

BridgeValley

SUCCESS STORIES



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BridgeValley Community and Technical College (BVCTC) student Samantha Fox didn't set out to be a pioneer or changemaker, but the Brewing Technology Apprenticeship student is precisely that.

Fox is the first-ever Brewer's Apprentice in the state of West Virginia and is one of the only women in the program at BVCTC. She recently began her apprenticeship at Greenbrier Valley Brewing, which Fox said was already her favorite brewery before she started in the program.

Fox's dreams have, quite literally, come true. She said she has long admired Greenbrier Valley Brewing company's beers, and that she is learning alongside real professionals in the field, while getting paid.

The innovative program at BVCTC made it all possible.

Fox was not a so-called "traditional" student -- she already had two

undergraduate degrees, a master's degree, and a successful career. She knew that she didn't love her job, but it paid the bills and she was good at it, so she kept it up. Then the COVID-19 pandemic made her job remote and suddenly she couldn't ignore it anymore -- she knew she needed a change.

"When the lockdowns for COVID-19 started, I found myself exploring different ideas and careers that I could do with my current hobbies," said Fox. "I had been homebrewing for about five years and had an interest in expanding on my knowledge. This program fulfilled all of the desires I was searching for. The apprenticeship is giving me hands-on experience that I can use to grow in this industry."

Craft brewing is a burgeoning industry in the state and is the

second-largest manufacturing industry in West Virginia. BVCTC is the only community college to offer this degree in the state, and helping to train the future workforce of craft brewers. Fox said she is incredibly grateful that she could have this opportunity, especially since BVCTC is affordable and close to home.

"I am very thankful for all of the support that I have received from friends, family, and the brewing community," Fox said. "I absolutely love this program! I appreciate the opportunities that I have gained and the fact that I am able to do it here in WV. The educational aspect combined with the hands-on experience is helping me learn every aspect of the brewing industry."

- **Samantha Fox,**
Brewing Technology Apprenticeship