

## HCTC Success Story: Don Hensley



When restaurant manager Don Hensley was a teen-ager, going to college didn't seem like an option. But after working in the fast food industry, the 41-year-old is glad he decided on enrolling at Hazard Community & Technical College.

Hensley is the area supervisor for two Lee's Famous Recipe restaurants—in Hazard and Whitesburg. Although he graduated from high school in 1983, it was 1998 before he started taking college classes. Why the wait? Because in 1998, his boss, Bill Moore, encouraged him to enroll and he's glad he did.

Hensley said having an education has given him more self confidence and he would recommend it to anyone who is already working to enroll.

He already has two associate degrees from HCTC in applied science and arts, and is working on an associate in science degree. His next goal is a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with Management Entrepreneurship from Morehead State University.

Hensley, who grew up in Knox County and now lives in Hazard, said he has appreciated the smooth transition of classes within the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) since he also has taken a class at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College.

"I was apprehensive when I first enrolled in that first management course. I didn't know what I was getting into," Hensley said. "After taking courses, then I became more comfortable speaking up in

class and sharing what I have learned in the work world,” said Hensley, who became a restaurant assistant manager straight out of high school.

“Having students like Don Hensley in our classes make them better,” noted Larry Parke, division chair and faculty member. “It’s good for other students in the class to hear how Don applies the information in the books. It’s also interesting when the books don’t agree with Don’s real life experiences. It all makes learning so much more beneficial,” Parke said.

Supervising workers is a challenge for managers. “I found through those classes that you have to look at each individual separately. People are motivated in different ways,” Hensley said. “I treat employees with dignity and respect.”

“I love the faculty at Hazard Community & Technical College. I would encourage anyone to start out at the community college level. It is the most affordable way to go,” Hensley said.

“I’m 100 times better of an employee with my degree,” Hensley said, saying he would encourage anyone to enroll because they will be challenged academically. “It’s not too late in life for anyone to enroll.”