

Goldy: 'Choosing Construction was the Best Path for Me'

Most 18 year-olds can't even read a blueprint. John Goldy looks at a set of electrical drawings and asks, "What were they thinking?" Or not thinking, as the case may be.

John is an apprentice electrician with EC Services. "Just look how this circuit is laid out. I could make some small changes and save a lot of time and a lot of wire," Goldy said, shaking his head. "That's why I want to be an electrical engineer someday. With my field experience, I know I can do a better job of designing circuits."

John enjoys his job with EC Services. He has worked on diverse projects such as wiring the lights for a tennis court, putting an electrical disconnect into a warehouse supply circuit, and adding circuits to an energized panel. "At EC Services, safety is stressed. If you can't turn the power off, you have to work "hot" sometimes. We always do the job the fastest and least expensively, but we always do it safely," Goldy said proudly.

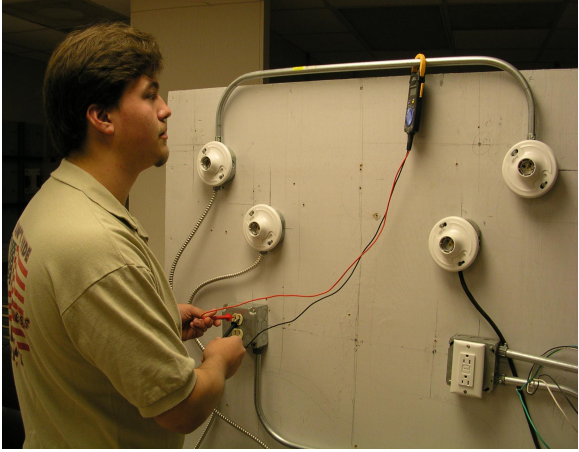
And no doubt he will become an engineer, if that's what he chooses. John is a graduate of Camden County High School, where he took three years of construction classes from Carlos Jones, Sr. "Mr. Jones didn't just show us how to wire things. He showed us how things work. He would take a regular light switch and take it completely apart. Once you see how something works, the right way to wire it up just makes more sense. It's easier to remember, too," Goldy said with a grimace. "Mr. Jones' tests were hard!"

Carlos Jones vividly remembers when John Goldy came into the Construction Program. "John wasn't sure why he needed to pay attention to all the regular high school courses. Then he discovered electricity. He wanted to know about all things electrical. He realized why he needed to know math, how to read directions and instructions, how to draw diagrams. Suddenly, John Goldy had a reason to learn all that stuff. He caught up on all his academics in record time," Jones said. "The best part was that he wanted to put it to use. He went around the school repairing motors in air conditioning units, power saws, power chain hoists – anything electrical that was broken. He probably saved the school a million dollars in maintenance costs," Jones chuckled.

John wanted to learn more about motor control wiring so he could enter the SkillsUSA industrial motor controls contest. Mr. Jones arranged for volunteer instructor Jack Bazemore to come into the classroom/lab and teach John and other interested students how to install, wire and maintain industrial motor controls. John won first place in the 2004 Georgia SkillsUSA contest and went on to Kansas City to compete in the nationals. "Those competitions were some of the high points of my life," Goldy said.

His success in the classroom and the contests also helped him get a full scholarship to the four-year Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) Apprenticeship Program. "The scholarship pays for all the tuition and books. I go to school one night a week. By the end of the program, I'll be a Bureau of Apprentice Training certified electrician," explained Goldy. "Everything I learn in the classroom is immediately applicable to the job. That makes school a lot easier to take."

Todd Hawkins, Training Director at the Atlanta Chapter of IEC, likes to hold John up as an example. "John has the right attitude about things. He works well with others. He focuses on what he's doing, whether he's at work, in class, or on the games," Hawkins said.



John Goldy uses a multi-meter to check a circuit for continuity in the IEC Apprenticeship Training Lab. Goldy goes to school one night every week. He is able to apply the training he receives at the IEC School on the job each day. He finds this kind of applied learning more to his liking than taking courses that he “might use someday,” he said.

The games? “When I get off work, my favorite thing to do is to game out on my X-Box, Nintendo, or Atari. Hey, I’m 18 years old! It’s what we do,” Goldy said laughing.

Asked how life has changed since moving from Camden County to Metro Atlanta, Goldy said, “The big difference is the pace. Everything here in Atlanta has to be done yesterday. But that’s OK. We get a lot done because we move right along. But I can sleep well because I know at EC Services we’re doing things right every time.”

The education and field experience has paid off in other ways, too. Goldy’s dad, Jeff Goldy, is a foreman for a construction company back in Camden County. “Yeah, Dad knows how to run jobs large and small. But he doesn’t mess with electricity. Last time I was home, I re-wired his shed for him,” Goldy said. “Re-wired” is something of an understatement in this case. The shed had only one receptacle. When John Goldy was through, the shed had outlets on every wall and a new lighting system. Goldy’s dad was thrilled. “He was putting in some irrigation for the lawn and they cut the underground cable. So he’d had to poke around in the shed with a flashlight whenever he needed something. He’s pleased with the new setup. Made Mom proud, too,” Goldy said, somewhat embarrassed (but happy, nonetheless!).

Whatever John Goldy chooses to do, he plans to continue his education. “I like to know how things work and why they work that way. That’s learning you can put to use. I like to figure out how to do things better. I am enjoying the education on and off the job. Choosing construction was the best path for me,” Goldy said.

The human resources managers at some firms ought to be following the career of John Goldy. There will always be a market for someone who can design a better circuit.