer the most promising path to education and employment for literally millions of Americans. This competition spotlights excellence and helps raise the bar for all community colleges to improve student achievement and better prepare the next generation for the job market after college," he continued.

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Scholarship donors and recipients meet

Scholarship donors were able to meet students who had received scholarships at a luncheon this spring.

“This gives the students a chance to personally thank the donors who gave unselfishly to help a stranger better himself/herself through education,” said Connie Sixta, resource development coordinator.

“After meeting, the donors know their investment in someone else is very worthwhile, and the students gain a better understanding of why someone else cares about their success,” she continued.



Russ McKillip, Nebraska Public Power District account manager (left), and Brian Svoboda, Utility Line student and recipient of an NPPD scholarship, visit during a luncheon that brought scholarship donors and recipients together.

Wind turbine prepares students for rapidly-expanding industry

A new piece of instructional equipment at Northeast Community College in Norfolk is preparing students for employment in the rapidly-expanding wind energy industry.

A 100 kilowatt Micon 108 wind turbine was erected on land owned by the College near Victory Road and Benjamin Avenue. The turbine was paid for with a \$363,450 grant supported by the U.S. Department of Energy. The award was a collaborative grant of \$1,591,665 that was distributed among Southeast, Western, Mid-Plains, Central, and Northeast Community Colleges in Nebraska.

Lyle Kathol, dean of the Applied Technology Division, said the new wind turbine is a fully-functional turbine that will simulate a full-size turbine. It is 110-feet tall, with an 80-foot tower and 30-foot blades. “Our wind energy students will learn to climb, repel, and maintain the turbine,” Kathol said. “They will also learn to do safety rescue procedures on that turbine.”

The new turbine allowed Northeast to expand its one-year diploma program to a two-year associate of applied science degree program in wind energy this year.



Lyle Kathol, dean of the Applied Technology Division, participated in commissioning the wind turbine purchased with funds from a Department of Energy grant. It is located north of Benjamin Avenue on Victory Road.

Some 12 students earned a diploma in wind energy from Northeast last May. “All are either employed in a related industry or continuing their education,” Kathol said.

“With more wind farms coming to Petersburg, Crofton, and Winside,” Kathol said, “there will be a great need for well-trained, entry-level employees. The employment outlook for our graduates in this industry is exceptional.”

An added benefit will be cost savings. Due to an interconnection agreement, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), will provide a simultaneous buy/sell service to Northeast which will be applied with the College’s current electrical rate.



“The scholarship I received helped me continue the process of achieving my dream of becoming a veterinary technician. It is my hope that my kids will realize that dreams can come true if you work hard, even if it is in the later years of life. Without scholarships, some dreams, whether you are a younger or older student, may not be achieved. Thank you to everyone involved with the Northeast Community College Foundation Scholarships. Please continue to help make dreams come true.

Diane Enderson
Veterinary Technician Major

Plans underway to help stabilize and grow rural communities

Northeast Community College is committed to helping communities in northeast Nebraska prosper.

Last year, officials at Northeast announced that rural revitalization and stabilization would be a major initiative for the College. Since then, several staff and faculty members have been working with representatives from economic development groups, chambers of commerce, business leaders, government organizations, and educators to develop a plan to address the needs of rural communities.

One aspect of the plan is to train students who are now in Northeast's classrooms to become leaders in their communities. Last fall, a class on community leadership was piloted where students learned how to become effective community leaders. Each week a guest speaker talked about a variety of topics including strategies for stabilization and sustainability, potential resources for community development, and local government, as well as ways to attract people to rural communities through tourism and recreation.

The class was co-taught by Northeast instructors Angie Shaffer and Michael

Lechner. "After the class ended, we surveyed the students and asked if they would be willing to get involved in leadership roles in their communities," stated Shaffer. "All of them said they were much more likely to get involved after taking the class."

The class will be offered as an elective in the fall.

Another phase of the revitalization plan is to share resources and knowledge with current community leaders. Joe Ferguson, long time business/industry and economic development director for the College, is now serving as a community coach and works with communities across the College's service area.

"With nineteen of our counties experiencing declining population, and with outmigration of our youth and young professionals, this is a critical time to work with community leaders to develop a plan for the future," stated Ferguson.

The program works by scheduling a series of meetings with a broad base of local leaders, youths, and young professionals to look at the community's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Ferguson



then helps to facilitate meetings with regional, statewide, and national resources.

