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HEAD OF THE GLASS

Blackstone River Glass Center hosts live demo amid national paperweight collectors convention

By JON BAKER

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CUMBERLAND

— Anne Vaz and “significant other” Al Gregoire made the trek from Naugatuck, Conn. to the Blackstone River Glass Center’s Live Glass Demos Event on Friday morning and afternoon for two reasons.

First, Gregoire hadn’t seen his old college buddy and renowned glass blower Chris Sherwin, who would be doing his thing during the exhibition, since before the pandemic, and he figured it was high time he did.

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Photos by Ernest A. Brown

Glass artist Mayaul Ward, of Manhattan Beach, California, adds flower piece decorations using a gas torch as he creates a handblown glass vase during a demonstration at the Blackstone River Glass Center in Cumberland Friday.



Photos by Ernest A. Brown

Davies Career and Tech students, from left, Pedro Ponceano, Brianna Rosado, Anthony McGowan, Eliza Reed, Mia Joseph, Elizabeth Tobon, Dante D’Amico, Sheilyn Matus, Johann Perez-Medina, Antonion Montoya, Aiden Cote, Matthew Restrepo, and Eduardo Villasenor all signed up to work with industry partners after their 2024 graduation during a signing ceremony and reception at the school Thursday.

Davies seniors ready to get to work

2024 graduates sign letters of ‘intent to hire’ with local companies

By JON BAKER

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LINCOLN — Davies Tech senior Dante D’Amico seemed relaxed and quite confident mere minutes before signing an “intent to hire” certificate with All Phase Contracting, LLC, of Chepachet on Thursday afternoon.

In a nutshell, at the tender age of 18 and still three weeks away from graduation, he’s going to work as a electrician’s apprentice. Still, he seemed unfazed by the enormity of

the moment.

“I’m skipping college; I’m going to straight to work, and I can’t wait,” the North Providence resident said as he and several classmates waited for this year’s Davies’ Career Signing Ceremony to begin inside the Patriot Room. “I was thinking I could go to college anytime in the future. It’s not something I have to rush into.

“I’m not afraid to pursue a career; I know I’m young, but I also feel like I’m all set because I’m prepared,” he added. “I prepared for it

right here in school and at All Phase with all of my hours of work-based learning. I can’t wait; I’ll be doing residential and commercial work, fire alarms, you-name-it. It doesn’t feel weird at all.”

Classmate Mia Joseph of Pawtucket, who like D’Amico majored in Electrical and Renewable Energy at Davies, concurred. She will be working with him at All Phase.

“My initial plan was to go to the Community College of Rhode

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Dean College grads told to ‘be filled with excitement and anticipation’

By STEPHEN PETERSON

The Sun Chronicle

FRANKLIN — — Some 250 graduates from 19 states and seven countries received their degrees Saturday at Dean College’s 158th Commencement.

The ceremony was held on the front lawn of Dean Hall on the college campus.

Madison Frechette, a 2020 North Attleboro High School graduate, was the main student speaker.

Frechette spoke about the Class of 2024 having not been able to get a proper high school graduation ceremony during the start of the pandemic, and beginning their first year of college with a mix of virtual and in-person classes amid frequent coronavirus testing.

“As we step into the next chapter of our lives, let’s be filled with excitement and anticipation for the endless possibilities that

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Helicopter carrying Iran’s president apparently crashes in mountainous region

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country’s foreign minister and other officials apparently crashed in the mountainous northwest reaches of Iran on Sunday, sparking a massive rescue operation in a fog-shrouded forest as the public was urged to pray.

The likely crash came as Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel last month and has enriched uranium closer than ever to

weapons-grade levels.

Iran has also faced years of mass protests against its Shiite theocracy over an ailing economy and women’s rights — making the moment that much more sensitive for Tehran and the future of the country as the Israel-Hamas war inflames the wider Middle East.

Raisi was traveling in Iran’s East Azerbaijan province. State TV said what it called a “hard landing” happened near Jolfa, a city on the border with the nation of Azerbaijan, some

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Here for the pets
Writer makes it a mission to pet dog show pups
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Students and company representatives applaud during a Workforce Development Job Fair and Reception for members of the Davies Career and Technical High School 2024 Job Fair Signing Day at the school Thursday.

Davies

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Island and get my general education degree, meaning I would have all of my English and math credits and I could jump right into my major," she said. "But then I landed this job and thought, 'Why not?' I really like it. When I was doing my work-based learning with All Phase, I had some really get teachers in my bosses, Sam David and Joe Olobri.

"We'll start working in early June, before we graduate, and I'm thrilled. I like working, staying busy. There's still tons to learn; I've only scratched the surface."

According to All Phase Co-Owners David and Olobri, Kathryn Dacier, Davies Career Coordinator for the Office of Workforce Development, recommended D'Amico for work-based learning, and they "found" Joseph after hiring him.

