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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Patriotic Project

CVTC groundskeepers create flag design in campus lawn

Eau Claire, WI - A Chicago Cubs cap displays his baseball allegiance as Dustin Peterson, the lead groundskeeper at Chippewa Valley Technical College as he goes about his duties, which include taking care of the lawns at five Eau Claire campuses. He loves baseball and is especially a fan of how ballpark groundskeepers create amazing designs in the outfield grass.

Now he has created one of his own. For the Independence Day holiday, Peterson and assistant Jake Sabel created an American flag in the lawn at the Energy Education Center at 4000 Campus Road.

"Jake and I were talking about doing something special for the Fourth on July," Peterson said. "And I've always wanted to do something like this."

Peterson and Sabel, who will be a student in CVTC's Landscape, Plant and Turf Management program in the fall, collaborated to come up with the concept and plans. For Peterson, it wasn't just for love of country that he wanted to create the flag design. It's also a love of his profession.

"I also teach a turf management class here and I wanted to showcase what we do in the industry," Peterson said. "I want to show that it's not just mowing lawns."

Contrary to widespread belief, designs in baseball outfields and other locations aren't generally cut by mowing at different heights. Instead, the grass is rolled in different directions, with the contrast creating the design.

"I made my own roller with sand to weigh it down," Peterson said. "For the stars, I made a frame and we brushed the grass with a broom."

Peterson had some high-powered help to get him started on his first design project. He consulted with David Mellor, head groundskeeper at Fenway Park in Boston, who is renowned for the designs.

"I emailed him about what I wanted to do and didn't really expect to hear back from him, but three days later, he called me," Peterson said. "He gave me some pointers, like suggesting I use water to help that grass lay down better, since I didn't have to worry about people slipping on a playing field."

Peterson and Sabal worked on the project on Wednesday, July 3, completing it in about four hours.

Peterson was unsure of how long the design would last. A natural stripped pattern from mowing can last up to five days, but rain forecast for the Fourth may affect the lifespan.

Peterson said the project was harder than he expected, but he was pleased with the way the design turned out. He added that he definitely like to try it again.

“Maybe next year, I’ll put a wave in the flag,” he said.

With over 97 programs offered both online and on-campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College delivers superior, progressive technical education which improves the lives of students, meets the workforce needs of the region, and strengthens the community. CVTC programs are designed with input of business and industry to prepare graduates for today’s jobs, with 95 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$46,816.

Cutline:

CVTC Lead Groundskeeper and assistant Jake Sabel work on a flag design in the lawn of the CVTC Energy Education Center in Eau Claire on July 3.

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