

# **CHATT TECH DIESEL EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**

## **PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**

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Evan Dover: We're trying to get our guys in career roles early on so that they can get in and progress.

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Caelan Scarborough: Being a diesel tech in general can take you anywhere.

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Travis Colasurd: These engines are modern marvels of technology. I don't care what it's in. If it's a diesel engine, there's a lot behind it nowadays.

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Caelan Scarborough: If you haven't touched a wrench in a day in your life, they'll teach you. If you think you know everything, they'll teach you. Anybody can be a member of this program. Anybody can learn from the professors and from everything the program has to offer.

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Narrator: 98 Seven Chatt Tech. Where 98.7% of our students earn a career. On this episode, we'll be learning all about the Diesel Equipment Technology Program with current instructors and a graduate. Let's grab our tools and get started.

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Evan Dover: My name is Evan Dover. I'm the lead instructor at the Diesel Equipment Technology program at Chattahoochee Technical College. I'm starting my 10th year as of April the 1st, so I've been here a while. I've seen a lot of changes in the program, but it seems to be going in the right direction.

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Narrator: Instructor Dover, can you give us a rundown of what students will be doing in the Diesel Equipment Technology program?

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Evan Dover: The Diesel Equipment Technology program, that's kind of our umbrella that we fall under. And within that, each semester in those four semesters, they're taking two diesel classes. Now they're going to start out in basic tools and safety basic electrical class. And then they're going to transfer in. And it depends on which time of the year you come in depends on your progression. But if you start in the fall time it's tools and safety, basic electrical. Then in spring your next semester would be engine overhaul and steering suspension. Summertime is heating and ventilation, air conditioning and brakes and then their fall last classes they take as preventative maintenance and drive trains. So within that umbrella a student can come in and we have a couple different certificate options and a diploma option. They can pick and choose exactly what classes they want in order to meet a certificate. Or they can say, hey, I want to take everything you got, and I want to get a diploma. And with the diploma option, they have to go in and take four core classes also, and we fit those in each semester. So they'll take two diesel and a core to get that diploma in four semesters.

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Narrator: Tell us a little more about what's involved and how long does it take.

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Evan Dover: So the program is a four semester program start to finish all consecutive. We don't take summer off like a lot of other institutions do, and we take full advantage of summer semester and help speed the process up to get students in and out. A typical semester class time set up for a student is in our program is what's called a hybrid program. So students are given all the online material early in the semester. It's laid out weekly, so they have due dates and assignments that are due each week. They're actually coming onto campus for a lab based lecture or a classroom lecture with that time period. And typically that's demonstrating what they're going to be asked to do on the shop floor. So our program is based off the the principles of an entry level position in the diesel industry. But there is still opportunity for somebody that has been working in the field for a while, and they decide they want to come back because we all know that, yes, OJT on the job training is great, but sometimes they forget to tell you those small little pointers that you need to help make your life be a little easier and a lot more successful. So when a guy comes to the program with us, we're learning a lot about theory based knowledge. Why is this component running this way? You know, why am I diagnostics going this way or why, you know, how do I tear this apart? How does this part actually function? So we're like we're learning a lot of systems on each chassis so that a guy can better able to tell, hey, this is exactly what's wrong. So it's a little bit of classroom, a lot more hands on, but you gotta have the best of both worlds. We're just not in there just tearing stuff apart just to see how much stuff we can break.

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Narrator: Let's meet our graduate.

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Caelan Scarborough: My name is Caelan Scarborough. I'm a graduate of the diesel program over here at Chattahoochee Tech.

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Narrator: What made you decide to enroll in the Diesel Equipment Technology program?

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Caelan Scarborough: Um, I decided to enroll to be able to understand more about the complexities and the terminologies and everything with diesel engines, and I, uh, not only that, but with the entirety of the systems, with air brakes and electronics and everything that goes into it, there's so much more than meets the eye about it. I thought I had a basic understanding until I joined the program.

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Narrator: Caelan, let's talk about your experience in the program and get your opinion.

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Caelan Scarborough: Yeah. So my experience, I'd say overall was great. The instructors were extremely knowledgeable. Uh, Mr. Dover and Travis were absolutely wonderful to work with. They worked at your level and your pace and were willing to to work with you if you didn't understand something and kind of knew how to word and to say things in order that if you didn't know what you were looking at, they could easily verify it for you and show you what it was. The program and all is wonderful. The classroom, I'd say about half of it is online, half of it is in class. And when you're in class, there's still some stuff you've got to do within the classroom. It's structured very well, though. They try to limit the amount that you don't have to be in the classroom and you're out in the lab actually doing work, and that's the way you're going to get your experiences through that hands on work. So the the way that they have it structured in that sense is, is phenomenal, I would say. And really overall was just pleased and excited with the program.

