

Mississippi State Alumni Seeking Energy Solutions



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Rhett Graves graduated from Mississippi State University in the spring of 2001 but that was not the last of his experience with the IAC.

The following autumn, Rhett enrolled at Texas A&M to begin working on his MSME with Dr. Warren Heffington (TAMU IAC Director) and Dr. Charles Culp. By May of 2002 Rhett had begun his Master's thesis research as an employee of the Texas A&M Energy Systems Lab in conjunction with Bell Helicopter. There he created energy conservation measures resulting in \$500,000 per year savings for Bell Helicopter. As Rhett moved along in his pursuits, he developed a Master's thesis focused on the development of an optimized thermodynamic chiller and cooling tower model. By September 2003, with his thesis work finished, Rhett accepted a position with Tour Andover Controls in the Energy Solutions department. Due to his impressive work in energy efficiency and his vast experience with energy audits during his IAC tenure, Rhett was immediately placed on the Detailed Audit phase of the \$25 million Texas Health and Human Services Center project, the largest energy solutions contract ever sold by TAC at the time. Here he participated in the building energy audit process and was responsible for building energy modeling and energy savings guarantees.

All of this was accomplished before he officially graduated. That honor came in December 2003 when Rhett received his MSME from Texas A&M University. After graduation, Rhett began work on the Virginia Community College System Detailed Audit, which has the potential to surpass the Texas Health and Human Services Center project as the largest energy solutions contract sold by TAC. This time, he was responsible for supervising the building energy audit process, building energy models and providing energy savings guarantees.

Rhett is not the lone IAC graduate making an impact at TAC. Mark Garafano, a Bradley University IAC alumnus, joined him and together they are viewed as the building energy modeling experts. Their respective IAC experiences have allowed them to come into an ESCO and immediately contribute to the profitability of the company. As a result, TAC has begun to target universities with IAC programs for recruiting energy engineers.

This past fall, Rhett completed the requirements to become a Certified Energy Manager. He is also a member of The Association of Energy Engineers.