Camp helps students build for future
BAIT Camp teaches business, tech skills

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For many high school students, hands-on experience is crucial for landing the right career. Often, however, North Dakota students are limited in how much business and technology experience they can attain.

Valley City State University and the Sheyenne Valley Area Career and Technology Center have teamed to rectify this issue by inviting students to a Business and Information Technologies Career Awareness Camp, also known as the BAIT Camp.

The camp, which started Wednesday and runs through today, has given students hands-on experience in business enterprise systems, computer networking, robotics, graphics and global positioning systems.

Throughout the week, students have participated in different activities. During Thursday's computer building activity at the career and tech center, students learned how to assemble computer parts.

One technician was 14-year-old Jared Swanberg of Valley City, who succeeded with his assignment partner, 17-year-old Dayln Limesand of Bowman, in assembling a computer.

“I like trying different stuff and learning about different software,” Swanberg said. “It's interesting.”

Limesand was excited when the two finished building the computer.

“I've always wanted to build a computer,” he said.

The computer-building activity gave both students a better idea of what they want to do after high school. Swanberg said he would like to attend either Valley City State University or North Dakota State University and Limesand said he would like to earn scholarships to go to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Managing Thursday's activity was Frank Egan, an SVACTC instructor. After minutes of zipping back and forth around the classroom to answer questions and provide encouragement, the busy instructor noticed a sea of raised hands and let out a comical shriek.

“Hands are up all over the place,” Egan cried.

The mentor proceeded to laugh and applaud as a confused student shifted his attention to a manual.
For 10 years, Egan has taught various computer classes at the career center, including computer maintenance, networking, Web design and introductory programming.

The instructor believes the BAIT Camp will prepare students for a successful future.

“Over 260 new IT jobs were created in North Dakota last year,” Egan said. “The camp gives them an introduction to various aspects of technology and prepares them for college.”

In addition to computer building, students have experienced activities in marketing, project management, LEGO robotics, networking and programming. Participants were even able to take part in a global positioning system scavenger hunt.

Some feel that the fields of business and information technology are no longer separate entities. According to VCSU Communications Director Doug Anderson, the two areas of study complement each other.

“It’s important for students to have a foundation in both fields,” Anderson said.

BAIT Camp is not limited to students with a focus in business and technology. According to Kerry Gregoryk, a VCSU business professor, the experience benefits all students.

“Anybody that wants to come is welcome,” Gregoryk said.

The local professor, who coordinated this year’s BAIT Camp, has worked at VCSU since 1997 and feels what students learn will help them when they graduate.

“They can see how what they learn is applied in real life,” Gregoryk said. “It helps them put together a career plan.”

This week, students traveled from as far away as Fargo, Grand Forks and Devils Lake, totaling around 30 participants for the camp. It will close this afternoon with a tour of Microsoft and Eide Bailly Technology Consulting in Fargo.