

Thinking about a career in the trades?

Meet Hannah, a third-year apprentice, who discusses the advantages of a career in the HVAC field.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that demand for HVAC technicians is expected to grow by 6% annually over the next eight years, with more than 40,000 new job openings yearly. An HVAC career could be the perfect fit for men and women who enjoy working with their hands, excel at finding solutions to complex problems, and want to make a tangible impact on people's lives.

Are you mechanically inclined and looking for a high-paying career without incurring a mountain of college debt? Consider a career in the commercial HVAC industry. We recently interviewed Hannah, a third-year apprentice, to find out why she chose this career path and what she enjoys most about her job.

Hannah took all the shop classes her high school offered and loved taking things apart and putting them back together, which led her to explore debt-free options in the trades. After a brief stint in fast food, she decided to try the HVAC field, starting with a job in the residential sector. She enjoyed the work but not the high-pressure sales tactics, so she worked for a non-union company in commercial HVAC before starting an apprenticeship with Lippert Mechanical in Kansas City, MO.

Now in the third year of her apprenticeship, Hannah is elated that she has found her permanent home at Lippert. Of course, what's unique about Hannah's journey is that she's in a field where 97% of HVAC technicians are male. Here are excerpts from our recent conversation.

Thanks for speaking with us, Hannah. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I'm grateful that my job is never boring. I'm always learning new things every day. It's a constant variety of the equipment I'm working on, the weather, the people I'm talking to, or the job site I'm on. It's never the same, and I love that!

My job is to make people feel comfortable, and that's a really rewarding career that will always be in demand.



Q: How do you troubleshoot problems you've never seen before?

This is what I love about working here at Lippert. They hire technicians with a vast array of knowledge and experience. If I encounter a problem I've never seen before, somebody on the team will always answer the phone and walk me through how to diagnose and solve it properly. I'm not just being told what to do; I'm learning how to think and solve mechanical and electrical problems in a way that adds to my knowledge.

“I’m grateful that my job is never boring. I’m always learning new things every day. My job is to make people feel comfortable, and that’s a really rewarding career that will always be in demand.”



What’s it like working in a field where fewer than 3% of your peers are women?

Any woman in a male-dominated field or any male in a female-dominated field would be lying if they said that there are zero challenges whatsoever. When I worked in the residential sector, some customers were offended that a woman was coming to service their air conditioner. It’s totally different now, working in the commercial sector at Lippert. I support a school district in Kansas City Metro with 34 locations and work with people who really want to promote women in the field. This can sometimes lead to a heavier workload and higher expectations because they want to help me prove myself—but I’m fine with that. Bring it on!

Overall, I have had good luck with all my clientele here at Lippert. I haven’t had anybody make me feel like I don’t belong or uncomfortable. Everyone has been wonderfully supportive, but people are also curious. They ask many questions about why and how I started in the field. That’s a great sign, especially for girls in high school who are thinking about trade careers.

What advice do you have for young women considering an HVAC career?

This is an easy question because I do outreach with high schoolers during my apprenticeship. While few, the gals who come around to our career fairs are absolute gems. I pull them aside and tell them

the HVAC field will be around forever because everyone wants to be comfortable. Their job can’t be outsourced to another country or taken over by robots or AI. The pay and benefits are great, and the technology constantly changes, so they’ll always learn new things. I let them know that they can get more job satisfaction and higher pay in just a few years than classmates who racked up a mountain of college debt. But our industry needs to be creative in attracting more young people. Here’s a great example. At a recent career fair, we set up a virtual welding rig. Girls who had never picked up a torch in their lives won the first and second-place welding scores!

I’ll finish my apprenticeship in two years. And, unlike others my age, who’ll constantly change employers every few years, I’m proud to say that I’ve found a permanent home here at Lippert. As a way of “paying it forward,” I’ll continue to do whatever I can to help recruit and mentor young people for a rewarding and lucrative career in HVAC.

Learn more: PremiStar is a leader in commercial HVAC, plumbing and building controls, with 48 locations across 13 states. To learn more about current apprenticeship opportunities at PremiStar companies, scan the QR code.

