

The bridge

2025

(cover photo of SRC employees and students in hard hats and safety vests posing on an industrial lift on the construction site of the new Macomb campus.)

(image: Spoon River College logo)

Macomb: A New Campus Comes to Life

SRC FOUNDATION - EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO PURSUE THEIR PASSION

THE bridge

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Mission

Spoon River College provides innovative learning opportunities that enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve.

Core Values

Caring • Respect • Integrity • Fairness • Responsibility

For information about Spoon River College graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed our programs, and more, please visit the [reports page of our website](#).

The Bridge is published by Spoon River College and distributed to the residents of Illinois Community College District #534. Questions about SRC programs and services described in this publication can be directed to 1-800-DEGREES (1-800-334-7337).

Content and design produced by Spoon River College employees.

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Academic programs

Transfer areas of concentration

Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Science (AS) areas of concentration

- Agriculture
- Art
- Biological Science
- Business
- Chemistry
- Communication
- Computer Science
- Criminal Justice
- Drama
- Early Childhood Education
- Education
- Elementary & Special Education
- English
- General Science
- Geography
- Health Science
- History
- Mathematics
- Philosophy
- Physical Education
- Physical Science
- Physics
- Political Science
- Pre-Engineering
- Pre-Exercise Science
- Psychology
- Religion
- Secondary Education
- Social Work
- Sociology

Associate in General Studies

- General Studies

Career Programs

Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degrees

- Agricultural Business
- Management
- Computer Information Systems
- Diesel & Power Systems Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Health Information Management
- Logistics & Operations Management
- Manufacturing – Advanced
- Medical Laboratory Technician
- Small Business Management

Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN)

- Nursing

Certificates

Agricultural Business Management

- Agricultural Precision Technology
- Agricultural Production

Commercial Driver Training

- Basic Commercial Driver Training
- Commercial Driver Training

Computer Information Systems

- Computer Forensics
- Computer Information Technology
- Computer and Network Technician
- Computer User Support Specialist
- Cyber Security
- Enterprise Computer Network Specialist
- Server Administrator

Diesel & Power Systems Technology

- Locomotive Mechanical
- Preventive Maintenance

Early Childhood Education

- Assistant Teacher
- Early Childhood Educator

Health Information Management

- Medical Assistant
- Medical Coding
- Medical Coding – Advanced
- Medical Insurance/Billing
- Medical Records
- Medical Transcription
- Phlebotomy Technician

Logistics & Operations Management

- Truck Driver Training

Manufacturing

- Certified Production Technician
- Industrial Maintenance

Nursing

- Nursing Assistant
- Practical Nursing

Paramedicine

- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Small Business Management

- Business Plan Entrepreneurship
- Customer Service
- Entrepreneurship
- Supervision

Welding

- Welding – Advanced
- Welding Operator

Cooperative Programs*

- Dental Hygiene
- Paramedicine
- Radiologic Technology
- Respiratory Care

*Spoon River College works with other community colleges to offer these programs. Courses will not be held on SRC campuses or centers. Please contact your advisor for details.

A Message from the President

Dr. Curt Oldfield

Welcome to this issue of The Bridge from Spoon River College

Throughout this publication, you'll discover the impactful work happening at SRC. Every day, our dedicated faculty and staff create an environment where students thrive—because when students succeed, communities grow stronger.

At Spoon River College, we welcome anyone looking to improve their lives. We recognize that every student's journey is unique, and we are committed to providing the guidance and support they need to achieve their goals. In this issue, you'll find inspiring student success stories, insights into our programs, and a showcase of our talented faculty and staff.

Beyond the classroom, SRC collaborates with economic development organizations to strengthen our communities. We partner with local employers to ensure our programs align with workforce needs, equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for immediate career success or seamless transfer to a four-year institution.

As a college, we are always looking ahead. We continue to enhance our facilities, expand our programs, and embrace innovation to support student success. I am incredibly proud of the creativity, collaboration, and entrepreneurial spirit of our faculty and staff.

Spoon River College plays a vital role in enriching our region by offering high-quality education, hosting diverse cultural events, and driving economic development. Our goal is simple: to take you where you want to go.

