

CareerCurrents

News and Views for Career-Minded Students | Winter 08

Summer Work for Juniors and Seniors

The summer job search is coming. What if that job allowed high school students to test out a future career? It's possible. Students age 17 or older can work for an electrical contractor over the summer which will help them decide if they'd like to pursue a career as an electrician.

The contractors of the Electrical Alliance employ about 100 high school students during the summer, who work on the job site under the guidance of a journeyman electrician. The students work full time and earn \$10-\$11 per hour.

"Working for an electrical contractor over the summer is the perfect chance for a student to try out a career in the field of electrical construction," says Andrew Porter, executive director of the Washington, DC Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA).

Many people start their career this way. Jason Ritchie spent summers in high school and college working on the job site. Now a journeyman electrician, where he earns up to \$73,000 per year, he believes the summer work is a great opportunity to learn about the field.

"If you're really interested in it, you can go a long way," Ritchie explains. "You start with basic work and build up as your capabilities increase."

Those who are interested in pursuing an electrical or telecommunications career can apply for The Washington area Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee's (JATC's), accredited education and training program.

The JATC oversees education and training of electrical and telecommunications apprentices in our area, providing their program in a new state-of-the-art facility that rivals any technology oriented university setting. It is jointly funded by NECA and Local 26 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Their cutting edge apprenticeship program uses innovative practices, the latest technology and experienced instructors to prepare future electricians/telecommunications technicians for the demanding Washington area construction market.

Once accepted, apprentices select a three-year telecommunications program, four-year residential program or five-year electrical program depending on their career goals and earn pay and benefits while in class and during supervised job site training. *Continued on next page*



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In addition, tuition is free. Their only expenses are for personal tools and transportation. After apprentices complete their training and achieve journeyman rank, they can earn up to \$73,000 per year plus benefits. Foremen and supervisors earn more.

During their apprenticeship, students receive training in electrical theory by certified instructors with field experience in hands-on labs which give them a realistic view of what they will encounter on the job site.

When not in the classroom, apprentices rotate through different electrical contractors' job sites to train in a variety of settings and hone a broad range of skills. Past apprentices have worked on some of the biggest projects in the region such as the new Nationals ballpark, Andrews Air Force Base and the National Institutes of Health.



"It's a benefit for a student to have already worked on a job site. This program is intense and they know what it will be like before they start," says David McCord, director of the JATC.

Once apprentices complete their training, they are journeyman electricians or telecommunications technicians. In addition to working on the job site, many go on to work in office positions as project estimators, project managers or even start their own businesses.

JATC classes begin in July/August; however, apprentices may start work prior to beginning class. Applications are accepted year round, but must be received by the end of May for the upcoming academic year. Visit www.electricalalliance.org for all of the details.

Please call **(703) 658-4383** for summer work information. More information about the JATC apprenticeship program and application requirements is available at www.electricalalliance.org. Please contact us at **(301) 429-2575** if we can provide you with additional materials for your office, attend a college fair at your school, or arrange a tour of our training facility for the counselors in your district.