

## What's Developing

“There is not enough of an upcoming workforce.” “Employers are willing to pay for part or all of a student’s education.” Those were a couple of the comments expressed by speakers at the Build Dakota Road Show on November 7 at the Eureka School Auditorium.

In an age where the workforce is less than the demand for the workers, employers are now proactive in finding quality employees, and those attending school often have a job secured far in advance of their graduation.

Deni Amundson, who heads up the Road Show, talked about the importance of applying for scholarships. She explained that every scholarship that the students receive is money they do not have to pay or repay.

One of the bigger scholarships is the Build Dakota Scholarship which pays tuition, fees, books and other required program expenses in any of the four technical institutes in South Dakota in a wide range of eligible programs. Businesses can partner in the scholarship expenses and are then assured of having a trained employee for at least three years following graduation.

Clayton Deuter, representing Mitchell Tech, explained some of the myths surrounding tech school education. A misconception is that the graduates will have low-paying jobs upon completion of school, but just the opposite is true and wages are often much higher than those graduating from a 4-year college. Another myth is that the jobs involve dirty nasty work, but the truth is that jobs are in technology, medical, computers, robotics and energy. A third myth busted is that tech school graduates are limited – actually, they can go as far as they want with their degree with further education or branching into related fields of study.

Dan Thielsen from the SD Dept. of Labor and Regulation told the group about federal money available through his office for a variety of opportunities, including getting paid for job shadowing. He also stated that, if requested, he will travel to Eureka to meet with groups of students in the future to explain what is available through the SD Dept. of Labor.

The fourth speaker was Kaye VanderVorst from Valley Telecommunications in Herreid. She gave the history of Valley, explaining how it has evolved from a telephone company to a telecommunications company, and along with it has come the change in employee qualifications. She also put a face and a name to the Build Dakota Scholarship program. Valley has partnered with Build Dakota to sponsor Jake Jundt, who will return to the area to work for that company in the future after receiving the education he needs to become a valued part of their workforce.

Tyler Schwingler, who also graduated in the same class as Jake Jundt, is also attending a South Dakota technical institute through the Build Dakota Scholarship program.

The Eureka Community Development Company knows the importance of having students return to the area. Because of that they partnered with Build Dakota and the Eureka School to bring this opportunity to the Eureka School staff and students in grades 9-12.

*Wanda Jundt*

Pictured are Dan Thielsen, SD Dept. of Labor; Clayton Deuter, Mitchell Tech; Deni Amundson, Build Dakota Scholarship. Second picture: Kaye VanderVorst, Valley Telecommunications.