

May 2026

# Evergreen Update

Volume 01



Pine Technical &  
Community College  
FOUNDATION

## Leading PTCC Forward

As we launch the very first edition of *Evergreen Update*, I'm reminded of something that makes Pine Technical & Community College (PTCC) so special: the connection you build here doesn't end at graduation—it stays with you, becoming a lasting part of who you are and the communities you serve.



To our alumni—whether you walked the halls a year ago or decades ago—your impact continues to shape not only this college, but the communities and industries we serve. From Pine City to communities across the region and beyond, you represent the skill, resilience, and heart that define PTCC graduates.

The Alumni Association was created with a simple but powerful purpose: to keep that connection alive and thriving. It's about strengthening relationships, celebrating your achievements, and creating meaningful ways for you to engage with today's students—who are walking a path you helped pave.

There are many ways to stay connected. Attend an event, share your story, mentor a student, or simply stay informed about what's happening on campus. Each connection—big or small—helps us build a stronger future together. Your experiences and insights are invaluable as we continue evolving programs to meet workforce needs and expand opportunities for the next generation.

This newsletter is your space. A place to reconnect, to celebrate, and to see the continued impact of PTCC—through you.

Thank you for being an essential part of our story.

With appreciation,

*Joe Mulford*

President  
Pine Technical and Community College

## Upcoming Events

May 15

Commencement

August 24

Fall Semester Begins

September

Annual Bass Bash Fishing  
Tournament

October 23

Annual Donor Event

## What's your PTCC story?

Do you have a favorite memory, career journey, or milestone—we'd love to share it!

Reach out to  
Heather Rank at  
[heather.rank@pine.edu](mailto:heather.rank@pine.edu)



# PTCC Expansion Prepares Students for High-Demand Jobs



**Hospital Simulation Lab launched in 2026**

equipment in an environment built for hands-on learning. Healthcare students will benefit from a new nursing lab and healthcare simulation suite designed to mirror hospital, clinic, and homecare settings, giving students practical experience before entering the workforce.

The project also includes updated common areas and student gathering spaces that strengthen campus connections and community. Together, these improvements support PTCC's mission of preparing students with the skills, experience, and confidence needed to step into careers that are in high demand across Minnesota and beyond.

Pine Technical & Community College's nearly completed expansion and renovation project is transforming campus into a modern learning environment designed to prepare students for tomorrow's workforce. The two-year construction project includes a 25,000-square-foot addition and more than 15,000 square feet of renovated space, creating updated facilities that reflect real-world workplaces.

Among the highlights is a state-of-the-art welding lab, significantly larger than the previous space, allowing students to train with industry-standard



**Redefined and Refreshed Common Areas**

## Hello Alum!

Check out the new PTCC Alumni Page at <https://pine.edu/about-ptcc/alumni/>



## PTCC Awarded \$1.3M TRIO Grant

Pine Technical & Community College (PTCC) has been awarded a \$272,364 annual grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the Federal TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program, renewable for up to five years. This funding—totaling more than \$1.3 million—will support first-generation, low-income, and students with disabilities in achieving academic success.

PTCC's SSS Program will provide comprehensive academic, financial, and personal support, with the goal of improving retention, graduation, and transfer rates. Services will include tutoring, academic advising, mentoring, financial literacy education, and assistance with FAFSA and scholarship applications.

# Perseverance and Passion Bring PTCC Graduate Full Circle

Elsa Cody's path to Pine Technical & Community College (PTCC) was anything but direct. After moving to California with her husband, Dan, in 2010, Elsa, Dan and their daughter returned to Minnesota in 2017 to help her father with his property.

She worked a variety of jobs, including a brief stint as an Anoka County 911 dispatcher, before landing at Dowco Marine in 2018. When the company relocated and Elsa was laid off, she found an unexpected opportunity through Minnesota's dislocated workers program: a chance to return to school.

Unsure of her next step, Elsa took her husband's advice to explore welding. "He said I was artistic and mechanically inclined," she recalls. "Working with my hands felt like the right fit."

Elsa enrolled in PTCC's Welding program in 2020, beginning with an introductory course while the main program was full. At the time, welding classes were still housed in a trailer, but Elsa quickly found her passion. She graduated with High Honors in 2021.

After graduation, Elsa gained hands-on experience at several manufacturers, developing skills in aluminum, TIG, and MIG welding. She became the first recipient of Premier Marine's Top Torch Award. She also learned laser cutting and press brake setup. Eventually, she came back to Pine City, where she accepted a position as a PTCC Welding Instructor.

Now in her first semester teaching, Elsa works alongside fellow instructor Dylan to guide about 20 students through the program.

She values PTCC's small class sizes and supportive atmosphere, describing the college as a close-knit community that feels like family.

For Elsa, welding is both a craft and a creative outlet. She hopes to build a small welding shop at home where she can create sculptures—an idea inspired by her grandfather, who passed away in 2021 at age 102.



**Elsa Cody**  
**PTCC Welding**  
**Instructor**

## PTCC Partners with BSU for B.S. Nursing Pathway

Pine Technical & Community College (PTCC) has partnered with Bemidji State University through Operation LEAD, creating a streamlined pathway for nursing students to earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

The program supports graduates of PTCC's Practical Nursing and Nursing A.S. programs as they transition into BSU's RN-to-BSN program. Benefits include guaranteed admission, seamless credit transfer, flexible 100% online coursework, personalized advising, and financial incentives such as scholarships and free upper-division credits after NCLEX completion.

Students can begin BSU coursework before licensure and are encouraged to apply during their second semester to secure a place in the RN-to-BSN cohort.



**PTCC's State-of-the-Art Welding Lab Launched in 2026**



Pine Technical & Community College

FOUNDATION

*Donate Today!* →



## Recognizing the PTCC Foundation Board



**Coleman McDonough**  
Foundation President

The PTCC Foundation Board plays an important role in supporting student success, scholarships, and campus growth at Pine Technical & Community College. Made up of dedicated community leaders and volunteers, the board helps strengthen connections between PTCC and the region it serves.

The Foundation supports opportunities that enhance education, workforce development, and student resources. PTCC is grateful for the time, leadership, and commitment these board members provide in helping students achieve their goals.

### Meet Your PTCC Foundation Board Members

**Coleman McDonough**  
President  
Rush City Schools

**Jacob Kiel**  
Vice President  
Atscott Manufacturing

**Nick Frandsen**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Plastech Corporation

**Karen Jansen**  
Board Member  
Pine City Plumbing

**Oscar Sutherland**  
Board Member  
Community Member

**Hank Schilling**  
Board Member  
Nexen Group, Inc.

**Diane Bankers**  
Board Member  
Welia Health

**Lori Tapani**  
Board Member  
Wyoming Machine

**Stacy Hancock**  
Board Member  
Community Member



Your generosity supports scholarships, classroom resources, programs, and opportunities that change lives.



**PTCC Students in the New Automotive Lab**