

# NEXT

the moraine park story

SPRING/SUMMER 2026, VOL. 9 ISSUE 1



MORaine PARK  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

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## *TECH IS POWERFUL*

### *REDEFINING THE PATHWAY TO A BACHELOR'S DEGREE*

Moraine Park is celebrating a first-of-its-kind partnership with Yavapai College in Prescott, AZ. Together, they are the first two-year institutions in the nation to offer a three-year, 92-credit optimized degree, Bachelor of Applied Science in Business (BASB).

Launched in fall 2025, Yavapai Community College became the first community college in the nation to be approved for a three-year, reduced credit baccalaureate degree. Moraine Park's Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Fred Rice, learned of the opportunity and immediately made connection with leaders at Yavapai.

"We have been ready and waiting for the right opportunity to partner with an institution that offers our students a clear and easy pathway to achieving a reduced-credit bachelor's degree," Rice said. "We quickly learned that our institutions have a lot of similarities—in addition to being a top-ranked college in Arizona, they understand the unique needs of two-year college students. It's clearly a win-win, and we are excited to offer a three-year baccalaureate degree."

Starting April 1, students can enroll at Moraine Park in the Associate of Arts (AA) program, where they will complete a two-year associate degree with a business focus. After graduating, students can seamlessly transfer to Yavapai College to complete their BASB fully online in eight-week courses. The 92-credit, optimized degree structure is intended to help students complete a high-quality bachelor's credential in less time than traditional pathways, while maintaining strong academic expectations and career-relevant learning outcomes.

Yavapai leaders understand the need for access to affordable education. Like Moraine Park, they work to ensure tuition remains affordable for learners of any age and are proud to offer their one-year BASB at an affordable tuition with no additional fees, such as textbooks or materials.

"This articulation agreement with Moraine Park Technical College represents an innovative model for how institutions can strengthen transfer pathways and improve bachelor's degree completion," Yavapai College President Dr. Lisa Rhine said. "By aligning programs and expectations, we are ensuring students can transition smoothly into Yavapai College's Bachelor of Applied Science in Business and graduate with confidence and clarity."

Together, Moraine Park and Yavapai College are not only spearheading many firsts in the two-year college realm, but they are also paving the way for students for years to come.

As a leader in Wisconsin's higher education landscape, the College is committed to transforming the perception of technical education—highlighting the immense local value and the endless paths to personal and professional success it provides.



## *TECH IS CONNECTED*

### *ASK AN EXPERT: JOE DESIDERIO ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*

Joe Desiderio, dean of Business, IT and AI Innovation at Moraine Park, is helping shape how the College responds to artificial intelligence. As AI transforms industries, he ensures students are ready to lead in a tech-connected workforce. He shares his insight in this Ask an Expert feature.



## ***WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?***

Artificial intelligence, or AI, refers to computer systems that learn from data, recognize patterns and assist with decision-making. The key word is assist. AI doesn't think like a human. It analyzes large amounts of information quickly and helps people work more efficiently. People tend to think of Generative AI (ChatGPT, CoPilot, etc.) when they hear the term AI. It is much more than that. ChatGPT has been around since 2022, but AI has been around for decades.

## ***WHERE IS AI ALREADY SHAPING OUR LIVES IN WAYS PEOPLE MAY NOT REALIZE?***

Most of us use AI dozens of times a day without thinking about it. Virtual assistants like Siri, Alexa and Google Assistant are all powered by AI. It powers Face ID and autocorrect on our phones, filters spam from our email, reroutes traffic in navigation apps and flags unusual activity on bank accounts. Streaming services, online shopping platforms and social media feeds use AI to personalize what we see. If you interact with a chatbot or support on a website or in an app, it is most likely an AI agent. In workplaces and colleges, it's built into scheduling systems, analytics dashboards and marketing tools. It often works quietly in the background, improving speed and accuracy.

## ***WHAT'S THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT AI?***

The biggest misconception is that AI replaces humans and human judgment. In reality, it works best alongside people. AI can process information quickly, but humans provide context, ethics and decision-making. That balance is especially important in fields like health care, education and business. AI output cannot always be completely trusted. Hallucinations happen in AI frequently. People need to be there to verify the output.

