When a U-turn is the Right Turn
More than one route to your life work’s passion

By Elizabeth Whitchurch
Photos by Debbie Gregerson and Terry Anderson

Bethel, a 2005 Menomonie High School grad, followed the typical growth path through high school. He works the family farm, plays softball in the summer, attends church, hunts, fishes, and spends time with family and friends. All that fit into his plan. So when it came time for college, he applied at one four-year college, was accepted and attended classes. But after three-and-a-half years at the university, life seemed out of whack. So Bethel slowed down, pulled over and made a U-turn to see what route he’d missed.

What Bethel discovered upon retracing his steps was his passion. “I talked with my uncles on the family farm and decided I’d be happier working as a diesel mechanic. My passion is for tractors and operation of various types of machinery and new equipment back to work.”

The project he’s working on this year is a John Deere 4320. So far it (technical college) has more than exceeded what I expected, and I am very, very happy to say that now I wake up and can’t wait to go to class!” Bethel says. “I’d heard good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated. “So far it (technical college) has more than exceeded what I expected, and I am very, very happy to say that now I wake up and can’t wait to go to class!” Bethel looks forward to graduation in the spring of 2011, with more work at a dealership.

The project he’s working on this year is a John Deere 4320. So far it (technical college) has more than exceeded what I expected, and I am very, very happy to say that now I wake up and can’t wait to go to class!” Bethel says. “I’d heard good things about WITC’s Agricultural Power and Equipment Technician program from a mechanic at home in Durand. He said it was a good program. And now I’m working at that dealership, too.”

The technical college route was something he’d overlooked, assuming the four-year was where he was meant to be. “I wanted to experience the four-year college atmosphere,” he says. “And it was fun, but my grades are better now than they were then,” he says with a sly smile. He feels the schedule at WITC is more flexible, making it easier to work the farm and the dealership in conjunction with his schooling. “I actually learned more here (at WITC) in one week than I did in a year at the U,” Bethel says. “Not that it (university) wasn’t interesting or didn’t have good information, it just wasn’t my learning style.”

“I feel a technical college is more personable than a four-year liberal arts college,” Bethel says. “I also really like the hands-on approach a technical college offers. I’m very impressed with the teachers. They are teaching because they love what they are teaching and cannot wait to pass their knowledge on to the students.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.

“The reason I chose the ag mechanics program at WITC is because I’d heard many good things from many people about not only the instructors, but the course material and the way the program operated.

“If you have a question, you can ask it right away and they always do their best to answer it. At the university, everything was pretty much the same – go to class, listen to a lecture, take notes, take the test. It works for some people, but not me,” Bethel explains.