

Attending college to get a mechanical engineering degree has always been in the plan for one White River Valley Electric (WRVE) Trust scholarship recipient.

“My college experience helped prepare me for not only my career, but also life outside my career,” scholarship recipient Dave Mathews said.

Mathews attended Crowder College and earned an Associate of Science degree with the alternative energy option. He also earned his Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. While in college, Mathews learned how to enjoy life through its ups and downs.

“Life has its fair number of struggles and you need to learn from these struggles, as they will make you a stronger person,” Mathews said. “God gives you the joy of each and every day, and every day is only what you make it.”

Receiving a WRVE Trust scholarship, helped ease the financial struggle that comes with attending college. Along with other scholarships Mathews received, the WRVE Trust scholarship helped him complete his associate’s degree debt-free which was a major stepping stone in achieving his long-term goal of getting his mechanical engineering degree.

While at Crowder College, Mathews was involved with the solar bike team both in 2004 and 2005. In this event, his team took a solar bike to Topeka, Kan., and competed among other schools in a 100 kilometer race. In 2005, he was the team captain and also rode the bike for half of the race.

Mathews also competed on the solar decathlon team in 2005 which involves designing and building a solar house. The house his team designed is how set up at Crowder College in Neosho, Mo.

“With solar decathlon I was able to do and see a lot of things that I wouldn’t have been able to do otherwise,” Mathews said. “I got to meet Roy Blunt, take a tour of the White House, go up in the Washington Monument, and of course, all the fun and good times with friends while working on the house.”

Additionally, Mathews was also involved with the jazz band and with the Baptist Student Union.

Mathews has encountered many new changes in his life since he first received a WRVE scholarship in 2003.

“While at Crowder, God was gracious to me and I met the most wonderful woman, Valerie, and asked her hand in marriage,” Mathews said. “I moved to Fayetteville to finish my degree and we got married in June of 2006.”

After his wedding and graduation, Mathews found a job as a project designer working for Perennial Energy, LLC in West Plains, Mo., where he uses his college experience and

knowledge every day. His primary role is to design gas extraction systems and flares for landfills and digesters.

“Depending on each project’s requirements, we will compress, de-humidify, and filter the gas before it leaves our system,” Mathews said. “There are several different applications for this technology, but the most common are combustion flares and engines.”

Since moving to West Plains with his wife, Mathews has also been blessed with two children.

“We have a son, Nathanael, who is two, and a baby girl, Lillian, who is two months old,” Mathews said.