Our mission is to “provide innovative learning opportunities that enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve.” After reading this issue, I hope you'll see how we bring this mission to life—every single day.

(Photo of Spoon River College President Dr. Curt Oldfield and his signature.)

[Learn more information about the college.](#)

Macomb: A New Campus Comes to Life

(Photo of construction on interior of new Macomb campus.)

Construction on the East Jackson Street campus is proceeding on schedule—welcome words to hear! Crews are installing drywall, completing work on windows and the entrance, and plumbing and electrical work has started.

“We hope to have the final walk-through the first part of June, and if all continues to go well, staff and faculty can begin moving in after July 4,” said President Oldfield.

Currently the home of the college’s Office of Community Outreach, the building will now provide space for classrooms and labs—including simulation suites—as well as administrative and faculty offices, student support services, a bookstore, and a student center.

Besides allowing for the expansion of transfer classes and existing career education programs (Nursing and Welding), there will also be room for the creation of new programs such as HVAC, Robotics, Manufacturing, and Industrial Maintenance.

“Increasing the number of students in career program courses will aid the college in continuing to play an important role in educating students for employment in McDonough County,” Oldfield said. “We look forward to having all of our Macomb operations under one roof and to welcoming students to the new campus for the Fall 2025 semester. This has been a long time coming.”

(Info-Graphic Text: Interested in making a gift to support the new campus? [Contact Dusty Berg, Director, SRC Foundation](#), for available giving opportunities.)

(Photo 1: The new entrance to the Macomb campus from the inside. Just a few weeks after this photo was taken, the cover photo was taken in this same location; highlighting how quickly work is progressing.)

(Photo 2: The building boasts an inviting new entrance.)

(Photo 3: Mike Strauman, SRC Chief Operations and Safety Officer and manager of the construction project tours nursing students through the new facility.)

Journey to a New Campus Timeline

(Photo: construction image of exterior of the new Macomb campus.)

(Photo of nursing students touring the construction site.)

DATE	EVENT
2006	The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of a building on West Jackson Street in Macomb for future expansion.
2009	Completion of Phase I of the new Macomb Campus - the Community Outreach Center.
Spring 2019	Illinois Legislature and Governor Pritzker approve Rebuild Illinois Plan which provides funding for the next phase of this project.
Spring 2024	Pre-bids for the project announced.
May 2024	Hein Construction named as the general contractor for the project.
June 2024	Interior preparation work begins.
July 2024	Fencing is up and construction begins.
August 2024	Wall breaking ceremony to celebrate the start of renovations to the facility.
Sept. 2024	Mechanical and electrical rough-ins complete.
March 2025	Crews continue with drywall, mud, and tape in anticipation of project completion.
May 2025	Interior slated for substantial completion.
July 2025	Exterior of building slated for completion.
July 2025	Faculty and staff anticipated to begin moving into the new facility.
August 2025	Ribbon Cutting and Opening Ceremony.
Fall 2025	classes begin at the new campus.

(Photo 1: Exterior photo of the construction site)

(Photo 2: Students inside the construction site during the wall breaking ceremony)

(Photo 3: Exterior photo of the new front entrance)

[SEE MORE PICTURES AND VIDEO OF THE NEW CAMPUS](#)

Alumni Spotlight. The Places They've Gone

Nursing: The Right Fit

Adam Fellner was only 12 when his dad was in a work accident that led to both feet, his femur, and part of his back being broken. The care his dad received inspired Adam to choose a career in nursing.

"I was able to witness the high level of care that was given to him, which resulted in a full recovery. He was able to return to activities he loved such as skiing and hiking. This opened my eyes to healthcare. With my passion for science and health, I discovered nursing was a great fit."

Adam earned his Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), graduating in Summer 2023. "I chose SRC because of the fantastic staff. It allowed me the flexible schedule to simultaneously complete my Bachelor's Degree at WIU while I finished playing football there as well. I credit SRC and my professors for preparing me to be the best RN possible and enter the workforce with confidence."