"We have experienced some very impressive early results with communities who became involved in the first phase of the initiative," said Ferguson. "Examples include numerous new business start-ups, main street revitalization, community leadership programs, development of business incubators, community strategic planning, youth involvement, and a long list of accomplishments resulting in a new community spirit and level of community pride."

A taskforce, led by Michela Keeler-Strom, director of grants, and Courtney Klein-Faust, former executive director of development, has also been working on a resource guide/toolkit. "The resource guide and toolkit will assist communities in navigating the myriad of resources available to them," stated Keeler-Strom. "It will connect communities to the changing world of economic development and assist them in accessing external funding/resources."

Dr. Chipps invited to witness signing of MOU

Northeast Community College President Dr. Michael Chipps was one of two community college presidents in the nation invited to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the USDA and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC).

The MOU encourages increased cooperation between USDA Rural Development and rural community colleges to develop partnerships and work together to strengthen rural economies. It also establishes working groups to coordinate Rural Development's financial and technical resources with private sources

to better service educational institutions and develops outreach and technical assistance models for rural educational institutions.

In the United States, there are about 1,167 community colleges. Of those colleges, about half, 577, are rural community colleges, similar to Northeast.

"This signing ceremony comes at a perfect time for Northeast Community College and other rural community colleges," Dr. Chipps said. "At Northeast we have been actively examining the role we should play to revitalize our rural economies. The MOU makes clear that the USDA is interested in being a partner in

helping us and other community colleges in the nation assist their struggling rural economies."

"It was a personal honor for me to be invited to this historic event," Dr. Chipps said. "It is clear to me that there are many in Washington that understand how vital it is for all of us to work on rural revitalization. I went knowing that Northeast has been recognized by federal officials as a leader in rural revitalization."

"The 'heavy lifting' now begins as Northeast Community College lends a hand to help our rural northeast Nebraska communities remain viable and strong," Dr. Chipps said.

Your gifts help Northeast keep tuition low and help us to expand programming so students can stay in northeast Nebraska to obtain the education they need to excel in the workforce. There are endless ways to make a gift, whether you want to make a gift now or plan a gift that will be realized in the future.

Students can transfer to SD School of Mines & Technology

Northeast students who earn an associate of science degree in pre-engineering can now transfer most of their Northeast credits to the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSM&T) and apply them to a bachelor's degree in engineering.

According to its website, SDSM&T offers bachelor's degrees in chemical, civil, computer, electrical, environmental, geological, industrial, mechanical, metallurgical, and mining engineering.

"The goal of this articulation agreement is to attract more students to Northeast's pre-engineering program,"

John Blaylock, vice president of educational services, said. "By giving our students this opportunity, we are preparing them for studies for a bachelor's degree in engineering at a renowned institution."

Blaylock noted that some Northeast courses, up to 63 credits, will meet elective or professional competency requirements for a bachelor's degree in engineering from SDSM&T.

He also noted that Northeast has a number of articulation agreements with other four-year colleges and universities. After the development of the Nebraska Transfer Initiative in 1995, all public and

private universities and colleges in Nebraska will accept credits from Northeast Community College and the five other Nebraska community colleges. Up to 43 different general education or program courses can be transferred to other baccalaureate institutions.

He said that these articulation agreements provide for great savings when one looks at the total cost of a four-year bachelor's degree. "Students can earn the first two years of that degree from Northeast at a very affordable cost and then transfer to a four-year college," he said.

Ask me why...

Why do you support the Northeast Community College Foundation?

"Northeast Community College is an integral part of our community and region. Students receiving an education here tend to stay in the area to work and raise their families, thus keeping our communities strong. Our high school students can get a jump start on their college education by taking dual-credit courses through Northeast. Because Northeast's tuition is so low, this saves families money and helps the students either reduce their class load or finish college sooner.

Transfer agreements with four-year colleges and universities ensure that Northeast classes are comparable to those at other colleges, and students who wish to transfer can do so easily. A recent agreement with the South Dakota School of Mines that enables students to complete the first two years of their bachelor's degree in pre-engineering at Northeast is especially beneficial for Nucor employees and those who wish to work for Nucor. It's partnerships like this that show how Northeast is in touch with area employers and how they are striving to meet the needs of our workforce.

Nucor is proud to be a supporter and business partner of Northeast."



Dirk Petersen, Vice President and General Manager, Nucor Steel-Nebraska

Share your story!

Tell us why you support Northeast Community College.

Email foundation@northeast.edu or write to the

Northeast Community College Foundation

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