



News Release

For Immediate Release – 3/23/2021
Contact: Laura Kuvaas, Director of Marketing,
Recruiting & New Student Experience
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212
laura.kuvaas@ridgewater.edu
www.ridgewater.edu

\$200,000+ in Donations to Enhance Ridgewater NDT Program

w/ pic of partners and donations

HUTCHINSON and WILLMAR, MN – Ridgewater College’s Nondestructive Testing Technology (NDT) program is the fortunate recipient of nearly \$200,000 in donated equipment and supplies from an Iowa power plant, plus another \$3,300 in related costs and additional supplies from a long-time local partner to bring it all to Hutchinson.

It’s not every day a company like Duane Arnold Energy Center of Iowa, owned by NextEra Energy Resources, makes a large donation. However, the decommissioning of the Iowa nuclear power plant last year presented a unique opportunity to provide equipment to support education. They just needed a partner to help make it happen. Hutchinson’s Curtiss-Wright Nuclear – LMT was on board to help.

“The Duane Arnold Energy Center donation is one of the largest donations our program has ever received, consisting of more than 230 items,” explained Nondestructive Testing Technology instructor Jerry Voelker. Some of the larger donations included a radiography system, a low-frequency eddy current pipe scanning system, a portable X-ray tube system, numerous ultrasonic calibration standards, magnetic particle and visual inspection equipment samples, and liquid penetrant materials.

Voelker said Ridgewater’s students will benefit in a variety of ways. “The donation provides dozens of ultrasonic calibration standards that will support inspections on a wider range of materials, pipes and plate sizes,” he explained.

“This donation demonstrates how much industry believes in and supports our program,” explained Ridgewater’s Matt Feuerborn, Dean of Instruction overseeing the NDT program. “Ridgewater College, our students, and our business training partners will all benefit from this generous gift. Ultrasonic standards are expensive to manufacture; these additional resources will expand opportunities for students to get hands-on experience, and will allow us to serve students more efficiently in the lab.”

According to Voelker, the computerized radiography viewing system will add an additional needed workstation to the radiography department and expose students to a new system and vendor. “The low-frequency eddy current pipe scanner will also offer a new experience to the students,” Voelker added.

Voelker and Feuerborn expressed great appreciation also for the ongoing partnership with Curtiss-Wright who helped bring the donation to Hutchinson and who donated items themselves.

“We feel fortunate to be partners with both education and industry,” said Curtiss-Wright’s Wade Padrnos. “We really depend on each other to build a strong workforce in this unique, high-tech, high-demand field.”

Submitted photo

Cutline: Sharing the excitement of a \$200,000+ donation to Ridgewater College are key players from left: Ridgewater Nondestructive Testing instructor Jerry Voelker and representatives from Hutchinson’s Curtiss-Wright Nuclear – LMT: Gary Fuechtmann, Wade Padrnos, and Darrell Popp. Curtiss-Wright helped facilitate the large Duane Arnold Energy Center power plant donation by covering transportation costs of nearly \$3,300 and storage until it could be moved to the NDT department at Ridgewater College, Hutchinson Campus.

###

Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 340,000 students. It is the third largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.

A MEMBER OF MINNESOTA STATE