



Media Contact

Tami Moehring

South Central Service Cooperative

tmoehring@mnsccsc.org

507-215-3705



Nitro-X Summer Camp Sparks Career Exploration Through Hands-On Transportation Experiences

July 23, 2026

Middle school students spent three exciting days at Minnesota State University, Mankato discovering that learning about careers can be just as thrilling as crossing the finish line.

Hosted at Minnesota State University, Mankato, the Nitro-X Summer Camp introduced students entering grades 6–8 to the world of transportation careers through immersive, hands-on learning experiences. Throughout the camp, participants explored career pathways in automotive technology, diesel technology, and collision repair while developing technical skills, teamwork, creativity, and confidence.

Rather than simply learning about transportation careers in a classroom, students experienced them firsthand. Campers assembled and customized RC car bodies using professional collision repair techniques and paint booths, participated in technical learning sessions, explored transportation technologies, and visited industry partners to see professionals at work. The experience culminated in an exciting Race Day Showdown, where students put their driving skills to the test on a timed RC course.

The camp is part of a broader effort to introduce students to career possibilities before they enter high school. By combining engaging activities with authentic industry experiences, Nitro-X helps students begin connecting their interests with future educational and career opportunities in one of Minnesota's high-demand workforce sectors.

Support for the Mankato camp was provided through the South Central Perkins Consortium, administered by South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC). Through

Perkins V funding, the consortium works with regional school districts and South Central College to expand career awareness and exploration opportunities, helping students discover career pathways while strengthening connections between education and workforce needs.

"Career exploration is most impactful when students have the opportunity to experience it firsthand," said Gwenn Wolters, Career and Technical Education Coordinator at South Central Service Cooperative. "Nitro-X gives middle school students the chance to discover careers they may never have considered while building confidence, technical skills, and an understanding of how their interests can connect to future education and workforce opportunities. Experiences like this help students begin seeing what's possible long before they make decisions about high school courses and career pathways."

Middle grades career exploration plays an important role in helping students make informed decisions as they prepare for high school coursework and future career pathways. Experiences like Nitro-X expose students to careers they may not have previously considered while demonstrating how technical skills, problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork are applied in real workplaces every day.

Nitro-X also highlights the value of partnerships between education and industry. By bringing together colleges, educators, and transportation professionals, students gain meaningful exposure to careers while building confidence through hands-on learning and interaction with skilled professionals.

Programs like Nitro-X align closely with SCSC's commitment to expanding Career and Technical Education opportunities across southern Minnesota. Through the South Central Perkins Consortium, SCSC helps schools provide meaningful career exploration experiences that inspire students, strengthen workforce readiness, and build the next generation of skilled professionals.

As industries continue to seek talented technicians and skilled workers, experiences like Nitro-X Summer Camp help students see that exciting, rewarding careers can begin with curiosity, hands-on learning, and the opportunity to explore what is possible.

Interested in learning more?

To learn more about Nitro-X Summer Camp, middle grades career exploration, or other Career and Technical Education opportunities available through the South Central Perkins Consortium, contact:

Gwenn Wolters

Career & Technical Education Coordinator
South Central Service Cooperative

gwolters@mnsccsc.org