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ABC National: [www.abc.org](http://www.abc.org)

President and Publisher: John Mielke  
Managing Editor: Nick Novak  
Art Director: Jayne Laste Design Solutions LLC

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

# Marketing a Merit Shop Career



**LATELY, I HAVE BEEN HEARING** quite a bit about the worker shortage. Simultaneously, I am hearing the statement, “Times have changed.” Boy, is the latter true, and I know each of you wrestle with the lack of quality, skilled workers on a daily basis.

It is a new reality for the construction industry. Gone are the days when a majority of high school students graduated and went looking for a job – many of whom went into the trades – instead of heading to college. Gone are the days when a quality, potential employee was on the next farm over. And gone are the days when an ad in the Sunday paper would line up interviews for the entire week.

Today, it is increasingly more difficult to find new employees that will be the next leaders of your company. While it is difficult, it is not impossible. One of the major sticking points our contractors face is the current culture in America. High schoolers are told they must attend a four-year university even though many of their degrees will not prepare them for the jobs available.

To change this culture, ABC of Wisconsin is on the front lines advocating for you.

Our staff regularly makes visits to high schools, we have partnered with the state’s Technical College System and consistently work with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) to encourage young people to consider a rewarding career in the trades.

While the way we find workers and the culture surrounding the industry may have changed, the good thing is that the work is changing, too. Yes, we still need workers who know how to use a hammer and drill, but now jobsites are filled with laptops and tablets. Technology and innovation make construction an exciting place to be and kids today need to know that.

They need to know that a job with a merit shop contractor is more than just a job. It is a career that can take them anywhere. It is a career they can be proud of. And it is an industry they can be proud to work in. We certainly are.

— John Mielke

“  
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# THE NEW LABOR REALITY

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*Dealing with the Skills Gap, Wisconsin's Worker Shortage and the Booming Construction Industry*

*By Nick Novak, Managing Editor, Merit Shop Contractor*





While the construction industry is booming in Wisconsin – a nice change of pace from the recession – another problem has quickly formed. There is simply not enough talent to fill the positions necessary to perform all of the work that is available. Across the country, the construction industry is expected to be the fastest growing sector over the next decade. That means more jobs come available every single day. However, high schools, tech colleges and universities are not producing the needed workers at the same pace.

It is not just a worker shortage that is the problem. Those in the industry told *Merit Shop Contractor* (MSC) that there are plenty of applicants, the quality just is not there. Purely stated, there is a *skilled* worker shortage.

Years ago, it was different. Young men and women that grew up on the family farm were deciding they no longer wanted to head in that same direction. They had a work ethic that fit the construction industry, and they enjoyed working with their hands – building something. These were kids that woke up

at dawn to do chores before heading to school. And when they got off the bus at the end of the day, they hurried back outside to finish their chores before the sun went down. Day after day, it's what was expected.

This created a tremendous supply of hard workers, who knew what physical labor was like. And the construction industry took advantage of it. Today, these so-called recruits are few and far between. Instead, kids spend their days on the computer or glued to their phone in the luxury of an air-conditioned home. Contractors stress it is not that these young adults are lazy or unwilling to work hard, they just do not have it engrained in their DNA.

Many contractors would hire a farm kid with no construction experience at all because they knew the skills necessary for the job could be taught. As long as the applicant understood the physical demands that came with the territory, the rest was just training.

With this pool of applicants gone, and an academic culture that tells every high school graduate they must go to a four-year college, the amount of people that know how to swing a hammer is quickly shrinking.

And contractors have noticed.

#### **Where is the talent?**

Contractors today have to turn over every stone they find to collect a quality pool of workers. And where they look has changed dramatically. Instead of placing an ad in the Sunday paper, they



place an ad on Facebook. Instead of going to the family farm, they are sitting down with students at the local technical college. And one of the more successful routes seen by members of Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin is the use of an employee referral system.

