

Quick study: Waukon High School student earns advanced manufacturing certificate

WAUKON—Lukas Larson grew up watching his grandfather and father use a welder to make repairs on farm machinery and semi-trucks, and always enjoyed using his hands to build and fix things. As a student at Waukon High School, Larson decided to get a head start and put his skills to the test. He completed a career pathway certificate from Northeast Iowa Community College's (NICC) Welding program, and is now qualified for employment in advanced manufacturing.

He accomplished all of this during his junior year.

In 2016, Larson enrolled in the Northeast Iowa Career Learning Link program, which assists high school juniors and seniors in northeast Iowa in the development of career goals.

"Northeast Iowa Community College is so close to my high school that I took advantage of the opportunity right away," said Larson, who also took several NICC concurrent enrollment courses to earn college credit.

Northeast Iowa Career Learning Link enables high school students to learn about high-demand career areas, participate in job shadows and meet with a career coach to help with determining their post-graduation plans. When Larson learned more about the career pathway certificates in advanced manufacturing, specifically in Welding, he enrolled.

Larson is the first student enrolled in Northeast Iowa Career Learning Link to earn a career pathway certificate in an advanced manufacturing program.

The Welding (Basic) program introduces students to the interpretation of blueprints, safety basics in the welding environment as well as the fundamentals of welding, such as using different types of welds in order to repair or fabricate items.

"I received great experience from the Welding career pathway certificate program at Northeast Iowa Community College," Larson said. "We worked on welding joints, including

aluminum, MIG (metal inert gas), aluminum pulse welding, TIG (tungsten inert gas) and steel.

We also welded in flat, vertical, horizontal and overhead positions to increase our skills."

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