

## **RTD celebrates innovative partnership with Front Range Community College to attract and prepare new talent**

On Aug. 26, five students successfully completed [RTD Diesel Technology \(DTECH\)](#) training classes and graduated from the program. The DTECH training is offered through a collaborative effort between RTD and Front Range Community College to a select group of students who have acquired experience with automotive systems, including electrical, engine and brake skills. The training teaches students specialized diesel repair skills and prepares them for successful careers as diesel mechanics with RTD.

RTD joined forces with Front Range Community College in 2016 to provide students with this innovative workforce development opportunity. The 12-week training program, taught by Jon Paul Mitchell, Mark Ringleman and Tim Wallace – all technical training instructors and supervisors in RTD’s bus operations division – has become one of RTD’s most successful tools for cultivating new talent.

Shortly after completing the training, all five graduates submitted applications to become RTD diesel mechanics. The five graduates are Alfredo Tevillo-Sanchez, Blake Saunders, Dave Dang, Jhanny Sanchez and Kevin Cervantes. Saunders, who received the outstanding student achievement award, accumulated the highest combined score of all students based on lab work, tests and quizzes.

The graduates join a long list of former DTECH students who have chosen to work for the agency, some of whom have been promoted within the organization to positions such as vehicle maintenance supervisor and quality control inspector. Since 2016, RTD has hired 33 general repair mechanics who are graduates of the DTECH program – constituting more than 25% of the 125 general repair mechanics currently employed with RTD. . Four have been promoted to management roles.

[Anthony Padilla](#), an RTD diesel mechanic and graduate of the 2016 class who was featured by the agency in a technical training video called [“A Day in the Life at RTD,”](#) said, “I’ve seen a lot of people and a lot of friends move up in the company. I think it’s a very cool opportunity for us and I’m very grateful to have that opportunity.”

Despite the pandemic, RTD continued to offer the DTECH program. RTD Assistant General Manager for Bus Operations Fred Worthen said, “Last year, we accepted 12 candidates into the DTECH program, but we had to downsize the program to six candidates due to COVID protocols for training. This year’s class primarily comprises candidates that were accepted into last year’s program.”

Worthen emphasized the value that DTECH training brings to RTD and the opportunity to develop specialized talent. “This program is worth its weight in gold, in my opinion,” he said.