

Honorary Diploma Nomination Form

Consistent with the Central Community College (CCC) Honorary Degree Policy and Procedure, the Honorary Diploma will be awarded to an individual who has demonstrated sustained commitment, advocacy or investment to advance a specific program or its students. This honor recognizes long-standing programmatic impact rather than collegewide outcomes. The CCC President will have final approval of all honorary diplomas which will be awarded at a time scheduled between college representatives and recipient.

Name of nominated individual: Jim R. DeBord

List nominee's significant contributions (as outlined above): Jim DeBord worked a productive and rewarding career spending 33 years in the heavy equipment field. The skills he learned over his career helped him gain a high level of hands on proficiency operating a variety of equipment. Jim grew up in Glenvil, Nebraska, where he began his career in the skilled trades by following in his father's footsteps in heavy equipment. From an early age, Jim knew this was the career he wanted to pursue, and he built a lifetime of work rooted in dedication, craftsmanship, and pride in doing the job right.

Throughout his career, Jim has operated a wide range of heavy equipment, spending much of his working life as a highly skilled Finished Blade Operator. He is known for his strong work ethic, dependability, and commitment to quality. Jim believes deeply in hard work and accountability, often sharing the lesson that if you are not proud of your work, no one else will be. As equipment and technology evolved, Jim adapted alongside it, transitioning from cable to hydraulic systems and from traditional transit methods to lasers and GPS, demonstrating a willingness to learn and grow throughout his career. One of the projects he is particularly proud of is the Farwell Canal project from Sherman Dam to St. Paul, Nebraska, which reflects both his technical skill and his contribution to critical infrastructure in the region. Additionally, Jim played a key role as the Heavy Equipment Supervisor at the Roman L Hruska US Meat Animal Research Center near the Hastings campus.

Jim has a true passion for the heavy equipment profession as his interest in learning to run all types of equipment coupled with his love of the outdoors gave him a high level of career satisfaction. As such, he has become a true advocate for the Heavy Equipment Operator program at CCC. His belief in the program led him and his family to establish the Jim R. DeBord Scholarship in 2020. This scholarship is awarded to second year students through a competitive process so they may continue their education. Jim believes in the importance of completion as more exposure to as many different pieces of equipment and new technological improvements will make a student stand out in the profession.

In addition to providing financial support to students in the program through the endowed scholarship, Jim has offered his advice and wisdom to our faculty and students. Jim enjoys discussing the latest developments in the field and how the profession has developed from a team of horses to the mighty diesel engines of today. Each year during the scholarship presentation, students will pepper him with questions about those changes and they enjoy hearing his stories. His advice to students is to, "Go to heavy equipment school...and thus you will gain an understanding of the job you will be doing. I enjoyed my career! I'd do it all over again!"

Nomination submitted by: Christopher Waddle

Date: 02/13/2026