

When summer jobs spark careers

A group of local students got hands-on experience in the electric utility industry during their time working with Coastal Electric Cooperative this summer.

High school seniors Clayton Ashcraft from Southeast Bulloch High School, and Jolie Claudio, Noah Enoch and Jeremiah Sanders from Richmond Hill High School spent the summer as part of the co-op's Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow summer work program.

During their time working, they not only learned skills central to any job—like punctuality, interacting with various personality types and problem-solving—but they contributed to the real, day-to-day operations of the electric cooperative.

Noah spent most of his time working with the building and grounds staff. He learned all that goes into keeping



Jeremiah Sanders



Noah Enoch

Coastal Electric's facilities safe, clean and in proper working order—lending a hand with lawn care, painting, HVAC maintenance, lighting and a variety of other tasks. Noah also spent some time with a Coastal Electric underground service crew, learning about lines, transformers and electrical service.

A highlight of his time at the co-op: learning to cook pancakes with Building and Maintenance Technician Steve Gose, who enjoys cooking for his co-workers on occasion.

"I learned a lot of basic life skills while working at Coastal Electric," Noah says. "I've learned that, when I go on to college and have my own family, to stay focused on the task at hand. You look at the problem, you learn how to fix it, you go beyond the problem and you keep moving forward."

Jeremiah primarily worked with line crews servicing the co-op's overhead and underground power lines. He learned about the equipment and process needed to deliver electricity to members' homes, in addition to working around obstacles like inclement weather.

Jeremiah even learned proper use of a shovel: "Work the shovel. Don't let the shovel work you," he says. He learned this from the wisdom and experience of Lead Lineman Clint Durrence.

"During my time here, I learned a lot of skills that will help me in life, in college and in the workforce," Jeremiah says. "I've learned how to manage my time better and how to communicate with colleagues to get the job done

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more effectively. ... I'd like to thank Coastal Electric for allowing me to work here, and I'll definitely apply the skills I've learned to my future job."

Clayton spent his summer with Coastal Electric line crews, working in operations. First, he worked with an overhead crew, setting poles, repairing power lines and adding pole attachments. He then joined the underground crew, changing out transformers, locating faults and splicing wire. On the service crew, he learned to push wire and replace meters.

After high school, Clayton hopes to attend lineman school and land a job at an electric cooperative. His time in the Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow program will translate into real-world experience in his desired field.

Jolie split her time between Coastal Electric's IT department and engineering. Her very first project was mapping the network for the entire Midway office in order to help IT staff troubleshoot



Jolie Claudio

more quickly and efficiently. She then helped map the power distribution unit.

"I learned a lot from IT," Jolie says. "If it looks like IT is working hard, that's bad, because that means there's a problem. That's an interesting mentality to hold—that they have worked hard to create a hospitable and safe online community so that Coastal Electric can thrive. That can apply to life as well."

Jolie also says she learned about individual employees' responsibility to cybersecurity, and that organization is crucial for troubleshooting, making it possible to pinpoint problems.

During her time in the engineering department, Jolie learned about substations and electrical safety, and she spent time testing meters.

"It was cool to see how the meters communicated through the power and to think you could apply this process when the meter is miles down the road and still have that communication," she says.

Jolie accompanied Coastal Electric staking technicians to meet with members to find out their needs, take measurements and gather information for future services. She also learned about work orders, inventory management, electric distribution equipment in the field and the process of delivering electricity.

"From engineering, I learned that you really need to be meticulous and accurate in this field, and really in most fields," she says. "Everyone needs to be doing their jobs correctly for the company to function properly, because one person's error could trickle down the line."

"I also learned to anticipate failure, not just react to it," she adds, giving examples of equipment the co-op keeps on hand to save time when faults on the

line occur, as well as proactive safety practices.

Before the Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow program, Jolie was considering a future in either electrical or aerospace engineering, but after her summer with Coastal Electric, she has decided to pursue electrical engineering.

