

SER Corporation



# SERvices for you SERvicios para usted

## Staying Focused Help Make a Dream a Reality

By Roberta Pianalto, NFJP Client Service Agent



**Benjamin Guevara**

When Benjamin Guevara from Stratton, Colorado (CO) turned fifteen, he began working the harvest fields. He traveled across Colorado and New Mexico working in back breaking conditions during the hottest part of the summer. Once he worked the entire summer in the fields and witnessed a friend of his pass out from heat exhaustion. It was then that he decided he was not going to do this type of work for the rest of his life. Thought was given to finding a career where he could obtain a skill allowing him to work year-round and earn good pay.

Benjamin was always intrigued with welding. He especially liked welding on heavy farm equipment and began looking into training programs where he could be trained as a welder. It was decided he would attend Northwest Kansas Technical College (NWKTC) in Goodland, Kansas which offered a short-term training program in welding. Searching for ways to pay for training was his next task. Benjamin was introduced to Roberta Pianalto, a Client Service Agent for SER Corporation. Benjamin worked as a migrant and qualified for the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP). The NFJP was able to assist him with tuition, transportation and On-the- Job Training.

While in the welding program Benjamin also took the CDL class offered at NWKTC. He completed his training in April of this year and decided not to settle for just any job. Instead, he wanted to work for a major company that offered great pay with benefits. Roberta worked with Benjamin to help write his resume and prepare him for interviews.

He applied for a job with Plains Ag in Burlington, CO. Plains Ag is the Case International Harvester (IH) dealership in Burlington with their headquarters in North Dakota. They have many stores over multiple states. A few days later, Benjamin was offered a position paying \$16.00 per hour with full benefits and the potential for a raise after 90 days. This was better than he imagined.

Benjamin cherishes the life skills he learned while working the harvest fields as he said it taught him to work hard and dream of a better life. Whenever Benjamin struggled during his training, he remembered his goal and stayed focused. A quote from LL Cool J that he put on his tool box served as his reminder, "Stay focused, go after your dreams and move toward your goals".

### Inside this issue:

<b>The Beginning of a Lasting Partnership</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Sydenstricker - Your Partner in Growing a Better Tomorrow</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Short-Lived or Long-Lived Success</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hard Work Pays Off</b>	<b>5</b>

## The Beginning of a Lasting Partnership

By Mike Medina, NFJP Client Service Agent

It is not often SER Corporation has the pleasure of partnering with a city government. A few months back, I presented the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program to Dennis Cox, former Electric Distribution Superintendent for the City of Pratt, Kansas. Dennis thought the OJT was a great opportunity to have an organization help with training cost. So, he recommended I speak with Jamie Huber, Director of Electric Utilities for the city. I meet with Jamie the following week and explained the NFJP and OJT to him. I also told him that I had a NFJP participant who was in the Electrical Power Program at Pratt Community College (PCC) and that I was looking to place him in employment. Jamie was surprised he had never heard about the NFJP and OJT when he was a student at Pratt. He was happy to learn about it and said “I also went through the PCC Line Program in 1990 and have been with the City of Pratt since the fall of 1991. I started out as an apprentice and worked my way up through the ranks and am now the Electric Utility Director. I oversee distribution and production for the City of Pratt.”

My participant was placed with the City of Pratt and they agreed to enter into an OJT. When I inquired about how the NFJP participant was doing, I was told that “he is a great individual, hardworking and very knowledgeable.” When I asked how he felt PCC prepared their students for real live situations, I was told the following, “PCC gives the students kind of a crash course into the industry which helps a lot when they arrive on the job.” When asked about the OJT program, Jamie stated “Using the OJT is a great opportunity for everyone especially the reimbursement that we receive for the salary. The paper work involved is very minimal and we would highly recommend students to get involved with this program.”

In closing, the job of a lineman is a time-honored profession. A special type of person is required to go out in the worst of weather conditions to restore much needed power to customers. It takes a committed person willing to do a hard and dangerous job. The City of Pratt would like to thank all the linemen, past, current and future for their hard work.



## Sydenstricker – Your Partner in Growing a Better Tomorrow

By Henry Coronado, NFJP Client Service Agent



In January of 1944, Ralph Sydenstricker founded Sydenstricker of Missouri. This International Harvester (IH) dealership is located in Paris, Missouri. He continued to operate the IH dealership until 1960 when he sold to J.I. Case Company and focused on continuing to grow his angus cattle business.

In 1965, after running his cattle business for 5 years, he decided to go back into the implement business and purchased the IH dealership in Macon, Missouri; his son Eddie becoming the manager. A year later, Ralph acquired the John Deere dealer in Mexico, Missouri. Ralph needed a trusted business partner, so he offered the partnership to Galen Gabriel. Accepting Ralph's offer, Galen took over the Macon dealership, while Eddie moved back to Mexico to assist with the John Deere dealership and angus business. Many years passed and relationships with family members, customers and the communities grew. In 1991, Greg Gabriel, Galen's son, joined the dealership as well.

