

Real tools of the trade

Legacy Foundation funds additional kits for each student in Electrical Wiring program at SRTC

Mr. Fecteau is “running a business” inside his Electrical Wiring lab at Sanford Regional Technical Center.

On this Friday morning his classroom is buzzing with activity, all 16 students each working on a project as teacher Tim Fecteau pops in and out of their work spaces, answering questions, asking his own questions of them, and demonstrating different techniques.

The Electrical Wiring program is all about hands-on learning, where they learn by actually doing the work — the best way to learn, a foundational belief at SRTC.

That’s why it is so vital each student has their own updated tool kit to use during their two-hour block. And now, thanks to a \$25,000 donation to the Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation from Wakita Electric, all 32 students have their own kits. Each kit includes a safety tester, an electrician’s knife, a right-angle drill, a dremel, and “meter disconnects” that meet 2023 code.

These tools are a luxury that would not be entirely possible under the regular school funding, which provides Fecteau with a minimal budget to operate his program.

“It adds up quickly. It’s a huge juggling act for us,” said Fecteau, who spent seven years as an electrician in the field before coming to the classroom 17 years ago to teach.

He said his tools of the trade are expensive, and the National Electric Code Standards often change quickly. To stay relevant in the field then, he has to upgrade the equipment so his students can work on real-life projects that focus on service, rough-in and finish wiring for residential homes. Without industry donations, his two-year program of such a high caliber wouldn’t be possible within the regular school budget.

“It’s like running a business out of here and teaching these kids what



The Electrical Wiring Lab, sponsored by Wakita Electric, at Sanford Regional Technical Center at Sanford High School gives students hands-on experience that’s as close to the “real world” as it gets.

they need to know to run their own business someday,” said Fecteau. “(If it weren’t for industry donations) I would have to simplify the program down to nothing.”

SRTC Director Kathy Sargent explained the program. “Our students learn about different career options in an applied learning setting,” she said. “That means many of the projects students work on are real.”



The flourishing Electrical Wiring program gives students an opportunity to explore the field and a safe space to practice and make mistakes in a highly charged profession. After successfully completing this two-year program, students have 576 of the classroom hours needed for the journeyman license. First-year students start with safety basics and tools of the trade designed to give students entry-level skills. They use mock-ups to experience the typical wiring of today’s homes including blueprints and schematics.

Second-year students have their helper license and work on real

community projects, while working with bending electrical metal tubing, metal clad cable and other raceways.

To students like junior Jason Rowe, this program offers everything he needs to jump-start his future.

“I plan on being an electrician in the National Guard right after high school, and then later on I want to own my own business,” said Sanford’s Jason Rowe. “So it’s great to be able to get started in high school.”

Owen McNamara, a junior at SRTC from Traip Academy in Kittery, said they couldn’t learn all that they do without the right equipment.

“Tools are a necessity,” said McNamara. “They really help out, and make it a lot easier to learn what we need to here.”

Programs such as this are also key to an industry that is desperate to hire their graduates.

“We have an unbelievable opportunity here for kids,” said Fecteau, saying Wakita Electric alone has hired at least 10 students from his program as apprentices.

Next up, Fecteau is looking at a solar power project for Alumni Stadium, funded by a Generac grant, in conjunction with Jay Desmond at NorthEast Electric, plus Gowen Power. The future is bright for students in the Electrical Wiring program.

Legacy Foundation

The Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization specifically designed to receive funding from community donors to benefit all ages above and beyond the regular budget of the Sanford School Department; the nonprofit, in turn, funds “extras” for initiatives such as the Electrical Wiring program to enhance the educational opportunities here in Sanford. For information, visit sanfordschoolslegacyfoundation.org.