## ***WHAT SKILLS WILL MATTER MOST AS AI BECOMES MORE COMMON?***

Technical knowledge is valuable, but human skills will set people apart. Critical thinking, adaptability, creativity and ethical decision-making will continue to be essential. Knowing how to apply AI tools effectively and responsibly will be important across nearly every industry.

## ***HOW IS AI CHANGING THE WORKPLACE, AND SHOULD PEOPLE BE CONCERNED ABOUT JOB LOSS?***

According to a LinkedIn article, job postings that mention AI have increased over 130 percent since 2020 while total job postings have only increased 6 percent in that same time period. AI can automate many tasks so employees can focus on problem-solving, communication and strategy. As with past technological shifts, some roles will evolve and new ones will emerge. The focus shouldn't be fear, but readiness and learning how to use AI as a tool. People still need to be there to make sure the AI output is accurate. AI will change the way some jobs are performed, but very few jobs will be completely replaced with AI.

## ***WHERE IS AI HEADED IN THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS?***

AI will become more integrated into daily life and work, often in ways people barely notice. It will continue supporting health care, manufacturing, small businesses, agriculture and education by improving efficiency and decision support. As the technology advances, the demand for professionals who can apply it thoughtfully and responsibly will grow.

## ***WHAT INDUSTRIES WILL NEED AI-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS?***

Just about all of them. Technology roles will continue building and refining systems, but fields like software development, data analytics, health care, manufacturing, finance, business and public service will depend on professionals who understand how to implement and manage AI tools. The greatest need won't just be technical developers, but leaders who can translate AI into practical, ethical and human-centered solutions that strengthen the workforce.

Moraine Park Technical College is preparing the next generation of AI professionals through its new AI Data Specialist program. Learn more at [morainepark.edu/artificial-intelligence](https://morainepark.edu/artificial-intelligence).



## TECH IS EVOLVING



### UPDATING OUR COMMUNITIES: REFERENDUM PROJECTS

Moraine Park Technical College celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Health and Human Services wing on the Fond du Lac campus on Nov. 3—marking the start of the College's fourth project funded by the 2022 referendum.

The 44,926-square-foot project, including an 8,908-square-foot addition, will modernize classrooms, labs and simulation spaces to reflect real-world settings found in hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics and emergency service areas. An additional 7,048-square-foot renovation, separate from the referendum budget, will house general science education and cosmetology classrooms.

The project will be completed in two phases. Phase one of the construction, which is currently underway, will add the simulation spaces and update existing areas for radiography, medical lab technician, surgical technology and respiratory therapy programs. Phase two, which will begin later in 2026, will remodel the remaining health care wing.

The new facility will serve more than 500 students annually across 10 programs, including Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Assistant, Medical Lab Technician, Nursing, Radiography, Respiratory Therapy and Surgical Technology.

The Moraine Park Foundation launched a \$750,000 fundraising campaign to help equip the new Health and Human Services wing with modern technology and training tools. These investments will ensure students train in realistic, industry-standard environments and graduate workforce-ready. Naming opportunities are available for community partners who wish to invest in the future of health and human services education across the region.

Construction on the Health and Human Services wing is expected to be completed in time for the fall 2026 semester, marking a new era for Moraine Park students and the district's workforce.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES WING  
FOND DU LAC

### WHAT'S NEXT

Moraine Park is doing even more with the community's investment.

Through diligent planning and responsible financial stewardship, the College completed its four approved projects so efficiently that funding remains available to advance an additional, much-needed initiative that has long been a priority for the College.

As a result, Moraine Park will move forward with a fifth and final project starting in the summer of 2026: expanding the Horicon Regional Center to include Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training. The expansion will feature a dedicated driving track, a storage building with a loading dock, and additional classroom spaces to support the hands-on, high-demand workforce training.

This expansion strengthens the college's commitment to meeting regional workforce needs while maximizing every dollar entrusted to us.



