

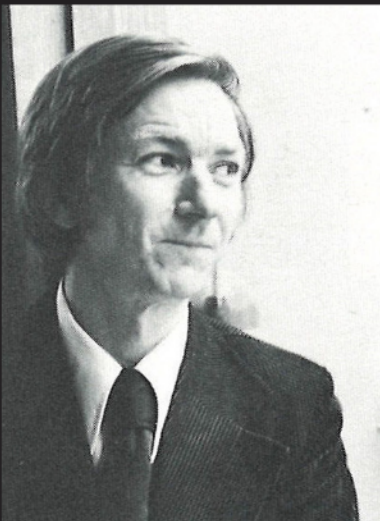
LAKE REGION STATE COLLEGE

branches

MAGAZINE



**DAN
JOHNSON**
AND THE LIFE OF PI



Dan Johnson, Math Instructor, 1978

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Lake Region State College and the Community College Foundation that supports LRSC is proud to introduce its new version of *Branches*! It's been a long-time dream to move to a magazine format and showcase some of the great people and activities at LRSC.

There are so many great things happening at LRSC, and we are excited to highlight a few of those successes in each issue. The opportunities our students find at LRSC are wonderful; college programs are outstanding; the students, faculty, and staff phenomenal.

If there is a specific program, faculty, student or graduate that you would like us to cover, let us know. We already are outlining future issues. One thing is for certain, we won't run out of topics. It's amazing what grand things a small college like LRSC can accomplish. Enjoy your new version of *Branches*, and have a great summer.



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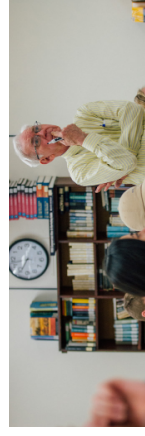
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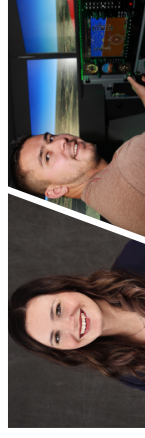


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More than 50 years of perseverance, 50 years of service, 50 years of making an impression.

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BRANCHES | SPRING 2019

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I'm writing this, another legislative session has concluded. Legislators had an incredibly difficult task prioritizing funding for agencies, campuses and a seemingly unlimited number of projects with a limited amount of revenue. We have some great area legislators in Representatives Johnson, Westlund, Monson, Sandford and Senators Oehlke, Boe, and Holmberg.

They saw the value of our Precision Agriculture program and our need for a modern, efficient facility on campus. They secured \$1 million in appropriation, \$500,000 plus matching funds, and gave us the authority to raise the \$1,500,000 balance to complete the project.

Now we need your help and the help of our industry partners to raise the funds to build a facility on campus that meets the instructional needs of the program and training needs of our partners. If you wish to help, there is an envelope included for you to send a contribution or to let us know how you are willing to help.

As part of our mission to meet the labor market needs of the region and the state, we are developing non-traditional apprenticeship opportunities for some of our programs. Students will be hired and sponsored by an employer, complete related classroom instruction with LRSC and have on-the-job training at the worksite. At the end of two years, the students will have completed a registered apprenticeship, earned an AAS degree from Lake Region State College and have a full-time job plus work experience.

In most cases, during the apprenticeship, they are being paid, and the costs of the related training are covered by their employers. So – a paying job, paid training for credit, tuition and fees covered, salary increases at pre-defined milestones and a completed apprenticeship, college degree, a job at full pay and little to no student loan debt. Almost sounds too good to be true – almost, but it is true!

We had a great year in 2018-19. We had a record enrollment in the fall (2072 students). LRSC was ranked a top 25 community college in the United States based on its graduation rate by the Chronicle of Higher Education. Our Precision Ag program was ranked in the top 10 in the US by Precision Ag Magazine.

It's a great time to be at LRSC. Keep following the good news on Twitter @lakeregionstate and Facebook @lakeregionstatecollege.

Have a great spring and summer!



Doug Darling, Ph.D.
President, Lake Region State College



NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Community College Foundation has had an exciting year, celebrating many firsts and changes. The first annual Presidential Reception was held for our Presidential Scholarship recipients honoring our young scholars. In February, President Darling and I traveled to warmer weather to provide a campus update to our Lake Region community residents spending the winter in Arizona.

