



March 2025 | *Spotlight on Regional Career Pathways*

Mineral Point Student's Passion for Agriculture and Engine Repair Leads to Career at John Deere

A Mineral Point High School student has successfully turned his passion for agriculture and engine repair into a promising career at John Deere, thanks to the guidance provided through his Academic and Career Plan (ACP) and Career Pathways.

Every CESA 3 school supports students by developing personalized ACPs that help them explore their interests and map out potential career paths. These plans are further enhanced by Career Pathway maps across 10 high-demand industries, allowing students to align their coursework, post-secondary training, and extracurricular involvement—such as participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) like FFA—with their future goals.

Read how Joseph Robinson's journey exemplifies how ACPs and Career Pathway maps empower students to transform their passions into rewarding careers in this article by Agri-View.

Tractor passion leads to career

By Jacob Swanson for AgriView

Mineral Point, WI - When Joseph Robinson was a teenager, he bought an antique tractor – a 1953 John Deere 50 model. From that tractor has spawned a passion, a career path and recently an FFA National Proficiency Award. A member of the Mineral Point FFA chapter, Robinson became the program's first winner of a national proficiency award, for his work in entrepreneurship – agricultural mechanics repair and maintenance.



After acquiring his antique tractor, Robinson started by changing the oil, fixing coolant and oil leaks, and gathering the tools needed. He then while in high school started working with a local mechanic for help in repairing tractors – and became good at it.

On his first day he was assigned to tear down an old diesel engine to see what he knew, and go from there. He then started taking apart other engines for parts, earning more trust and being able to do more on his own.

“It was a passion for him as soon as he tore apart that first piece of equipment,” said his dad, Mike Robinson,

who's also his FFA adviser.

Joseph Robinson grew up on A&M Farms, a 325-acre beef farm owned by his parents, Mike and Amy Robinson. He was a "big help," Mike Robinson said, admitting he doesn't particularly prefer fixing equipment. "But that's right up Joseph's alley," he said.

"That's just the way his mind works," Mike Robinson said. "He soaks it all in."

Joseph Robinson is now in his second year in the John Deere Tech program at Lake Land College in Mattoon, Illinois. He's also an intern with a John Deere dealership in Freeport, Illinois. And his work earned him a National FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award in October during the 97th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis.

He was one of four finalists at the convention. His father said he didn't hear a single word after the event host said his son's first name.

"(I was just) taking it all in," Mike Robinson said. "I know how hard he has worked for this. He said it was good to see that hard work pay off."

Joseph Robinson said, "I thought my interview went well, but I didn't know. I just didn't know what was going to happen at convention, so it was quite the surprise."

Winning the award has been the highlight of his FFA career, he said, though he's also had quite a bit of success in other areas. He qualified for nationals after winning state as part of a livestock-judging team and has won two state proficiency awards.

FFA has been always been a big part of his life. He's been attending events since a very young age, with his dad being an FFA adviser for 25 years. His brother Johnny is a sophomore in high school, and his sisters Annie and Ellie are seniors. All three are involved in FFA.

"I started going to FFA events when I was just a baby," Joseph Robinson said. "I've been in it my whole life. I've really liked it, through and through. It's been neat seeing my siblings succeed in similar ways to me and in different ways also."

Mike Robinson said it's been unique to wear the hat of FFA adviser and father at the same time. In a moment like that in Indianapolis, he felt "a lot of pride." There's also a lot of pride in Joseph's commitment to helping other people, which he said is one reason his son does what he does. He knows he helps somebody," Mike Robinson said.

Joseph Robinson plans to remain in Illinois for a while after graduation, to help the people of Freeport with their equipment. But eventually he said he'd like to come back home to the Mineral Point area.

"I really like the community there and know a lot of neighbors," he said. "I would definitely like to go back and farm there alongside my parents and kind of do my own thing as well."

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