*AUTOMATION, INNOVATION AND ROBOTIC CENTER*

*AUTOMATION, INNOVATION AND ROBOTICS (AIR) CENTER  
FOND DU LAC*

**COMPLETED PROJECTS**

**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND TRAINING FACILITY-FOND DU LAC**

Completed in May 2024, this project included the construction of the AIR Center and the remodeling of the manufacturing wing.

**HORICON REGIONAL CENTER**

The Horicon Regional Center, completed in August 2024, provides state-of-the-art training spaces for district firefighters, as well as additional learning spaces.

**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING CENTER-WEST BEND**

Completed in 2025, the Manufacturing, Automation and Robotics Lab project in West Bend transformed the manufacturing spaces on campus, as well as the campus as a whole—creating a new front entrance and conference center space.



*HORICON REGIONAL CENTER*



*ADVANCED  
MANUFACTURING  
CENTER*

*ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND TRAINING FACILITY  
WEST BEND*



imagine  
what's  
**next**



MORaine PARK  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

# *TECH IS INTENTIONAL*

At Moraine Park, we design more than programs.

We create spaces to think, to grow, to begin again.

The world moves quickly.  
Here, you can take a moment—just for you.

Think about the last time you did something just for you,  
something that brought both joy and pride.

*WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE?*

*WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE?*

*WHAT DID IT SOUND LIKE?*

*AND WHAT WOULD HELP YOU FIND THAT SPACE AGAIN?*

You may have walked our halls.

You may have studied in our classrooms.

Or maybe you're just beginning to imagine yourself here.

Wherever you are on your journey, there is space for you.

Because your future deserves clarity

and because tech is built for you:

the current you, and all the versions of you

still waiting to be discovered.

*TECH IS INTENTIONAL, TECH IS YOU.*

## TECH IS OPPORTUNITY

### BUILDING HANDS-ON BUSINESS CAREERS

Moraine Park alumnus and Fond du Lac native, Chris Dudzinski, returned to the College where his own journey began—this time as a business instructor. He first attended Moraine Park in the late 1990s, earning a degree in engine technology. Though his path from the shop floor to the classroom wasn't a straight one, each step along the way helped shape the instructor he is today.

After graduating, Dudzinski began working for a local business that offered tuition reimbursement and internal leadership training. That opportunity led him back to Moraine Park, where he completed supervisor and management training through the College's workforce development program. From there, he continued his education at Marian University and earned a degree in business.

His teaching journey began with instructing dealerships on engine repair through a contracted course between Moraine Park and Mercury Marine on the Beaver Dam Campus.

"It's funny how few people end up exactly where they thought they would when they first went to college," Dudzinski said. "That's definitely been true for me."

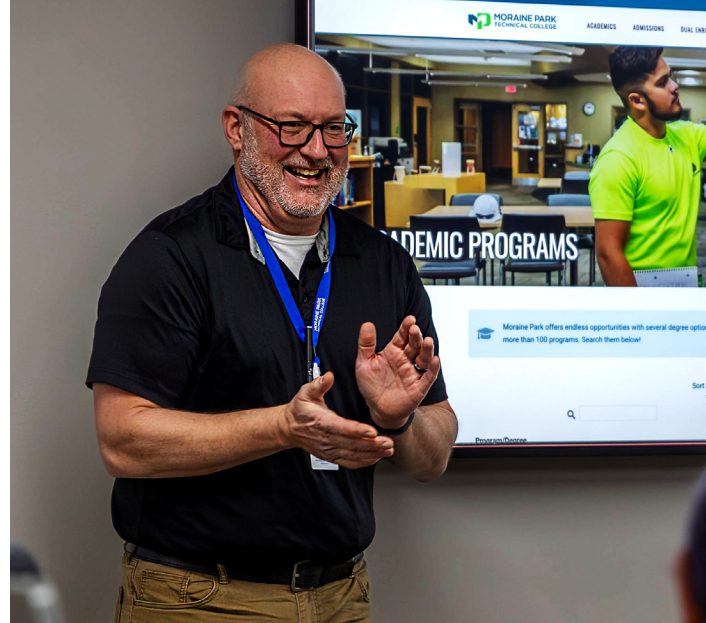
Dudzinski's transition into business was sparked when a supervisor recognized his leadership potential and encouraged him to pursue management. One opportunity led to another—corporate roles, leadership experience and eventually owning a small business with his wife. Those experiences are now central to how he teaches.

