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## Press Release

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### **Minder, Reese Named Vocational Trainers of the Year**

JUNEAU, Alaska—The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has named Tom Minder the Post Secondary Vocational Training Administrator of the Year and Melissa Reese the Secondary Vocational Training Instructor of the Year for 2009.

“Vocational education is a critical component of our Alaska workforce investment system,” Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. “Vocational education, also known as career and technical education, helps keep students in school, reduces dropout rates, improves grades and increases entry into the workforce or postsecondary education.”

Only one in five Alaska jobs requires a four-year bachelor’s degree or more – however many of the rest do require education and training after high school. In Alaska, these post-secondary training needs are served by a variety of institutions, including the University of Alaska system, the Alaska Vocational Technical Center, regional training centers, joint apprenticeship training centers and the private sector.

“Tom and Melissa have joined a select group of Alaskans whose contributions are significantly improving and promoting career and technical education,” AWIB Chair Jim L. Lynch said.

“Nominations for these prestigious awards come from an Alaska business or industry.”

Minder is the apprenticeship coordinator for the Kornfeind Training Center in Fairbanks, which is part of the Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship and Training Trust. He was chosen for his professional practice, community engagement, leadership in professional development and attention to diversity. He has been an instructor and administrator for 28 years, and a member of the Inside Wireman Curriculum Review and Development Committee that is responsible for the national curriculum used by all IBEW/NECA JATCs.

Reese, who teaches communication technologies at Valdez High School, was chosen for her innovative programs that are serving to improve and promote career and technical education in Alaska, particularly her creative and innovative approach to teaching students communications skills. She is also VHS’s curriculum director, CTE director and the Alaska state advisor for Business Professionals of America. Reese served a three-year tour in the U.S. Army as an automated data telecommunications center operator.

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Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
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#### **Photo Attachments**

[Melissa Reese with Labor Commissioner Click Bishop](#)