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TCU hosts 1st career day and community career fair

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Whether their interests lied in nursing, welding or even designing their own video games, students at Tri-City United High School had the opportunity to explore the world of opportunities waiting for them after graduation in the high school's inaugural career day.

Over 30 businesses came to Tri-City United High School on Thursday to give 613 students between ninth and 12th grades an introduction to careers in fields ranging from agribusiness to medicine, engineering, trades, law enforcement and much more.



A representative of K&G Engineering talks with TCU student Aidan Miland about their job opportunities during TCU's first annual career fair. (Carson Hughes/southernminn.com)

Career Fair 10



Students toured Seneca Foods pea-packing combine parked in the back of Tri-City United High School during the school's first career day. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)



Bracco Medical Technologies spoke to TCU students on medical device career paths. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)

The first-of-its-kind career day at TCU was a unique opportunity for students to explore jobs of their choosing. For the day, employers took over the high school classrooms to deliver 15-minute presentations about the careers they offer. Students picked the six presentations they were most interested in and rotated between sessions throughout the event.

Some businesses not only delivered presentations but gave students hands-on learning opportunities. Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to practice welding with a virtual blowtorch, try their hands at fitting copper pipes and even explore Seneca Foods' pea-packing combine parked in the back of the high school. Students could even participate in a virtual conference with a game developer and learn game development with Fortnite Creative.



Winco Generators showcases their equipment to TCU students in a career day presentation. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)

"It was really amazing to watch as this happened today as the students interacted with the businesses," said Honey Burg, the district's Workforce Development Coordinator with CEDA. "They only had 15 minutes each so a lot of them now want more from those businesses and the businesses also want more time with the students."



The Lonsdale Police Department gives a presentation on how to become a police officer. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)



Tri-City United students practice welding with virtual reality technology. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)

TCU aimed to offer students experiences with businesses from six different sectors including agriculture; arts and communications; engineering, manufacturing and technology; health science; human services and business, management and administration. Employers ranging from police departments to construction vehicle dealers, assisted living facilities, hatcheries and electric cooperatives were invited to fill these roles.

TCU Welding and Mechanic CTE Instructor Mike Reeser noted the career fair was an opportunity to highlight trades as a career pathway to students. Traditionally, well-paying jobs in the trades have been overlooked as a career path, the teacher said, which has left these fields with a significant labor shortage,

"All of our trades be it an electrician or plumber or carpenter, welder, machinist we're seeing that retirement gap not being filled by people going into it. So anytime we can get these careers in front of the students and show them they can be in a job that's needed and they feel comfortable doing is very important," said Reeser.



Pork producer Christensen Farms delivers a presentation to TCU students on a day in the life of an animal care technician. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)



A certified Xbox and Playstation video game developer gave a virtual presentation on game development using Fortnite Creative. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)

The event also gave students a chance to reflect on the kinds of classes they wish to take just before they sign up for their next semester of electives, said Assistant Principal David Ruehs.

"We're entering the registration time for next year's schedule so we did this so they're well informed about what kind of classes they want to take," said Ruehs.

Based on the feedback from students, Burg said many who had their eyes on a specific career felt validated in their choice, but for some students the event gave them a lot to consider when deciding what they want for their future.

Following the career day, 10 area employers set up booths in the high school commons for an after-school career fair where both students as well as their parents and other adults in the community could access information about internship and career opportunities in the local area.

K&G Manufacturing, Three Links Health Services, Central Health Care, Nick Slavik Painting and Restoration, the US Army National Guard, Bisek Interiors, Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, Seneca Foods, TCU and Palmer Bus Service all hosted booths during the event.



Benjamin Franklin Plumbing led TCU students in a solderless copper pipe fitting activity. (Courtesy of Anna Hoy)



Jennifer Woldsnes (left) and Jen Juarez (right) talk about career opportunities at Central Health Care with a TCU student. (Carson Hughes.southernminn.com)

Burg noted it was an optimal time for the career fair since hundreds of students were coming into the building with their parents for Parent Teacher Conferences, evening basketball games, and the eighth grade to ninth grade transition night.

"All students are here with their parents for some reason, so both the parents and the students get to check it out," said Burg.

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