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## NSCC COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY RECOGNIZES 228 GRADUATES

*ARCHBOLD, OHIO* –Northwest State Community College celebrated the 2026 graduating class at its spring Commencement Ceremony this past weekend, held at Founder’s Hall in Archbold. The ceremony recognized 228 graduates who completed an Associate degree or certificate program with the College during fall, spring or summer term, comprising a total of 253 awards (154 associate degrees and 99 short-term certificates). Seven students graduated via College Credit Plus, before they officially graduate from high school. Cassie Rickenberg, NSCC Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, noted that 81% of the graduating class lives in the six-county service area of Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Van Wert and Williams counties. Rickenberg also noted the students earning various honor society awards – 23 graduates are Phi Theta Kappa, nine graduates are Alpha Delta Nu (nursing), and one graduate is Kappa Beta Delta (business).

Dr. Todd Hernandez, NSCC President, shared the parallels of Commencement to the campus-wide “Elevate Northwest Ohio” initiative. Hernandez said, “Think about your journey here. Whether you started in College Credit Plus, participated in a workforce development program, or pursued a traditional degree, you have expanded your knowledge, honed your skills, and increased your potential.” Hernandez then invited Natalie Clauson to the podium to accept the President’s Outstanding Student Award.

Senator Jane Timken delivered the keynote address to the audience. Sen. Timken represents the 29<sup>th</sup> District as a Senator for the state of Ohio. Timken honored her late mother in her address, combining her words of wisdom with engaging, forward-looking sentiments for the graduates. Timken concluded her address with this summary: “Be true to yourself, know your value, and the value of a dollar. Work hard, be honest, and have fun!”

Jason Dewyse was selected to be the Student Speaker of Commencement. Dewyse, a 2024 graduate of Tinora High School, was actively involved in athletics, musical productions, 4-H, and also served as the Tinora Rams mascot “Rambo.” Dewyse pursued a degree in Agribusiness while remaining actively engaged in NSCC campus life through organizations such as Ag Grows Here, Cru, and TRIO-SSS. In his address to the graduating class, Dewyse said, “Northwest State has given us the tools to continue carving our dreams into a reality. I challenge everyone in this building to look for the opportunity to say ‘yes’, spread the love, and have fun.”

Near the conclusion of the Commencement ceremony, NSCC Chief Fiscal and Administrative Officer Jenny Thome presented the 2026 Distinguished Alumni recipients: Douglas Bernath (1979 NSCC graduate), Michael Kemerer (2001 NSCC graduate), Grayden McCashen (2012 NSCC graduate), and Kevin Whitlock (1996 NSCC graduate). Those interested in viewing the Commencement ceremony on-demand are invited to go to the NSCC YouTube channel ([@NorthwestStateCC](https://www.youtube.com/@NorthwestStateCC)).

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*Northwest State Community College is an accredited two-year, state-assisted institution of higher education that has served northwest Ohio since 1969. Northwest State is committed to providing a quality, affordable education with personal attention and small class sizes. The College offers associate degrees with numerous transfer options, short-term certificate programs, and workforce training programs designed to meet the needs of local businesses and industries. For more information, visit [NorthwestState.edu](https://NorthwestState.edu) or call 419.267.5511.*

**Media gallery:** <https://northweststate.smugmug.com/20260509-Spring-Commencement-MEDIA>