# Medford Area Public School District Moves Forward

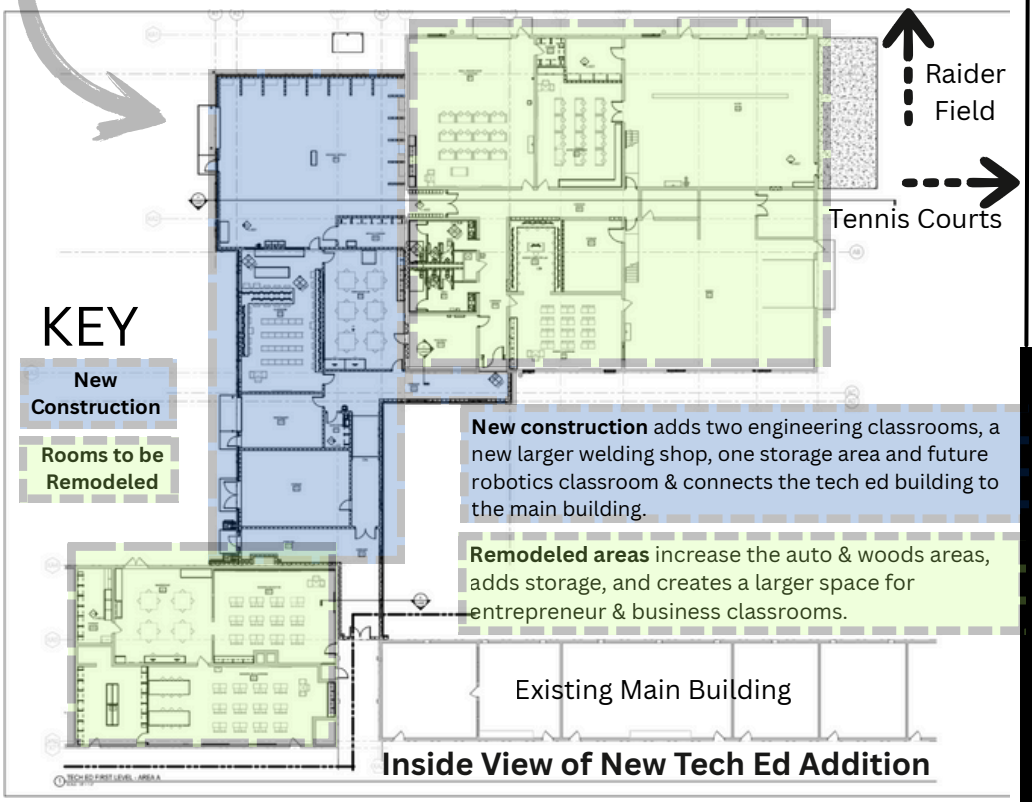
## *with Tech Ed Expansion and Remodel*

One year after residents of the Medford Area School District (MAPSD) approved a $22.6 million referendum, major progress is being made on a transformative expansion and remodeling project for the district's Technical Education building.

Outside View of New Tech Ed Addition (See blue area below)

Originally constructed in 1977, the tech ed building is undergoing significant updates to better serve today's students and prepare them for modern career and technical opportunities. The project includes both new construction and renovations designed to enhance hands-on learning in fields such as robotics, engineering, welding, and business.

Among the most notable changes will be a new corridor connecting the main high school building to the tech ed facility — a long-requested improvement for accessibility and safety. The expansion also includes four new classrooms: one dedicated to robotics, two for Project Lead the Way engineering courses, and a larger, state-of-the-art welding shop. A new maintenance storage area is also part of the plan.



**Inside View of New Tech Ed Addition**

In addition to these new spaces, the existing auto and woods classrooms and shops are being enlarged and remodeled to provide more room for equipment and student projects. New storage areas will also be added to help keep materials organized and accessible.

The renovations extend beyond the tech ed building itself. The current engineering and driver's education classrooms in the main building will be remodeled to create two new business classrooms. One of these will support the district's growing entrepreneurship program, which gives students hands-on experience running a school-based business that designs and sells Raider gear — including shirts, hats, and other spirit items.

**Tech Ed Continues on Page 2**

# Tech Ed Expansion & Remodel

*Continued from Pg 1*

This construction is being completed in conjunction with other new development on the south side of the building, which will make way for new science, art, and family and consumer education classrooms. More on this additional construction will be shared in future newsletters.

Construction crews have encountered some delays since starting work this summer, but district officials say the project remains on schedule. The goal is to have the new and remodeled spaces ready for students and staff by the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

**The late October sun rises over MASH's south construction site, where crews are building eight new classrooms for science, art, and family and consumer sciences.**

***Photo credit: Tracy Swedlund***

Superintendent Laura Lundy expressed gratitude to the community for its continued support. "This project represents a significant investment in our students' future," she said. "We're building spaces that will inspire innovation, collaboration, and real-world learning for decades to come."