With these firsts and changes, one thing that has remained is your steadfast support. Our Key Event, *Rollin' on the River*, supported LRSC students by raising almost \$80,000. In addition, we were able to meet the challenge set forth by the State of North Dakota to LRSC and the Community College Foundation raising \$400,000 with the third ND Higher Education Challenge Match.

During the last three Challenge Match campaigns, the Community College Foundation has been able to claim \$2.1 million in matching dollars. With these dollars, we were able to provide over \$300,000 to 298 students this past year, and at our Named Endowment Recognition Event held in March, we honored over 250 sponsors and scholarship recipients.

The 2019 State Legislature has once again approved this challenge. LRSC is set to commence the fourth Challenge Match campaign this July and we hope you are as excited for it as we are.

This May, as members of the class of 2019 make their way down different paths, their lives will have inevitably changed because of LRSC, because of you. Just as their lives will change, we too will change and evolve. You are holding one such evolution in your hands. *Branches* has been given a new look. We hope you are as pleased as we are with this change.

If you or anyone you know would like to be on our mailing list, please forward their names and contact information. We are trying to reach out to all of our alumni and friends.

Enjoy your summer!



Elonda Nord
Executive Director, Community College Foundation





Precision Ag students scout their field of canola. The 40-acre plot of land creates a live lab environment for students.

LRSC AG PROGRAM

PREPARING TOMORROW'S

BY ERIN WOOD | PHOTOS BY AGENCY MABU

WORKFORCE TODAY

Agriculture is the heart of North Dakota and a substantial driver of the Lake Region economy. Now, it's a big reason many students choose Lake Region State College.

For students like Shae Tofte of Devils Lake, LRSC's Precision Ag Program is preparing her for a career in agriculture and the opportunity to achieve her goal to live and work in the Lake Region.

"I've always dreamed of working for a farmer. A few years ago, I started my dream job and have loved every day."

When she first looked at going to college she was looking at going to her hometown college, and getting a degree quickly.

"Upon entering the Precision Ag program, I quickly realized that it was so much more than that. The relationships you build with classmates and instructors are something that can never be replaced," she says with a smile. "I came into this with the mindset of 'I can't wait to be done.' But as my final days in the program near, I think the opposite because I'm not ready to leave. The program and all its activities have brought me out of my shy, introverted shell and made me into a new person."

Since 2013, students have been able to enroll in courses and study for degrees in Precision Agriculture.

Today, the program is nearly full with continued interest. A recent graduate was a National Star Farmer finalist.

The Precision Ag Institute ranked the LRSC Precision Ag program #10 in its Top 20 list in September 2018, citing the mix of hands-on and high-tech programming.

The all-inclusive ag program focuses on today's technology to provide students awareness and experience preparing them for the demanding agriculture field. "LRSC provides this in a hands-on, field experience-type atmosphere using the college's own precision ag equipment, 40 acres of farmland, and industry access," said Preston Sundeen, director of the program.

Having an agricultural-related degree is central to the college's mission, especially when the college is in the heartland, says LRSC President Doug Darling.

"It's great to see this program progressing. This is a degree that affects so many employers in the region, so it's imperative to help create the skilled workforce to keep agriculture advancing with emerging technologies and needs," he said.

The ag program had been shelved in 2003 due to years of enrollment decline, but in 2006, the college brought agriculture back onto campus with the state's Centers of Excellence program.

Under the direction and leadership of Dr. Paul Gunderson, the college was named a center of excellence with its Dakota Center for Technology-Optimized Agriculture.

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The center, which later became the Dakota Precision Ag Center, was created through LRSC and many private- and public-sector partners. Managed by a director and guided by a steering committee of local, regional and national leaders, the center engaged in product design, prototype development, testing, agronomic impact assessment, creation of answer farms and innovation incubation.

"That opportunity took ag education at LRSC to the next level," Darling said.

Then, in 2012, the U. S. Department of Labor awarded a \$2.99 million grant to Lake Region State College to develop training programs in precision agriculture.

"Rapid changes in agriculture with the constant advances in technology teamed with our center of excellence program, and the federal grant opportunity created a perfect storm to rejuvenate the program," Darling said. But space was needed.

Additional square footage to locate the agricultural program was required to handle both the academic program and the work of the center of excellence. Space on campus was not large enough to handle the needs of both the center and Department of Labor grant. The college leased a former implement dealership 1.25 miles north of the campus. The college's farm management program also relocated there to be close