

Graduation Benefits Speech from Co-op Coordinator, Jeff Limoge June, 2015

Examples of what “trade certificates of value” are and how they benefit students taking a technical education program.

These come from the Green Mountain Technology & Career Center's 2015 graduating class. Other centers all have similar examples.

Please keep in mind: these tech center graduates are 17 & 18 years old and this is just where they are starting their careers. They would not even be considered for these opportunities without their technical educations and their state, national and industry certifications already.

I. The Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning program had 3 students, with their NORA Bronze Oil Heat certifications, hired full-time, by a large local fuel dealer. Their contracts include:

Starting Pay: \$12.00/hour (that's \$24,000/year)

In 45 Days: a raise to \$12.50/hour (\$25,000/year)

In 90 Days: a raise to \$13.50/hour (\$27,000/year).

Benefits Package:

1) A company vehicle will be provided for work:

This vehicle can go home with them and be used to travel to and from work daily. Fuel and insurance are provided by the company. (According to IRS guidelines, this equates to \$18.40/day mileage and vehicle wear and tear daily. Over the course of a year, this amounts to a benefit of \$4,600 plus NO wear and tear on their personal vehicles.)

2) Sick/Personal Time:

Accumulates at the rate of 4 hours per month or 6 days a year.

3) Vacation Time:

Accumulates at the rate of 4 hours per month or 6 days a year.

4) Paid Holidays

The company observes 7 ½ paid holidays a year.

5) Health Insurance:

The company pays 60% for the employee, 40% for family members.

- 6) Short Term Disability – provided for by the company.
- 7) A %15,000 Life Insurance Policy – provided for by the company.
- 8) A Performance Bonus - based on company profits – provided for by the company.
- 9) An Assisted Retirement Plan – the company will match 3% of the employee's salary contributed to a 401K or other personal retirement plan.
- 10) Employee Discount On Fuels:
 Oil & Kerosene: company price + 40 cents/gallon.
 Propane: company price + 35 cents/gallon
 Inventory of Parts & Equipment: cost + 10%.
- 11) Family Discounts:
 20 cents off per gallon of public price.
- 12) Commissions:
 Paid to employees where applicable.
- 13) Tool Fund:
 Matching funds provided by the company on a 1:1 basis.
- 14) Uniform Fund:
 Matching funds of 1:1 to 3:1 depending upon your job.
- 15) Fitness Program:
 Up to \$20 a month towards an approved fitness program at local fitness spas.
- 16) AT & T Cell Phone Discount:
 Provided by the company an 8% on personal cell phone account.
- 17) Additional paid training, with associated travel, costs, etc. for industry and national certifications in other related areas.

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The Automotive Technology program has a graduate who has been doing a paid co-op at a local large auto dealership. Upon graduation he:

- 1) Has been accepted into an elite Chevrolet Technician Training Program at a 2-year college.
- 2) As part of this specialized education program, he will continue his co-op with the local dealership earning a decent wage to help cover his college expenses.

- 3) Will get free uniforms.
- 4) Will be nationally and industry certified in a minimum of 85% of all Chevrolet repair areas.
- 5) Upon college graduation from the Chevrolet Technician program, he will be offered full-time employment at the dealership to include:
 - A) Health insurance,
 - B) a 401K Retirement program,
 - C) Paid holidays,
 - D) 3 Personal Days,
 - E) Employee Discount on all automotive parts: cost + 10%,
 - F) Free use of the dealership automotive facilities to repair his vehicles,
 - G) Performance based pay increase based upon flat rate up to 50 cents/hour for each 5 hours over the standard 40 hour work week,
 - H) Additional training opportunities which includes full pay while off to training schools, free use of a company vehicle and all expenses paid while getting this additional training and certifications.

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The Electrical Technology program has all of its 2nd year students offered full time positions with their co-op employers – all with benefits. One example:

- Besides full-time employment with the company, this young woman also receives:
- 1) Health Insurance,
 - 2) Dental Insurance,
 - 3) Vision Insurance,
 - 4) Basic Life Insurance of \$50,000 with Accidental Death & Dismemberment, with the option for additional life insurance available up to 3 times her annual earnings to a maximum of \$500,000,
 - 5) Accident & Critical Illness Insurance,
 - 6) Long & Short-Term Disability Insurance,
 - 7) A Cafeteria Plan (125 Plan) – pre-tax dollars for insurance contributions,
 - 8) a 401K Retirement Plan,
 - 9) Profit Sharing,
 - 10) Paid Vacation Time,
 - 11) Paid Personal Time,
 - 12) 7 Paid Holidays,
 - 13) Additional paid training opportunities and certifications and assistance in continuing her State Electrical Apprenticeship training.

As an end note: ALL of these students will be debt free for their educations and will make very good livings here in Vermont.