**View of the tech ed building addition, seen from the main building.**

**View of the new tech ed building addition, seen from the north (Raider Field).**

# From the Shop Floor to the School Board:

## *A Medford Graduate's Commitment to Strengthen Education & the Trades*

**Jeff Peterson, 1981 Medford Graduate**

For Jeff Peterson, a 1981 graduate of Medford Area Senior High School, the road to success has always started close to home: in the family shop, with a wrench in hand and a lesson in hard work.

Today, Peterson is the president of James Peterson Sons, Inc, (JPS) a fifth-generation family construction business that's been part of the Medford landscape for over a century. With more than 200 employees and projects across Wisconsin, the company's reach stretches far beyond the local concrete trucks people see around town. But for Peterson, the story isn't about how far the company has gone, it's about how deeply it's rooted in community, family, and education.

"I grew up working in the shop with my brother and cousins," Peterson recalls. "We'd go down on Saturday mornings when we were about seven or eight and drive the end loader around. Then we'd wash cars and change oil. It was great."

That hands-on education continued throughout school. Peterson took every technical education class Medford offered, a foundation that inspired his career path. After graduation, he attended Wisconsin Rapids Technical School to study civil engineering, where he learned drafting and surveying, long before computer-aided design took over. Later, recognizing that a successful business needed more than field experience, he earned an accounting degree from Eau Claire Technical School.

Peterson's curiosity didn't stop there. He even earned his pilot's license in Florida, eventually flying part-time for Weather Shield's corporate aviation program, traveling across the country while maintaining his role in the family business. "Pretty cool for a guy from Medford," he laughs.

Back home, Peterson's dedication to community and family continued. He and his wife, Pam (also a Medford graduate), raised two children, Haley and Adam. Their son, Adam, now works in the family business and races professional snow cross for Polaris in the winter.

**Jeff Peterson served on the Medford School Board for nine years and was the president of the Wisconsin Road Builders Association.**

**Alumni Feature Continues on Page 4**

# Alumni Feature: Jeff Peterson, 1981 Graduate

*Continued from Pg 3*

Perhaps one of Jeff Peterson's greatest contributions to Medford has been his commitment to technical education and workforce development.

After years of hearing from parents asking how their kids could enter the construction industry, Peterson saw an opportunity to make a difference. Working with the Medford district, the Department of Transportation, and local trade unions, he helped create a program that connects high school students directly to careers in construction.


**In November, the MASH Highway Construction Skills students traded their morning lesson for a hands-on experience with Miron Construction, the general contractor for the district's referendum-funded projects. These students arrive at 7 a.m. each day, before regular classes, to earn their certification toward becoming skilled heavy equipment operators.**

The program, now known as Highway Construction Skills Training (HCST), offers students hands-on experience, safety training, CDL test preparation, and dual credit toward both high school and technical college, plus a direct path into the workforce. "It's working great," Peterson says. "We've hired around ten students who came through the program, and most are still with us. It's exciting to know you've made a difference."

Peterson's belief in giving back also led him to serve three consecutive terms on the Medford School Board, beginning in 2009. Motivated in part by his daughter, who has special needs, Peterson wanted to help the district better understand and support families like his. "You don't know what it's like until you live it," he says. "I wanted to bring that perspective to the table." He describes his time on the board as challenging but rewarding. "I don't think the board ever agreed on anything right away," he laughs, "but we'd talk it through, take a vote, and move on. That's what good boards do."

Recently, Peterson found himself coming back to where it all began. JPS was selected as the low bidder to complete the pipe installation for the new MASH construction project, a meaningful milestone for the Medford graduate.

From his early days behind the wheel of a water truck to leading a statewide construction company, Jeff Peterson is still paving new paths, shaped by family, forged through technical education, and dedicated to building both roads and the next generation.

# Real Skills. Real Jobs. Real Opportunities.


**Senior Corey McVicker is serving as a youth apprentice with Miron on the MASH project, gaining hands-on experience in architecture and construction.**

This semester, more than seventy MASH students are turning classroom time into real-world experience through job placements, mentorships, and apprenticeships--including senior Corey McVicker, who is apprenticing for Miron Construction for the high school additions and remodels.

McVicker is just one of many students who spend part of their day gaining real-world experience in the workforce. MASH offers three work-based programs, each providing a unique and valuable opportunity. To learn how to get your child enrolled or to mentor a student, contact the MASH guidance department.

**Employment Partnership** is MASH's most popular program, with over fifty students working in community jobs this semester. It gives high school seniors job experience while earning pay and school credit. The year-long program is designed for students building work skills or planning to enter the workforce after graduation. Participants attend morning classes and spend afternoons at local job sites. Applications are due in the spring of junior year, and placement depends on available positions.

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**Mentorship** is another popular option, with twenty-two students this semester gaining career experience at local businesses like Enerquip, Aspirus, and Sandbox. Seniors spend two hours each day at a job site, earning one high school credit while exploring career interests in a professional setting. While student mentors are unpaid, they gain valuable insights and skills to guide their future career choices.

