



MEDIA RELEASE

Miles Community College

2715 Dickinson Street, Miles City, MT 59301

800-541-9281 • milescc.edu • MccNews@milescc.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, November 13, 2020



IMAGE: Processed meat being packaged at a local processing plant

New Updates for MCC Meat Processing Program

MILES CITY, MONTANA: Miles Community College offered updates yesterday for its Meat Processing Program, one of the newest credited programs offered at the college. During a Facebook live-chat with Montana Farm Bureau Federation, MCC representatives explained some of the new positive features associated with their Meat Processing Program, including a hiring announcement for the Meat Processing Program Coordinator position.

The Meat Processing Program is a one-year certificate degree (two semesters as a full-time student), aimed at helping students to gain practical skills and knowledge for this technical industry. Students are able to complete all of their core classes online through MCC and then partner with local meat processing plants in their area to complete four internships of technical training.

Included in the updates announced yesterday was the approval for students to apply for Federal Financial Aid under the program. While normally a six-month process, the meat processing program was approved for the government aid program in just three days, according to MCC Agriculture Instructor Kim Gibbs. "This really shows you how valuable meat processing is. It's driven across the nation that meat processing is now on the forefront of everybody's minds," commented Gibbs.

Gibbs also announced the fulfillment of the Meat Processing Coordinator position. MCC has hired Tina Rutledge, currently of Terry, Montana to oversee the new program and its students. Tina grew up on a purebred cow-calf operational ranch in North-Central North Carolina before attending South Dakota State University and receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science. She recently worked in Glendive under an internship.

"I have had internships in four different states across the country which has allowed me to see the Agriculture Industry from various perspectives," commented Rutledge. "I am super excited to have the opportunity to use my diverse experiences to teach consumers where their meat comes from!"

While only recently implemented, Miles Community College, along with the Montana Meat Processors Association, had been working to develop this processing program for the last several years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the availability of new grants due to a processing shortage, MCC was able to secure funding to begin offering the course as of this fall. In August of 2020, MCC was awarded a \$117,000 Montana Meat Processing Infrastructure Grant, as part of the \$7.5 million of coronavirus relief funds awarded by Montana Governor Steve Bullock and the Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Instructor Gibbs is excited for the continuous progress the program has been making, along with the encouragement received from both agricultural organizations and the public. "This is something the industry obviously needs," Gibbs commented in yesterday's Facebook chat.

Along with Financial Aid and possible scholarships such as the Gianforte Trade Scholarship, students may also contact Job Service Miles City to see if they qualify for assistance with tuition, fees, books and supportive services, with availability depending on funding. Applications for these programs may be found on the college campus in the MCC Learning Center or the MCC Financial Aid Office, as well as the local Miles City Job Service office. For more information on this assistance, please contact Miles City Job Service at 406-232-8340.

Spring semester at MCC begins January 20, 2021 and students can apply for admissions at any time through the college website at www.milesc.edu/apply. Registration for classes opens Wednesday, November 18, 2020. Visit www.milesc.edu for updates.

-#-