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LOCAL NEWS

KC's Vega: taking I-CAPS to a brighter future

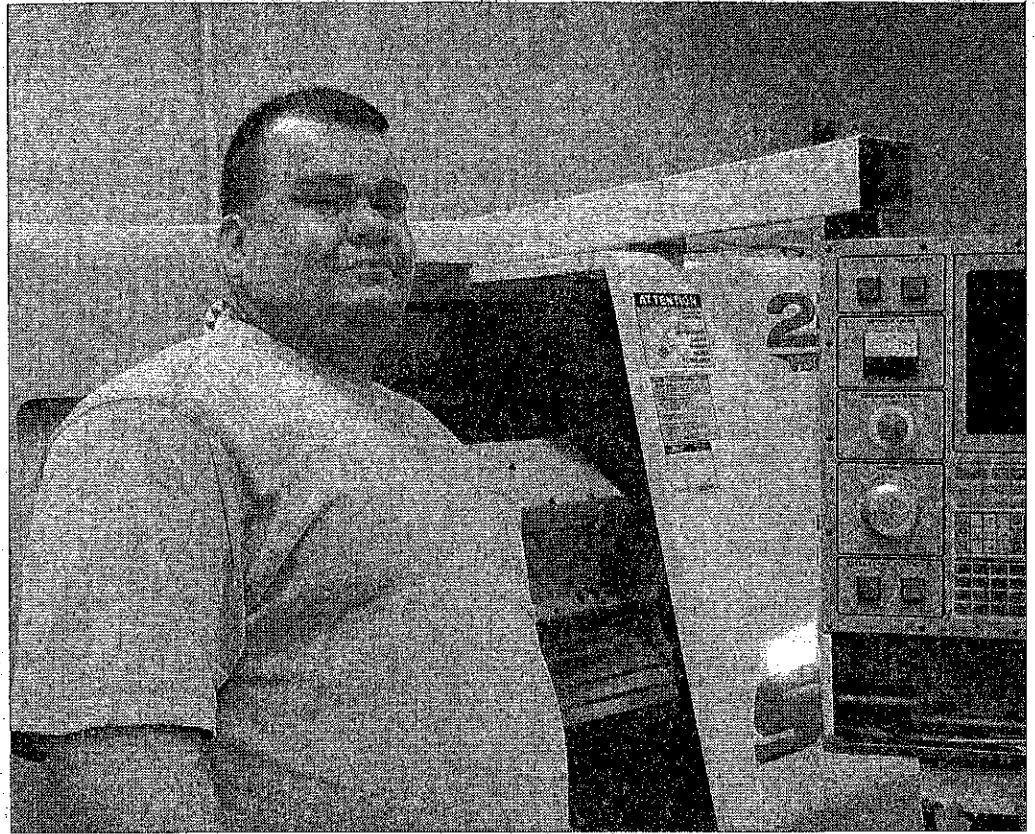
MALTA — Eduardo Vega lives in Rochelle and has held a variety of jobs since he dropped out of high school almost 15 years ago: line worker, forklift operator, sheer-cut machine operator. He has even pitched in to help his wife, Samantha, in her cleaning business. He has kept his family housed, clothed and fed. When he decided to get his GED through Kishwaukee College, he never anticipated that his decision would lead him to a much better employment opportunity as a Certified Production Technician.

"I didn't know about the I-CAPS program," he said. "Now I have a GED and I am preparing for a great job in manufacturing."

I-CAPS stands for Illinois Career and Academic Preparations Systems and is a unique program that allows qualified students to complete their GED (high school equivalency credential) while they simultaneously work toward a certificate in a career field. In the Adult Education and Transition Programs division at Kishwaukee College, students in I-CAPS can work toward becoming a Certified Production Technician (CPT).

In two semesters, I-CAPS students can earn their GED, complete 13 college credits toward a certificate in manufacturing, and receive up to four Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) certificates. If students are interested in pursuing more training, they can choose to continue on to earn a two-year Associate in Applied Science degree in Automated Engineering Technology/Computer Numerical Control (CNC).

During the Fall semester,



Eduardo Vega is enrolled in the Illinois Career and Academic Preparations Systems (I-CAPS) at Kishwaukee College. As a student in I-CAPS, Eduardo completed his GED while also taking classes to become a Certified Production Technician. For more information on the I-CAPS program, contact Adult Education and Transition Programs at Kishwaukee College at 815-825-2086, ext. 3111 or visit www.kishwaukeecollege.edu/go/aetp.

while he was working on his GED and taking an I-CAPS support course, Eduardo was also enrolled in Introduction to Manufacturing and Safety and Machine Shop Math I. He earned seven hours of college credit while he prepared for his GED. Eduardo completed his GED in December.

"I wanted to get my GED so I would be more job ready," he said. "I had hoped someday to go to college. With I-CAPS, I am already in college. I have a lot of work experience, but I wanted to do something that

was more permanent. This program lets me do that."

This spring semester, Eduardo is taking college classes in Metrology, Manufacturing Maintenance, and Manufacturing Process. In addition to the three manufacturing classes for I-CAPS, he is in an I-CAPS Support Class that focuses on job readiness skills. He said, "When I complete this semester, I will be ready for an internship."

Looking over his path to I-CAPS, Eduardo is thoughtful. "I dropped out of high school

because I was stubborn and didn't want to do anything," he said. "Any chance I had, I threw it all away. Now I bring home blueprints and stuff and I show my kids what I am learning. It really impacts them. With I-CAPS, I got my GED and I got a new chance for a better future."

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