"One of the biggest things I try to tell students is not to always say no," Dudzinski said. "Opportunities come along that you may not understand at the time, but when you look back years later, you realize how important they were."

As a business instructor, Dudzinski is passionate about changing the perceptions of what a technical college business program can offer.

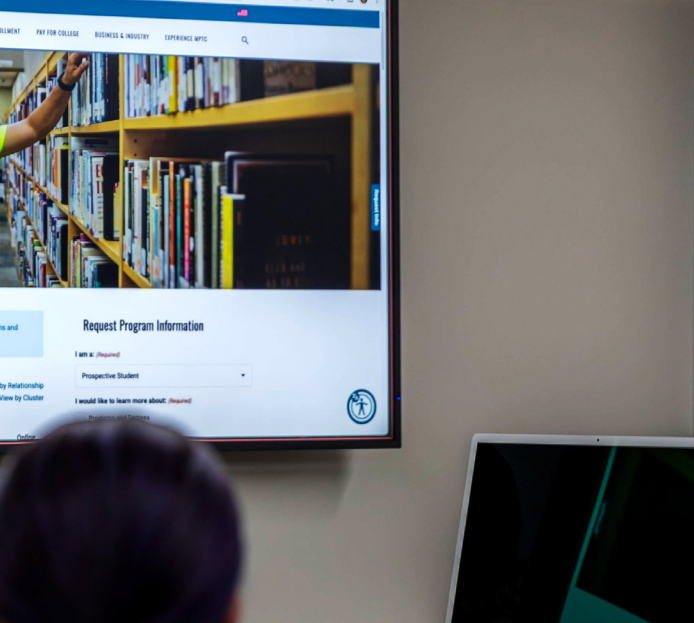
"Sometimes people don't think of a technical college as a place to earn a business degree," he said. "But what we do really well here is hands-on learning, even in business."

In Moraine Park's Business Management program, students don't just learn theory. They practice real-world skills like creating job postings, conducting SWOT analyses,



*"SOMETIMES PEOPLE DON'T THINK OF A TECHNICAL COLLEGE AS A PLACE TO EARN A BUSINESS DEGREE, BUT WHAT WE DO REALLY WELL HERE IS HANDS-ON LEARNING, EVEN IN BUSINESS."*





developing codes of ethics, leading brainstorming sessions and building team-based strategies.

“Our goal is to give students the skills needed to manage someone else’s business or department,” Dudzinski said. “Those are things employers expect you to know how to do, and we can teach them directly.”

Keeping business curriculum current requires strong connections to industry. Many instructors come directly from the business world, bringing firsthand experience into the classroom. The program is also supported by an advisory committee made up of business leaders from across the district. Representing a range of industries, the committee meets regularly with faculty to ensure coursework reflects real workforce needs.

“They tell us what they’re seeing in the field and what skills they want graduates to have,” Dudzinski said. “That feedback is incredibly valuable.”

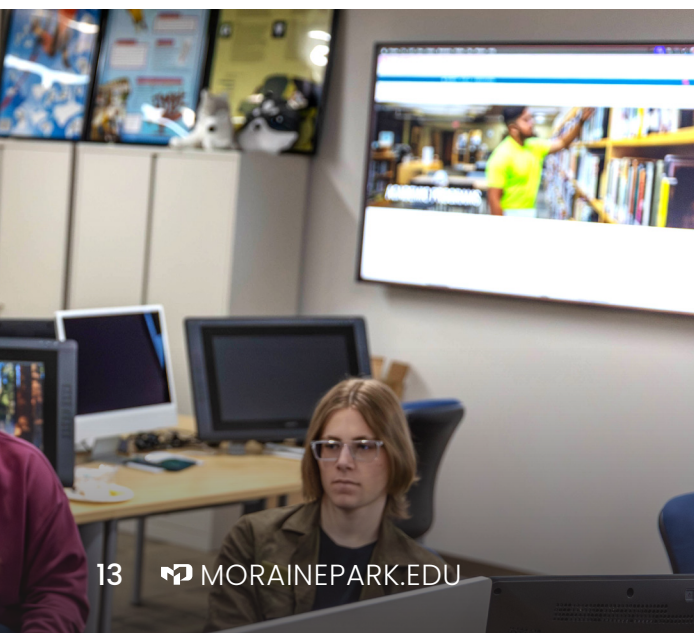
Graduates of Moraine Park’s Business programs pursue a wide range of career paths. Some use their degree as a stepping stone toward a bachelor’s degree, taking advantage of the College’s robust transfer agreements with universities across Wisconsin. Others are already in the workforce and looking to advance through promotions, raises or new responsibilities.

