

Harrisonburg 450 and Safety Glasses Featured in Local Newspaper Project Donates 1.1K Pairs Of Safety Glasses To MTC

By ERIN FLYNN Daily News-Record



Page Sencindiver, with the Virginia Elks Safety Glasses Project drops off a donation of 1,100 glasses to Massanutten Technical Center on Monday Morning



MTC Director Kevin Hutton loads the boxes of safety glasses donated by the Elks.

HARRISONBURG — Students at Massanutten Technical Center have new glasses to round out their back-to-school outfits.

But these spectacles, courtesy of Harrisonburg Elks Lodge No. 450, are about safety, not fashion.

Students in almost all of the school's 20 career programs, even computer repair and networking, are required to wear safety glasses, even if sharp objects or chemicals aren't in sight.

"We basically use safety glasses in all the classes," said Kevin Hutton, director of the center, which is operated jointly by Harrisonburg City and Rockingham County public schools. "Just to be on the safe side, we provide a pair of safety glasses for every student."

The glasses are valued at \$12 to \$20 a pair, but MTC received 1,100 of them for free. For the eighth year, the city's Elks Lodge donated enough glasses for the students, as well as some leftovers.

"Getting some extra glasses gives us the opportunity to give [the students] glasses even when they, unfortunately, lose them," Hutton said.

And the Elks don't skimp on the donation, said Page Sencindiver, chairman of the club's scholarships and Elks Safety Glasses programs.

“These are safety glasses employers are purchasing for their employees,” he said.

The donation, which saved MTC more than \$13,000, is part of Virginia Elks Glasses Project.

The project is a statewide initiative that provides school divisions with free safety glasses, Sencindiver said.

This year, Elks Lodge No. 450 also donated 150 pairs of glasses to Harrisonburg City Public Schools and will drop off 550 more to Rockingham County Public Schools on Thursday.

Bob Hinkle, a member of the Staunton Elks Lodge and former professor in James Madison University’s Integrated Science and Technology department, and Marshall Price, MTC’s former director, started the project in summer 2008.

Hinkle approached Price to see if the center was in need of scholarships for the upcoming school year.

“Marshall said, ‘I don’t need that.’ ... ‘I need safety glasses,’” Sencindiver said.

In the project’s first year, the Elks donated about 3,000 pairs of glasses to 10 technical schools, including 700 to MTC.

Since then, the project has expanded to other parts of Virginia, including Fredericksburg and Staunton. During the 2015-16 year, 30 lodges donated nearly 17,000 glasses.

Donating glasses every year, Sencindiver said, is just one community service project Elks Lodge 450 participates in each year.

“We have a good time,” Sencindiver said. “We work hard; we play hard, but we give all our money away.”

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Source: http://www.dnronline.com/news/harrisonburg/elks-keeping-eyes-safe/article_b8483cc8-68e0-11e6-a3d5-6f51fdc8514d.html

Submitted by Horace Jones

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