Adam passed the NCLEX the first time and was hired at HCA Healthcare in Florida, working in all specialties of surgery while prioritizing Neurosurgery and Orthopedics as well as being a part of the transplant team.

"Adam was a fantastic student!" said Director of Nursing Becky Sherwood. "He excelled at every task, every assignment, every course, and every clinical experience that he faced while setting a harmonious and positive example for his peers. Adam set goals and would often comment that he was going to work in surgery one day. I am not at all surprised to see him achieving this goal. We are so very proud of Adam and his success in achieving his dreams!"

(Photo: Adam Fellner wearing scrubs in an operating room where he works as a nurse.)

A Dream to be a Veterinarian

Cassidy Tarter is living her dream as an Associate Veterinarian at the Treasure Veterinary Service in Hysham, Montana, where she spends her days tending animals both big and small, from cattle to cats.

"My passion for animals started when I was young, and I knew then I wanted to be a veterinarian and work with animals."

Cassidy was active in FFA during her time at Canton High School—she was recognized as a Star Chapter Farmer—and continued that passion at SRC as an active member of the National Professional Agriculture Student Association (PAS), serving as President and participating in PAS related events. One of her favorite memories of those events is of competing in the job interview category two years in a row—and winning first place both times. Cassidy has also been honored with the American FFA Degree, something less than 1% of FFA members and alumni receive.

After completing an Associate of Arts and Sciences degree and a certificate in Agricultural Precision Technology at SRC, she transferred to the WIU School of Agriculture where she was in the Sigma Alpha Professional Ag Sorority, Hoof N Horn Club, and Collegiate Farm Bureau. She graduated with a B.S. in Agricultural Science with a Minor in Chemistry. Cassidy completed her journey with a DVM degree from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in 2023.

Her move to Montana was the result of an internship opportunity that she applied for. It was delayed one year due to COVID, but in 2021 she was finally able to complete the 3-week program, and that was enough time for her to fall in love with the state and secure permanent employment.

When not working, Cassidy can be found reading or exploring Montana either on horseback or dirt bike. She also enjoys hiking and shed hunting with her three dogs.

Starting at Spoon River College was a great choice for Cassidy, and she says that Professor Bridget Loftus was her favorite teacher. "Even though chemistry can be difficult, she made the classes both enjoyable and understandable."

(Photo: Cassidy Lock wearing lab goggles working in a science lab.)

From Student to Teacher

Damian Minder was on his way to a degree in Nursing at Spoon River College when he took the required chemistry course and had an “a-ha” moment.

“I realized that I loved getting hands-on with the labs we did and started researching different careers that offered that approach to work. I came across medical laboratory technician and instantly thought it would be perfect for me.” Around that same time, he got a flyer announcing that SRC was starting a MLT program. Timing is everything.

The first class was in the fall of 2020, and Damian was in it. Two years later, he’s a board certified MLT working full-time at Graham Hospital and now also back in the classroom as a teacher in the MLT program.

“Normally a patient meets a lab worker, typically a phlebotomist, who draws the blood or collects the needed specimen. The techs are in the background receiving those specimens to analyze and then forwarding the results to the physicians. I may not meet a patient, but I still get a feeling of satisfaction in knowing that I am playing a vital part in helping a patient get better.

(Photo: Damian Minder and MLT student Audra Dodds in the MLT lab.)

Supporting our Students. SRC Foundation

The incredible generosity and support of individuals—both from within the college’s district and beyond—makes it possible for the Spoon River College Foundation to provide crucial scholarships, emergency funds, and other resources to not only college students, but also to high school dual credit students such as Ariana Reynoso of Colchester (pg. 9).

The SRC Foundation awarded a total of \$7,800 in dual credit scholarships in the Spring 2025 semester, enabling eligible students to get a head start on their college journey and focus on their studies while easing their financial obligations. Recently, the Foundation staff worked with a local in-district high school to create a special funding package for students interested in learning a trade, providing them a path to gainful employment that may not have existed for them otherwise. The Foundation has a strong commitment to helping those at the high school level succeed.