"Traditionally our best recruitment tool has been our current employees using a referral system," said Tony Zignego, Vice President at Zignego Company in Waukesha. "In construction, it takes a certain mental toughness, frankly, that is unique to the building trades. We have always emphasized to current employees, if you have a quality applicant, send them on in."

"Actually, a lot of the new truck drivers for this season have come via referral."

Jim Conard, Chief Operating Officer at Northern Electric, Inc. (NEI) in Green Bay, echoed that sentiment when discussing the worker shortage.

"It is tough, but I have to take my hat off to my own employees. We are like a family," he said. "Our guys work together. They get together outside of work. We just have a great culture here, which leads to more referrals from our employees."

Though referrals have proven successful, contractors try to cast a net in nearly every pond they find.

Some ideas discussed for this article included job sites like MilwaukeeJobs.com

"We are going to the high schools and talking with guidance counselors, as well as tech ed instructors," said Bauer, Human Resource and Safety Manager at Brickl Bros. in the La Crosse area. "We are also reaching out to the local technical colleges and pursuing those same avenues through their technical programs."

### **We Need Workers Right Now**

The variety of different recruitment techniques used by contractors has helped to alleviate some of the stress of the skilled worker shortage. However, it has by no means eliminated it. There are still some cases where contractors have a job that they just do not have enough workers for the task at hand.

In cases like this, some contractors turn to labor staffing firms like Ackerman Construction Services and Trillium Construction Services.

Brickl Bros. has used them when they run into a temporary worker shortage on a project, but also to save money on projects that are out of town.

"We've used Ackerman, Trillium and Tradesmen and a number of other ones," Bauer told MSC. "We've used them when we have specific projects that maybe are understaffed. We also use them to reduce our overhead on projects that are out of town. Where we would usually take our employees and put them up in a hotel with paid travel and per diem, we can utilize local labor from a provider to reduce overhead."

Others said they have had to turn to labor providers in recent years because they could not find enough workers using other methods.

### **Planning Long Term**

Contractors agree that the best way to build a quality workforce is through recruiting strong candidates, and retaining them as employees and helping them grow with the company.

NEI has built a strong partnership with the local technical colleges, which



Zignego explained that they use a variety of different avenues to find workers, but the best candidates have come from their current employees.

"If you have applicant A, who is John Doe off the street, or applicant B who is referred by an employee in good standing, applicant B has a leg up," he continued.

and Career Builder. The contractors that talked with MSC have also increased their visibility on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in recent years.

In addition to being more visible online, Eric Bauer stressed the importance of building relationships with the local high schools and technical colleges.



helps them recruit new hires and potential apprentices. However, Conard explained to *MSC* that sometimes even reaching out to tech college students is too late. That is why NEI has become more involved with youth apprenticeship in high school.

“We are partnering with the Green Bay Area Chamber to handpick students that have it figured out, that this is the direction they want to go in,” he said. “Then we have them come in to visit a jobsite or even work on a jobsite.”

By taking high-school students and exposing them to construction, Conard has found some students get even more interested in the trades and can be set on a path toward adult apprenticeship after graduating high school. The information just needs to get to the students, he argued. That is why NEI is working hard to help them understand that construction is changing and can be more appealing to a wider audience.

“Today, technology – especially in the electrical field – has gone out of this world. In many cases now, it is a key stroke instead of a sledge hammer,” Conard said.

With more than 10 individuals currently enrolled in ABC of Wisconsin’s apprenticeship program, NEI highlights its culture that allows apprentices – and all employees – to move up through the company.

“We sit down with all of our employees, companywide, quarterly. And then individually, we are constantly in communication” added Conard. “The culture we have created allows everyone to see how they can grow vertically. And we look at everyone’s strengths and weaknesses to discover what direction they want to go in. We just want to maximize everyone’s strengths.”

Zignego Company also stresses career pathing and incorporates the apprenticeship program into it.

