



## RCC ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS GRADUATE ALBERTO MARTINEZ ESTABLISHES THRIVING SMALL BUSINESS

At just 23 years old, Alberto Martinez has already earned an associate's degree in electrical systems and started his own small business, JB-AM Electric, LLC. It's a thriving business located out of Red Springs that mostly handles commercial electrical jobs with contractors and a few service calls to homeowners.

"It's named after my family, my parents, and my brother," Martinez said. "Jose, Blanca, that's my Mom and Dad, and Manuel, that's my brother."

Since he was a child, Martinez says he has always liked fixing things, including TVs, iPads, iPhones, etc.

"People around here usually just throw things away instead of repairing them," Martinez said. "So, I thought about how I could still do that but in a way that I would be able to earn an income, and so I love troubleshooting and that's a big part of electrical... With it there's more process, and more money to fixing electrical problems.... But I'll still repair things for my family if they need me to."

Martinez was homeschooled during high school and was able to graduate much earlier, allowing him to enroll at Robeson Community College at 17.

"I graduated from college when I was 19 and became a licensed electrician in September of 2022," Martinez said.

"I graduated during Covid in 2020... it was a big struggle, we stopped going in person," Martinez recalls. "It was hard learning code, continuing through online, but somehow we managed to make it through."

Overcoming the challenges and adversity of COVID-19, Martinez excelled in learning the foundations of electrical systems. One of his beloved classes he says, was when they were able to work on an actual house being built.

"That was my favorite class," Martinez remembers. "It put you in the field and gave you hands-on experience, and you get to see the lights turn on... we installed receptacles, switches, and installed light bulbs so we could see them work."

Now out on his own, Martinez says he still gets excited when he's able to repair things, troubleshoot, and gets to see the finished product working again.

He recalls one instance where he was on a service call and said the homeowner had called someone else, but they were not able to resolve the issue.

"It was an older house that was being remodeled, and they were adding a three-way switch. The wires were not ran," Martinez said. "I had to troubleshoot and basically what I did was 'ohms the wires' to figure out what path was used to run the switches and the lights. Within an hour, I got it done and the contractor was happy to get their issue fixed."

Taking experiences like that, Martinez has built his own business using the knowledge he gained at RCC, making a living for himself and his family.

"Owning your own business, there is freedom, and there is a reward," Martinez says. "You get rewarded for your work, instead of making someone else rich, you get to make money for yourself."

"Yesterday, I went to connect a meter box with a house and made \$600 in two hours," Martinez said. "Certain jobs make good money; other jobs require more time."

There's a lot that goes into running a business though, as Martinez is discovering.

"There are invoices, pricing, you've got to know how to manage your time, hiring people and getting to know contractors, and doing inspections according to code," Martinez says. "You've got to be able to do all of that."

As his business flourishes, Martinez says he hopes to one day be able to grow the service side of his business to homeowners.

"It's getting harder to do service calls, and it's getting to the point where I am trying to hire people," Martinez says. "It takes invoices, management, a lot of time involved... but I look forward to having more service calls."

"I want to have a bigger company and continue growing as a company," he said. "It's nice and certainly good to be able to manage your own time, jobs... it does require a lot of effort, but there's just something about having your own company and making it grow."

For anyone looking to become an electrician, Martinez does have some words of wisdom to share.

"Pay more attention in class," he said. "After I started working, more of the terms came to me and started to make sense. I came to RCC fresh, not knowing anything about electrical... and now sometimes I have flashbacks and I'll be like, 'Oh this is what they were talking about, this is what they meant.'"

But he says a degree in electrical systems is definitely worth the time and effort, as it leads to a career of a lifetime.

"I say electrical is a job that's going to be around for a while, people are always going to need electrical services, so it's a field that's going to continue to grow and there are opportunities for everyone," Martinez stated. "Without Robeson Community College, I would probably be working a 9-5 job... I'm glad I went to school, otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to start my own business."

"The instructors are awesome, they go above and beyond," Martinez stated. "Besides teaching you, they also developed a relationship with you, and I can say that is something that has helped me become successful in life, and I'm thankful for all that Robeson Community College has helped me achieve."



Published on **March 31, 2025** by **Cheryl Hemric** **NEWS** **STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES**

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