BCCC Student Works for Grades

Ronnie Baker, a Mechanical Engineering Technology student at Beaufort County Community College (BCCC), had a good turn of luck in December when he was selected to be the first student at BCCC to be accepted for the co-op work experience program at the Naval Air Depot (NADEP) at Cherry Point. Given the highly competitive nature of being selected for the program, it was a great turn of luck for BCCC too.

According to Rhunell Boyd, BCCC's coordinator of the College's Cooperative Education program, "This is a real honor and speaks highly of Ronnie's abilities as a machinist as well as our Mechanical Engineering Technology program. This is the first year that Cherry Point has included BCCC students in the application process. We are one of eight colleges from which they recruit. The pay and benefits offered by the Department of the Navy are so good that civilian job openings are rare and the competition to fill them is high." Baker modestly states, "This opportunity just fell into my lap."

Baker will co-op during the day and attend class at night. His work through the co-op will provide him with credits toward his degree. NADEP will pay him more than twice the minimum wage and provide benefits. "These are impressive additions to any resume," states Boyd. Baker was encouraged after his initial orientation stating, "If all goes well during the co-op process, we will most likely become full time employees of NADEP." A full time position can pay as much as $23 an hour.

Baker lives in Chocowinity and is in his second year of the Mechanical Engineering Technology program at BCCC. He was interviewed for the opening on October 5 and was notified of his acceptance on November 7. He began working at the NADEP on January 7.

During his orientation Baker was amazed to learn that NADEP employs approximately 2500 people. "They told us that they were North Carolina's largest employer east of I-95," stated Baker. Due to recent world events, the demand for military equipment has increased significantly, and Baker stated that production at NADEP would be following suit this spring. NADEP is in need of machinists right now. "They only hired me and another student from Pitt Community College," states Baker, "but they need four more."

NADEP will also consider BCCC students in other curricula programs for the cooperative...