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Three Rivers College Enhances Welding Program with Virtual Welding Machines

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Three Rivers College recently added virtual welding machines to its Welding program, located at Three Rivers – Dexter. The virtual welding machines offer a realistic way for students to practice welding in a controlled environment.

“When the students put on the virtual welding helmets, their experience is incredibly close to actual welding,” said Derek Joplin, Three Rivers College Welding Instructor. “The electrode retracts like the rod does with real welding, and the students see the molten pool and sparks.”

Being able to practice welding virtually is especially beneficial to those without any previous welding experience. It’s also cost-effective because it allows students to practice without using expensive materials.

“These virtual machines will help us keep costs down for our welding students, while letting them build their welding skills,” said Joplin.

Individual profiles in the welding system allow students to do assignments, take exams, view their results, and even do live replays of their welds.

“Our welding programs offer an efficient and affordable gateway into a high-demand career,” said Dr. Dan Lauder, Chair of Career Studies and Workforce Development at

Three Rivers. “In as little as a year, a student in these programs can be ready to apply for well-paying welding jobs anywhere in the nation.”

Students in Three Rivers’ welding programs in Dexter can obtain a one-year certificate in Welding Fabrication or Maintenance Welding, or a two-year Associate of Applied Science Degree in Engineering Technology – Welding Option.

There are 13 students currently enrolled in the TRC Welding program, with a maximum of 15 spots available. Spring welding classes are underway, but classes will begin again in Fall 2019.

Current Three Rivers students can register for Fall classes starting March 18, and registration is open for all on April 1. Prospective students can visit trcc.edu or call 573-840-9605 for more information on all of Three Rivers’ programs of study. To apply for admission to Three Rivers, visit trcc.edu/admissions. Prospective students must possess a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential.

Three Rivers College is committed to contributing to the quality of life in Southeast Missouri with quality, affordable higher education opportunities and community services that support and encourage the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region. For more information about college and workforce programs and upcoming events, visit trcc.edu.

Pictured: Carter Petty of Neelyville practices his welding skills on a virtual welding machine at Three Rivers College – Dexter. The monitor plays a live feed of what Petty sees inside the virtual helmet.

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