"Kathryn puts on a really good program; she's the one who talked us into

Round 2 and hiring Mia," said Olobri, himself a 2005 Davies Tech grad. "These are young kids who have really good work ethics, and Davies turns out really good apprentices. We're lucky and fortunate to have that."

School Director Mary Watkins greeted the approximate 18 seniors on hand to sign their intent to hire certificates and their family members, but also the Davies partners who agreed to accept them into their work communities.

Supervisor of CTE Susan Votto then explained to the audience that this graduating class accumulated a whopping 58,568 work-based learning hours, which is more than Patriots Nation ever had before. In fact, that was 14,796 more hours than the previous year, marking an astonishing 94 percent increase from 2021.

"That showcases our students' commitment to gaining practical experience and preparing for successful careers," she said. "Additionally, we are proud to announce that 16

students from the Class of 2024 have achieved membership in the prestigious 1,000 Club, having accumulated over 1,000 hours of work-based learning."

Those signing with companies in the Electrical & Renewable Energy field, besides D'Amico and Joseph, include Pedro Ponceano of Pawtucket (Izzo Electric of Warwick); Anthony Varela of Pawtucket (A&G Electric of New England/Riverside); Anthony McGowan of Central Falls (Alpha Electrical Contractors, Inc. of Providence); and Aiden Cote of North Providence (Tower Hill Electric in Cumberland).

Ponceano mentioned he began as an apprentice at Izzo Electric back on Sept. 13, 2023, and just loves it, as he's already got 440 hours of work-based learning.

"I'm going to night school at Roger Williams University to become a journeyman electrician. I need to complete three years of certification, so I'm well on my way," he said. "Working with Izzo provides me the opportu-

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couldn't do it without you.



Photos by Ernest A. Brown

Dante D'Amico, of North Providence, left, signs on to work for All Phase Contracting in Chepachet during a job fair signing ceremony at Davies Career and Technical High School Thursday.

nity to follow my passion and do electrical work."

In the Machine Technology industry, Pawtucket's Nathan Desimone, Cumberland's Antonion Montoya, Johann Perez-Medina of Providence and Central Falls' Matthew Restrepo all signed on to work with Greystone of Lincoln, while Central Falls' Eduardo Villasenor will go to work for Fielding Manufacturing in Cranston.

In the Automotive field, the seniors include Cumberland's Justin Emond (Balise of North Attleboro), Pawtucket's Luiz Cruz (Planet Auto) and Central Falls' Cesar Coterone (Tasca).

As for those involved in the Health Careers major, three signed on with The Lighthouse of Lincoln as CNAs, including Central Falls' Eliza Reed and Elizabeth Tobon and Pawtucket's Sheilyn Matus; and two more with Oak Hill Center in Pawtucket, among them Pawtucket's Angela Mallywanga and Brianna Rosado.

"This is so exciting because we're still young

students, but we're going to be making good money," Tobon said. "We're also getting to experience something that a lot of young people don't typically see, and that's seniors who are suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and dementia. We're there to help them, and because of work-based learning hours, now we do.

"My mom was a CNA, and I remember always coming home and talking about it, and it intrigued me. She also would practice on me for her CNA exam, so I fell in love with it."

Reed admitted working 30 hours a week at The Lighthouse, and that trying to balance her work and classes was rather difficult. She said she'd work 3-10 p.m., so once her patients went to sleep, supervisors would allow her time to catch up on her homework.

"I got paid \$21 an hour when I was doing work-based learning, but now I'm full-time, so I'm hoping I'll make more," Reed said. "What I like about this job is when working

with dementia residents, you see a lot of different emotions – anger, sadness, hopelessness – but when you're able to cheer them up and put a smile on their faces, that makes me feel so good.

"There's nothing like it," she continued. "It feels great, I feel accomplished. While I was growing up, I never thought I could be a CNA; my mom would always come home and complain about the workload, but once you're in that environment and you see the help you give people, it's awesome. You see there's so much more to it. It's all about the people."

Matus called this signing a "big stepping stone to what I want my future to look like.

"I actually don't want to do nursing the rest of my life; I'd eventually like to go into dentistry, specifically dental hygiene," she said. "I don't know why, really, except it piques my interest. Then again, I'm open to all sorts of medical careers. It could be anything, but this helps get me on my way."

Dean

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lie ahead," Frechette told fellow graduates. "Some of us are pursuing careers, while others will continue their education or explore new passions. Whatever path we choose, we are not alone. We are part of a community that will continue to support and uplift us as we navigate the chal-

lenges and triumphs of life beyond Dean."

Frechette, who earned a bachelor's degree in business management, a bachelor's in marketing and an associate's degree in arts for dance, was involved in several campus organizations, including the founding of the college's Women in Business Club, of which she was president, in 2023.