“I always tell new hires or potential employees that the apprenticeship program is their vehicle for success,”



Zignego said. “Put in your three years in the apprenticeship program. Obviously learn on the job, as well, to apply what you learned in the classroom. Opportunities usually await those individuals.”

During and after their apprenticeship program, Zignego will sit down with his employees to find out where they want to be in five years, ten years and after. With those consistent check-ins, he said they have been able to retain employees and help them grow.

Some contractors, like Brickl Bros., look to in-house training programs to help their employees. Every new hire takes a 200-question exam that measures their level of technical understanding. This assessment helps the leaders at Brickl to determine what types of training they put their new employees in.

To lead the training, Brickl hired a former educator and construction business owner to develop a curriculum and teach technical classes. New hires without any form of construction experience go through a five-day course to get them up to speed on things like safety, basic math, hand tool usage and other training. Then they offer up to 12 block training classes – normally around two days each – to teach techniques more in depth. For

example, one class they offer is how to install exterior windows and doors, and how to properly frame them.

Throughout this process, Bauer said they have regular career-pathing conversations with employees to ensure they are accomplishing what they would like to, and making the right decisions to help them reach their next goal.

“What we are literally doing – and this goes into the recruitment of a person – we have a career path story that we can talk about with candidates that walk through the door,” Bauer said to *MSC*. “Regardless of skill sets, we talk about how we can elevate those skill sets in a timely manner so that their financial situation reflects their ability. In other words, how can we move their pay scale up the line, very similar to the apprenticeship program.”

If an employee would like to move into the professional side of the business, Brickl is working on a program that would train them on things like leadership and management – not unlike ABC of Wisconsin’s Emerging Leaders program.

Bauer argued that, industry-wide, one of the failures he sees is not teaching the necessary skills beyond the job site. While the apprenticeship and other training programs teach the technical skills, there

was not always a focus on the professional side.

“We understand that of all the skill sets that our foreman and other fields guys lack, it was the leadership skills,” he said. “Much like a lot of industries, we took our best carpenter and made him a foreman, but we never taught him how to manage that crew, how to be a mentor, trainer or leader.”

He advocated for others in the industry to create an in-house program for the future leaders of the company or to enroll them in ABC of Wisconsin’s emerging leaders program. For the long-term health of the industry, he believes that is key.

### Words of Wisdom

This article is, of course, not a solution to every problem that contractors are experiencing with the skilled worker shortage. However, it does provide insight into what colleagues are doing around the state.

Of the contractors interviewed, each offered their ideas on how to solve at least part of the problem that is the skills gap and the worker shortage. Some may work for others, and some may not be a good fit. But, the biggest points that every contractor made were simple:

1. It is a detriment to your company if you are not innovating. Understand that

the industry is changing and so are its workers.

2. Looking for new workers must be done through many mediums, not just one. Finding a blend or formula that works for your company will take time, but it is worth it.

3. Recruiting high-quality workers and setting them on a career path will pay huge dividends in the future.

4. Invest in your workers and they will repay you. This doesn’t always mean in terms of money. Find out what your employees value.

5. Look to ABC of Wisconsin for support when needed, both to other members and staff. [abc](#)



### ERIC BAUER *Brick Bros, Inc.*

“In my little small corner of the world, as employers we have to be willing to make an investment in our employees, more so than we have in the past. But, we have to make sure from a business standpoint that it is an investment well spent. We must keep in mind that today’s generation is different than it was yesterday. They are motivated by different things, and we have to be willing and able to provide a value to the employees more so than what we have done in the past.”

### JIM CONARD *Northern Electric, Inc.*

“Every company is different, but we find it is easiest to reach out to the younger generation with our younger employees. We need someone who can explain to these high-school-aged individuals the kind of career that can be had in construction. It is more brains than brawn today, in many cases. I have guys who, at age 35, do not lift up a tool anymore. They sit behind a computer on the jobsite. There is unfortunately an incorrect perception out there, though. So, we need to reach out to younger folks through other younger folks and show them that opportunity is out there.”

