

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2025

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NORTHWEST ILLINOIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JO DAVIESS CARROLL CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACADEMY HOST ANNUAL MANUFACTURING & TRADES DAY

HANOVER, ILLINOIS – Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED), in partnership with the Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical Educational Academy (CTEA), hosted their fifth annual Manufacturing & Trades Day event on Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025, with high participation numbers from Jo Daviess and Carroll County area schools and businesses.

The event takes high schoolers into area manufacturing facilities for site visits and to the CTEA for interactive hands-on learning sessions led by area trades-focused businesses and small manufacturers to showcase the potential of their industries and foster career interest. The event also featured several area agencies and schools who offered information on their apprenticeship and trade school opportunities. New this year were “Utility Pop Ups” where utility and municipal field crews met students following their site visits in plant parking lots to show off their rigs and speak about a day-in-the-life of a field line worker.

“This event is all about workforce development and youth retention. It is NWILED’s hope that by offering this experience to our region’s students that they better understand the opportunities and quality of life available to them here after they graduate high school,” said David Schmit, NWILED Regional Director. “Our goal is to bring attention to local quality, in-demand career opportunities here in Northwest Illinois.”

Manufacturing & Trades Day is a regional event that is not only fun for the students, but it also creates a workforce development opportunity for employers. This October’s event had all nine high schools from Carroll and Jo Daviess counties participating, plus Lena-Winslow High in Stephenson County. That combined plan sent upwards of 330, primarily sophomore students, to the event. Helping facilitate the experience were over 30 area businesses and agencies, some with multiple overlapping roles, which included JCE Co-op, Adkins Energy, Riverport Railroad, Zurn Elkay Water Solutions, MacLean-Fogg Component Solutions: Metform, East Dubuque Nitrogen Fertilizers, Signcraft Screenprint, Neumiller Farms, Citizens State Bank, Galena Area Chamber of Commerce, Carroll County Highway Department, Village of Stockton Public Works, ITC Midwest, Origin Design, Business Employment Skills Team, Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa, Galena Roasters, University of Illinois Extension 4-H, Morrison Institute of Technology, WPPO, DC Rise Real Estate, Jo Daviess County Highway Department, Highland Community College, Nicor Gas, Invasive Media & Sound Safe.ai, Visit Northwest Illinois, Forster Products, Ergotips, Midwest Medical Center, 4-C: Community Coordinated Child Care, and Hudson’s Tack & More.

Chad Stenberg, Executive Director at Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical Education Academy, said, "Manufacturing Day is a great part of Career and Technical Education (CTE)! It gives students a chance to see all the amazing career opportunities right here in our community. Every year, I'm inspired by how our local businesses and partners step up to help students explore their future paths."

For more information about NWILED or our Manufacturing & Trades Day event, contact NWILED directly at 815-297-7361 or dschmit@nwiled.org.

ABOUT NWILED:

Northwest Illinois Economic Development was created by the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors to spearhead economic development structures, funding and progress in Jo Daviess, Carroll, and Whiteside counties in Northwest Illinois. Now in its 16th year of successful service, NWILED continues to be a regional development entity concentrating on growing the economy and public/private partnerships.

NWILED promotes economic development by fostering business growth and assisting expanding and relocating businesses. The organization aids in determining these needs for growth with cooperation from government and business partners.

NWILED encourages entrepreneurs by assisting with access to resources to begin and grow their businesses and employs all available resources to create a welcoming business environment, aligning the skills of the available workforce with the needs of businesses, and building political and economic capital.

NWILED's commitment to success also produces programs, ventures and events that nurture educational business growth and overall business community involvement.

ABOUT CTEA

The Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy (formerly Jo Daviess Carroll Area Vocational Center) has proudly been delivering quality career and technical education to high school students and adult learners since 1972. The CTE Academy is a collaborative public education entity of six local districts: Galena, River Ridge, Scales Mound, Stockton, Warren, and West Carroll.

The Vocational Center opened its doors to students from the participating districts in the fall of 1972, having undergone a few revisions over the years as career and technical needs of the districts changed. Juniors and Seniors, or students sixteen years of age, are eligible to enroll in a technical program. They must enroll in their home district with their Guidance Counselor. CTE classes are not required but are electives.

The CTE Academy is funded through tuition paid by the member districts and numerous grants. CTE classes offer dual credit through Highland Community College. There is no cost for these credits.

Over the years, the Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy has offered quality technical education to over 11,000 students in our community.