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Narrator: Now let's meet our other instructor.

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Travis Colasurd: My name is Travis Colasurd. I am one of the two instructors at Chattahoochee Tech for the Diesel Equipment Technician program.

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Narrator: Can you talk about exactly what this program is?

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Travis Colasurd: Well, it's a program that is designed to bring individuals who may or may not have had or have any experience working with their hands or working on vehicles of any kind to get into entry level positions for the diesel equipment technology industry, and we get individuals. Some of them never touched a screwdriver. Some of them, for example, I've got one gentleman now. He, uh, he's a little older and he came in because he's been doing it his whole life, but he doesn't know a lot of the why behind it. So it does cover a lot from the very beginning to more advanced stuff.

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Narrator: Who would make a good candidate for this program?

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Travis Colasurd: That one's actually been up for a lot of debate recently because of the fact that, uh, a lot of the recruiters look at this program the way it used to be looked at 20, 30 years ago. And that's well, anybody can come do this and it doesn't matter. You don't know what to do. Well, why don't just go ahead and, you know, there's slots open over here, which is fine to a degree. But people don't realize that these trucks are modern marvels of technology. These engines are modern marvels of technology. I don't care what it's in. If it's a diesel engine, there's a lot behind it now. And you can't just come in here, uh, without having any drive or motivation to learn and expect to just float through here. We cover a lot of topics that are sometimes covered in other industries, just as a singularity. For example, HVAC. We cover the basics of HVAC for heating and air conditioning in our trucks and in our cars and in our equipment. We also cover basic electrical, which is one of the first classes you have to take. Obviously, we cover the mechanics of the engine and everything else, but I mean, we cover brakes and a lot of that translates into other applications throughout other industries. This industry can really be a gateway to a whole host of other areas in life and just everywhere.

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Narrator: So what goes on in the classroom? Obviously it's hands on, but what about the book work?

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Travis Colasurd: A lot of it is hands on. Yes, and that is something that is somewhat misunderstood by students. When they come in. They think that, uh, 99% of it's going to be just hands on. And I do have a lot of students that complain that, well, I mean, I want to do more hands on, and there's too much book work, which I completely understand. However, the reality of our industry is that there's a lot of specific information that you need to be able to absorb in order to properly work with your hands, and to a degree, you're never going to get away from it in this industry, ever. Once or twice a year, you'll have further education typically provided by your employer, that will bring you up to speed on the modern equipment, because things change year over year and you may go for advanced training. And let's say they want to get you master certified for rebuilding DD engines or Cummins engines, or they want to get you master certified for brakes or something like that. You're always going to have continuous training, though not necessarily in the accelerated depth that you will have here. So on average, for every one hour of lab work or classwork here, you'll typically have between 2 to 4 hours of study work at home. And it didn't always used to be that way. Actually used to be five days a week, eight hours a day here. But now typically we try to keep it to 4 or 8 hours either once a week or twice a week for the purpose of a lot of these guys have jobs and a lot of them have families, so we try to work around that and keep it flexible. But there is a good bit of study behind it with the idea that you'll study ahead of time, you'll come into class and either Evan or myself demonstrate what's going to be done. We answer questions, maybe on something that someone didn't understand from studying, and then you go out and do it and practice doing it as if you were in the field. So that's typically how our classes are set up.

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Narrator: Back to you, Caelan. What are your long term goals now that you've graduated?

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Caelan Scarborough: My long term goals in this right now, I am currently working as a diesel mechanic for the Gilmer County Road Department, and so it's helped me to understand my job more efficiently and to be able to do the repairs and maintenance that I need to be able to do and know what I'm looking at and to understand the systems. And so my long term goal was to stay where I'm at, to keep the knowledge that I have, because they did a wonderful job teaching me and to go from there. And maybe if there's other options that show up, go for those. But stay where I'm at.

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Narrator: In your opinion, who would make a good candidate for this program?

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Caelan Scarborough: Anybody. If you haven't touched a wrench in a day in your life, they'll teach you. If you think you know everything, they'll teach you. Anybody can be a member of this program. Anybody can learn from the professors and from everything the program has to offer.

