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Solar Holler Partners with Wayne High School to Bring Solar Apprenticeship Program to Students

Careers in Solar Energy a Growing Opportunity for West Virginia Youth

Huntington, WV - Solar Holler today announced, in partnership with Wayne High School and the Pioneer Career Launch program, a new apprenticeship opportunity for students interested in a career in solar energy. Participating students will shadow Solar Holler installation crews to learn industry basics through direct observation and hands-on experience. Five Wayne County High School seniors have been selected to take advantage of the offering this semester and will have equal opportunity to be hired into full time positions with Solar Holler upon completion of the apprenticeship.

“Wayne County Schools is excited to see Solar Holler participating in the Wayne High School Career Launch internship program,” said Todd Alexander, Superintendent of Wayne County Schools. “Solar Holler’s involvement provides a unique opportunity for our students to learn an emerging technology and we want to thank them for their willingness to contribute to the development of our students.”

Alexander spearheaded the Pioneer Career Launch program that went live last Fall. It’s designed to place students into internship positions with local businesses so students can apply classroom skills to real world scenarios while being exposed to employment opportunities within their home communities. The overarching program currently has 15 participants, including the 5 who are apprenticing with Solar Holler.

Solar Holler joins the program at a pivotal moment in clean energy workforce development. The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act makes solar accessible to more nonprofits, businesses, and homeowners than ever before, particularly here in Appalachia. In 2021, there were 372 solar jobs in West Virginia, a number that’s projected to nearly triple by 2030.

“Revitalizing Appalachian economies so that young people can find good paying jobs here at home is central to the Solar Holler mission,” said Dan Conant, Founder and CEO of Solar Holler.



This collaboration builds on Solar Holler's history of fostering creative partnerships to develop the renewable energy economy and a skilled workforce to support it here in Appalachia. In 2017 Solar Holler partnered with Coalfield Development to create the first solar training and apprenticeship program in the state. Then, made history again in 2020 by partnering with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) to unionize their installation crews.

"We're thrilled to be working with Wayne County Schools on a program that creates opportunities for local kids while also spreading the good news about solar and training the next generation of solar installers. It's really a win-win for everyone," said Conant.

According to Kristi Booton, Coordinator for the Pioneer Career Launch Program, "Traditional education has changed a great deal in the last decade. School is no longer a brick- and mortar building. Internship experiences are valuable opportunities for our schools to graduate confident, prepared students who are valuable employees to businesses like Solar Holler," she concluded.

Students participating in the apprenticeship program with Solar Holler are required to work at least 75 hours during the semester. Wayne High School will work with the students to ensure that academic and work schedules are compatible and that students maintain a 2.5 GPA and meet attendance requirements.

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Solar Holler is bringing the next generation of energy production to our ancient mountains, and strengthening our communities with union employment. Solar Holler relentlessly pursues innovative approaches that bring solar within reach of all Appalachians, starting with low-interest financing options with no upfront cost. Solar Holler has helped dozens of businesses, nonprofits, and churches, and hundreds of homes go solar across West Virginia, southern Ohio, and eastern Kentucky.