

## **Spring break means entering the workforce for 4 seniors from Ponca City High School**

The Ponca Works program at Ponca City Development Authority (PCDA) hosted 4 students at local employers through their Careers and Cookies program this week.

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Some people spend their spring breaks at waterparks, on the beach or in other festive ways. For 4 seniors at Ponca City High School (PCHS) they were festive in a different way, they were preparing for their future.

Check out [PoncaWorks.com](http://PoncaWorks.com) for more information on what they do in the Ponca City!

Careers and Cookies is a program that meets once a month during the school year at PCHS. Ponca Works exists to assist local employers find and develop a great workforce! Part of this development process is training up the next generation of workers. Those that want to live, work and play in Ponca City. That is who Ponca Works targets with this Careers and Cookies program.

During the 2016/2017 school year Ponca Works, has met with almost 100 students over 8 meetings. The curriculum was developed specifically for our industry, talking about what is made here in Ponca City. Focusing on the working future that is facing most of these students in a few months, this group is generally deferring college or choosing to go straight to work. Building resumes, interviewing skills, interacting with employers at a career lunch, hearing more in depth stories from industries are just a few things that are written into this program.

The job shadowing component came directly from the Senior Career Lunch. Several local companies and students made a connection during their time to ask question at the lunch. "The employers in Ponca City have been more than willing to be a part of this hands-on learning initiative," says Ponca Works Manager Liz Pershing. "We are lucky to live in a city where everyone is so community oriented. While this may not affect the employers that were involved this year, it is an ongoing effort to close the skills gap and ensure that students have more skills when entering our workforce. This will be a good thing for all businesses in Ponca City."

The employers that hosted a student this year were Anderson Salon and Spa, Bower's Trucking, Sooner Construction, and Eastman National Bank. Student Garrett Beller said "I didn't realize how much math I would need to know in the construction business, reading blue prints and deciphering what that means on the job site is hard!" All the students involved were motivated to finish high school, and some even motivated to get more training.

As this program continues to grow Ponca Works and it's partners hope to see students as young as 8<sup>th</sup> grade starting to job shadow, and possibly integrating an internship program into the school breaks for high school students.

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