

## Foxconn may entice students into technical careers

### Schools

#### WCTC has class openings in the fall

By Katherine Michalets

Freeman Staff

PEWAUKEE — It may be a few years until Foxconn opens its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in southeastern Wisconsin, but it's never too soon to start gaining the skills to land a job at the tech giant company — or another company in need of skilled trade workers.

Mike Shiels, dean of Waukesha County Technical College School of Applied Technologies, encourages students to think about enrolling in first semester courses in electronics technology, electrical engineering technology or automation systems technology.

With spots still open in the classes for fall, Shiels said a person could “jump in now and start to prepare for those jobs.”

And even if they begin to look for work before 2020, which is when Foxconn is anticipated to open its \$10 billion factory, there are many other employers in the area looking for workers.

“They will be employed right away,” he said.

Shiels also suggested people who are not happy with their current jobs or the educational track they are on to think about attending WCTC. Foxconn is projecting to bring 13,000 jobs to Wisconsin and Shiels said there could be another 23,000 jobs affiliated with the company's development.

“So many companies here will be in their supply chain and will need to add jobs,” Shiels said. He also emphasized that careers in such fields as automation are here to stay.

“All of these programs are in high demand now and will be needed well into the future,” he said.

Laura Myrah, superintendent of the Arrowhead School District, said she sees many advantages resulting from Foxconn's announcement: for AHS students, the local economy and the state.

“A win-win scenario occurs, for our students and for the local economy, when Arrowhead High School produces excellently prepared graduates who obtain and succeed in engaging, family-supporting jobs in southeastern Wisconsin,” she said.

At AHS, faculty members strive to keep a finger on the pulse of the needs of the regional workforce and then adjust class selections and curriculum to prepare its students.

“For example, based on workplace skills gaps in engineering, manufacturing,

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Bailey Fladog, Jay Rucker, Tyler Glenn and Brady Boyle work together in The Lookout, one of the non-traditional spaces at Waukesha S.T.E.M. Academy — Saratoga Campus.

Freeman file photo

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**Foxconn may entice students into technical careers** for our students over the long term,” he said.

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high-tech innovation, and health care fields, Arrowhead has been updating curriculum, courses, and technology/equipment in programs such as our Design Engineering Manufacturing Center, health care coursework and practicum experiences, various school-to-work internships, and computer/technology design, programming and coding,” Myrah said. “Whether it is Foxconn moving into the region, or longstanding, local businesses looking to hire high-skilled employees, Arrowhead High School is consistently updating our curriculum and course options to best prepare our students for their future schooling and the current and future workplace. The addition of 13,000 Foxconn jobs into our region may help to entice our bright, skilled graduates to plant their roots right here in Wisconsin over other locations.”

Todd Gray, superintendent of the Waukesha School District, said it’s too soon to say if Foxconn coming to Wisconsin will have an impact on the district’s students.

“We expect it will provide some good career opportunities

Suzanne Kelley, president and CEO of Waukesha County Business Alliance, agreed.

“I think one of the things that having Foxconn located in this region will do is it really shakes off the Rust Belt image and really demonstrates how our county and our state are truly leaders in advanced manufacturing,” she said.

The Waukesha County Business Alliance works with area school districts and manufacturers, as well as WCTC, for its Schools to Skills programming that exposes students to possible skilled trades. Kelley said she believes Foxconn will help to raise the visibility of the strength in manufacturing and technology the state has.

“I do think that it will have that kind of impact. There is enough buzz around this announcement and when it actually materializes, I think the younger generation will see that there are great opportunities at Foxconn and other fantastic companies in the area,” she said.

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