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Narrator: Can you talk about your future because of Chat.B

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Caelan Scarborough: Because of Chat Tech, I feel more capable and I feel more confident about working on the things that I work on. And because I'm more confident and capable of being able to do the things that I need to do, I've been able to start managing and running the shop and being able to take over the shop and teaching the people that come into the shop that don't know as much. My main goal is to educate the people on what they need to know, and because of the education that Chatt Tech gave me, I'm able to do that.

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Narrator: Finally, can you give us your thoughts? Overall about the program.

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Caelan Scarborough: If you're questioning about doing it, the best answer is to just do it. You can learn so much, and being a diesel tech in general can take you anywhere. It teaches you to cut with oxy setting torches, plasma cutters to weld. It is the door that opens everything within that kind of mechanical blue collar sense that we get to deal and expose ourselves to everything. You can go and branch off of so many different levels by just being a diesel tech and Chatt Tech really, really hit on all of those points to introduce and to teach people how to do certain things, and how to properly be a diesel tech and be a diesel mechanic. And so they hit on everything from the mechanical side to the electrical side, to the tools required to do the job, to the safety, to absolutely everything that they could think of. It was structured so well that if you didn't know anything about it, you were going to know all about it by the end of the class.

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Narrator: Instructor Colasurd. What should potential students understand about the Diesel Equipment Technology program?

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Travis Colasurd: One thing to understand that a lot of people don't necessarily understand coming into the program, is that the first two classes that are required to be taken first, tools and safety and basic electrical are not necessarily great representations of the rest of the course. Basic electrical, for example. That's probably the second hardest class, but it's also the most important. Every single company that I talk to or that comes in during the job fairs always asks, do you have anybody that's even halfway decent at electric? And the reason for that is that we have electrical systems tied throughout the entirety of our everything. If it's got an engine in it nowadays, it's got sensors on it everywhere and tools and safety. Some guys find it incredibly boring because they've been doing a lot of this stuff before. Some guys, like I said, have never touched a screwdriver before. That class is there to make sure that we're all up to the same level, and that we can all work safely in a shop and use tools appropriately. So I would say that go in with that understanding and give 110% when it comes to electrical, knowing that that's the thing that will make you a lot of money. Being able to master that topic. First and foremost.

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Narrator: Thank you. And Instructor Dover. What is the importance or relevance of an education in the Diesel Equipment Technology program? And do you help grads find a job?

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Evan Dover: So most of the time our program, we're a little different. We handle our own career fair that we do for every six months for our students, and we bring in companies that we partner with through the school. On average, there's typically about 15 to 20 companies there. And we actually encourage because of the way our program is set up, our guys are typically only coming to school for either four hours a day, two days a week, or one eight hour class a day. So they have the opportunity while they're in school to go ahead and jump on out there and get in the industry and get that good school job. And that's what our career fair is for, is to get a job more than just working at the Jiffy Lube, changing oil or changing tires, doing that kind of stuff. We're trying to get our guys in career roles early on so that they can get in and progress. And so that's that's one thing that we really do. But a guy that, you know, once they graduate at that point in time, they should be able to go out. And depending on some shops, you know, they'll put them in a specialization. So they may be the transmission guy, they may be the electrical guy, they may be an after treatment car, they may be an engine guy. If they're lucky enough to get into that, they may start out, you know, and start pulling transmissions, doing clutch work. Then they may go into rebuild and transmissions doing full driveline diagnostics. Some guys may get into being an engine builder. I've got some former students that that's all they wanted to do was build engines and they worked for companies. And when they left us, that's what they went to doing. They went to doing full major engine overhauls their first week out of school. So it's a lot is up to the actual graduate. It's up to the tech. On what he or she may decide that they want to work on. There are some people that are just happy working at the truck stop, you know, doing just typical breakdowns and road calls just because they don't ever know what they're going to get when they get there. But then there's some people that prefer to go into a more specialized rural area.

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Narrator: Chatt Tech, the College of Real World Training, and how our communities are stronger and better thanks to the thousands of Chatt Tech graduates in our local workforce. For more information about the Diesel Equipment Technology program at Chattahoochee Tech, visit [Chattahoochee Tech .EDU](http://ChattahoocheeTech.EDU). Thanks for listening to 98 seven Chatt Tech, where 98.7% of our students earn a career.