“Business is a great choice if you’re still figuring things out,” Dudzinski said. “The skills are broad, and they open doors in a lot of different directions.”

He encourages students to get involved on campus, build relationships and develop soft skills—abilities employers consistently say are just as important as technical knowledge.

As an alumnus, business professional and instructor, Dudzinski brings a perspective shaped by real experience and a belief that with the right support and hands-on learning, students can build careers they may not have imagined when they first walked through Moraine Park’s doors.

Take the first step toward a career in business management by visiting [morainepark.edu/business-management](https://morainepark.edu/business-management).





## TECH IS SUPPORTIVE

### GUIDING STUDENTS TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Moraine Park Technical College's Journey Program is empowering high school students to take control of their education and future. The program provides students from district high schools with an alternative pathway to earn their High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) in a supportive, hands-on environment.

Formerly known as the High School Alternative Program, the initiative was relaunched last year as the Journey Program to better reflect the personal growth and determination of each student. The new name embodies the idea that every learner's story is unique—each with its own challenges, milestones and goals.

"We chose the name 'Journey' to recognize that every student has their own unique path in life," Pete Snyder, associate dean of adult education, said. "When they finish the program, their final assignment is to reflect on their educational journey, and write about where they've been and where they're headed."

Throughout the program, students develop academic skills, career readiness and confidence that prepare them for the next step, whether that's continuing their education, entering the workforce or pursuing new goals.

Beyond preparing students for the HSED, the Journey Program also offers activities and experiences that help students transition successfully into life after graduation. Each week, students spend about three hours gaining practical experience through work or volunteer opportunities. Alternatively, they may choose to dedicate three hours weekly to enrichment activities such as art, music or a foreign language at their high school.

Spring 2025 graduate, Egypt Alexander (not pictured), of Fond du Lac, credited the program with helping her overcome academic challenges and effectively balance school with work.



"The Journey Program gave me the support I needed to succeed and stay on track," Alexander said.

The program also helped her secure employment right after graduation. Initially working at the Course Center earning \$20 an hour—she now works in telecommunications at Spectrum, gaining valuable experience while building a foundation for future college studies.

"Without the Journey Program, I doubt I would have graduated. It provided targeted support in the areas I needed to improve, allowing me to pass my exams and graduate early," Alexander said. "This achievement is something I take great pride in, and I am grateful for the positive impact the program had on my life."

The program's final assignment encourages students to reflect on their personal and educational experiences by writing a letter about their journey. For many, this letter serves as a powerful reminder of how far they've come and the possibilities ahead.

**For more information, visit**  
[morainepark.edu/journey-program](https://morainepark.edu/journey-program).





*FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE READY TO TAKE ACTION, MORAINÉ PARK'S HIGH SCHOOL CAREER ACADEMIES OFFER MORE THAN COLLEGE CREDIT. THEY OFFER DIRECTION, CONFIDENCE AND A CLEAR PATH FORWARD.*





## TECH IS READINESS

Through Moraine Park's High School Career Academies, students can get a head start on college and a career before they receive their high school diploma. The Fire Academy is one of those opportunities, offering a direct path into the fire protection field through hands-on, career-focused training.

A High School Career Academy allows students to complete a defined set of college courses in a specific career area while still in high school. By finishing all required coursework, students earn a Moraine Park certificate or technical diploma credential. It is a powerful way to build real skills that can lead directly to employment or continue into advanced education.

In 2025, seniors Macy Nikkinen, of West Bend West High School, Raymond Ellis, of Ripon High School, and Graham Gopalan, of Waupun High School, stepped into that opportunity.

