

THE AVTI SYSTEM

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As an educator and businessman, I would like to share two related thoughts with you. The first is an update on the future of the vocational technical education system. The second involves those qualities that make our program at Anoka VTI successful.

Many of you are concerned with the future of the vocational technical system and the AVTI system in particular. During the last couple of years, the State of Minnesota has been exploring different options for the AVTI system. These options are being considered due to two major factors: fewer high school students graduating each year and the growing cost of operating the AVTI system. The State will have 50,000 fewer graduates this year compared to 1976 and we haven't even reached the bottom of the graph yet. The cost of operating the AVTI system is in direct correlation to the student population. AVTI's are funded by the State of Minnesota and as you know the State has been watching its operating budget very carefully.

At this time no one can predict what changes will be made, if any. Currently before the House is a bill proposing that the AVTI and Community Colleges merge together forming one system. One can only speculate what the negative and positive effects of such a merger would be. One of the foundations the AVTI system was built on is "hands on training". Colleges generally concentrate on theoretical aspects of education.

With the declining numbers of high school graduates and the ebbing of the green survival period, we find that it is now a major concern of ours to keep our student population at a State mandated level. We are operating with 50-60% of the 1970 level of student enrollment. Anoka VTI shares this declining enrollment problem with other educational facilities throughout the state. Some AVTI's have been forced to close down their Horticulture Departments as a result.

Our student ratio has been maintained in large part through your continued support. A group that has been a great help is our Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is made up of industry people like yourself who are willing to meet with us once or twice a year and give us input on the direction and focus of our program. Discussions concerning curriculum, program recruitment, potential employment, industry trends and much more are part of the guidance that the Advisory Committee extends to the program. In addition, many of our industry friends donate equipment and supplies to the program, assuring training on up-to-date equipment. No one advisor or Anoka VTI staff person has all the answers. However, by combining new ideas with tried and true practices, we have continued to provide quality education.

Along with the Advisory Committee, we have the MGCSA membership who provide us with a multitude of help. In particular, they are employers who provide our students with "on the job training". They also offer seminars, class trips, and guest speakers. Our program is enriched by industry suppliers and vendors who lend equipment, furnish product samples and provide product literature.

We are deeply indebted to all the individuals and businesses that have helped us maintain our high level of training. With positive legislation and your ongoing support, we look forward to the continued success of the Anoka VTI Horticulture Program.

SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

During the busy season for applicators, it's easy to pay less attention to safety. Here are a few reminders for safer cleansing/disposal of contaminated clothes:

DISPOSE of clothing that has been spilled on in a sanitary landfill. It is not safe to burn them and rinsing will not get out all the residue.

PRE-RINSING clothing worn while applying chemicals will help decontaminate it, but make sure to rinse twice in a separate tub and dispose of the water in the sewer