

WCTC town hall: President talks emerging industries, opportunities

Artificial intelligence, robotics,
battery cell technology poised to rise

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PEWAUKEE — At his inaugural town hall meeting on Monday, Waukesha County Technical College President Richard Barnhouse said he anticipates a coming rapid rise in technology similar to the personal computing boom of the 1980s.

In particular, Barnhouse said he sees the fields of artificial intelligence, battery cell technology and robotics as poised for significant growth individually, but also collectively as those technologies merge together.

“That’s going to change industries across the board, the way we live,” he said. “We’re going to see a rapid, rapid improvement in those areas (and) we intend to be at the forefront of that educationally as well... to make sure we’re delivering the workforce to manage and maintain (those) technologies.”

WCTC already has programming in robotics and similar areas, which will be built upon, he said.

“There is such a need for mechanically minded (and) technology based education,” Barnhouse said, adding he’s even a bit envious of students in the Wisconsin Technical College system today, because of the opportunities available.

“I can’t imagine a better time to be coming out with a technologically advanced degree because the entire planet is moving in this direction.”

Barnhouse said the town hall is an event designed for WCTC to make itself accessible to taxpayers as a tax-funded institution. He said he’d also like to expand dual-enrollment offerings in the area.

“My goal in Waukesha County is to have more high school students graduating with their associate’s degree and high school diploma simultaneously,” he said, which allows students to get a head start on their post high school education or enter the workforce directly sooner.

Looking ahead, WCTC will continue to offer in-person, online and hybrid options for students.

Barnhouse said more town hall meetings will be planned for the future.

