

BridgeValley

SUCCESS STORIES



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Brecon Richmond is an anomaly, although she never set out to be one.

Richmond recently graduated from the 900-Hour Utility Lineman program at BridgeValley Community and Technical College (BVCTC), and was the only woman in her class. Standing out was never her goal though, and she said she was pleasantly surprised by the welcoming faculty at BVCTC. The college always made her feel welcome, she said, even though the utility lineman field is a traditionally very male career path.

"I really appreciated the teachers at BridgeValley," she said. "I was really nervous about being the only woman and everyone at BridgeValley was really supportive and positive. Our class was small, and we were able to get lots of attention and hands-on experience in a really great learning environment."

Richmond was quickly hired for an apprenticeship after graduation. The BVCTC Utility Line Service Training Program is designed to provide students

with these kinds of opportunities with the college's energy partners. Successful students like Richmond can be placed into on-the-job training apprenticeship opportunities for 16 weeks with partner companies. Richmond is now on her way to a flexible and great paying career servicing substations with New River Electrical. She recently completed her Learn and Earn and on-the-job training with the company in July 2021.

One faculty member said Richmond worked very hard in her course and that he was not surprised she was already working for a utility company so soon after graduating.

"Brecon has chosen to take on a non-traditional career path for a woman," the faculty member said. "She has taken the challenge and has excelled in passing all required in field and classroom training and has remained at the top of her class."

Richmond said she would highly recommend the BVCTC program for anyone, especially another woman, who is interested in working as a lineman or in the utility field.

"I would definitely tell anyone else interested in working in the utility field to go for it," she said of the BVCTC utility lineman course. "It's a quick program and then you can jump into work and it will be less than a year. It's adventurous and exciting and these companies want women to participate too. I want other women to know that if I can do it, then they can too."

In particular, she emphasized the college's lower cost compared to other institutions and its efforts to ensure the students were very employable. She said her class even helped students earn a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), which ultimately helped her in her application process for her apprenticeship as well.

To learn more about the 900-hour Utility Line Service Training Program at BridgeValley, visit:
bridgevalley.edu/utility-line-service-training-program

**- Brecon Richmond
Utility Line Service Training, 2021**