



News Release

For Immediate Release – 11/13/2019
Contact: Laura Kuvaas, Director of Marketing,
Recruiting & New Student Experience
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212
laura.kuvaas@ridgewater.edu
www.ridgewater.edu

Drone donation brings high-tech aerial inspection method to Ridgewater NDT students

W/PIC

HUTCHINSON and WILLMAR, MN – Industry partners are critical in helping college programs provide real-world experiences to students training for careers. Thanks to a drone donation from Marathon Petroleum, second-year students in the Nondestructive Testing program at Ridgewater College will learn another inspection method that is gaining momentum in the industry.

“Contract companies are using a lot more technology for inspection work in the field,” said Paul Kyser, Ridgewater NDT alumni and member of Marathon’s St. Paul Park Refinery team making the donation. “You’re constantly learning ways to use it.”

“Students need to learn about new technology and the advances they play in inspection,” explained Keith Ben, Marathon inspection supervisor and Ridgewater alumni. “Drones are being used more and more in the inspection industries - anywhere from inspecting tall stacks to pipeline right-of-ways to inspection of electrical lines using infrared technology. The Marathon donation will give the students a chance to explore the opportunities drones bring to the industry.”

Wade Padrnos, Ridgewater NDT instructor, said he is extremely appreciative for the industry partnership and donation of the DJIS-1000/Zenmuse drone. “By mounting a high-resolution camera on this drone, it is used for multiple industrial Remote Visual Inspections (RVI) of above-ground storage tanks, smoke stacks and piping systems applications,” Padrnos explained. “Using the drone will reduce the cost of setting up scaffolding and the time required to access industrial components located high above ground level. This drone will allow our students to be better prepared for industrial applications that utilize these high-technology NDT inspection techniques.”

Over the years, Marathon’s St. Paul Park Refinery has supported student scholarships and last year gave the college a \$40,000 equipment grant.

For more information about the Nondestructive Testing program, go to www.ridgewater.edu/ndt.

Submitted photo

Excited about the new \$9,000 high-tech drone that Ridgewater students will experience are, from left, Marathon employees Jason Humphries, Keith Ben, Joe Rath, Paul Kyser, Ridgewater NDT instructor Wade Padrnos, alumni Ben Hergert, and Ridgewater instructor Walt Asmus.

###

Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.

A MEMBER OF MINNESOTA STATE