In April of 1994, Sydenstricker expanded to Kirksville, Missouri with the opening of another John Deere dealership. The company continued to grow in the years to come with the purchase of eight other John Deere dealerships from 2003 to 2016. Sydenstricker now has 11 different locations across Missouri.

Client Service Agent, Henry Coronado, contacted Sydenstricker inquiring about their participation in the SER On-The-Job-Training (OJT) program. Sydenstricker recently signed an OJT contract for Aaron Gerling. Aaron is still currently being trained and working on the OJT contract with Sydenstricker until the end of June. When speaking with Jeremy at Sydenstricker about Aaron and the OJT program, Jeremy stated that he thinks the SER program is a good program. It helps kids that might need assistance with school, OJT and job placement. Sydenstricker has agreed to make students aware of the SER program should they decide to go to the John Deere School at Fort Scott Community College. They would like to continue our OJT relationship to possibly enter into more contracts in the future.



## Short-Lived or Long-Lived Success

By Vicki Needham, NFJP Client Service Agent



Colton England

I have always said that the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) helps displaced farmworkers with a hand-up versus a hand-out. With that philosophy, the question is are the benefits of the NFJP short-lived or do they stand the test of time?"

I met Colton England when he was at a point in his life seeking change and a successful career. Colton was raised in a small Kansas (KS) town whose population is under one hundred people. Each year he performed seasonal farm work. There were no benefits provided and no opportunity for advancement. Employment opportunities in his community were very few.

He came to SER Corporation where it was determined he qualified for the NFJP. A lengthy interview followed along with an assessment. It was concluded that Colton had the skills and abilities to pursue his chosen field of becoming a welder. The NFJP assisted Colton with a portion of his tuition during the brief one-year program in welding technology at North Central Kansas Technical College in Hays, KS.

Colton did his part by attending classes every day and putting his all into learning everything that the course had to offer. Keeping a positive attitude during training was a factor to his success as well.

After Colton completed his training in 2016, I assisted him with landing a job close to where he grew up. This was important and one of our goals for him. He began a career with Caterpillar Work Tools in Wamego, KS who hired him as a welder. He is still working there today. Caterpillar offered him full benefits which includes insurance, short term disability, unemployment insurance, vacation, 401K, bonuses and chances for advancement.

Colton now earns more than six times the income he was earning in his previous job. Not long ago he was promoted to a Welder III. With enough income he realized one other goal of becoming a home owner. Soon, he will be married, be a father and can now financially support himself and his future family.

Colton stated," SER Corporation helped fund the education so I could obtain a career in my chosen field. Vicki was very helpful in getting a hold of me to help me find a job and kept offering me job leads to aid in my job search. She would talk to me every few days. After I got the job, she would check on me and make sure I was sticking with the job."

So, returning to my initial question, do the benefits of the NFJP have short or long-term effects? Absolutely! Success came to Colton right after completing the training program. That training led to continued success. Colton's case demonstrates that the benefits are long term and helps immediately after completing the program. He is a good example of how a hand up can help change someone's life in the most positive way. I'm so honored to have been able to help Colton and witness his achievements. I know his success will continue throughout his life.



Colton England

## Hard Work Pays Off

By: Sarah Guardado, NFJP Client Service Agent



Nicholas Barley

Nicholas Barley was born and raised in Conway Springs, Kansas (KS). He is a twin brother and has three younger sisters. Nicholas attended the local high school and was involved in sports. Since he can remember Nicholas has always helped his dad and grandfather around the farm. At the age of fourteen Nicholas got his first paid farm job. Some of his tasks included feeding the animals, haying and helping with the crops. He earned \$8 per hour.

I met Nicholas at Cowley Community College in Arkansas City, KS. He had made the decision to work towards obtaining an Associate Degree in Applied Science and Non-Destructive Testing. After Nicholas graduated college, SER Corporation was successful placing him in employment with Younger and Sons Manufacturing, Inc. located in Viola, KS. Client Service Agent, Sarah Guardado entered into an On-the- Job Training contract with the company. Nicholas was hired as a Production Worker making \$14.50 an hour. Although he felt it was a good job with good pay it wasn't what he really wanted to do.

Nicholas wanted to get a job in Non-Destructive Testing which was what he trained for.

Nicholas continued to apply to job openings in his field. After a few months he landed a position at Honeywell in Kansas City, Missouri as a Non-Destructive Testing Technician working in x-ray radiography earning \$32.00 an hour! When Sarah spoke with him he had this to say, "SER Corporation helped me in many ways. It helped me tremendously in paying for school when I attended Cowley Community College.

Nicholas is now on his way to a successful career. Way to go Nicholas. Your hard work paid off.

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