

# Powhatan WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHT

## Youth Apprenticeship Week with Royall Pump & Well



The week of May fifth is known nationally as “Youth Apprenticeship Week,” a time to recognize the importance of this type of hands-on work experience at an early age. Here in Powhatan, we are fortunate to have not only an amazing Career and Workforce Development (CWD) Program within our public schools and an Economic Development Department that supports their efforts, but business partners within the community who also see the importance of providing career pathways for our county’s future workforce.

One of these community business partners is Royall Pump & Well, a longtime Powhatan staple who has been providing pump, well, and water treatment services for seventy-four years. This school year, Powhatan High School Senior Wyatt Tronge, had an apprenticeship with Royall Pump & Well to supplement the education he was receiving through the high school’s welding and electrical CWD programs. We spoke with both Royall Pump & Well and Wyatt about their experiences working together in this capacity.

Christina Ekhoﬀ of Royall Pump & Well explained that it beneﬁts the business to offer apprenticeships to our county’s highschoolers because this creates important industry exposure opportunities and introduces teens to a ﬁeld they may not have considered previously. This creates a win-win situation in the sense that the company is beneﬁtting from a larger pool of potential employees and our teens then also know of more places to look for employment. She reiterated, set-a-part trades and professions such as, Master Electricians, Master Plumbers, Certiﬁed Crane Operators, Certiﬁed Earth Movers, Heavy Highway Licensees, Construction Managers, and many more are all a part of the Water Well Industry.

“We are ﬁnding that the youth now, are looking for how to supplement their higher education or immediately start working and learn skills that will earn them money now, while they plan and work for options in their future. Offering internships provides not only extra hands to do the work that is in so high demand, but also molds young men and women to ﬁnd their path within the industry, providing a sustaining element. Our apprentices walk away with customer relations skills, mechanical skills, business models, work ethic and muscles.” - Christina Ekhoﬀ

Wyatt’s experience as a high school-aged apprentice echoed the same sentiments. He feels as though working with Royall has given him a head start in life and has taught him many skills. The work he does on job sites correlates directly to the education he’s received through the CWD program at school and vice versa. He explained to us that because he learned how to weld and do electrical work at school, he’s usually one of the crew members at work that can jump in and make those types of ﬁxes.

“I love how it’s something new every day. Each day we get briefed about what is expected of us for the particular job we are working on. This can be anything from drilling and pumping to ﬁltration and more. I get to learn so many skills that people actually use in the real world while getting to travel around Virginia and see all of these cool places.” - Wyatt Tronge

We would like to give a big thank you to Wyatt, Royall Pump & Well, and the Powhatan County School’s CWD program for their participation in this county feature. Our Economic Development Department hopes to continue fostering great relationships like these to make a difference in the workforce development eﬀorts happening around Powhatan. If you are a business owner in the county who would like to oﬀer internships or apprenticeships, please reach out to [econdev@powhatanva.gov](mailto:econdev@powhatanva.gov) to have a conversation. The future certainly looks bright in Powhatan County!