



## Washington County Community College Graduate Finds Dream Job Working with Dead River Company

### *Alumni Profile of the Month*

Sometimes, what we're looking for is right in our own backyard – a truth that Mark Roussel has uncovered after following a fairly circuitous route that took him all over the state before he returned to the Calais area and secured his ideal job. A graduate of various mechanical programs at Washington County Community College, Roussel now enjoys employing his knowledge as a driver for Dead River Company.

As a young man growing up in Princeton, Roussel recalls that he “didn’t have much interest” in becoming a mechanic, but he loved heavy equipment trucks. Attending Woodland High School in Baileyville, Roussel was able to participate in the St. Croix Regional Technical Center’s truck driving program, attaining his CDL by the time he graduated from High School.

Unsure of what he wanted to do for his future career, Roussel enrolled at a college in the Bangor area to take the game warden program but because of financial reasons he would not be able to continue. After a few work opportunities fell through, Roussel saw it as the perfect opportunity to enroll in the Heavy Equipment Operation [HEO] program at WCCC.

WCCC’s Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance programs are extremely popular programs. These programs prepare students for operations and maintenance jobs in the forestry, trucking, earth-moving, or construction industries. Through intensive shop and field oriented courses, students are introduced to a variety of heavy equipment and learn to operate and maintain, repair and rebuild it. After visiting the college, Roussel knew WCCC was the place for him. The instructors in the program, “helped me a lot,” Roussel said. He explained that his past work experience gave him initial familiarity with many of the concepts students struggle with, and the instructors recognized and encouraged his aptitude. During his time at WCCC, he was able to work on all types of heavy equipment. Following the advice he’d received from a past supervisor, Roussel worked on all the equipment that WCCC had to offer. He took advantage of the new equipment, as well as the aged equipment. When he graduated and returned to work as an operator, the bulldozer Roussel ran was almost identical to the one he’d been practicing on.

After spending a few years working for different companies around Maine, Roussel decided it was time to return to college. He enrolled in the Powersports and Small Engine program at WCCC, with the hopes he would be able to enroll in the popular Heavy Equipment Maintenance [HEM] program in the future. He knew he could use the small engine knowledge to repair his own vehicles, which he now had several of. “After taking that program, I loved it. I graduated from the Powersports program a much better technician.” He opted to stay at WCCC that following fall to take the Engine Specialist program and to enroll in the HEM program. Roussel enjoyed the HEM program and found it to be very rewarding. “If I needed support, the instructors and staff were always there.”

After graduation, with all his credentials and experience in hand, he walked into the local Dead River Company and asked if they were hiring. When he shared his education and experience, they hired him immediately as a driver. Praising the company for its family-based atmosphere, Roussel expresses that it has been the “best job I’ve ever had”, an enthusiasm that has contributed to the company sending him to the southern part of the state to assist drivers and to visit the head office in South Portland. While there, he was thrilled to learn how Dead River Company’s oil operations began in Calais originally.

Roussel is already looking forward to taking on more responsibilities with Dead River Company, including assisting with repairs and placing and replacing propane tanks. “No matter what I do – I think I’ll always drive – I want to stay at Dead River Company.” For Roussel, it represents finding nothing less than his dream job in his own neighborhood, using the training and support he received at WCCC.