

HB 1232

Supporting CTE through Virtual Reality Career Exploration



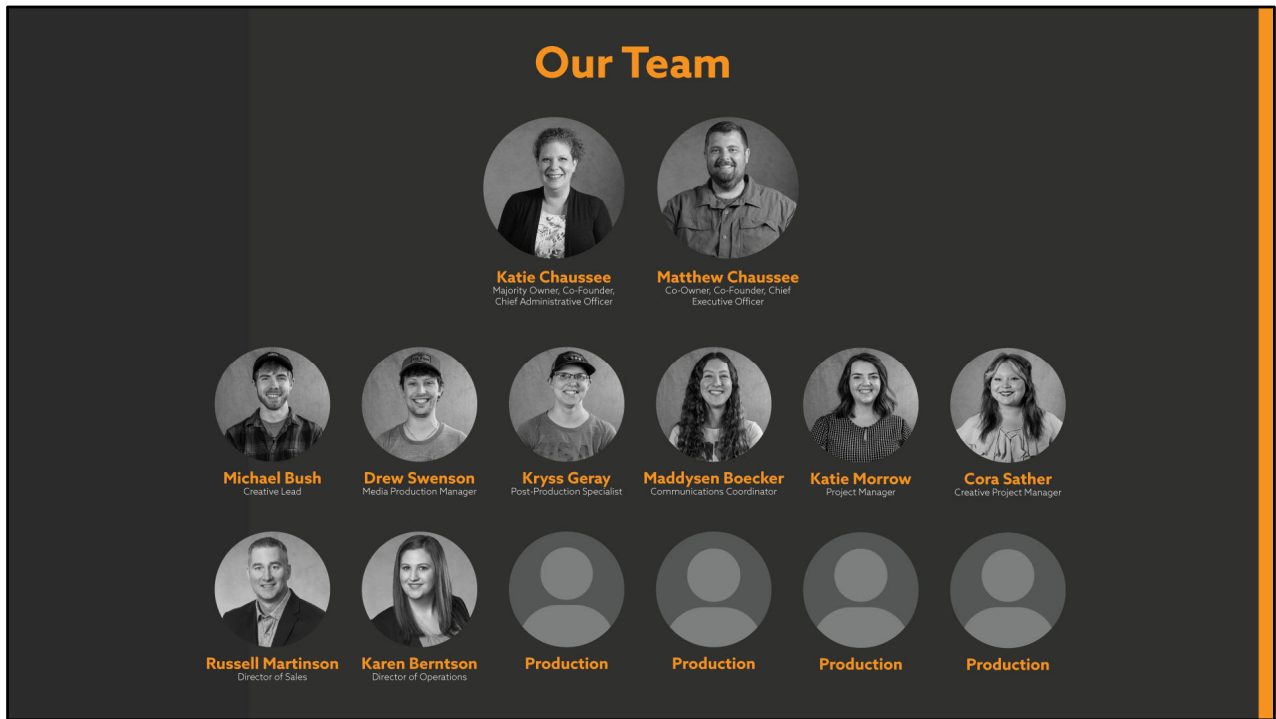
Matthew Chaussee
CEO/Co-Founder
Be More Colorful, LLC

Chairman Sorvaag and Members of the Committee:

My name is Matt Chaussee and I am the CEO and co-founder of Be More Colorful.

