

Community

Anatomy of an electrical apprentice

The biggest challenge facing young people today is deciding upon a career, especially when considering that in today's market place, there are no more cradle to grave jobs. Most people not only change employers, but also change careers throughout their life. So, it's particularly important to try to find a field that provides growth and flexibility.

Connections interviewed several electrical apprentices to find out how they made their decision to enter this field.

Agnes "Aggie" Lovelady was the top electrical apprentice last year. Before entering the program five years ago, she was an office manager for a union pipe fitting company. But she

was really interested in learning a "hands-on" trade. "I like to be able to see my accomplishments," says Aggie. "The benefits offered by the electrical apprenticeship program were enticing; the benefit-wage package and the ability to work anywhere in the country. I was a 34 year old single mother, with a two-year-old and new baby, and I decided to take the plunge."

In the beginning, the program was more difficult that she realized. Her first day on the job was at a sewage treatment plant, which is a far

cry from an office environment. She took her books to the jobsite every day so she could study during breaks and lunch. And Aggie faced additional

challenges. .being female in a male dominated field. So she developed a "can-do" attitude. She was determined to succeed, and she did. On most jobs, she is

the only female electrician. However, when working at Miami Valley Hospital she said at one point there were three female electricians.

Aggie says she would

highly recommend the program to anyone leaving high school. Her only regret is that she didn't enter the program sooner. "If you enter the program when you're 18, by age 24 you can be earning \$50,000 a year, with full health care benefits and a pension plan. And the entire time you are training, you are earning money." Aggie intends to further her education by learning more about estimating and the inspection process.

Jason Hardin just started his fourth year in the program. He was a residential electrician for 5 years, and the last two years had his own business. Jason decided to enter the apprenticeship program at the age of 29 for several reasons. "I needed a challenge," says Jason. "I've learned new mechanicals and

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Agnes Lovelady

School's in session

It's that time of year again. Summer vacations are over and the kids are back in school. And their schools are in better shape this fall due to the work performed by National Electrical Contractor Association (NECA) contractors over the summer.

Newco Electrical Contractors renovated Oakwood High School science labs and added classrooms, locker room facilities, a faculty workroom and open areas. They also installed new exterior site lighting. At Colonel White High School, Newco has installed a new fire

alarm system and emergency lighting.

Kettering City schools are undergoing upgrades for the next 2-3 years. Wagner Smith Electrical Contractors is upgrading existing electrical service at Kettering Middle School, in the classrooms, gym and cafeteria. They are replacing all the switch gear and added outdoor lighting at the activity field. Wagner also installed new tower lights in the activity field at the University

of Dayton.

Chapel Electric is currently working in five Kettering Schools including J.E. Prass Elementary, Orchard Park Elementary, Indian Riffle



Journeyman Foreman Shawn Stamps, Wagner Smith Electrical

Elementary, Moraine Meadows Elementary and Kettering Middle School Campus. Two projects in Mad

River Schools are Spinning Hills Middle School and Mad River Middle School. Both of these projects are new construction. Chapel has been heavily involved with the City of Dayton's "Warm, Safe and Dry" efforts, which involves fire alarm upgrades, boiler replacements and electrical upgrades in nine Dayton schools. Chapel's Network Services Division is also working on numerous local school projects.

Maxwell Lightning Protection's specialty speaks for itself. They installed lightning protection to the new additions and athletic center at Fairmont High School in

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Teledata Agreement

It's official. The National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) Western Ohio Chapter and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 82 have approved a Teledata Agreement that allows electrical contractors to bid more competitively for VDV (voice/data/video) installations. The national agreement was reached last year, however, local Teledata agreements provide the wage rate for the work.

Only two electrical contractors in Dayton have signed the agreement so far, Kastle Technologies and Chapel Network Services, because they have already been installing VDV systems for several years and have trained employees with the required skills. The work covered by this agreement

includes the installation, testing, service and maintenance, of all VDV systems which utilize the transmission and/or transference of voice, sound, vision or digital for commercial, education, security and entertainment purposes. It specifically includes the following work:

- Sound and voice transmission/transference systems
- Television and video systems
- Security Systems
- Communications systems that transmit or receive information and/or control systems
- VDV support systems such as Data-Track, Innerduct or similar type raceways.

