

The Augusta Chronicle

Student Painters to return to Augusta

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Student Painters is returning to Augusta for a second year to help college students pay tuition and gain marketable job skills for future careers as part of a nationally accredited small business model.

Sean Wilby, a junior business management major at the University of Georgia and a 2011 graduate of Augusta's Alleluia Community, has begun putting out yard signs, distributing fliers and interviewing college students to help him start painting as many as 50 homes this summer.

Wilby, 22, said he is looking to recruit three marketers, paid \$7.25 an hour and provided a \$2 cash bonus for each estimate completed, for the spring season.

For the summer, he hopes to hire six to eight painters, each of whom will start at \$8.25 an hour, but are eligible for a raise each month that ranges from 25 cents to \$1.

"One of the qualities that attracted me to the program was the challenge," said Wilby, this summer's manager of Student Painters' Augusta chapter. "I have always worked well under a trial-by-fire mentality. With this, it is very much on my shoulders to make sure the business takes off and is successful."

Wilby, who transferred last summer to UGA from Georgia Regents University, will have some help.

A thick manual guides its business plan and a mentor from the national learning organization, Young Entrepreneurs Across America, oversees its operations.

Student Painters was formed in 1987 by college underclassmen aiming to fill a growing shortage of summer jobs for young adults nationwide. The summer employment rate for teens 16 to 19 has fallen to 27 percent after peaking around 58 percent in the late 1980s, according to the federal Bureau of Labor statistics.

The company arrived locally in September, when Dayne Porter, a 2010 graduate of North Augusta High School decided to bring the concept to his hometown after managing teams in Anderson, S.C., for two years.

Wilby, who was born and raised in Augusta, said he was introduced to the program his first week at UGA, when a Student Painters representative passed out fliers during one of his classes.

He went to an information session and then got an interview, a call back and was awarded a paid internship.

Wilby said jobs are priced depending on the size, condition, and level detail of a home, but added the average cost of a project is between \$1,500 and \$1,800.

He already has two scheduled and four pending jobs.

"I want to absorb as much knowledge as I can about the business world," said Wilby, who worked at The Village Deli while at GRU and fell in love with restaurant industry. "Management is really one of the fields I am looking toward. I hope this experience will give me firsthand experience with managing a staff and providing quality customer service to possibly translate into a career."

FIND OUT MORE

Homeowners who would like painting estimates or college students who would like to apply for jobs can contact Sean Wilby, the branch manager for Student Painters Augusta, at seanmwilby@gmail.com or (706) 267-0512.