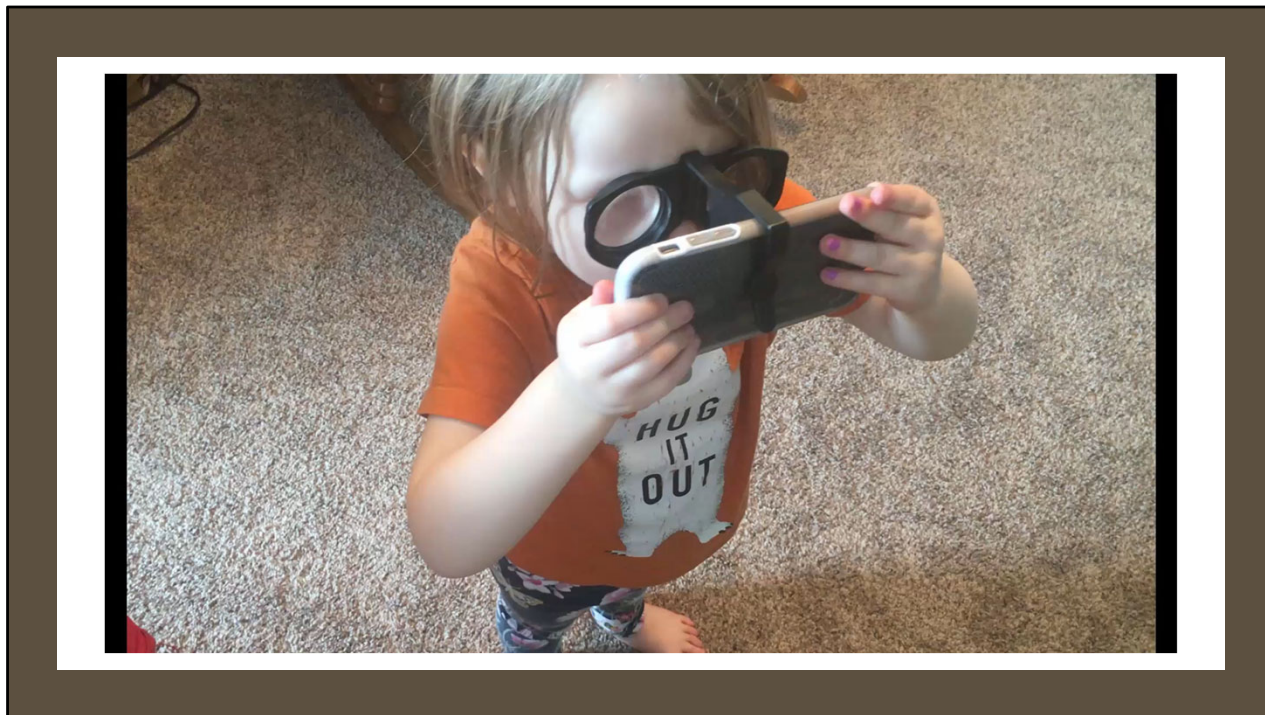
I was born in Devils Lake, grew up in Bismarck and graduated from Bismarck High School then moved to Fargo in 1999. I went to school at NDSU and following graduation, worked for 15 years in various technology roles supporting both marketing and higher education administration functions. In 2016, my wife (also a lifelong ND resident) and I started Be More Colorful, North Dakota's first and only virtual reality production studio.

Our focus for the past 3 and a half years has been on the development of CareerViewXR, a library of interactive virtual reality career experiences that bring jobsites into the classroom.

