

SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

From Determination to a Career in Heavy Equipment Operation

Meet Connor, an 18-year-old from Bad Axe with a strong work ethic and a big goal: to build a career in the Construction Industry.

Throughout high school, Connor's summer work experiences were in entry-level retail jobs. During the summer of 2024, he worked as a General Laborer for Irion Improvements in Elkton, Michigan. In that role, he assisted in the construction of multi-story buildings from start to finish, utilized heavy machinery, and demonstrated proficiency in carpentry, welding, and other construction techniques. Connor found his career path. In his senior year, he earned a certificate in Construction Trades/Power Tools from the Huron Area Technology Center in Bad Axe.

After graduating from Lakers High School in 2025, Connor had not found a job. Someone suggested he visit GST Michigan Works! in Bad Axe, so he came seeking employment assistance and training for a CDL license. Connor was quickly determined eligible for three programs: WIOA, Young Professionals, and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates.

He worked with his Career Coach to create a resume and cover letter; potential job positions were identified; and after a successful interview with Bischer Landscaping, he was offered an entry-level, full-time job as a Yard Worker. This job was funded through the Young Professional grant, intended to provide young adults with the skills necessary to perform successfully on the job. Employers are incentivized to help youth build those skills while having their wages paid through the Young Professionals program for up to 12 weeks. Oftentimes, the young adults gain valuable experience within that first 12 weeks and are hired by the employer to remain on the job.

After his first two weeks, Connor was given a $1 per hour raise and received another raise six weeks later. By the end of the 12-week period, Connor was offered a permanent job at Bischer Landscaping. They supported his goal by giving him part-time work throughout the winter season while he worked toward obtaining his CDL-A license.

During that time, Connor was enrolled at Thumb CDL, LLC where he developed safe driving skills, learned federal transportation regulations, and gained confidence behind the wheel of commercial vehicles. Committed to his goal, Connor earned his CDL-A in April 2026.

Today, Connor operates a heavy cement mixer truck for Bischer Ready Mix, Inc. He enjoys competitive wages, excellent benefits, and opportunities for overtime and career advancement. Most importantly, he takes pride in laying foundations in commercial and residential applications that serve his community.

He is also an active member of his community as a member of the Elkton Lion's Club and by volunteering for the Elkton Autumn Fest, Bad Axe Fair, and Huron Youth Camp. Reflecting on his journey, Connor realized the paid work experience and CDL training opened the first door, but his willingness to learn and hard work helped him walk through it. He never would have imagined the opportunities that would come from that decision.