

# THE REDMOND Spokesman

A special good morning to subscriber JIM PIERCE of Redmond

redmondspokesman.

## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING COMES TO REDMOND

**Geoff Folsom**  
Spokesman

Sam Stout, a junior energy systems engineering student at Oregon State University-Cascades, didn't have to go far to find on-the-job training.

He is working as an intern at Composite Approach, a company that designs and builds composite aircraft, vehicles and other items near Redmond Municipal Airport. He said the company give him unique experience that he might not otherwise get.

"Everybody is pretty easy to get along with," Stout said. "They have a nice family dynamic that a lot of other businesses don't often have."

The pairing of Stout and Composite Approach is one of three put together so far by Larry Holeman, Redmond Internship Coordinator for Economic Development Central Oregon. His job is part of Youth CareerConnect, a partnership between Central Oregon businesses, schools, governments and nonprofits.

The program, which is de-



Ridgeview sophomore Skyler Black works on a bicycle shock at Risse Racing in Redmond. Black is one of three interns taking part in a new Redmond program.

(Geoff Folsom/Spokesman photo)

signed to improve job opportunities for students, while providing skilled workers, started in Redmond for the 2017-18 school year. Holeman works with Redmond and Ridgeview high schools,

Redmond Proficiency Academy, Central Oregon Community College and OSU-Cascades in placing students in area businesses.

See **TRAINING**, Page 5

### MORE INFO

For information on taking part in the Redmond Internship Program, contact Larry Holeman at 541-815-5005 or [larry@edcoinfo.com](mailto:larry@edcoinfo.com).

## Training

Continued from Page 1

"They get involved in the next generation of workers," Holeman said. "It's forming a better and tighter community. I see it already."

The internship program is expected to continue growing in 2018, Holeman said.

"We've got a lot of companies that want to wait until the start of the year," he said.

Sam Meier, vice president of operations for Composite Approach, wanted to take part in the internship program both to invest in the community and to get young people interested in composites.

"Teaching kids how to think is more important to us than actually learning about composites," Meier said. "Understanding the 'why' is more important than the 'how to.'"

Stout and other students get emails letting them know about interest from companies like Composite Approach. He was excited to learn about the company.

"I looked them up and saw all the cool stuff they were working on," Stout said.

Stout has been working on a program for a computer numerical control router that Composite Approach's 30 employees haven't had time to do. That frees up time for the other employees to work on other tasks.

Such experience is hard to get in school, Stout said.

"They don't teach you any of that stuff, even as an engineer," he said. "Unless you've gone to school to be a CNC technician, you don't really learn that stuff. They don't teach work culture at school. They don't teach you a lot of things that are really valuable in the workplace."



From left, Composite Approach Vice President of Operations Sam Meier, intern Sam Stout and senior engineer Guy Drescher pose in the company's shop. Stout is one of three students taking part in the Redmond Internship program.

(Geoff Folsom/Spokesman photo)

*"Teaching kids how to think is more important to us than actually learning about composites. Understanding the 'why' is more important than the 'how to.'"*

— Sam Meier, vice president of operations for Composite Approach

Composite Approach is flexible with Stout's schedule, which Holeman said is common in the internship program. Students can work after school a few days a week during the school year and spend more time on the job during breaks.

Ridgeview sophomore Skyler Black, 16, was picking up some extra hours over the recent winter break at Risse Racing, not far from Composite Ap-

proach. He was helping remove oil from used bicycle shocks that the company rebuilds.

"We're just getting him up to speed on different things," owner Kevin Risse said of Black, who started about a month ago. "It helps to have another person who can get training. I don't think they have a bicycle shock suspension program anywhere. It's a little specialized."

Like all companies, Risse

Racing keeps students away from heavy machinery they are not trained for, leaving those tasks to its six employees.

Black is interested in working on bicycles for a living, so the experience he gets is important, he said.

"My dad's the one who got me interested in being a bike mechanic," he said. "The school got me into the program, and I've been working here ever since."

Students also earn school

credits from the program.

"Basically, you can work, you're getting paid and you're getting school credit," Holeman said.

Youth CareerConnect has similar internship programs with directors in Bend and Madras. The program has a goal of having 160 interns in the region within a year.

The positions are filling up. Holeman said he has interviews this week for four internship positions and is working to fill 18 more.

Risse advises companies to give Holeman a call.

"It's a tight labor market, you can get someone you can teach good skills," he said. "Everybody's getting older, so we've got to get some fresh blood."

— Reporter: 541-548-2186; [gfolson@redmondspokesman.com](mailto:gfolson@redmondspokesman.com)