"I will always have a fascination for aerospace, but the projects I've seen take decades to complete, and yes, they result in an expansion of human knowledge, but you don't know if they will cause an improvement of the human condition," she says. "In electrical engineering, you have those short-term projects like some of the jobs I've seen. But you can see this is my work, and this is how it impacted people and how it benefited people. I feel as though that is more fulfilling as a job."

Because an electric cooperative's mission goes beyond just providing electric services and to investing in the community, student workers also spent time helping local charitable organizations, such as the Liberty County Manna House Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen, and Gabriel's House Children's Home.

For information about careers with Coastal Electric, visit www.CoastalElectric.Coop/careers.



Clayton Ashcraft

Coastal Electric members donate \$25,000 to Darien Boys & Girls Club

Once again, YOUR Operation Round Up dollars at work ...

Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation Board Member Ray Williams recently attended a ribbon-cutting for the new Boys & Girls Club in Darien. The teen-friendly furniture you see pictured, along with other equipment to get the club off to a great start, was purchased with a \$25,000 donation made possible by Coastal Electric members who allow their electric bills to be rounded up to the next whole dollar and invested back into our community through Operation Round Up.



Have questions about Coastal Fiber? Find the answers now online at www.CoastalFiber.com!

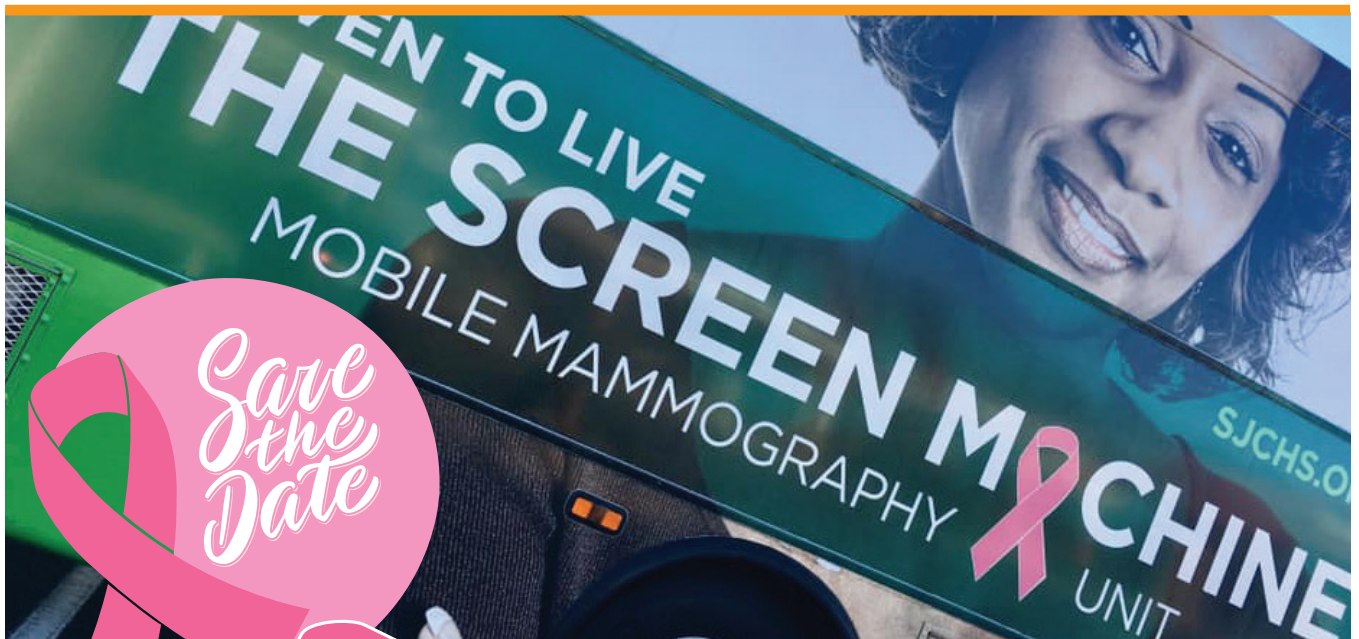


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