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Energy Producers Provide Summer Internships to Recent High School Graduates

Oil and gas producers are teaming up for the inaugural year of a program to provide graduating high school seniors exposure to the California oil and gas industry through a summer employment program.

E&B Natural Resources, California Resources Corporation and LINN Energy are collaborating with California Independent Petroleum Association (CIPA) and several school districts throughout the state to provide graduating seniors a summer experience that will provide exposure to quality oil and gas industry career options available along the educational spectrum.

“We are excited to provide young adults experience in our growing Poso Creek operation in Kern County,” stated Amy Roth, Public and Government Relations Director at E&B. She continued, “Typically, summer internships require several years of post-high school education. This program is unique because it provides high school seniors a paid internship immediately following graduation in a field based position. This is work experience where they will develop tangible skills and a practical understanding of how our industry operates.”

“When E&B approached the district, we did not have an internship program and welcomed being a part of the pilot. The Cuyama School District is establishing an energy career pathway and this program demonstrates the connection between what students learn in the classroom and how it can apply to their future employment,” said Dr. F. Paul Chounet, Superintendent from Cuyama Joint Unified School District, located in Santa Barbara County, who partnered with E&B to advertise the program and recruit students to apply.

Debra Maxie is a longtime educator and Vice Principal at Crawford High School in San Diego. She organized an industry introductory presentation for students and parents in San Diego and assisted students throughout the hiring process. “We truly appreciate being a part of this pilot program. Having no oil or gas production in San Diego made it challenging to get students excited and interested in Kern County ‘sight unseen’,” said Maxie. She continued, “Although I understood the value of this opportunity, the mother in me also knew that I would initially have to walk alongside my students until they felt comfortable enough to stretch out on their own. My strategy worked and I am so very proud.”

Despite the economic downturn in the industry due to low oil prices, the companies prioritized their participation in the pilot program. E&B also applied for and received grant funding from Energy Partners, a non-profit focused on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in Santa Barbara County, to assist with the costs.

“Market conditions are cyclical and our members understand the importance of investing in our future workforce. We hope these deserving students gain work experience that will lead to well-paying energy careers and learn more about an industry that is often maligned by those who do not understand our economic and environmental contributions to the state,” said Rock Zierman, chief executive officer of the California Independent Petroleum Association.

Interns selected to participate in the program are:

Michelle Caballero: Michelle Caballero was placed with E&B Natural Resources. She is a graduate from Cuyama High School in Santa Barbara County where she participated in science fairs. Michelle is bilingual and applied for the program because she desired “hands on” experience and to learn more about science and engineering. She is considering joining the Air Force after her internship.

James Garrafa: James Garrafa was placed with LINN Energy. He is a graduate of Lincoln High School in San Diego where he was active in band. James is bilingual and plans on studying chemical engineering. He applied for the program because he thinks it will give him a start in a professional career as a chemical engineer.

Jasmine Gilstrap: Jasmine Gilstrap was placed with California Resources Corporation (CRC). She is a graduate from Crawford High School in San Diego where she was involved in ROTC; appointed as a Command Sergeant Major; President of the Military Science Club; and Treasurer of the Basketball Club. Jasmine has been a leader on campus and this opportunity would allow her to apply team work skills. She joined the program because it would provide exposure and knowledge about the oil and gas operations.

De’Jon Harrison: De’Jon Harrison was placed with E&B Natural Resources. He is a graduate from Crawford High School in San Diego where he participated in basketball and worked as a gardener. He joined the program to learn more about the oil and gas industry, and to gain independence and work experience.

Internships began in late June and students will work while residing in local college dormitories.

This new internship program is one example of the industry’s continued efforts to help educate students about career possibilities within the oil and gas sector. Earlier this year, [CIPA and its member companies awarded scholarships](#) totaling \$5,000 to high school seniors pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

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