

WELDING

BURNING BRIGHT *Competition sparks top honors for CHS students*

By JAKE MOSBACH

CLINTON - The success of Clinton High School's welding department was put on full display recently at a regional competition at the Midwest Technical Institute in Moline, Illinois.

When instructor Ted Lamb brought a group of his welding students to the competition on April 21, expectations were wide ranging. When the sparks settled, however, two students in the group had earned some of the highest honors. CHS senior Slader Hoppe, who graduated at the end of the second trimester, took home the competition's first-place honors, as well as a \$500 check.

Fellow senior Hunter Miller grabbed third place and a \$100 payout.

With about 50 students competing for places, Lamb couldn't be happier with his welders. Last year one of his students took 10th place at the competition, the highest ever.

"We compete in this competition every year and this is the first year we've had anybody place in the top five, so to have two of our kids in there is pretty exciting," Lamb said. "The kids are really starting to figure out what they want to do with their welding." The competition gave the students, who came from all over the Gateway area, a chance to show off the diversity of their welding skills by doing work in "any and every position," according to third-place finisher Miller.

Miller plans to attend Midwest Technical Institute in August. Hoppe, according to instructor Lamb, is currently working as a welder in Mount Carroll, Illinois, and aspires to be an underwater welder in the future.

After getting his foot in the door early on at CHS, Miller's passion for welding became clear.

"A while ago, I took a class called 'Journey Through Technical Careers,' and we spent a couple weeks working in woods, autos, and in here in the welding rooms," Miller said. "I just really enjoyed it in here, so I decided to follow up and take the rest of the welding classes." Throughout his time moving through the classes, Miller has learned countless invaluable lessons that will prepare him for his time at Midwest Technical Institute and beyond.

"In here we just practice everything, all the different types of welds that will set us apart once we're actually able to get out in the field," Miller said.



Clinton High School senior Hunter Miller demonstrates his welding skills. Miller received third place in a recent competition in Moline, Ill.

Rachael Keating/Clinton Herald