About six years ago, Kastle Electric formed Kastle Technologies to meet the growing need of the voice-data-video market. "We design, install, and maintain structured cabling systems consisting of high-speed copper and fiber

optics," says Lyman Smith, President of Kastle Technologies. "This a totally different industry from electrical work

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Your comments, suggestions and questions are welcome! Contact the Western Ohio Chapter - NECA.

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how to apply them by working in the commercial/industrial market. And it's reassuring to have a retirement plan and medical benefits." The biggest challenge for him in starting the program was the cut in pay. And although he could have tested out of some of the classes, he decided to start from the beginning. "Working in a commercial environment requires a whole new set of skills and I receive more respect from other Journeymen for my commitment," says Jason.

Adam Kelhoffer is a third year apprentice and entered the program when he was 21. "I went to college for a while, then worked a few jobs. My wife's grandfather is a retired IBEW member and he inspired me to look at the program," says Adam. "I liked the idea of hands-on work and receiving a paycheck and benefits while learning a new trade." Adam felt challenged initially because he was entering a field where he had no background. Many apprentices have graduated from JVS or technical programs, so they have an understanding of electrical work and concepts. "From the very beginning, you work side by side with a Journeyman Wireman. It's the best way to learn," says Adam. Adam worked for Chapel Electric for two years and recently rotated to work at Wagner Smith, so

he faces a whole new challenge.

As a second year apprentice at age 28, James Dellinger had previously worked as a factory electrician for four years. A co-worker in the trade told him about the apprenticeship program. Initially, James faced two challenges: it took a year before he could enroll into the program because it was full at the time he applied, and it also meant a pay cut. But he enjoys the program because the learning is hands-on. "Being an apprentice is a great training opportunity," says James. "I like the idea of a five-year program. It gives you time to learn from your mistakes." James worked for Newco for one year and was recently rotated to Chapel Electric to work on a remodel at Wright Pat Air Force Base.

Darrell Brown is finishing up his last (5th) year as an apprentice. His brother-in-law is a union electrician, so he was familiar with the industry. Darryl attended Sinclair for a couple of years before deciding to become an apprentice. "I decided that learning a trade while earning a wage made sense. As a father of three, it was challenging to work every day and attend school one, sometimes two nights a week," says Darrell. "But now I can see the light at the end of the tunnel." Darrell worked for Chapel Electric for three years and is currently with Wagner Smith working at the

General Motors Water Treatment plant.

Here's where advertising pays off. Thomas Flayler, who had recently been laid off from his job in the Teledata field for five years, was driving down Route 4 one day when he saw a billboard for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). "I made the decision to join that day," says Thomas. "I had been working in sales, which was never consistent in terms of income. Even though I was 27, and would take a cut in pay, it was worth it." As a third year apprentice, Thomas is already planning for his future and hopes to have his own shop one day. After working with Chapel for two years, this year he is with Newco working at the Miami Valley Hospital on the new construction of a waiting area.

It takes tenacity and intelligence to complete a five-year apprenticeship program. From day one, you are in the field, working side-by-side with a Journeyman Wireman. And you have to attend class one or two nights a week. But upon completion of the program, the apprentice graduate has earned, through an articulation agreement with Sinclair Community College, 45 free credit hours towards an Associates Degree. So, instead of ending up with a huge tuition debt after college, apprentices complete their training with money in their pocket, knowledge of a skilled trade, and credits toward a degree. Where can I sign up?

For additional information about the IBEW/NECA Training Center, please contact Bill Newlin at 937-264-2052 or visit www.daytonarejatc.org.

Kettering, as well as the entire school. Brookville High School is a new building, and Maxwell also provided lightning protection. They are currently working on a major contract for installing magnetic shielding on the electrical room at the Bioscience building at Ohio State University. This is a new



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Upcoming Events

OPEN HOUSE

You are cordially invited to an Open House at the IBEW/NECA Training Center
 Wednesday, November 17 from 11am-6pm.
 Located at: 6550 Poe Ave.

Fabulous door prizes including:

- 27" flat screen TV
- Portable DVD player
- DVD/CD player
- CD stereo
- Digital camera and many more.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages provided.
 Take this opportunity to visit the premier electrical training facility in the Miami Valley!

The Western Ohio Chapter - National Electrical Contractors Association Directory:

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