

Woodworking Industry News

Reed-Custer's industrial program utilizes donations to train tomorrow's workers

By Larry Adams September 1, 2022 | 12:05 pm CDT



Aetna Plywood has contributed materials to the Reed-Custer High School industrial tech students so they can "learn to build and become the craftspeople of tomorrow."

"We hope that we'll see them in the future working for some of our customers or owning their own companies," said Jon Minnaert, president of Aetna. "A special thank you to principal Tim Ricketts and Industrial Tech Instructor Mark Smith for their leadership and partnership with us to make it all possible for their students."

Smith, the industrial technology teacher at Reed-Custer High School, said that Minnaert and Aetna have been fantastic industry supporters of the school's industrial technology program. "Back in 2020, Jon Minnaert connected with me on LinkedIn and discussed setting up a visit to Reed-Custer High School. Jon met with me and our principal, Tim Ricketts, to discuss how RCHS and Aetna Plywood could help each other."

Due to Covid restrictions, Aetna Plywood was not able to come into the school and meet with the students, but now that the restrictions have been lifted, we can finally invite the industry in, Smith said.

This coming October, RCHS is hosting a Career & College Fair in our fieldhouse. Aetna is one of many industry supporters that have been invited to participate. This is an all-day event where the industry will have the opportunity to get in front of RCHS students and talk about the company's career opportunities.

Because of supporters like Aetna Plywood. our program can expose students to the skill set needed and opportunities available in the advanced manufacturing wood industry," Smith said. "Aetna Plywood has been donating all of our panel products and hardwoods like; hard maple plywood UV coated on one side. Baltic Birch panel product, red oak panel product, red oak, and hard maple hardwood. The students use these products to complete several class projects."

Some projects include:



Production Hall Tree Job 2021-22 Production Hall Tree job made in the production 1-2 class

The hard maple plywood UV coated one side is used in our production 1 & 2 class to build and install kitchen cabinet sets for local and statewide homeowners. Last year we installed a cabinet job in the town of Lemont, IL. It was our twentieth kitchen cabinet job to date.

The red oak plywood is used in our CAD/CAM 1 class to build RTA/Knock Down TV entertainment centers.

The Baltic Birch plywood is for the CAD/CAM 2 class where the students build wood products using joining techniques inspired by OpenDesk in London England.

The hard maple is used in Orientation to Technology class where the students build a longboard and earn their Woodwork Career Alliance Saw Blade Certificate.

Go to <https://rchsit.weebly.com/wca.html> to see the list of RCHS ind tech students that have received their WCA Saw Blade Certificate.

A full list of our industry supporters can be found at <https://rchsit.weebly.com/program-supporters.html>

For more information on the program and potential employees, email Mark Smith at mark.smith@rc255.net