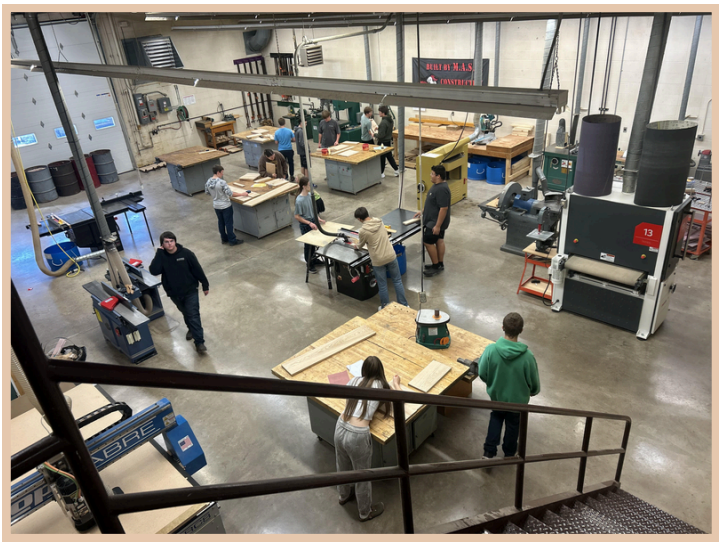
**Youth Apprenticeship** offers students a valuable pathway to gain advanced, hands-on experience in their chosen career fields. This one- or two-year program allows participants to earn wages and high school credit while learning directly from industry professionals. Apprenticeships span health sciences, manufacturing, IT, education, and more, and successful students earn a state-issued skills certificate recognized by employers across Wisconsin. This semester, seventeen students are enrolled in apprenticeships ranging from auto tech and electrical to education, plumbing, and banking.

Together, these programs help students bridge the gap between school and career—building skills, confidence, and connections for life after graduation.

# MASH Offers Robust Career Pathways in *Trades & Manufacturing*

Manufacturing is a cornerstone of Wisconsin's economy, contributing more than $70 billion annually and employing 1 in 6 workers across the state. Today's manufacturing careers are far from outdated; they're high-tech, creative, and in demand, offering opportunities in automation, robotics, welding, engineering, and more.

From construction and automotive repair to welding, machining, and electromechanical systems, MASH students have access to more than a dozen specialized classes that give them the tools, training, and confidence to succeed in technical fields.




**"Our goal is to give students as many on-ramps to success as possible—whether that's straight into a job, military, a technical school, college, or an apprenticeship," said MASH principal Jill Lybert. "Every course is built to be hands-on, relevant, and reflective of what employers are looking for today."**

## Metals

On the metal side, Metal Manufacturing introduces students to machining equipment and welding methods, while Metal Manufacturing II offers advanced welding skills including TIG welding and blueprint interpretation, with opportunities for transcripted/dual credit through Northcentral Technical College.

## Electromechanical

Students looking to enter industrial maintenance or engineering technology fields can dive into the Electromechanical course sequence. Starting with safety and electrical basics in Electromechanical I, the program progresses through AutoCAD, microcontrollers, fluid power systems, and SolidWorks 3D modeling. These advanced classes also offer dual credit opportunities and align with real-world applications in automation and modern manufacturing.

## Starting Early: Laying the Groundwork

For younger students just beginning to explore the trades, Introduction to Technology A and B offer foundational experiences. Tech A focuses on woodworking and manufacturing processes, while Tech B expands into blueprint reading, basic welding, and home maintenance, including creating a custom fishing rod (See picture to the right). A unique offering, Just for Girls Tech, encourages female students to explore woodworking and light welding in an empowering, supportive environment.

Those interested in more advanced craftsmanship can progress to Wood Manufacturing, where teamwork and quality control are central as students design and produce furniture. For students who want to take their skills even further, Cabinet Making allows them to individually craft complex projects using advanced tools and techniques.

## Automotive and Small Engine Training

For students drawn to mechanics, MASH offers a comprehensive path: Small Engines introduces students to internal combustion engine maintenance and repair, while the ABC's of the Automobile teaches practical car care skills. Students can then advance to Auto Mechanics I and II, covering everything from basic vehicle systems to computerized diagnostics and alignment.

With over 20 courses designed to build technical skill, problem-solving ability, and career readiness, MASH is helping students find purpose and prosperity through the trades.

# Building Skills and Homes

## *MASH Students Take on Their Third House*

For nearly five years, MASH students have had the opportunity to build their construction skills while constructing real houses. MASH teacher, Doug Eichman, has guided students through projects like the Raider Field concession stand and is now leading the construction of their third home.

These housing projects are made possible through a partnership with the Medford district and the City of Medford, which has donated three lots. Local construction and trades businesses also help mentor students and donate supplies and tools.

Each house has presented unique challenges. The current house is their largest project yet, featuring a basement, and is on track for completion by May. The first two houses were sold with the help of two local realtors after the school year ended.

Students spend three hours of their day onsite, and say the best part of the work is that it's "better than school"—even though it is school. Many of Eichman's students also work as apprentices in trades like plumbing and electrical in the afternoons through the district's work study program.