

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • May 14, 2021

Justin Streitenberger will finish his high school career this month but he'll have only a pause before he starts on his career path.

Justin learned from Welding instructor Tommy Collier about the field of underwater welding, also known as commercial diving, and researched it that night.

He found Commercial Diving Technologies Institute in Hudson, Florida, and visited the school with his father. After he graduates from Zane Trace on May 22, he will leave for Florida a week later to begin a 24-week hands-on program.

Two elements appeal to him: being able to use his welding skills under water and getting to travel. Once he completes the program, he'll be qualified to work anywhere in the United States and overseas.

Ken Shelly, owner of the diving institute, said his school works with companies that need commercial divers to place their students in jobs.

"They know us, they know what we're doing and they'll call and say 'I need a couple people or I need one person, I've got this project.' "

Ken, who worked as a commercial diver since 1980 before opening his school five years ago, said he also brings in people from dive compa-



Justin was the Pickaway-Ross recipient of the Joseph Landman Memorial MADE Scholarship, established by Kristy Landman, right.

nies to provide training for jobs they have.

"In most cases, (students) know where they're going to go before they leave the school. They might have multiple opportunities."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of May 2020, fewer than 4,000 people were employed as commercial divers.

This also appeals to Justin, who said he likes "having a job that's a whole lot different than everybody else. Because not a lot of people do it."

Tommy Collier said that Justin is his second student to pursue commercial diving.

"I always get excited when a student figures out what they want to do and then follows through with it. I think it is going to be an awesome experience for him."

In addition to being active in SkillsUSA, Justin has been a member of the National Technical Honor Society and MADE, the school's drug-free club. Last week, Justin was awarded one of the Joseph Landman Memorial MADE Scholarships.

At his home school Justin was on the football, track and bowling teams, experiences Justin credited with teaching him to be a team player and show good sportsmanship while getting to meet peers from other schools.

As the school year winds down, he's excited about starting his next chapter at the diving institute.

"It's on-the-job training. It's really like work. After (24 weeks), I'm qualified to do anything under water, like underwater rigging, welding, construction, hazmat. I like being able to (do all those jobs) under water," he said.

Justin researched commercial diving schools for almost a year before finding and applying to Commercial Diving Technologies Institute in Hudson, Florida.