### TONY ZIGNEGO *Zignego Company, Inc.*

“First, whoever is in charge of hiring, whether that be a CEO or HR person, make yourself known to the guys in the field. In other words, don’t just be a name in an email. Get to know your current workforce as best as possible. And second, a thing we have been doing for a number of years. On a weekly basis, either with their paychecks or via email, what I do, is a company newsletter. I put in safety reminders, hot-button issues for the industry, what is going on with all the jobs the company is working on, and also, I leave a spot for employment opportunities. Those two practices are pretty effective.”



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HOW EMPLOYERS ADDRESS A NEW EMPLOYEE'S INITIAL EXPERIENCE, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE HIRE DATE, CAN BE CRUCIAL TO EMPLOYEE RETENTION EFFORTS.”

# ONBOARDING

## NO MORE “SINK OR SWIM”



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*By Deb Marshall, Senior Manager — Human Resource Consulting, Wipfli LLP*

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When does “onboarding” actually start – before or after a new employee’s first day on the job? Trick question! The answer is BOTH. “New employee orientation” is typically a routine process that happens once an employee starts a new job. “Onboarding” is a broader, more comprehensive approach to an employee’s initial experience with your company. It encompasses the time between when a job

offer was accepted and that critical first day of work, as well as the first several months on the job.

As you are well aware, it is a very difficult labor market for recruiting employees. And it doesn’t matter if you are in construction or any other industry, or at what job level, from labor and skilled trades to professional and executive positions. The demographics don’t



indicate any improvement in the number of new entrants to the labor market for at least another 10 years. How employers address a new employee's initial experience, both before and after the hire date, can be crucial to employee retention efforts. In fact, your best recruiting strategy is great retention!

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for a candidate to accept a job offer and then not show up on their first day of work. It is also not uncommon for them to stay only a few days or weeks and then quit. Instead of complaining about it, determine what you can do. This article will address a few ideas to consider and incorporate into your new employee experience. It needs to be a structured process of welcoming, orienting, initiating and training new employees so they feel well-informed and valued, and to start building the trust relationship with your company that could sustain their employment until retirement.

### Before the First Day

One of the reasons we often hear for candidates who are no-shows or quit quickly is that the employer really made no effort

whatsoever to engage with them prior to their start date. A comprehensive onboarding process will ensure that new employees know you want them to be there. Before their start date, it is very likely they are still hearing from other employers they contacted in their job search process! We all want to be appreciated – don't let your own inattentiveness to this basic human need be the reason they entertained a "better offer."

Your HR staff and the new employee's boss (and anyone else at your company who may know them) should be involved in a well-planned strategy of frequent communication before the official hire date – by phone, e-mail, text, etc. It's a lot harder to be a no-show if they know you are thinking of them and eager for them to be onboard. For example, for professional positions, ask if it's okay to announce their impending arrival at your company via LinkedIn, and tell them it's okay for them to announce it, too. If they have a family, send a letter telling them how pleased you are to have the new employee join your company. We've even seen t-shirts, hats and other logo items sent ahead of time to encourage that sense of belonging.



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Another pre-hire-date strategy is to send paperwork (I-9, W-2, emergency contact, benefits information and forms, employee handbook, etc.) to the new person in advance to give them the opportunity to review it before starting. Many employers now have on-line benefit enrollment and information on whom to call for assistance. Even if you don't have this, it's better to have the new employee prepared to ask questions when he or she starts.

### Onboarding Approaches

There are as many approaches to onboarding as there are organizations. From "best in class" formalized onboarding structures, to a very informal approach or even "sink or swim," you have a process whether you have defined it or not. Most importantly, the more new hires feel welcomed and prepared for their jobs, the better (and faster) they will be able to make a positive contribution to their own success and the success of your business. A well-designed onboarding process helps new employees adjust to their jobs by:

- Establishing better relationships with their boss and co-workers to increase job satisfaction.
- Clarifying expectations and objectives to improve job performance.
- Providing support to reduce unnecessary turnover.

