



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY FAIR BOARD TAPS CACTC STUDENTS TO BUILD BENCHES

Uniontown, PA – The wooden benches dotting the Fayette County Fairgrounds are a welcome sight to tired fairgoers every summer. This year, thanks to the efforts of carpentry students from the Connellsville Area Career and Technical Center (CACTC), fair patrons will have even more seating options available.

Students in Jerry Matthews' carpentry classes constructed four benches of treated lumber, which were sponsored by donors who wished to designate them in honor of friends and loved ones.

Fair board member Jennifer Deichert said she reached out to CACTC Workforce Development Coordinator Shawna Little after finding out that the usual builder was unavailable.

"Shawna and I collaborate on several different committees and boards, so I kind of knew that was something the vo-tech did," Deichert said, noting that she suggested to the board that the students may be able to complete the project and asked if she could reach out to Little.

The board agreed, and Matthews and his students were happy to help.

"I spoke to our carpentry instructor, and he was on board. He said, 'Absolutely,'" Little said of Matthews. "Since it was the end of the year, they were on a little bit of a time crunch."

Little said the fair board provided the lumber, and the students started the project on May 14.

"With people being distance learners because of COVID, it was kind of an 'all hands on deck' situation," Little said, explaining that every student who attended in-person carpentry classes worked on the benches.

Little said the benches were completed on May 25.

"They got them done very, very quickly. They were big benches," she said. "What was nice was that Jerry arranged with someone from the fair to bring us up a bench as kind of an example. It worked out really, really well."

"It was amazing, especially at the end of the year," Deichert said. "Most of the time, kids are kind of checked out those last couple of weeks. But Mr. Matthews was willing to step up and take this project on."

Deichert said she believes the carpentry students finished the benches about a day and a half ahead of their estimated completion date. All that is left to be done is for the memorial plaques to be engraved and attached to the benches, a task Little said was left incomplete because the school didn't have a router big enough for the job.

Deichert said fair building and grounds committee members Dave Biggerstaff and Chris Piwovar Sr. will have someone else do those engravings. She said the carpentry students did excellent work.

“They did a great job,” she said.

Little said the bench project was the perfect way for the carpentry students to gain some hands-on experience as well as perform a service.

“Hands-on experience is the whole reason why students enroll at the career and technical center,” she said, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to fewer such opportunities being available this school year. “I think this was a great way for them to get that hands-on experience and give back to the community.”

The 2021 Fayette County Fair is slated for July 29-August 7. The full schedule of events can be viewed at www.fayettefair.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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