

CCC Heavy Equipment Operator Technician Student Profiles

Dillon Burns | Oxford, NE

As a kid, I enjoyed watching powerful machines at work, so when I heard about a new program at Central Community College that teaches people how to operate heavy equipment, I knew I had to be a part of it. While growing up I did get the chance to operate my uncles skid steer, and I found it very fun to see how much I could do with it. Although I did not often get the chance to get in the cab of it, the memory stuck with me. During the first semester, I have done more than I thought I'd ever get the chance to do, and have received much encouragement from friends and family. I enjoy this profession a lot and look forward to seeing where it takes me next.

Doug Oeltjen | Glenvil, NE

My Journey to the Heavy Equipment Operator Training program at Central Community College is a different path than most of my high school classmates. Right out of high school I went to a trade school to find that the field I went for was no longer in demand. I took a manufacturing job in Hastings Nebraska feeling it was a field with potential. Working this field in Kansas City and again in Hastings, 35 years in the field I found myself unsatisfied. Next was a short employment in Healthcare before being laid off as the program was shut down. On an option given by the state of Nebraska, as this was a state job, was to have schooling at a trade school paid for. After Initial consultation with CCC Hastings I decided to enroll. At 56 years old, I was somewhat nervous but I have found this to be one of the best decisions I have ever made. Learning on the machines here has been more fun than I can put into words and I am looking forward to graduating and finding employment in the Field.

Pedro Francisco | Lexington, NE

My name is Pedro Francisco, I'm a student here at Central Community College in Hastings. I come from a small town named Lexington here in Nebraska. I'm Attending CCC in hopes of being rewarded with a diploma in Heavy Equipment Operator Technician. I've decided to participate in this program because I enjoy the feeling that I'm operating these huge machines to make a difference in this world and that's what really drove me to be a part of the Heavy Equipment Program. As the first semester comes to an end, I can ensure you that this program is just right for me.

Joshua Sonnenfeld | Boelus, NE

Before Starting this program at Hasting's Central Community College, I lived on a farm/ranch near Boelus Ne. When I was growing up I operated my father's machines on the farm/ranch. At first, I didn't know what to think about this program. But now I am glad I took it. Heavy Equipment has improved my Knowledge and skills to operate the machines.

William Brazau Jr. | La Vista, NE

I'm from La Vista Nebraska. I loved to play in the dirt since I was a little kid. I would always watch the new projects that they would be building around La Vista and build and work being done on the hospitals in Omaha and thought running the large machines looked like so much fun. The way I got to this program or found out about it was that I came to the college to the Accuplacer test to see what English and math class and my mom noticed a flier for the class. I came out the college a second time and just felt like I wanted to do this more than diesel.

Cole Traynowicz | Sidney, IA

I am from Sidney Iowa where I worked on a farm. I have run tractors, trucks, and skid loaders. My main job on the farm was to take care of the cattle and run the skid loader. I have done many different things with a skid loader, like dirt work for new buildings and cattle facilities, mowing, and removing trees with a shear and tree puller then piling them with grapple. I got my class A CDL from Southwest Community College in Lincoln when I was 19 with hazmat and tanker endorsements. I ran the semis on the farm for the next three years hauling grain and pulling a flatbed a few times. In February 2017, I

got a job with Crop Production Services filling and hauling anhydrous ammonia tanks, driving the tanker truck, hauling water and chemical to the sprayer and moving material with a forklift. When they did not need me anymore I moved out to Hastings, Ne. to take the Heavy Equipment Operators Technician course and better my future.

Kramer Traynowicz | Lincoln, NE

I grew up in Lincoln Ne and from August of 2012 to March of 2017 I worked for Nenneman Farm & Cattle in Sidney IA. While working on the farm I performed a variety of odd jobs including building fence, hauling anhydrous ammonia tanks, operate a skid loader, a wide variety of tractors and implements, and some minor maintenance on machines. In May of 2017 I received my class A CDL with hazmat and tanker endorsements from Southwest Community College in Lincoln. In June of 2017 I started working for Gana Trucking & Excavating operating a dump truck until August when I moved to Hastings Ne to start the Heavy Equipment Operator Technician program at Central Community College.

