

SteelDays at Clark



A high school competitor works on a welded piece in the Clark College welding lab.

Can you pass this welding pop quiz?

Q: As more than 155,000 welders in the U.S. approach retirement age, how many new welders will need to be trained by 2027?

- A. 155,000
- B. 200,000
- C. 360,000

The answer is C. The U.S. will need 360,000 new welding professionals by 2027, according to the American Welding Society. That translates into 90,000 welding jobs that need to be filled annually through 2027.



Regional employers came to the event to support the competitors.

On Friday, Oct. 18, the Clark College welding program welcomed SteelDays, a welding competition for local high school students to showcase the welding and fabrication industry. It's one of 25 SteelDays events organized by the American Institute of Steel Construction from October 14-18 around the U.S.

Attendees from high schools with welding programs in Battle Ground, Fort Vancouver, and Kelso school districts spent the day welding, receiving guidance from Clark welding instructors, and competing to win. Representatives from the SteelDays sponsors, including Industrial Source, Thompson, and Central Welding Supply came to support the students.



Left to right: Wade Hausinger and Tiffany Saari helped organize the event.

Wade Hausinger, instructor of welding technologies at Clark, said that Clark's relationships with local companies are important. He regularly visits welding employers around the region to learn the techniques they're using in their shops so he can teach current skills to Clark students.

He also shared that local companies are hiring from Clark. One student was hired at Vigor Aluminum Fabrication right after finishing the program and started at \$34.95 an hour. Vigor even brought some of their employees to Clark to learn some new welding skills from Hausinger.

Clark College's Welding program:



- Two-year degree, Associate of Applied Technology in Welding
- Five welding certificates
- Learn more here.

Photos: Clark College/Carly Rae Zent