



WAUBONSEE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

President's Report

July 2025

Dr. Brian Knetl, President



RISE Mixer Celebrates Community Partners' Plan Input

The college's first official public-facing RISE event drew more than 140 local community, business, industry, and employer leaders as we gathered at Sugar Grove's White Stone Events venue to thank and celebrate those who had participated in our sector input meetings. The invaluable insights gathered at those meetings helped shape what RISE 2030 has become.

At the event, we distributed cards with a QR code linking to our new Partner Inquiry Form, accessible at waubonsee.edu/partner, making it easy for attendees and any other area entities to share ideas on how we can collaborate to better meet student and community needs. Submissions are already coming in.

Also a special thank you to our event co-sponsor Old Second National Bank.

Waubonsee Students Named Best in Nation at SkillsUSA Conference, Continuing Legacy of Career and Technical Education Excellence

Waubonsee continues its tradition of excellence in Career and Technical Education (CTE), earning national recognition at the 2025 SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC) held in late June. Eight Waubonsee students competed among more than 6,500 participants from across the country, earning top honors in Automotive Refinishing, Automotive Service Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Collision Damage Appraisal.



National Ranking of Waubonsee Students

Gold

- Aleah Sauder, of Marengo, Automotive Refinishing Technology
- Joshua Stover, of Maple Park, Automotive Service Technology
- Entrepreneurship Team: Briana Harris of Yorkville, Sarah Pawlus of Elburn, Kevin Bustamante Fontanel of Yorkville, Ennis Ballines of Aurora

Bronze

- Benjamin Swanson, of Aurora, Collision Damage Appraisal

National Competitor

- Julian Flores, of Oswego, HVAC

Accompanying the students were many of their teachers and mentors including Ramiro Cervantes, Instructor of Auto Collision and Refinishing Technology; Tyler Friedland, Assistant Professor of Automotive Technology; Joe Kloke, Assistant Professor of Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning; Ken Kunz, retired Professor of Automotive Technology; Guy Tiberio, Associate Professor of Automotive Technology; and Business Club Faculty Advisors and Instructors Dr. Nour Al Naber and Andy Clements. Also on the trip to support students were Dr. Alyson Gaspar, Career and Technical Education Services Manager; Dr. Tamekia Smith, Dean for Business and Social Science; and Ne'Keisha Stepney, Assistant Provost of Workforce Development.

Alumni Gather to Celebrate Summer Sounds

On Thursday, July 10, I joined a crowd of 75 Waubonsee alumni and guests gathered at Blackberry Farm's Live & Uncorked concert series, featuring '80s cover band Breakfast Club. This free event was part of Waubonsee's growing alumni engagement program, designed to reconnect graduates with the college and each other. The event tickets "sold out" in just two hours, demonstrating the momentum of the program.



Meeting Local Workforce Demand "At the Crossroads of Education and Industry"

Waubonsee continues to build programs that align with local workforce demands, with a noncredit Industrial Maintenance Technician option being the latest addition. To help launch the program and bring local manufacturers together with college staff, the "Crossroads" summit was held in Plano on July 9. More than 60 people attended to learn more about the role of Industrial Maintenance in manufacturing competitiveness, the value of microcredentials, and other topics while also touring the Plano Campus lab space.



Coming Up

July 30-August 2

Alliance for Innovation and Transformation (AFIT)
Summer Institute

August 14

Waubonsee Night at the Kane County Cougars

August 15

All-College Address and Faculty Development Day

September 12

Technical Education Center Grand Opening