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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Lux-Casco readies for Ahnapee Diesel, 1st diesel-only high school program in state**

*Partnership with NWTC, area businesses gives students dual-credit, advanced-degree opportunities*

LUXEMBURG, Wis. – Demolition and construction work got underway this week in preparation for the Luxemburg-Casco School District's new Ahnapee Diesel program, which begins with the start of the 2021-22 academic year. A portion of the district's former middle-school facility in Casco is being converted into a Diesel and Fabrication Lab, made up of classroom space and a fabrication area, measuring 1,000 and 4,200 square feet respectively.

Ahnapee Diesel will be the first diesel-only program at the high school level in the state of Wisconsin, according to Dan Klecker, state education director at The Foundation of the Wisconsin Automobile & Truck Dealers Association (WATDA), an organization that supports scholarships and educational programs leading towards workforce development solutions for transportation dealerships in the state. While some high schools teach diesel within their automotive program, Klecker says that the new L-C educational initiative will be the inaugural one dedicated to the diesel specialty.

"We are excited to offer the Ahnapee Diesel program – the first in the state – starting in August," says Luxemburg-Casco District Superintendent Glenn Schlander. "We pride ourselves on providing a variety of educational pathways, both for the benefit of students and to meet the workforce needs of our community. Our industry partners tell us that there is a strong need for qualified diesel technicians.

"We are pleased to also keep the promise we made to Casco when we moved the middle school to Luxemburg last year: that the district would continue to find long-term, purposeful uses of the original middle-school building."

The diesel program is a consortium of area high schools, including Luxemburg-Casco, Denmark and Kewaunee. Students in their junior and senior years are given the opportunity to earn college credits, while also receiving credit towards high school graduation, through a partnership with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC).

With successful completion of NWTC's Diesel Maintenance Technician (DMT) curriculum while in high school, students attain a one-year technical diploma. The required 26 credits include courses such as Transportation Welding 1 & 2, Diesel Lab Operations, Intro to Diesel Mechanics, Intro to Electrical Systems, Diesel Heavy Duty Electrical 1 & 2, Chassis Sub-Systems, Hydraulic/Pneumatic Systems, and Engine Sub-Systems.

Upon graduation from high school, students can choose to pursue an associate degree in either Diesel Heavy Equipment Technology or Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology. Technical diplomas as a Diesel Heavy Equipment Technician or a Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technician also are possible student pathways.

Diesel technicians are highly skilled positions that specialize in maintenance, diagnosis and repair of heavy equipment, including over-the-road trucks, off-road construction equipment and agricultural machinery. There were an estimated 253,000 diesel engine specialists as of May 2020, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and future prospects trend upward due to

—more—

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an increased reliance on moving freight across the country.

More than 20 students already have registered for Ahnapee Diesel for the 2021-22 school year: 15 from Luxemburg-Casco, six from Kewaunee and two from Denmark.

Gene Francisco, NWTC associate dean of construction and transportation, oversees the program on behalf of the college. The on-site NWTC instructor will be Duane Lundwall, who is certified as a Master Medium/Heavy Truck Technician by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Lundwall joined NWTC in August 2018 following a 14-year professional career as a diesel mechanic, including time with the City of Green Bay and Murphy Concrete & Construction in Appleton.

“Luxemburg-Casco has been a great partner of NWTC through its Ahnapee Automotive program,” says Francisco. “We look forward to working with them again on their groundbreaking diesel program and helping to train the next generation of diesel maintenance technicians.”

The new Diesel and Fabrication Lab will be located in what were the Art and Wood Shop areas, along with the Cafeteria, of the former Luxemburg-Casco Middle School, at 619 Church Ave. in Casco. Middle-school students moved to a brand-new middle-school building on the main L-C campus at the start of the 2020-21 school year.

To accommodate a full-size semi-truck cab, the existing building must be modified to lower the elevation of its concrete floor slab by 2 feet. The garage entry door also is required to be made taller and wider, and a new, 18-foot overhead door installed. An exterior ramp down to the freshly lowered floor additionally needs to be constructed.

Enhanced exhaust systems and ductwork must be added to adequately distribute air within the Diesel and Fabrication Lab and to mitigate contaminants introduced through welding, grinding and fabrication activities. Interior and exterior catch basins also will be appended, along with upgraded electrical outlets to support safe operation of welding machines and other shop work.

Zeise Construction, led by L-C grad Jason DuChateau as the project manager, is the general contractor of the conversion, with completion expected by Aug. 1. Beyond the work mentioned, the project includes demolition of interior partition walls, sawcut removal of the current concrete floor and the addition of structural steel at the roof structure to support a new make-up air unit.

Through meaningful partnerships with area companies and the regional transportation industry, more than \$275,000 already has been raised to begin and support Ahnapee Diesel. Packer City International Trucks, with three Northeast Wisconsin locations providing sales and service in the medium and heavy-duty truck segments, has contributed \$50,000.

“We see the value in building a future workforce of diesel maintenance technicians, and the Luxemburg-Casco program will go a long way in doing that,” says Mark Adams, vice president at Packer City International Trucks. “We were impressed with the forethought and vision in putting this program together and are excited about the partnership.”

America’s Service Line, an American Foods Group company, also was a major donor to the program. “In a world where a college education seems to be the only way of life, we need to remember some people just aren’t cut from that cloth,” says David Geise, fleet maintenance director at America’s Service Line. “These people come out of high school with some asking, ‘Now what?’ Teaching the basics of the mechanical trades is a natural as it usually will pique their interest and set them up in a trade that can supply a better income than a lot of college educations. We need more people in our industry, and we need to get back to the high schools to quite literally farm them.”

Nearly 20 local and transportation-based companies have donated to the L-C diesel program. These also include: Master Fleet, Kinnard Farms, Kriete Truck Center, Somerville Architects, Rio Creek Feedmill, WEL Companies, CSM Companies (aka Wisconsin Kenworth), DeBroux Custom Work, Pagels Ponderosa Dairy, Paper Transport Inc., Peters Concrete, Ducat Trucking, Dorner Inc., Service Motor Company, Roland Machinery Co., Joski Trucking, and Cummins Sales & Service.

“With the help of many area companies who have been willing to form strong partnerships with L-C, we are able to create a workspace mirroring that of a professional diesel mechanic,” says Mike Snowberry, the district’s director of learning services who is guiding the program’s creation. “Our students will have quality instruction and fully equipped, professional-quality tool boxes, along with the new facilities. Almost all of the students in the diesel program have been placed in the Ahnapee Youth Apprenticeship program with our partner businesses. We believe that the L-C diesel program will be a win-win for our students and the local business community.”

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*The Luxemburg-Casco School District serves nearly 2,000 Northeast Wisconsin students annually through four schools located on a single campus in Luxemburg: the Primary School (4K-2), Intermediate School (3-6), Middle School (7-8) and High School (9-12). The district maintains a strong tradition of academic and extracurricular excellence while preparing students to thrive in a global community. U.S. News & World Report in 2020 ranked L-C High School as a top 5 high school within the Green Bay metro area. Located between Green Bay, Door County and Lake Michigan, the educational community has been in existence since the early 1900s, with Luxemburg and Casco operating as separate districts until they merged in 1968. More information may be found at <http://www.luxcasco.k12.wi.us/home>. “We Are Spartans”*