

TROUP COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Adam Harris' Mounted His Career Through Work-Based Learning



LaGrange, Ga., September 7, 2017 – When Adam Harris graduated from high school in May, he was eagerly looking forward to continuing his internship with the City of LaGrange's maintenance department. Later in the summer, he was happy to be offered more than an internship – he was offered a full time position.

Harris says he is now fulfilling his dream, "When I was younger, my dad was working on his truck in the backyard. He called me over to look at what he was working on and I tried to help him

out a little bit. I knew absolutely nothing about a truck or car, but ever since then I've enjoyed being able to fix stuff. Now, I get to do that full time with my current position."

Gaining employment as an Apprentice Mechanic was not an easy feat. Even though Harris participated in the Work-Based Learning (WBL) program while in high school, he had to complete an application and interview for the position as if he was new to the position.

Tommy Brown, Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor for City of LaGrange, said Harris' WBL experience helped him have an edge over other applicants, "Over the last two years, he has learned our equipment, he has learned what we look for in work completion, he has learned how to work with the technicians he is working with."

Harris knew he was planting employment seeds two years ago when he earned the WBL internship as a junior at LaGrange High School. He would spend his mornings in the classroom and late afternoons at the maintenance shop. He didn't know what to expect, but he says it was to his benefit to take advantage of the internship opportunity because it provided him with hands-on learning for his future career choice.



Lamar Norris, Garage Foreman with the City of LaGrange, said Harris came to him with very little knowledge, but they were able to change that. "When Adam came to us through the Work-Based Learning program he was pretty interested in what we do. He didn't know a whole lot at the time, but he was willing to learn and wanted to learn," says Norris.

Through the years, Norris said Harris picked up more work skills and knowledge, "If he felt comfortable working on something, I would encourage him to work on it. We always check for safety and have those safety measures in place, but he ended up doing some great work for us."

At 18, Harris said the WBL program taught him different work habits that he needed to exhibit in the work place. One-day courses on time management, working in a team environment, and work prioritizing work assignments were some of the discussions he remembers that have now made a difference in his career.

"Ms. Carrie Brkich would come over to LaGrange High and talk to the Work-Based Learning students about how we can succeed in the workplace. These discussions really stuck with me and made me a better employee," said Harris.

As far as work experience, Norris said, "We try to teach him automotive techniques and responsibility. For example, the student is responsible for their time sheet. They are responsible for ensuring the grade sheets are signed off. The main purpose is that we want to make sure whether a student remains with us or moves into another career, they are prepared."

When asked if the WBL program was beneficial for the city as much as it was for the high school student, Brown said, "This is a valuable experience for any student. We are able to provide them with a vast amount of equipment, and a great number of tools at their disposal. We also have our senior technician's on-hand to help train them. They will obtain work and life experiences."

In addition, Brown said, "Outside of the actual job experience, we get into some of those skills that any employee looks for; they have to be on-time, they have to be at work, they have to be responsible."

Harris said any student can benefit from the program, especially if they know their career path. "I really enjoyed it. It was a great experience and it helped me get to where I am now."

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