

Eric's Story: A Certified Career



For a while, Eric Voshell '13, could only find sporadic work as a roofer. He took jobs for cash with no benefits, and tried to get by. He and his wife were supporting two kids and it just wasn't enough. When he learned about Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology from an admissions recruiter, the HVAC&R Certificate piqued his interest. Growing up in Marlborough, Voshell remembered his friend's dad who ran a successful HVAC&R business. "I knew there was money there," Voshell said. "I was ready for a life. I needed a career."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the HVAC field will experience 14% growth—much faster than average—from 2014-2024. The HVAC&R Department Chair, Kevin Bell, reminds students that the jobs are out there, but it takes hard work and a willingness to learn to be successful. He also makes it clear that having basic skills and knowledge from a formal certificate program gives you an advantage in the job market. "The certificate program covers the basic information you need to know to start in the industry," Bell said. "Having that certificate will give you an edge. Once you're hired, you have to get involved. You have to keep learning."

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- Kevin Bell, HVAC&R Department Chair

He hit the ground running after landing a job at BTU Control. He made sure his boss knew he was willing to help in case of emergencies and spent the first five months on-call. On a regular day, he goes on 10-20 calls to visit sites for regular maintenance, troubleshooting, and repairs. Sites range from public schools and fire stations to restaurants and supermarkets. He also visits residential properties all around the island to work with heating and air conditioning units.

The **HVAC&R Certificate program** at BFIT provides a foundation to enter the industry. There are endless career options you can explore from there. Voshell passed the state Refrigeration Technician License allowing him to work on any piece of refrigeration equipment in the field. "Out of the 50 questions on the exam, I learned 40 of them right from class," Voshell. "The program prepares you to get started in your career right away."

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- Eric Voshell, Class of 2013

Now, he's also working on a Gas Fitter license and after two more years and a few classes, he will be eligible to sit for the state Refrigeration Contractor License. All of this comes with more responsibility and more income. He wants to work his way up to become a Service Manager and see where life takes him from there. The work load has lightened up a bit and provided a good work-life balance. "At the beginning I worked all the time. I had to pay my dues," Voshell said. "Now I can go to my kid's gymnastics events or dance recitals. My wife and I have the time and the money to go on vacation."

Less than three years after graduation, Voshell realizes he made a great decision when he decided to enroll at BFIT. He went from struggling to make ends meet to a very lucrative career in a high-demand industry that promises to grow and expand in the coming years. "I figured I'd eventually be making good money down the line," Voshell said. "But I didn't think it would come this quickly. The earning potential is definitely there. Without the certificate, it would not have been possible."