Tony Whipple | Cambridge, NE

Hello, my name is Tony Whipple and I am from Cambridge Nebraska. I have spent most of my summers working on a ranch building fence and operating a tractor in a hay operation. Other times I would help my dad with his feed business. I have gotten a lot of time to learn and operate the forklifts that we use. I also use many different types of skid steers to unload the feed we sell to the customers and work around my grandparent's farm. I have always enjoyed running equipment, but my uncle (Matt McCann) introduced me to the heavy equipment class at Hastings CCC, which I have thoroughly enjoyed.

Michael Benscoter | Thedford, NE

I am from Thedford Nebraska. I was born in Wayne, but grew up in the heart of the Sandhills on a cattle ranch. My hobbies include hunting fishing and shooting. Ranch work includes doctoring, feeding, and shipping livestock. I learned how to run ranch equipment, work ethic and the construction trade at an early age working with my father. We have done numerous jobs but roofing, farming, and trenching are some of the things we did the most. The equipment range from tractors, loaders, skid loaders, and hay swathers. Ever since I first got behind the controls I've loved the large-scale machines to get work done. Helping my dad with construction I have been a laborer and off-road fork lift operator since I was 10 years old. I can never tell my favorite machine because I love operating many different pieces of equipment.

Christopher Saalfeld | Nelson, NE

I am currently taking Central Community Colleges Heavy Equipment Operator Technician Program. I am 31 years old, single father of three kids. They are the biggest reason I decided to take this program. I have worked in construction for most of my life as a laborer. It has been very hard on my body and it has not been able to provide me with the income to properly provide for my family. I am using this class to take my life to the next level, not just for me but for my family as well.

Catherine Schiffler | Hastings, NE

I'm going to CCC Hastings for their Heavy Equipment Operator Class. Before this, the closest thing to heavy equipment I had operate would be riding lawnmowers. I enjoy being outside and working with my hands. While being in this class I've learned how to operate many more machines and my favorite so far has been our excavators.

Parker Thomas | St. Paul, NE

Hello, my name is Parker Thomas. I live in St. Paul Nebraska where my family owns and operates a carnival business. I will be fifth generation carnival owner so I have some experience running machines like a forklift or skid steer to help set up the rides and also use the around the shop and for normal ground work. The reason I am taking this heavy equipment class is to better my skills as an operator so I can go out and have a good paying job in a field that I know there is an abundance of companies out

there looking for good operators. With this job I would like to either stay around the St. Paul area or have a full time traveling job so I can go visit other parts of the world while I am still young.

Joe Clifton | Hastings, NE

My name is Joe Clifton, I was born in Alton ILL. I moved to Nebraska in 1976 and have been here ever since. This is my second stint at CCC, I attended back in 1989 as a toolmaker/machinist. I spent the next 23 years in manufacturing. Then I began a career in human services which lasted just over 4 years was ended by cuts in state programs. Not wanting to return to manufacturing, I took advantage of a displaced workers program to begin my training in Heavy Equipment Operator. I hope this is the beginning of a bright new career.

Dylan Croon | Hastings, NE

I was born and raised in Hastings, Nebraska. I graduated High-school a couple years ago and I thought I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my life. I went away to college at the University of Lincoln and started to wonder if this was really what I wanted to do. After a very hard decision I moved back home and spent a year soul searching until I found the heavy equipment program here at CCC. It was a long year of searching for something I might like to do but I can honestly say I have found where I belong. Growing up I enjoyed visiting my grandparents who lived on a farm just outside of Hastings and would always look forward to getting to climb out the machinery that he had that week. Sometimes it would be a backhoe, but most of the time it was a front loader. Needless to say, my grandfather had a hard time getting me off the machines to go in for supper. Having such a playground has given an opportunity to have a little bit of experience when getting on the machines today. After running equipment with mediocrity, I can say that after finding the program at CCC I have found a passion with operating heavy equipment professionally.

Nicholas Wallace | Minden, NE

My name is Nicholas Wallace, I was born in Kearney Nebraska but have lived in Minden for most of my life. I grew up helping my father in construction which allowed me to operate skid loaders around the construction site and ever since then I have always wanted to run even bigger machines. I was introduced to this class by one of my best friends who took the class last year and he had nothing but great things to say about it. After I toured the classroom and facilities last summer I signed up and ever since then I have loved this class and I cannot wait to learn more.