



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®
Walla Walla District

News Release

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Corps apprentice program to graduate eight journeymen

UMATILLA, Ore. -- Eight students will graduate from Walla Walla District's Apprentice Program June 21 during a 10 a.m. ceremony at McNary Lock and Dam, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials announced today.

Ryan Angel, of Spokane, Wash., works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power house operator.

Roy Clark, a Marine Corps veteran from Walla Walla, Wash., works at Little Goose Lock and Dam as a power house mechanic.

John Farthing, a Navy veteran from Selah, Wash., works at Ice Harbor Lock and Dam as a power house electrician.

Scott Jones, of Clarkston, Wash., works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power house electrician.

Jim Metzger, an Air Force veteran from Lewiston, Idaho, works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power house mechanic.

Robert Meyer, an Air Force veteran from Spokane, Wash., works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power house mechanic.

Manny Salas, a Navy veteran from Libby, Mont., works at Lower Granite Lock and Dam as a power house mechanic.

Josh Simonsen, a Navy veteran from Orofino, Idaho, works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power house electrician.

The apprentice program, based at McNary Lock and Dam near Umatilla, Ore., develops trades and crafts journeymen to serve in Walla Walla District hydropower facilities. The program typically graduates six to eight apprentices each year. Depending on prior education, or simultaneous enrollment in a related college education program, students can pursue a three or four-year program to become electrical, mechanical or operations journeymen.

The first year focuses on gaining hydropower knowledge, after which each student selects a craft to pursue as a career. The next two to three years are spent under the guidance of journeymen and a rigid academic curriculum. Academic work includes textbook studies, computer-based training and hands-on experience. During their apprenticeship, students gain work experience at three of the six hydroelectric facilities in the district before they join the workforce as craftspersons.

"Across the Corps, we've recognized the need to plan for a sustainable workforce as a large percentage of our current workforce nears retirement eligibility. This program enables the district to better meet its future craftsman needs. Apprentices learn from the masters, rather than trying to glean that knowledge out of a book at a later time when the experts may not be here to help them," said Terry Filson, Walla Walla District's training officer for the program. "This graduation ceremony serves to recognize the students' efforts and welcome them to the ranks of journeymen, and to thank the craftsmen who coached them."

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