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Students meet 'Challenge' through Corle's

By Tyna Walker-Lay
Gazette Staff Writer

IMLER — More students may take advantage of a career development program through an expanding partnership between a local manufacturer and a non-profit organization that aims to foster career success.

Corle Building Systems, Inc. of Imler has increased its participation in The Challenge Program, a Johnstown-based organization that works to connect businesses and schools to prepare students for the workplace.

The company had been involved in The Challenge Program for several years, but its participation grew to another level when it signed on as a major corporate partner in 2016.

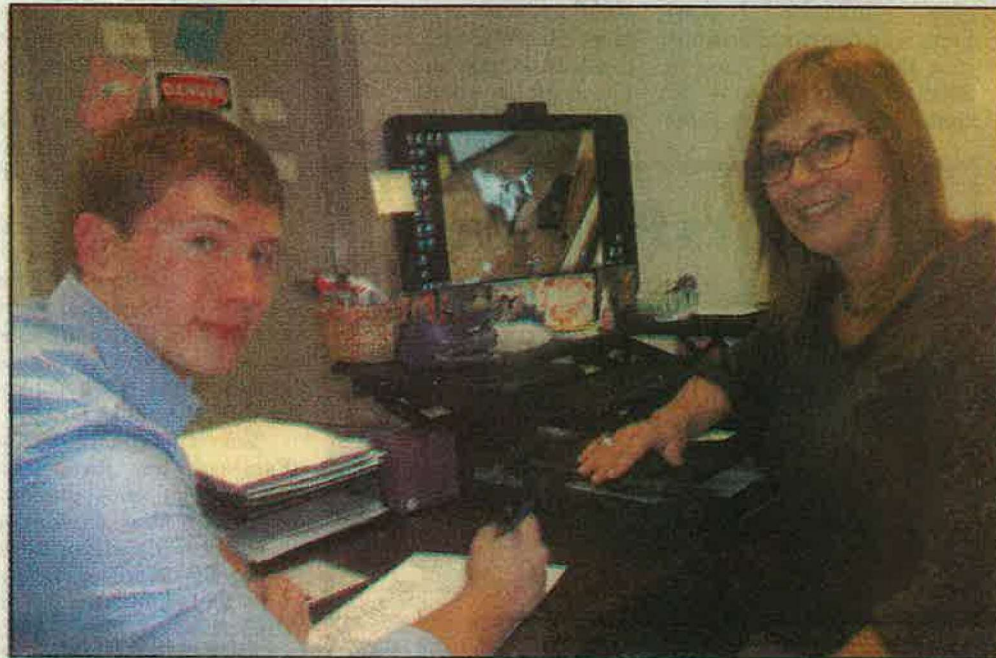
The Challenge Program works to create career opportunities for students by developing workforce success components. Students in grades 10 through 12 are challenged in five different categories that support good work habits: attendance, participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) programs, community service, and academic improvement along with academic excellence, a

press release from The Challenge Program said.

The Challenge Program had been involved in Chestnut Ridge and the Bedford County Technical Center but with its expansion, it will now conduct outreach to additional schools in the area: Bedford Area High School, Everett High School and Tussey Mountain High School, with a new summer learning experience for Bedford County and Claysburg-Kimmel High School students, according to Kevin Ziance, financial controller at Corle Building Systems, and Anna Gibbs, program operations manager with The Challenge Program.

Aubrey Smith, 18, of Schellsburg, graduated from Chestnut Ridge High in 2016, said he found success through The Challenge Program.

Smith said he heard about Corle Building Systems in a STEM school assembly when he was a senior. What stood out to him the most was "that the jobs were not all about grades," and more about a hands-on kind of opportunity. "I always had good attendance, and I was always doing extra stuff in my free time with drafting. I'd finish my work sooner than every-



Gazette Photo/Tyna Walker-Lay

From left, Aubrey Smith, 18, sits in the office Thursday of Dani McGrath, human resource manager at Corle Building Systems, Inc. in Imler. Smith was hired recently as a full-time employee of the company, after being involved in the partnership between The Challenge Program, Inc. and his new employer before he graduated from Chestnut Ridge High School last year.

one else," Smith said. He worked with his CAD teacher, Keith Fleege, to develop his drafting skills, so when Dani McGrath, human resource manager at Corle Building Systems, emailed Fleege and asked to meet with his three top students, Smith was one of

them, McGrath said.

Smith said at first, he thought he might attend college right away. In the meantime, Smith accepted a part-time job in CAD, (computer-aided drafting), with Corle Building Systems.

At the end of his proba-

tionary period, he was hired into a full-time position, has had his salary increased, and is now receiving full benefits, McGrath said.

McGrath said that for Smith's interview, he came in well-dressed, well-spoken, and was punctual. She

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