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Board approves program expansions at Western Dakota Tech

The South Dakota Board of Education has approved several program expansions at Western Dakota Tech in Rapid City.

WDT's Law Enforcement Associate of Applied Science program will now include an option in Criminal Justice. Labor market information indicates strong demand for workers in criminal justice career fields now and well into the future. Students will complete classes in criminal justice, corrections, juvenile justice, criminal law, crime scene investigation and more.

The Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning program has been expanded to an AAS program and, beginning with fall 2014 enrollees, will include Refrigeration training. Through 2020, the need for technicians in this area is expected to grow 23.3 percent, according to the South Dakota Labor Market Information Center. Graduates of this program will be able to seek employment in a variety of settings, including HVAC/R companies and public entities. Graduates could also eventually start their own HVAC/R business.

In addition, WDT's one-year diploma program in Surgical Technology will transition to a two-year AAS program. According to the South Dakota Labor Market Information Center, the need for surgical technologists is expected to grow 22.1 percent by 2020. Students will take coursework in microbiology, pathophysiology, surgical procedures and more. This program will also provide training in soft skills such as communication and professionalism.

"Graduates of all these programs will now be even better prepared to meet the needs of employers statewide," said WDT President Mark Wilson. "These expansions, which are all in direct response to industry demand, clearly illustrate just how nimble program development at South Dakota's tech institutes can and must be."