For students facing unexpected financial challenges, Hardship Funds have been critical. Whether the funds were needed for car repairs, medical care, or food in their refrigerator, the \$20,472 that was dispersed to SRC students have kept them in the classroom and on track to finish their education goals.

Fundraising efforts will continue to grow as the SRC Foundation prepares to meet the evolving needs of SRC students and ensure that all students, regardless of their financial situation, will have the opportunity to begin an educational journey that ends in success.

“I am deeply grateful for the trust and partnerships that have been provided to the Foundation. I look forward to working together to make a difference in the lives of our students,” said Dusty Berg, SRC Foundation Director. “Thank you for your support. You are truly helping to shape a brighter future for our students and our community.”

(Info-graphic detailing Foundation scholarships: \$182,364 in scholarships were given; an average of \$364 per student; 501 students; 18% of students receive scholarships; \$20,472 in hardship grants; and \$7800 in dual credit scholarships.)

(Image: Spoon River College Foundation logo: Programs, Scholarships, Facilities.)

A Passion for Welding

Ariana Reynoso of Colchester was only seven years old when her grandfather enlisted her help with a welding job on a tractor. “I was terrified, but I was also hooked.” That moment in time led her to enroll in SRC’s welding program as a dual credit student. This May she will graduate with a Basic Welding Certificate and be job ready.

Ariana is no longer terrified by welding, and actually finds it calming. “It’s almost Zen-like.” She plans to combine her passion for iron work with her passion for driving and travel to wherever the jobs are. “I love driving and have already visited 27 states. I can talk to anyone, and I make friends easily.”

A family member who had already completed SRC’s welding program—and who now works at Pella—encouraged her to enroll. “I’m so glad I chose this program. Chuck Harris is an amazing teacher and makes it enjoyable. This class is my favorite part of the day, and I would encourage others who are interested to go for it.”

Ariana is one of the 13 dual credit students from Macomb and West Prairie high schools completing the program.

[Learn more about dual credit.](#)

SRC to take Step Toward Sustainability

Spoon River College is taking a bold step toward sustainability and cost savings by exploring the addition of a five acre solar farm on the Canton Campus to reduce electricity expenses.

By harnessing renewable energy, the college aims to lower operational costs while demonstrating a commitment to environmental responsibility. It is estimated that the solar farm will produce approximately 90% of the Canton Campus electricity. A solar farm would provide a reliable, long-term energy solution, decreasing dependence on traditional power sources and reducing the college's operating expenses.

This initiative aligns with SRC's strategic goals of economic efficiency, benefiting both students and the community. Investing in solar energy not only supports financial sustainability but also serves as an educational opportunity, showcasing renewable technology in action for future generations. It is anticipated that the solar farm will be active in 2026.

(Photo: Photo of a solar farm)

[Learn more about solar at SRC.](#)

SRC-WIU. Partnering for Student Success

Spoon River College (SRC) and Western Illinois University (WIU) have been selected by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program (Aspen) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to join the prestigious 2024-2025 cohort of the Aspen-AASCU Transfer Student Success Intensive. Their partnership was chosen from a competitive pool of 97 institutions and three systems across 24 states.

Funded by Ascendium Education Philanthropy, this year-long initiative provides monthly sessions designed to strengthen partnerships between community colleges and AASCU institutions. The program focuses on advancing policies and practices that promote equitable transfer student success and increase baccalaureate degree completion.

A dedicated research team of faculty and staff from both SRC and WIU recently completed an in-depth, year-long study of the transfer process between the two institutions. Moving forward, SRC and WIU will work to develop intentional, affordable pathways that support students' academic goals while addressing local workforce needs. Both institutions are committed to expanding student support services, easing the transition to WIU, and helping students successfully complete their bachelor's degrees.

Key measurable goals of this partnership include:

- Increasing the number of SRC graduates who enroll at WIU.
- Expanding opportunities for students to take courses at both SRC and WIU.
- Identifying scholarship opportunities to reduce financial barriers for transfer students.
- Strengthening dual-institution marketing and communication strategies to provide a clear pathway to a bachelor's degree.
- Creating on-campus communities that support transfer students throughout their academic journey.