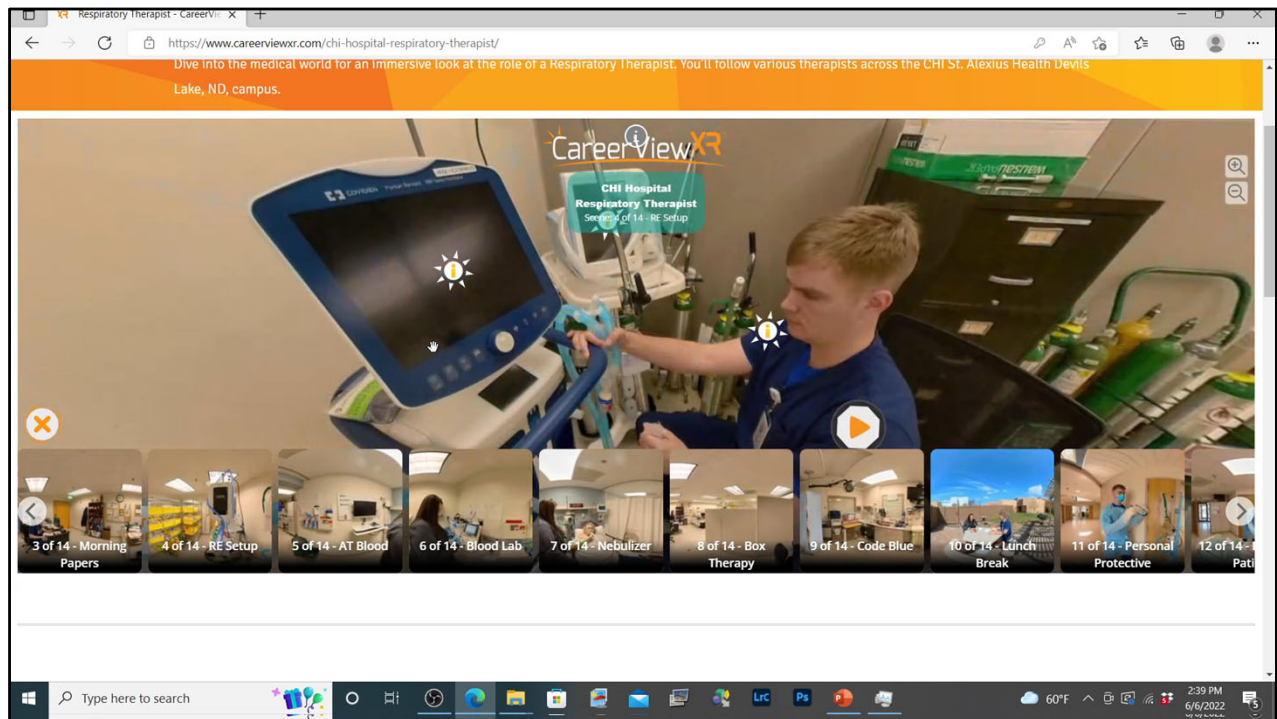


We are a 100% North Dakota owned husband and wife company operating in NDSU’s Research and Technology Park. We have personally invested substantial time and dollars into creating virtual reality experiences for workforce development. During the past two years, we have rapidly grown from a “Mom and Pop VR shop” to a team of 11 professionals who are changing the way students and career seekers make informed career choices.

We’ve worked with hundreds of educators and students to understand how to enable teachers and students with VR technologies for career exploration.



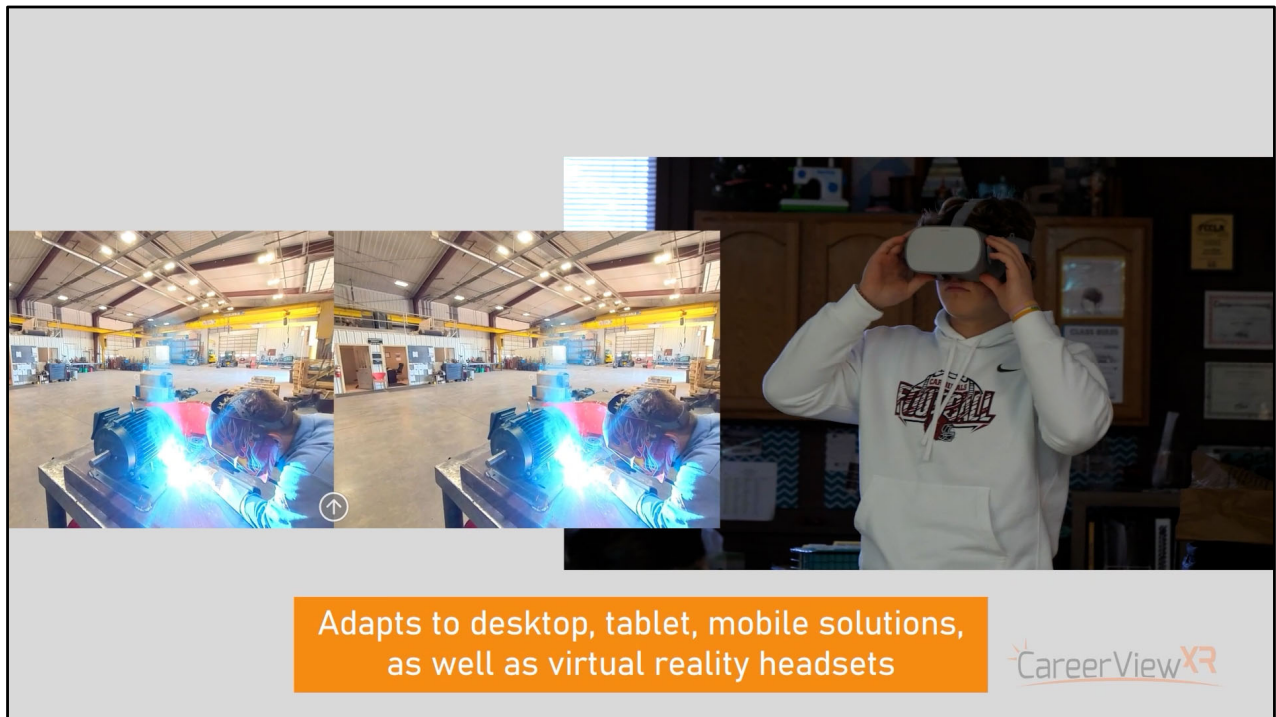
We are passionate about what we do and about virtual reality's capacity to make emotional connections between people and experiences. I did my career exploration in college... an incredibly expensive and inefficient way to figure out what I wanted to do. That experience is a major part of why our company is so passionate about promoting earlier and more diverse career exploration. We have spend thousands of hours of testing experiences adults and students of all ages. Through those interactions, we have learned that the immersive nature of the technology combined with the viewer's ability to choose their own adventure makes a lasting impact. VR experiences give people a sense of presence in a location that helps them make a more informed decision on whether to learn more. (PLAY VIDEO)