Onboarding has four distinct building blocks. Most organiza-

tions do at least the first one. The others can be done in any combination, though they typically build upon each other:

**1. Compliance** – The lowest level of "orientation" which typically includes a review of basic legal requirements, employee handbook content, important safety info, and benefits enrollment. Just about all organizations do at least this level, usually conducted by HR.

**2. Clarification** – Ensures employees understand their new job and what is expected of them, usually done by their immediate supervisor or lead employees.

**3. Culture** – Gives employees a sense of "what it's like to work here" with formal and informal organizational expectations or norms. This is often introduced by someone in ownership or top management and should be reinforced by all company leaders.

**4. Connection** – Establishes the critical trusting and respectful relationships that will lay the track for their own success and that of the company. A new employee's boss often "paves the way" with introductions to other important and influential people in the company.

According to research done by the SHRM Foundation in its 2010 report on *Onboarding New Employees: Maximizing Success*, the degree to which you leverage these building blocks determines your overall onboarding strategy. These strategies typically fall into three levels – Passive, High Potential, and Proactive.



“

## INCORPORATE ONBOARDING IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE HIRING PROCESS. HOW WOULD YOU WANT TO BE TREATED AS A CANDIDATE?"

**1. Passive** – Addresses compliance issues with a checklist-type of approach, and maybe a little bit of role clarification, but other than that, it's "sink or swim." There is little or no attention to culture or connection. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon in the construction industry, and it can and should be better. About 30% of the organizations in the SHRM research were in this category.

**2. High Potential** – Compliance and clarification are consistently well-covered with a formal process. Some culture and connection pieces are in place too, though a complete process has not been established throughout. This group accounted for about 50% of those in the study.

**3. Proactive** – Includes all four building blocks and is systematically organized with a strategic approach. Retention is maximized here. Only about 20% achieved this level.

### Best Practices

How your company approaches onboarding will depend on your size, the level of positions you are targeting, your culture, and the commitment of your top management and/or ownership. Some of the "best practices" we have seen include:

- Incorporate onboarding in all aspects of the hiring process – good job descriptions, hiring managers who have been appropriately trained, competency-based interview questions, timely follow-up with candidates – how would YOU want to be treated as a candidate?

- Implement onboarding basics BEFORE the first day on the job – and communicate, communicate, communicate! Send a job description, employee handbook, benefits information, etc.

- Make the first day on the job special – receptionist knows they are coming, boss is there to meet them, orientation schedule sent in advance, work area already set up, equipment and/or business cards if needed, etc. – the little things make a BIG difference.

- Have a formal orientation program – for the job and the company – mission/vision/values statements and discussion and an organization chart with names and job titles. This will likely occur over a few days or even weeks – does not need to be all at one time, as long as new employees know in advance what to expect. Minimize surprises and support expectations.

- Be crystal clear with company and job objectives, timelines, roles, and responsibilities. This cannot be stressed enough – knowing what is expected and WHY is the foundation for success.


- Top management participation – depending on number and frequency of new hires, it really is important for new people to meet

your top management team – including those in entry-level jobs. This is an easy way to differentiate your company from others.

- Use milestones such as 30-60-90-180 days to personally check in with new people – often done by HR or their immediate supervisor. Develop a list of questions to use and do it consistently, asking about what they have learned, who has been helpful, do they have what they need to do their job well, any thoughts of leaving and what can be done to encourage them to stay, what we can learn from their previous job experiences, etc.

- Have a team approach to onboarding – "many hands make light work" – and it is much more interesting for employees!

- Consider some form of "gamification" with routine items like important safety requirements or critical employee handbook content – like a scavenger hunt, or Jeopardy!-type approach.

Successful onboarding is a key part of any talent management system. With today's talent shortages, you can't leave this to chance. Making this process a priority can have a significant impact on a new employee's first impression, as well as on their likelihood of staying with your company long-term. 

