

Metro, MAT team for diesel mechanic class

By Bob Glissmann

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Metro Area Transit had the diesel engines at its Omaha headquarters. Metro Community College needed a place to offer a diesel technology program.

The two hooked up, and now 12 students — 10 of them MAT employees — are learning about diesel engines in MAT's shop at 22nd and Cuming Streets.

Curt Simon, MAT's senior director of operations, said the first class, part of a planned associate's degree program for diesel service technicians, came about during talks over putting a bus transfer center on Metro's south Omaha campus.

Dwayne Probyn of the Workforce Development Institute at Metro said the college is glad to team up with MAT.

"We were lucky to find in MAT an opportunity to help us shoulder the cost of such a program," he said. "The diesel program is a very capital-intensive program: big tools, big engines. You need large areas to support

such programs."

MAT let the program have 10 diesel engines that had been taken out of service and which students can take apart. MAT's shop has the cranes needed to move the engines around.

Dan Murcek, who has been with MAT 25 years, is taking the class. He has been working on wheelchair lifts on MAT's buses and is the coordinator overseeing the rehabilitation of MAT's retro buses.

Murcek said that even though he probably won't switch to working on bus engines, the class is helping him become a more well-rounded mechanic.

Students in the program also serve as interns at area businesses.

Diesel technology programs also are offered at community colleges in Milford, Norfolk and Council Bluffs.

The first session in Metro's program will be offered again next fall. People interested in the class may call Roger Johnson at 457-2578.



JEFF BEIERMANN/THE WORLD-HERALD

Brian Kocanda tears apart a diesel engine at the Metro Area Transit shop at 22nd and Cuming Streets as part of a Metro Community College class.