



Sophomore Chad Holman practices welding on scrap metal as part of an introduction to equipment and machinery in his Ag Mechanics class. Third-year teacher Seth Swallow hopes to restart the welding program at Jay County soon if finances and certification can be obtained. Welders are in demand nationwide, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor.

# New Pathway Heats Up Hopes for future welding program

**W**ith the employment outlook for welders projected to grow 15 percent by the year 2020, it's no wonder Ag Mechanics teacher Seth Swallow is taking a long hard look at starting a program at Jay County.

"Whenever I talk with industry leaders about their needs, it always comes back to welding," Swallow said.

A master carpenter by trade and a welder by "passion," Swallow currently teaches a beginning adult welding class at the John Jay Center for Learning, in addition to his high school classes.

Swallow, who also has his Master of Education, says he'd like to return to the classroom and earn his certification as

a SWE/SWI Inspector "to better serve his students and the community."

If plans go as projected, students could have a welding program at Jay County in the foreseeable future.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says training for welders, cutters, solderers and brazers may range from a few weeks of school or on-the-job training to several years of combined school and on-the-job training for highly skilled jobs.

As part of the proposed welding course, students who pass would earn entry level certification from the American Welding Society (AWS), in addition to dual credit opportunities from Vincennes and Ivy Tech, with the potential for credits at additional

post-secondary schools.

Currently, students get a sampling of Swallow's proposed welding program in his Ag Mechanic's class.

"I already spend a minimum of 10 weeks with my kids now."

Included in the coursework are the study of metallurgy, chemical and physical properties, electrical currents and distortion of metals.

"It's a big time science. You have to really know your metals if you want to be a big-time welder."

"The end game is to do what is best for the community," Swallow said. "We know not every student needs to go to college, and we also recognize our valuable position and ability to make a difference in many kids lives."

## JAY COUNTY AGRICULTURE COURSES AND INSTRUCTORS:

### Seth Swallow

- Agricultural Mechanization I
- Agricultural Mechanization II

### Melissa Wolters

- Adv. Life Science, Animals
- Adv. Life Science: Foods
- Adv. Life Science: Plant and Soil

\* SAE, an agricultural education program, is made up of three integrated parts: Classroom instruction, FFA and SUPERVISED AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE (SAE)

### Brittany Bridges

- Food Science
- Fundamentals of Agricultural Science & Business
- Horticulture Science
- Horticulture Science/Greenhouse
- Landscape Management
- Natural Resource Management

### Cody Linville

- Agri. Business Management
- Agri. Mechanization/Building
- Animal Sci./Animal Production

The CNC lathe needs some repair attention from senior Austin Thornburg, a senior student in the Ag Mechanics class. Students get exposure to a variety of machines and their workings in this introductory level class. The agriculture program at Jay County consists of four full-time instructors in classes that range from Horticulture to Agricultural Business Management and includes membership in SAE.



The swing of the sledge hammer on metal is taken by senior Zach Johnson. Students get an introduction to welding in Ag Mechanics amounting to roughly 10 weeks. Students also get a variety of instruction and lab experiences in the class, including the study of metals and their various properties.



Welding student Tristin Riojas, junior, discusses his class project with third-year Jay County Ag Mechanics teacher Seth Swallow. Swallow graduated from Wilmington College in Ohio with a bachelor degree in Agriculture, and worked in industry for 10 years before becoming a teacher. He also has a Master of Education. "I am a master carpenter by trade...I am intrigued about learning more about welding," Swallow said. "The four of us (Jay County's agriculture teacher team) looked at where we were heading. The school used to have a welding program... We're going to learn side by side."