

David Steinhoff

As a freshman in high school I won the regional International Science and Engineering Fair and traveled to Louisville Kentucky to participate in the International fair. This was an indicator that college was the path for me.

My sophomore and junior year I took electronics and advanced science and math classes to prepare me for my college years.

During my junior year I went to the career office to find out about a job for the summer. There were 3 options: a 2 week program at Bates Vocational School for electricians, a 4 week program with Bonneville Power, and the Get Electrified program. I was accepted in all 3 programs and chose the Get Electrified program because it continued through my senior year. I began working that summer as an electrical apprentice and decided becoming an electrician was the right career for me.

During my senior year I went to school for half the day and spent the rest of the day working as a pre-apprentice Monday – Thursday. On Fridays the Get Electrified program provided training in conflict resolution, research into the electrical field, safety training, resume writing and other basic job skills.

After graduation from high school I continued my education as an electrician while working full time at City Electric of Tacoma. The Pierce County Workforce Development Council In Demand Scholar program provided me with scholarship funds to help pay for books, tuition, tools and other work related items. The classes provided through the union are accredited and will give me 25 credits toward an AA or higher degree if I decide to continue my education.

I am currently working as an electrician for City Electric of Tacoma. I have completed my 2 years of training as a residential electrician. The next step for my career is to take the test so I can be a licensed Residential Journeyman Electrician B.

My near term future career plans include training to become a licensed commercial electrician.

For students who struggle to complete high school, more emphasis needs to be placed on vocational training and apprenticeship programs. When I attended the career fairs at my high school, the colleges were well represented, but I found very little information on the construction trades.

More funding to help students pursue a career in the construction trades is needed. Funding for part time or after school work programs are needed to give students who struggle academically or who choose not to pursue college a chance to try out other career options. The School to Apprenticeship program is a proven program which would benefit from increased funding.

The Pierce County Workforce Development Council provides an excellent opportunity for those students who are not college bound. Increased funding for scholarship is needed to help students with continuing education to get ahead in their chosen career.