

Revved Up

Tech school adds energy technology program;

As the skill set changes for area employees, LATI revamps courses and programs.

by Tom Green

ON MAY 9, MORE THAN 500 STUDENTS OF LAKE Area Technical Institute (LATI) will experience a life-changing event. So, too, will an area resident – it could even be you.

For the students, it's LATI graduation day; the rest of their lives and future careers await. For the lucky resident? A 2007 liquid-cooled V-8 Boss Hoss Super Sport valued at more than \$39,000 awaits.

What could they possibly have in common? A lot more than you think.

LATI began 43 years ago in a campus built specifically for the state's first fully accredited technical college. The initial graduating class had 19 students.

"Much has changed over the years," beams Luann Strait, director of institutional relations and a 20-year LATI employee. "We have gained plenty of respect from industry, business, manufacturing and healthcare. The true 'skilled' person we offer is exactly what they are looking for. Technical institute graduates are driving the economic development growth in our state and the nation."

Lasting from nine to 20 months, LATI currently tracks 25 different academic programs each with a variety of required courses. The degrees LATI offers cover a diversity of career paths including agri-business, aviation maintenance, dental assistance, robotics, medical assistant/technician, nursing, engineering/architectural drafting, computer information systems, accounting, cosmetology and more traditional skills like mechanics and welding. The newest course study at LATI is energy technology.

"We try to expose our students to many different areas," Strait noted. "As new fields and careers become important to the workplace, we will adjust our curriculum. Our energy technology courses just started this year. All of the available spots are filled for the first two years of the program. We already have a waiting list."

Strait says if new power plants and pipelines for the state become a reality, those companies will need skilled employees to keep the operations running. The program also covers the emerging field of wind turbine maintenance.

DRAWING MAY 9, 2008

Win this 2007 Boss Hoss Super Sport!
Donated by LATI alumn Monte Warne,
owner of Boss Hoss, Inc.

Thank you Monte & Meredith Warne
for your generous gift!



embarks on building campaign

“Wind is probably the most fascinating because of all the publicity and possibilities for our area. It takes specific training to fix the equipment and diagnose problems,” she added.

As the skill set changes for area employees, LATI revamps courses and programs. But as far as future objectives are concerned, LATI President Deb Shephard concedes they are out of physical space. “We are going to need a new building...soon.”

Plans are already underway for a \$25 million addition to the current campus to add classrooms and learning labs for new programs like the energy technology courses. But, the expansion plans require money and that brings us to the 2007 Boss Hoss Cycle.

Back in 1990, Monte Warne (a '73 LATI aviation maintenance graduate) finally realized a “nagging nine-year-old dream.” Originally from Pierre, Warne applied his LATI degree in a variety of work fields from airplane maintenance to grain bin construction to crop dusting to stock car racing. Still he felt unfulfilled.

Using what he'd learned at LATI and throughout his career, Warne built a custom motorcycle powered by a wide, V-8 engine he removed from an old Chevy racer. That bike – with more torque than usually wedged beneath a rider's seat – won the People's Choice Award at a Cincinnati, Ohio, bike show and changed his life forever. He immediately went back home and built another – one to show and one to sell. At Daytona Bike Week in 1991, more success followed.

Warne and his powerful custom bikes commanded attention everywhere he went and, with seed money from a Japanese investor, the international company Boss Hoss Cycles quickly materialized. Boss Hoss has expanded its product line over the years and now sells bikes, products and apparel all over the world, still Warne remembers and credits his humble South Dakota beginnings.

“My time at Lake Area Tech was valuable,” acknowledged Warne. “I not only learned a lot about airframes and power plants, but also about dedication and spirit. I have been fortunate to apply that to every career adventure I've taken. Lake Area Tech gave me the tools I needed to experience several life-changing events.”

Credited with crafting America's dream machines, Warne

Opposite: Tom Paulson, executive director for the Lake Area Technical Institution Foundation/Alumni sits atop a Boss Hoss Cycle the school is raffling for its building project. The bike, VIN No. 2, was created by LATI graduate Monte Warne of Tennessee. The school hops to raise \$50,000 in the raffle. **Above:** Boss Hoss Cycles bike designer Monte Warne sits on one of his creations in his Dyersburg, Tenn., showroom. Warne, a Pierre, S.D.-native, is a 1973 aviation maintenance graduate of LATI.



and Boss Hoss once again put the motorcycling world on its toes in 2007 with the introduction of the Super Sport model. The Super Sport is the Tennessee company's first new model design since 2000. Warne kept the first model for the showroom and for the second bike off the line he had a vision.

Tom Paulson, executive director for the LATI Foundation/Alumni explained, “Monte wanted to help his old school by providing us an incredible opportunity. He donated this beautiful, extremely valuable motorcycle for us to raffle off and use the donations to assist LATI students.”

Warne hoped the raffle would increase awareness for the school and demonstrate the unique careers available to the skilled students of LATI.

He also issued a challenge for this rare motorcycle (VIN #002 in a limited run of only 168 bikes). If LATI can reach its goal of selling 2,500 tickets at \$20 each (raising \$50,000 through the effort), Warne will donate another American-made Boss Hoss Cycle in a couple years to sustain the fund-raising drive.

“We are very close,” affirmed Paulson. “We have already raised more than \$40,000 and are less than 500 tickets away from our goal, but there is still time to get your ticket and have a chance to win this \$40,000 cycle that will undoubtedly appreciate in value.”

The drawing will be held immediately after LATI graduation ceremonies on May 9; Paulson mentioned that anyone wanting to purchase a raffle ticket may do so via the LATI Web site www.lakeareatech.edu or by calling 1-800-657-4344.

Currently living in northwest Tennessee, Monte Warne has even agreed to return to Watertown for the ceremony to reach in and draw the winning entry.