Unfortunately, when many people hear the words “virtual reality” the thought that follows is a misperception that VR and immersive media are gaming technologies and have little application for the real world. The truth is that there is massive untapped potential to use modern technology to capture real-world scenarios allowing us to document and playback experiences that show real people performing real work in real environments.

When approaching VR solutions for schools, its important to keep both accessibility and cost in mind. (PLAY VIDEO) What you are seeing here is a web-based version of a virtual reality video that is accessed on a non-VR device over the internet. This web-based tour allows students to progress at their own pace and is paired with a companion virtual reality video for VR headsets that allows for even deeper immersion. These are real professionals performing work with real patients which is important because kids need authentic career experiences to help them make good career choices.

The combination of both VR headset technology and more accessible web technologies allows schools to take a comprehensive approach to implementing VR media, and one that is not dependent on a massive investment in virtual reality headset hardware.



(image 1) Here you see two students engaging in web-based virtual tours on Chromebooks. The student on the left is learning about a day in the life of a Dental Assistant filmed in Devils Lake ND. The student on the right is learning about a day in the life of a master plumber at a location filmed in Williston, ND.

(ADVANCE TO image 2) In this image, you see a student using a headset, getting fully immersed, exploring a day in the life of a welder.



Students inherently understand this technology and the importance of it. Frequently, they make the case for its use in the classroom better than I can. (PLAY VIDEO)

Virtual worlds
creating real-world
reactions and
conversations



VR video experiences engage people of all ages, but we are particularly excited about their capability to help inform middle and high school students about career pathways they would otherwise never have known about.

On the right is a student inside an elevator shaft. (PLAY VIDEO TO END) This is something she would never be able to see in person but it is readily, and safely, accessible through virtual reality.

