

# MENTORING PROPELS TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE GRADUATE TO NEW CAREER



**life. to the fullest.**  
**Abbott**



**W**hether looking for a career change, wanting to hone existing skills, or needing to establish new skills, Tri-County Technical College provides a streamlined pathway to success for today's workforce.

Beverly Sweet, a weekend shift production supervisor at Abbott Laboratories in Liberty, South Carolina, says she would not have her career if it weren't for mentors, both in the classroom and in the workplace, who encouraged her to go for and complete her college degree at age 41.

"I'd always thought about college since graduating from high school but there were always roadblocks," said Beverly, who had a 20-year career in the textile industry — one she thought would last until retirement — but ended with a plant closure in 2003.

Beverly had to start over and began applying for jobs. She soon landed a part-time job at Abbott (then St. Jude Medical in Pickens). Abbott is a global company that manufactures a variety of medical products and devices.

At the Liberty site, the company manufactures components for life-saving Cardiac Arrhythmia and Heart Failure devices.

Within six months, the part-time work turned into a full-time production job. Her then-production manager noticed an aptitude in Beverly and encouraged her to pursue a degree at Tri-County Technical College.

"It's easy to talk yourself out of something if you don't have encouragement. But she helped me to see I could do it," said Beverly.

Beverly returned to college in 2007 to pursue a General Engineering Technology degree — 23 years after graduating from high school.

"I was excited and scared. Once I got started, I had fun building projects and applying the knowledge. My instructor and dean at the college were a huge part of my success. I connected with them, just as I did my production manager, and they served as mentors for me," she said.

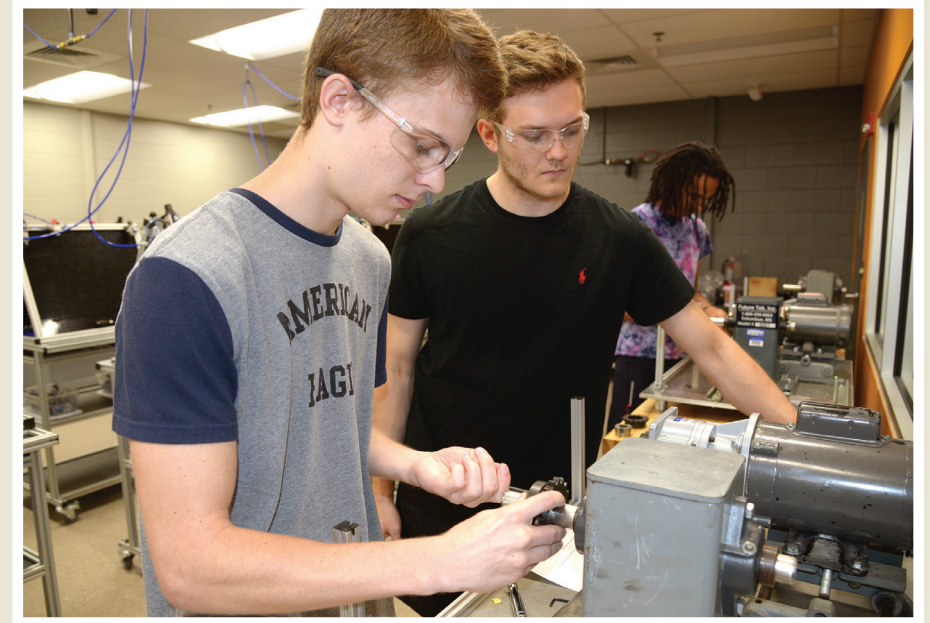
It took Beverly five years to complete her degree because she was a part-time student taking evening and online classes. During her last semester, she took four classes in addition to working full time. Beverly made the President's List and graduated with honors and debt free, thanks to Abbott's tuition reimbursement program and lottery tuition assistance.

Over the years, Beverly advanced from team coordinator at Abbot to production technician to senior production technician. In 2013, she was promoted to weekend shift production supervisor. She now supervises four departments totaling 45 people on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"This is the best job I have ever had. It's always different. That's why I love my job so much. It's never boring. But I couldn't do it without the degree from Tri-County Technical College." ■

Learn more: [www.tctc.edu](http://www.tctc.edu)

## PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR MANUFACTURING CAREERS



Several weeks before they even graduated high school, Jacob Shaw and Bryant Newsome completed Technical Operator certificates I and II from Tri-County Technical College (TCTC). Through the Technical Career Pathways program, they then entered TCTC's summer school as sophomores with less than a year left to earn their associate degrees.

Shaw, a Belton-Honea Path High School graduate, and Newsome, a Palmetto High School graduate, both have their sights set on working in manufacturing after they complete their degrees. With the skills they

earn in the Industrial Electronics Technology and Mechatronics programs, they are well on their way.

All totaled, five Anderson County 18-year-olds received Technical Operator certificates and became TCTC sophomores in the Industrial Electronics Technology and Mechatronics programs before they even marched in their high school graduations.

Over 100 high school students are enrolled in the Technical Career Pathways programs in all seven school districts in the college's service area. This program serves students who might have considered college beyond their reach. The vast majority continue after high school graduation to earn an associate degree in a technical field that will prepare them for highly-skilled careers in the area.

