

# Register-News

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## Course discussion



Mt. Vernon Township High School AVC Director Rob Knutson, left, holds a round-table discussion with Robert Hyman, director of the North Egypt EMS System (center) and Tammy Martin, the Health Core Skills class instructor. Seated behind Martin from view is Belle Rive Fire Chief Lance Thackery. The discussion was about the new first responder course which will be added to the Health Core Skills class next fall. Students who pass the certification exam will then be eligible to hold a license from the state of Illinois. KANDACE MCCOY/REGISTER-NEWS

## MVTHS Area Vocational Center adds first responder course

By KANDACE MCCOY

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MT. VERNON — An addition to the Mt. Vernon Township High School Area Vocational Center's Health Core Skills class will now allow area junior and senior students to become licensed, upon passing the certification exam, as first responders.

The addition will begin with the 2009-2010 school year and creates a "seamless curriculum" for area AVC students between secondary and post-secondary education, according to AVC Director Rob Knutson.

"We started to look at different programs [for Health Occupations]," Knutson explained Tuesday at a round-table discussion. The discussion was attended by Health Core Skills Instructor Tammy Martin, Robert Hyman, director of the North Egypt EMS System, Belle Rive Fire Chief Lance Thackery and Betty Musgrave of Partnerships for College and Career Success.

"Tammy came in mid-year with suggestions for introducing Emergency Medical Training into the class," he continued. "After some research, came the new mar-

riage with the first responder course."

Martin explained that she contacted the state of Illinois to see what adding the course to the curriculum would entail and also consulted Hyman.

"I realized that we were already doing parts of [the course] prior to the job shadowing," she said. "This will be more structural. There are seven modules and will be nationally recognized. It fit well into the program and I felt we could include another subject."

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## AVC

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Under the current Health Occupations Program, juniors and seniors in the Health Core Skills class take medical terminology during the first semester — which is a dual credit course through Rend Lake College. During the second semester, students are rotated through clinical departments such as X-ray, occupational therapy, physical therapy, laboratory, respiratory therapy, surgery, and dietary among others.

By adding the first responder course, students will also be trained in CPR/First Aid/AED and monitored by Hyman, who will be administering the licensure exam provided by the state of Illinois. The seven modules covered in the first responder course are preparatory; airway; patient assessment; circulation; illness and injury; childbirth and children; and EMS operations.

"Anytime we look at making adjustments to curriculums, we ask, 'Does it serve local or regional demand?'" Knutson said. "This type of program has the propensity to help others in other communities."

Thackery agreed. "[The

fire department] thrives on volunteerism. The first level for a firefighter is to be first responder-certified for emergency medical calls. I fully support this program because it will inspire young people to become first responders."

Hyman explained that though fire departments often provide mutual aid to one another, having extra volunteer first responders on call would be beneficial to the area.

"We have a lot of dedicated volunteers in this area, but we have a lot older population [of first responders]," he clarified. "As that population grows [more] older, we need to have others step in."

Musgrave speculated the program could be a model for the entire state. "This is going to be a neat thing for students," she said. "I hope it will expand to more males and females."

Knutson said the course does not require new textbooks or equipment, however Hyman replied the North Egypt EMS System will "ensure they have what they need."

"The talent is here," Knutson added, "it's just a

matter of exposing the opportunities."

Five high schools currently participate in the MVTHS AVC program throughout Jefferson and Wayne counties, representing nearly 300 high school junior and seniors.