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By Kerri Sandaine of the Tribune |

Between her scholarships and 3.9 grade point average, Anne Veseth has the tools and drive to succeed in just about any career she chooses.

As she heads into the final lap of high school, the Moscow senior has made her decision.

"Auto mechanic. I really want to fix my car if it has any problems," said the 18-year-old Moscow native.

"I knew I didn't want to sit and stare at a computer all day. This will allow me to work with my hands, and it's a skill I can use all of my life."

Veseth is one of 179 students who are graduating at 7:30 p.m. today at the Kibbie Dome on the University of Idaho campus.

She is the recipient of several large academic scholarships, which will cover almost all of her college costs. Her three older siblings attend the UI, but Veseth is breaking the family tradition by enrolling in the auto mechanics technology program at Lewis-Clark State College.

"I've had a lot of people ask me to work on their cars when I'm done with school," she said with a laugh.

Her idea of a perfect job is a mechanic gig that combines hands-on work and interaction with people.

She drives a 2002 Toyota Corolla, but her dream car is a 1990s' Toyota pickup truck with an extended cab, a five-speed manual transmission and four-wheel drive.

"I'd rather be playing in the mud than getting dressed up," she said of her tomboy tendencies. "I like biking, basketball, hanging out with my friends, anything outside. I'm a country girl."

She is the youngest child of Claire, who is a nurse at Moscow Family Medicine, and the late Roger Veseth, who was a conservation tillage specialist for Washington State University and the UI. Her dad was paralyzed in a tubing accident in 2003 and died later that year.

"It's definitely shaped my life," Veseth said of the loss of her father at a young age. "It made me appreciate who I have in my life, while I have them. It made me realize life is short.

"My mom is an awesome person," she added. "She's been a good role model for me, not only in how she handled this but in everyday life."

Veseth has already been able to take several classes at the UI, including agricultural economics, communications and welding. She got some college credits for the communications class, and learned what she likes and dislikes in the others.

"Welding was awesome," she said. "I really enjoyed it."

Veseth also was the second runner-up in the Moscow Junior Miss program last year. She learned to break dance for the talent portion of the competition and still enjoys busting some moves for exercise.

This summer she will be a general laborer at Jacie Jensen's Thorn Creek Native Seed Farm. She has also worked as a personal assistant for Molly Akey, wife of the Vandal's football coach, Robb Akey. Her duties included running errands, grocery shopping and helping around the Akey household.

Her favorite parts of high school were "the changing relationships, growing up and figuring out what I want out of life."

Veseth isn't dating anyone right now, but she is looking forward to meeting cute guys in college, she said with a smile.

As she bids farewell to her high school days, she offered some words of wisdom for the incoming freshmen.

"Enjoy it. Try your best and don't underestimate the impact you can have in other people's lives."