

Vision for the Chippewa Valley Technical College

by Bruce Barker

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(Thank you to Bruce Barker and his Administrative Assistant Candy Johnson for providing this "Program Summary")

As a new President, I am frequently asked what changes I'll make at CVTC. First, let me cover the items that won't change:

1. CVTC's primary mission is to provide a highly educated, highly trained workforce for business and industry in our district (Neillsville to River Falls). The Wisconsin Technical College System was created by our state legislators specifically for this purpose.

We not only educate students, but we help students become valued employees with successful careers. We also help business and industry by providing customized training for their employees.

2. We will continue to provide quality education for our students. They deserve the best. The quality of instruction in our classrooms is the foundation for your quality of life in the valley. The quality of your home, utilities, health care, police and fire protection, auto service, child care, food, and transportation all depend upon the quality of our graduates.
3. CVTC must provide value for our taxpayers. Approximately 40% of our revenue budget comes from our local property tax levy. Our taxpayers deserve the best value for their dollars. We need to spend that money wisely on our most important needs and on our best opportunities.
4. We are willing and able community partner in the economic development of the region. We will continue to: (a) bring in new companies from outside our area; (b) incubate new start-up companies; and (c) help existing companies expand and grow.



Bruce Barker
CVTC President

Future areas of focus:

1. Continued development of NanoRite. We have one tenant—OEM Micro. We are negotiating with another possible tenant.
2. Meet the needs of the River Falls area. The western portion of our district is the fastest growing part of our state. We built a 20,000 sq. ft. facility in River Falls in 1999. It is at full capacity and there is a strong demand for both service programs and manufacturing programs.
3. Remain fiscally responsible. All public sector entities are struggling with shrinking state funding, thereby increasing pressure on taxpayers during difficult economic times.
4. Raise the floor. We do a good job of providing high tech positions, but we also must remember those at the other end of our spectrum. We are seeing a significant increase in the number of Hmong and Hispanic residents. Many need help with English and must earn GEDs before entering our programs. We are seeing more displaced workers who need to return to school and learn a new trade or occupation.

This is an important part of our mission. If we can take someone who is a tax user (dependent on government assistance) and turn him into a taxpayer, that's a double win for the person and for our district.

5. Go green. We need to actively incorporate new approaches and materials to be more energy efficient and self-sufficient. We need to be a leader in the development of alternate energy technology and jobs.
6. Emphasize quality. Forty-seven percent of today's college students attend a two-year community or technical college. Forty percent need remedial help.
7. Continue to be a strong, dynamic community partner.

Bruce Barker, 56, became president of Chippewa Valley Technical College January 1, 2008 after seven years as the college's vice president and chief operating officer.

Chippewa Valley Technical College enrollments, now at 4,700, grew 60 percent in the decade spanning Barker's employment, making it one of the fastest growing colleges of its kind in the nation. Major initiatives during Barker's tenure have included a Health Education Center offering 22 related majors, and NanoRite, combining a Nanoscience Technology major with a high tech incubator.

Barker will oversee the direction, operations and governance of a college with campuses and centers in Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, Menomonie, Neillsville and River Falls.

An attorney by profession, Barker is a graduate of Marquette Law School and Ripon College. His resume includes early career work at the Eau Claire City Attorney's office and a private firm, Mulcahy and Wherry, S.C. Immediately before being recruited to CVTC, Barker was a vice president of human resources at Luther Midelfort Mayo Health System in Eau Claire.

An Eau Claire resident since the 1970s, Barker has been active in the Chamber of Commerce and a number of city committees and commissions.

He is married with a son and daughter.