

Department of Commerce Testimony on SB #2018

January 25, 2021 9:00 am CT
Senate Appropriations Committee
Roughrider Room
Senator Ray Holmberg, Chairman

MEASURE: SB 2018

TITLE: OmniByte Technology Success and Support of Operation Intern Program

Chairman Ray Holmberg and Senate Appropriations Committee Members

My name is Ray Berry and on behalf of OmniByte Technology, I want to express our support and share a bit of our successes for the ND Workforce Operation Intern Program.

I am a Co-Founder and the CEO of OmniByte founded in 2015. We are a boot strapped company started in Fargo, ND to build a better mobile for field service personnel in the industries we serve like Electrical, HVAC, and Energy.

I have a lot of experience in building a successful internship program in companies starting back in 1998 and in fact I started out as an intern as well. I knew when we started OmniByte in 2015, we would need interns to be able to grow since we were small and had no outside funding. Our first employee at OmniByte in the Winter of 2015 was a Student from NDSU as an intern. Jordan Pansch. In 2015, we were not able to receive support from Operation Intern and that did not stop us from hiring interns.

In our five and a half years in business, OmniByte has had twenty-eight (28) internships. (see attached Addendum) This is made up of twenty-three (23) college students and five (5) unpaid high school STEM students. The majority of our internships have been with NDSU students.

We provide internships in technology, specifically Computer Science and Engineering as well as in Business, Marketing and Sales. We provide real world experiences to students as they learn to become professionals along with what it is like to work for a technology startup. The Operation Interns work on technology projects including software development, research, testing, installations, training and demonstration of solutions.

Without the support of Operation Intern we certainly would have struggled to grow our company in an industry very competitive for technologists. We could not afford top dollar however needed top talent.

Each intern has been important because they add value to our company at a lower cost to the organization not just in wages but benefits. It allows our team to evaluate talent and offer full time positions at OmniByte.

Since the beginning, OmniByte has offered seven (7) student interns full time positions and six (6) accepted. In the 20+ years I have supported internships not all work out but this low-cost access to talent reduces risk as well because at end of intern and transition to Full Time, the chances of it working

out is high and we understand fully that full time turnover is very expensive and impacts companies and teams. Of the 6 interns hired, one was known short-term (Military service) and we still have four of them working for us full-time as well as one paid Operation Intern on staff this semester.

Our goal from beginning, besides our mission to Improve the Safety and Work Lives of Field Service Personnel Through Technology, has been to create a great and successful company here in North Dakota using local talent to build and grow. I have said from the very beginning, the success and growth of OmniByte will be tied at least partially to young talent in the form on student interns as we build our own team.

Of the current fourteen (14) Full-Time employees at OmniByte, four (4) of them started as Interns, three (3) through Operation Intern. Several others have found jobs in North Dakota keeping our talent here in our state. Of those four interns, one of them was our very first paid intern who started with us in 2015.

Please support this bill and program as it not only helps small companies like OmniByte Technology start and grow here in our state, it provides opportunities to our students which otherwise would not exist. Without this program I am certain we would have had less than half the number of internships in the last 5.5 years. This is one of the great ways to keep the talent in North Dakota.

I will attend and present virtually and open to any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Berry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ray" being more prominent than the last name "Berry".

Ray Berry

CEO, President and Founder

OmniByte Technology

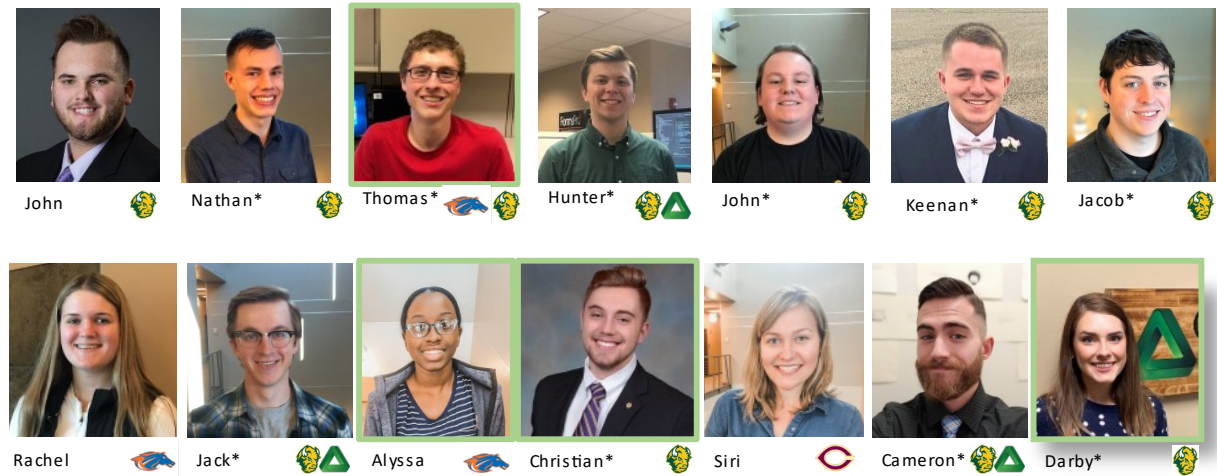
1854 NDSU Research Cir N

Fargo, ND 58102

Addendum A



* ND Operation Intern Funded
 ** NDSU RTP Scholarship Intern



* ND Operation Intern Funded
 ** NDSU RTP Scholarship Intern