Through this collaborative effort, SRC and WIU are dedicated to transforming students' lives, empowering them to achieve their educational aspirations, and building a stronger future for the region.

SRC Faculty. Setting a Standard of Excellence.

Two faculty members recognized for their commitment to excellence in the classroom.

Brian Dalpiaz (Math): Spoon River College Outstanding Full-Time Faculty Award and Illinois Community College Trustee Association Outstanding Full-Time Faculty nominee.

According to Brian he was a very curious child, and his favorite questions were “why” and “what if.” He believed in magic, that anything was possible, and that when he grew up he could be Superman and marry Wonder Woman.

Although both of Brian’s parents were dedicated teachers in his hometown of Beardstown, Illinois, and always supported his learning, it was a challenge from his grandfather after junior high that motivated him to live up to his academic potential, leading to a turning point in high school.

He started applying himself to his studies and participated in sports and other extracurricular activities. He excelled, and during his senior year was voted Most Likely to Succeed and named valedictorian. He also began dating a girl named Sarah his senior year.

He graduated high school, attended Western Illinois University for his B.S., then earned a M.S. from the University of South Carolina. Fresh out of college, he thought he had a job lined up with the National Security Agency, but was told that the hiring process could take months. Eager to begin a full-time job, he instead applied to teach math at a small community college in Illinois. The rest is history.

And although he didn’t marry Wonder Woman, he did marry Sarah, who is pretty close, and who also teaches math at SRC. The National Security Agency’s loss was a double win for SRC!

Allyson Smith (Agriculture): H. Truman Standard award.

Allyson’s first introduction to agriculture began when she was in junior high and her parents moved her to the country. She became active in FFA while in high school, serving as both vice president and president and participating in contests, and remains a dedicated FFA advocate. After graduating high school, she was determined to leave Canton behind. Forever.

With a goal of becoming a high school ag teacher, she studied ag at Western Illinois University, where she also discovered a passion for research. Switching up her major, she earned a B.S. in Agriculture with a Minor in Agronomy, then completed her Master’s degree in Crop and Soil Science.

Her first job was as a Research Specialist with the University of Missouri. The hours were long, but other than that, life was going good for Allyson and her new husband. Then she saw an ad for an agriculture teacher at Spoon River College and flashed back to her grad advisor asking her what she wanted to do after graduating, to which she answered, “Well, I would love to move back to my hometown and teach agriculture at the community college.”

And just like that, the hometown she once wanted to escape “forever” became the place where she and her husband chose to reside as they raise their two daughters.

Leaving can be good, but coming back home can be even better.

(Photo: Photo of SRC faculty members Brian Dalpiaz and Allyson Smith)

[Learn more information about faculty at SRC.](#)

Big Opportunities, close to home.

REGISTER NOW:

2025 Summer & Fall Semesters

Reaching our Communities

Spoon River College Community Outreach continues to provide noncredit workforce training to businesses within its district, thanks to funding from the Illinois Community College Board. "I'm pleased with the work our team has been able to provide to employers in our district, and excited to see what we accomplish in 2025," said Velvet Powell, Director of SRC Community Outreach.

Now in its second year, the Noncredit Workforce Training Initiative Grant provides a variety of resources, such as customized training, professional development, career certification, and employability skills.

Powell said that their work with NTN-Bower was "one of our 2024 success stories, with more than 40 employees benefiting from the training." One of the largest manufacturers of roller bearings in North America and one of the largest employers in McDonough County with nearly 700 employees, the company utilized the training services for managers and supervisors that included enhancing both leadership and soft skills, giving and receiving feedback, and managing stress and anxiety.

Shannon Kachinovas, Human Resource Manager at NTN-Bower Corporation, said the company has enjoyed working with SRC Community Outreach throughout several years hosting various events and activities. "These classes have helped us provide necessary training for our managers and supervisors, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with SRC in the future."

Powell appreciates the positive feedback. "We're happy that NTN-Bower valued our services, and that they recognize the value of investing in leadership training for their continued success of their company and for the overall success of our community."

(Photo: Group photo of Spoon River College Community Outreach staff)

[SRC Outreach.](#)