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News Release

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NEW LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR DISPLACED WORKERS

WATERTOWN, S.D. – Twenty new scholarships for Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) students are available thanks to a new program funded by Focus Watertown and the Watertown Community Foundation. According to Focus Watertown President Craig Atkins, the scholarship fund is designed to assist displaced workers and the families of displaced workers to increase their skills and education.

“This is an opportunity for Focus Watertown and the Watertown Community Foundation to make a positive impact on the lives of people who are out of work right now,” Atkins said. “We hope it will serve as a motivation or encouragement as they seek to better their situation.”

Jan DeBerg, Watertown Community Foundation executive director, said the scholarship program fits perfectly with the Foundation’s purposes. “The Watertown Community Foundation has a 30-year history of supporting educational initiatives,” DeBerg said. “In addition, we also have a mandate to improve the quality of life in Watertown. This scholarship program supports both of those goals while giving us an opportunity to effectively partner with other Watertown organizations and meet a common goal.”

Atkins also emphasized the advantage of LATI for the Watertown community. “LATI has always been a very valuable asset for Watertown, providing a well-trained workforce for our local employers. In times like these, when people are seeking to further their education due to special employment challenges, having such a high caliber institution right here is a tremendous blessing,” he said.

The \$30,000 scholarship program will be awarded during the next two years to new and current students attending LATI. \$15,000 is available for both the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 school years to fund 20 scholarships of \$750 per year.

The scholarships are limited to displaced workers or dependants of displaced workers who are unemployed due to layoffs or downsizing in the past twelve months as a result of economic conditions. Applicants must be an accepted student at LATI. The application includes an essay and a required letter from the employer verifying displaced worker status.

The application process will be open until all twenty scholarships have been awarded. Applications will be available at the LATI Admissions, Financial Aid and Foundation offices as well as at the South Dakota Department of Labor Watertown office.

Focus Watertown is a non-profit economic development organization funded by public and private investors with the mission of increasing job opportunity and the property tax base of Watertown.

The Watertown Community Foundation promotes philanthropy, receives and administers charitable gifts and invests in programs that improve the quality of life in Watertown by promoting charity, education and culture in the community.

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