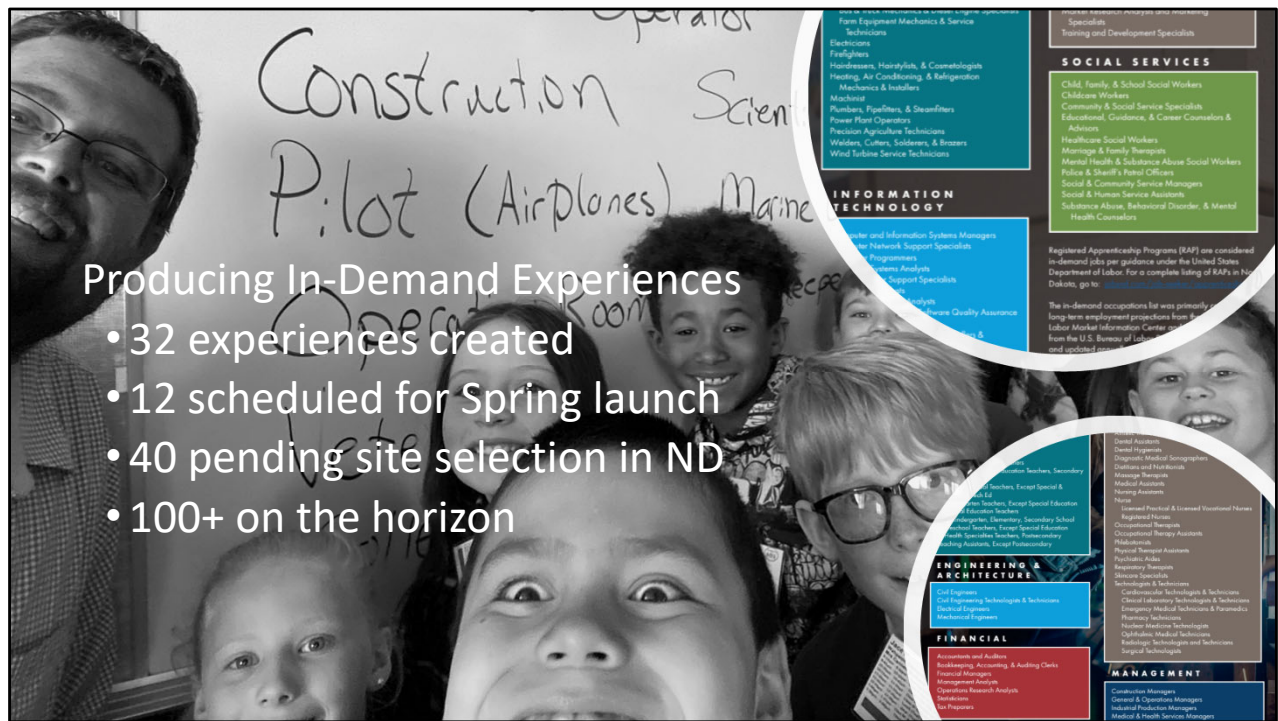
North Dakota Opportunity

- **First Statewide Deployment of VR**
- **Connecting ND Students with ND Jobs**
- **Distribution Established**
 - EduTech
 - ND Small Organized Schools
 - RU Ready (CTE and Bank of ND)



Deploying VR career exploration within North Dakota now has the potential to make a big difference in years to come. To date, no other state has implemented a statewide program for locally produced virtual reality career exploration. CTE in North Dakota would immediately become a leader in immersive tech for workforce initiatives. Using VR content that has been filmed in North Dakota provides added benefits of helping retain students by making them aware of the amazing career opportunities we have here in the state.

There are already some great mechanisms in place to ensure success of a statewide deployment including EduTech - a division of the state IT Department, ND Small Organized Schools, and the RU Ready Career Resource Network, the existing statewide career information.



VR technology paves the way for making career exploration in our highest demand industries accessible 24/7, not just to students and teachers, but also to their parents, eliminating stereotypes and misperceptions about career pathways to enable more meaningful and engaged conversations about career choice.

Its always eye-opening working with kids. Any time we are in the classroom, we always ask students what they would like to have us create in VR. This has been one of the most surprising things for our team... we get the occasional “Nascar Driver” and “Football Player” but the vast majority of careers that kids want to see in VR are things like: veterinarian, nurse, police officer, welder, farmer, mechanic, and dozens of other trades where great opportunities exist in communities throughout North Dakota.



For the past 4 years, students, teachers, counselors, employers, and industry leaders around the state have been active and involved in testing, developing, and vetting VR solutions as a critical component to solve our workforce development issues. VR technology is a practical, effective, and efficient way to address North Dakota schools' dire need for earlier and more diverse career exploration.

Your support on HB 1232 will provide unprecedented opportunity to connect students with in-state industries while simultaneously demonstrating to the rest of the country that North Dakota is a leader in innovative education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matthew Chaussee
CEO/Co-Founder
Be More Colorful, LLC