

Building the Nashville Technicians of Tomorrow, One Class at a Time at Remington College

Remington College's Nashville, Tennessee, campus opened an HVAC lab as part of its new diploma program offering. The lab was renovated, thanks to campus efforts combined with community and manufacturer donations.

"It was a lengthy process," said Angel Almond, president, Remington College, Nashville. "We renovated the space on the campus to open it up to bring in larger pieces of equipment, residential equipment, packaged units, trainer-type systems, and donations from Lennox; Trane; Donelson Air Service Experts, Nashville; and Baker Distributing Co., Nashville."



Almond said the college reaches out to the community prior to adding a new program. In this case, local employers weighed in, saying they need more HVAC technicians, so the college decided to implement an HVAC program.

The first program began Dec. 11, 2017, and the second began Jan. 16. The program is designed to provide students with skills in the fundamentals and practice of the HVAC industry. Also, students can earn a diploma in as little as 12 months.

NEW PROGRAM, NEW TECHS

This program sheds light on the importance of training young talent to fill the skills gap in the HVAC industry and seeks to show up-and-coming students the benefits of working in the trades. Mark Davison, HVAC program director, Remington's Nashville campus, loves working in the industry and finds it fulfilling to share the perks with aspiring new techs.

"HVAC is a hot job in the summer and cold in the winter, but if you put your mind to it, it's a great way of life," said Davison. "I've seen people come from rough backgrounds into this career, and they have a second chance at life to make money and take care of themselves and their family. I tell my students, 'You see people in misery because their system isn't working,

and you bring them joy when you fix it; you bring joy to a lot of people. You get them comfortable again. If you like this job, it isn't work.”

The current curriculum was developed for technicians entering the field in 2018, including both traditional materials and new technology.

“This HVAC program is a great thing for students,” said Larry Oglesby, regional HVAC director, Remington Nashville. “Remington College has taken a different approach than other schools. One thing I have seen is that we do more hands-on training.”

Although theory is still a large part of the education process, Remington College puts an emphasis on labs.

Students are instructed to pull compressors and perform maintenance checks and diagnostic procedures — and they do it over and over again.

“A lot of students hadn't seen an a/c system until they came here,” said Davison. “After seeing how it works, they are more eager to get in-depth with the system.”

And it's their motivation to try it themselves that's driving their success, according to Davison.

“You always hear ‘practice makes perfect,’ but it's perfect practice that makes perfect,” said Oglesby. “We're trying to show them the right way to do it.”

The current curriculum includes HVAC technology, theory, and safety; maintenance techniques; motor functions; residential and commercial systems; refrigeration and freezer systems; and automated control use, troubleshooting, and repair. It includes both residential and commercial training.

PASSING CLASS

Through the HVAC program at Remington College, students are able to obtain their diploma in as little as one year. The program is structured as 12 months of classes, with each class lasting one month.

“Students get their diploma by doing objectives, passing classes, passing prerequisites, and we have what we call a capstone, which is where, during the last class, you take a test over all 12 classes, so you're not just learning something, forgetting it, and moving to the next class,” Oglesby said. “It builds on the basics and keeps going. It's a little bit rigorous, but it's had great success and worked well with students.”

Once students graduate, the college works with them in order to help with job placement. According to Almond, Remington College has career development classes, where students can work on résumé writing, internet skills, cover letters, and more. It also has a career services department that helps students with their job searches by sending them to job fairs and scheduling interviews for them.

“If you graduate, chances are, we can find you a job,” said Davison. “You can graduate and go directly into the workforce without being saddled with a bunch of debt.

“So far, the program has been pretty good,” he continued. “To have successful students, you need a successful teacher to motivate them. I can sit here and tell you my students love coming to class. If I show them something one time, they are eager to try and do what I explain.”

Oglesby has been tasked with opening HVAC programs in South Carolina, Alabama, and other campus locations across the country, as there is a huge community demand for trained technicians.

“For the past four or five years, I’ve been working with HVAC students,” he said. “When students graduate, there are so many different areas they can go to work in; it’s so vast on what students can accomplish when they get out.”