The nine-credit Fire Academy introduces students to the foundations of fire protection while preparing them for the state Firefighter 1 Certification exam. Coursework includes Firefighting Principles, Hazmat Awareness and Operations and Fire Prevention courses.

Unlike a traditional high school classroom, the Fire Academy places students in active learning environments at Moraine Park's Horicon Regional Center.

"I really like how different it is from my regular high school classes," Nikkinen said. "It's so hands-on. We're not just sitting and listening. We're actually doing the work and practicing the skills we'll need in the field."

After graduating from high school in spring 2026, Nikkinen hopes to become an airport firefighter, a goal she is already moving toward through her early training.

The credits earned through the Fire Academy can be applied to the Fire Protection Technician Associate Degree program and prepares students for the state firefighter license exams.

For students who are ready to take action, Moraine Park's High School Career Academies offer more than college credit. They offer direction, confidence and a clear path forward.

Moraine Park offers multiple opportunities for high school students interested in getting a head start on career exploration.

**For more information, visit [morainepark.edu/dual-enrollment](https://morainepark.edu/dual-enrollment).**



## TECH IS TIMELESS

### 50 YEARS OF THE MORAINÉ PARK FOUNDATION

This year marks an extraordinary milestone: 50 years of the Moraine Park Foundation transforming lives and strengthening the communities we proudly serve.

Over the past five decades, Moraine Park has provided more than \$5 million in support to students—made possible by alumni, friends and community partners who believe in education and opportunity. Each dollar is an investment in hands-on learning, skilled careers and stronger communities.

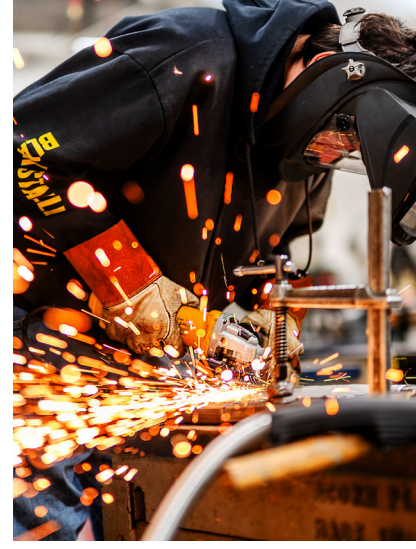
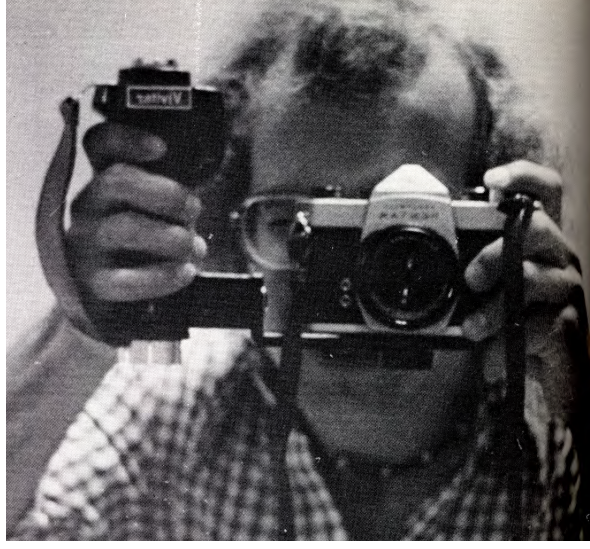
As the Foundation celebrates this milestone, the \$50 for 50 initiative invites alumni, partners and community members to continue the legacy. A \$50 gift to the

Excellence Fund helps ensure support remains available for students who need it most—today and for generations to come.

For 50 years, generosity has opened doors, and the next 50 begin with the same spirit—investing in students ready to shape the future. We are grateful for a community that believes in opportunity, access and the lasting power of education, and we thank you for being part of the Moraine Park story and helping students build brighter futures.

**Your Generosity. Our Mission.  
Empowering Students for 50 Years.**

**Make a difference in a students' life today  
by donating at [morainepark.edu/give](https://morainepark.edu/give).**





**MORAINE PARK  
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