

USI ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

GRADUATE TO RECEIVE

ASME NATIONAL AWARD



## NEWS RELEASE

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Keith Benedict, a 1987 mechanical engineering technology graduate of the University of Southern Indiana who likes "impossible projects," has been selected as the 1987 Charles T. Main Student Section Award Silver Medalist by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

The award will be presented during the members and students luncheon at ASME Winter Annual Meeting December 13-18 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts. It recognizes at the national level a student member whose leadership and service qualities have contributed over a period of at least two years to the program and operation of a student section of the society.

Benedict is being recognized "for unselfishly serving your community, school, and profession in civic projects, including aiding in the restoration of the Evansville Old Courthouse Bell, serving as USI Student Section chairman, and continued participation in Regional and National Old Guard Contests."

Benedict, of 3100 Marion Avenue, Evansville, now is lab supervisor in the USI Division of Engineering Technology, a position he held even before his graduation from the University.

He was the first-place winner last spring in ASME's regional student competition at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, giving him an expense-paid trip to the Boston meeting and a chance for a second national award -- the national student competition -- at this annual meeting. His winning project involves computerized control of a pipe-fitting machine, allowing for more precise pipe connection. He is applying for a patent on the computer formula.

This is the fourth year that Benedict had a winning project in the ASME regional competition. He won first place in 1984 with a flower cart design, second in 1985 with an inexpensive bolt-threading tool, and fourth in 1986 with the Courthouse bell project. He is believed the only student to have achieved this record of consecutive wins as well as being the only student to have won a regional first place and gone to the national competition two times.

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Benedict said the knowledge that he will receive the Charles Main Award has taken the pressure off in the student competition, however. "We already are winners," he said, meaning himself and the University. The comment is typical of Benedict's sharing attitude -- of sharing both his abilities and his successes with USI and his community.

Benedict worked with William Leth, supervisor of the USI Art Workshop, on the restoration of the bell mechanism in the Old Courthouse clock in downtown Evansville. He now is project manager for the restoration of a P47 similar to the historic aircraft that was built in Evansville during World War II, a project he says is "definitely going real, real good."

Both the Courthouse bell renovation and the work on the P47 have been viewed by some as "impossible projects." The bell work saved at least \$1,500 for the Conrad Baker Foundation which operates the Old Courthouse, as Benedict and Leth volunteered their time and used materials donated by a local company.

The P47 project also is being done on a volunteer basis, as crews restore a plane that was pulled from a Florida lake where it had lain since it crashed in the '40s. It is being restored as a community project and will be displayed at Evansville Regional Airport.

The P47 work crews range from teen-age Explorer Scouts through retirees who once worked on the aircraft at the old Republic Aviation plant in Evansville. Benedict said it is "fabulous to watch them work together. They get along great."

Since the plane is being restored for display only, Benedict said they've used some innovative methods to rebuild the wings and now are getting ready to flush wing compartments to clear away corrosion. They have metal replacement panels ready to install and hope to have at least one wing ready for reattachment to the fuselage by Christmas, he said.