The highest-ranking cultural official in Massa-

chusetts, Michael Bobbitt, the executive director of the Mass Cultural Council, was the keynote speaker.

"The world is waiting for your creativity, your passion, and your leadership," Bobbitt told graduates. "The issues we face are complex and multifaceted, requiring innovative and creative solutions. It is here that your education becomes not just relevant, but essential. Creativity al-

lows us to turn knowledge, in consideration of opposing views, into solutions to help all people."

Mark D. Boyce, chair of the Dean College Board of Trustees, told graduates "Don't be afraid of the future. Be bold."

"Your education does not end here. The world you are entering is one of perpetual learning and adaptation," Boyce said, urging graduates of the

"importance of using your skills not just for innovation, but for inclusion" and that the world is a "wonderful diverse rainbow of colors and people, places and choices.

"I hope you go forth from Dean and make the world a better place, continuing to be exposed to new ideas, new people and new places," Boyce said.

Honorary degrees were presented for the second

time in the college's history to Bobbitt, and Peter W. Galbraith, former U.S. ambassador to Croatia and assistant secretary general of the United Nations in Afghanistan.

President Kenneth Elmore is leaving the college this year following commencement. He became the 14th president of the college in October 2022 after nearly 20 years at Boston University.

Crash

Continued from page A1

600 kilometers (375 miles) northwest of the Iranian capital, Tehran. Later, state TV put it farther east near the village of Uzi, but details remained contradictory.

Traveling with Raisi were Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province and other officials and bodyguards, the state-run IRNA news agency reported. One local government official used the word "crash," but others referred to either a "hard landing" or an "incident."

Neither IRNA nor state TV offered any information on Raisi's condition in the hours afterward. However, hard-liners urged the public to pray for him. State TV later aired images of the faithful praying at Imam Reza Shrine in the city of Mashhad, one

of Shiite Islam's holiest sites, as well as in Qom and other locations across the country. State television's main channel aired the prayers nonstop.

"The esteemed president and company were on their way back aboard some helicopters and one of the helicopters was forced to make a hard landing due to the bad weather and fog," Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said in comments aired on state TV. "Various rescue teams are on their way to the region but because of the poor weather and fog-giness it might take time for them to reach the helicopter."

IRNA called the area a "forest" and the region is known to be mountainous as well. State TV aired images of SUVs racing through a wooded area and said they were being hampered by poor weather conditions, including heavy rain and wind.

A rescue helicopter tried to reach the area where

authorities believe Raisi's helicopter was, but it couldn't land due to heavy mist, emergency services spokesman Babak Yek-taparast told IRNA.

Long after the sun set, Iranian government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi acknowledged that "we are experiencing difficult and complicated conditions" in the search.

"It is the right of the people and the media to be aware of the latest news about the president's helicopter accident, but considering the coordinates of the incident site and the weather conditions, there is 'no' new news whatsoever until now," he wrote on the social platform X. "In these moments, patience, prayer and trust in relief groups are the way forward."

Khamenei himself also urged the public to pray.

"We hope that God the Almighty returns the dear president and his colleagues in full health to the arms of the nation,"

Khamenei said, drawing an "amen" from the audience he was addressing.

Raisi, 63, a hard-liner who formerly led the country's judiciary, is viewed as a protégé of Khamenei and some analysts have suggested he could replace the 85-year-old leader after Khamenei's death or resignation from the role.

Raisi had been on the border with Azerbaijan early Sunday to inaugurate a dam with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev. The dam is the third one that the two nations built on the Aras River. The visit came despite chilly relations between the two nations, including over a gun attack on Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran in 2023, and Azerbaijan's diplomatic relations with Israel, which Iran's Shiite theocracy views as its main enemy in the region.

Iran flies a variety of helicopters in the country, but international sanctions make it difficult to obtain parts for them. Its military

air fleet also largely dates back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. IRNA published images it described as Raisi taking off in what resembled a Bell helicopter, with a blue-and-white paint scheme previously seen in published photographs.

Raisi won Iran's 2021 presidential election, a vote that saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history. Raisi is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988 at the end of the bloody Iran-Iraq war.

Under Raisi, Iran now enriches uranium at nearly weapons-grade levels and hampers international inspections. Iran has armed Russia in its war on Ukraine, as well as launched a massive drone-and-missile attack on Israel amid its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It also has continued arming proxy groups in the Middle East, like Yemen's Houthis

rebels and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, mass protests in the country have raged for years. The most recent involved the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, a woman who had been earlier detained over allegedly not wearing a hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. The monthslong security crackdown that followed the demonstrations killed more than 500 people and saw over 22,000 detained.

In March, a United Nations investigative panel found that Iran was responsible for the "physical violence" that led to Amini's death.

President Joe Biden was briefed by aides on the Iran crash, but administration officials have not learned much more than what is being reported publicly by Iran state media, said a senior administration official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.