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## Staffing for Tomorrow (*Sometimes Literally*)

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*By Nick Novak, Managing Editor, Merit Shop Contractor*

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Finding quality, skilled craftsmen in today's market has proven difficult for most contractors. Jobs are available, but the unfortunate truth is that the workers needed to fill these positions simply do not exist. And when they do, contractors don't always have time to find them.

"We have more orders than we have people almost all the time," Bill Ackerman explained to the *Merit Shop Contractor*. Ackerman, who owns the labor staffing firm Ackerman Construction Services, says it is a daily challenge to find workers that have the needed skills for his customers.

While contractors do not regularly have the time to find available workers for their projects, Ackerman and his staff spend much of their day looking for quality candidates.

"We try to partner with our clients to get them the skilled tradespeople they need to help them finish their projects in a timely manner," he added. But do not try to call Ackerman's firm – or companies like it – a temp agency.

He admits that the legal definition of his company is a temporary service. However, Ackerman believes that he is an integral part of the construction indus-

try – especially during a time when the skills gap is at an all-time high. And while the jobs that his employees are placed in may be temporary, some workers have been on Ackerman's payroll for years. In fact, one of the first employees he hired is still working for him today.

Jeff Waugh, Area Manager at Trillium Construction Services, said that many of his employees prefer to stick with the staffing firm long term because they almost always have work, don't need to worry about a bouncing paycheck and many like the variety of working for different contractors.



“

*IF I WAS A CONTRACTOR, I WOULD USE AS MANY AVENUES AS I CAN.”*

In addition, if a contractor is looking to hire someone directly, Trillium is happy to provide that service, as well. From entry-level field employees to superintendents and project managers, Waugh works with his clients to find workers to fill the positions – either temporary or permanent.

No matter what the position, these labor providers aim to have workers that are ready for the jobsite day one. “We do a general safety orientation when they start that goes through a basic overview of what anybody working in the trades would encounter,” Waugh said. “From there, when our people get on the job, they get more site-specific information.”

Both firms work hand-in-hand with


contractors to prepare workers for any other challenges they may face – safety or otherwise.

Some of the employees that have been with Ackerman and Trillium for multiple years are actually requested by contractors today, especially if a worker has a lot of experience with a certain company or type of project. But, both Ackerman and Waugh say that the biggest challenge they face is the same as their clients: finding qualified workers.

While Ackerman focuses on getting more experienced workers for his clients, Waugh says this is also a great opportunity to get people interested in the construction industry. Even if someone has little to no experience, Waugh says

that Trillium is willing to work with new hires to get them ready for the field. If they can encourage them to stick with it and find a trade that the worker enjoys, he says it solves the worker shortage for one more position.

While firms like Ackerman and Trillium provide an important service for both short-term gaps and long-term vacancies in the construction workforce, both admit they are not a cure-all for the worker shortage contractors face.

“Of course, I would prefer to have everyone come to us. But if I was a contractor, I would use as many avenues as I can,” Waugh concluded. “And that is what we end up doing. We use as many avenues as we can.” 



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# Recruiting the Next Generation: How ABC is Working for You

*By Elizabeth Roddy, Director of Recruitment and Training, ABC of Wisconsin*



The skilled worker shortage is here. We have known that it was coming for a long time, and we tried to prepare, but our industry is feeling the strain. In the short term, contractors are doing the best that they can – but what about a long term solution?

There is no perfect answer and certainly no quick answer.

As we are aware, students are basically given three options after high school:

1. Four-year college
2. Two-year college
3. The military

For most, it does not even really matter what their major is, or if they even have a major, as long as they pick one of those three options. Parents and students do worry about how they will pay back the thousands of dollars they will incur in student loan debt. But, most in our society believe that once they graduate, the job they secure will be more than enough to pay it off. Recent statistics paint a very different picture.

ABC staff and members are regularly promoting construction careers and apprenticeships to school-age students, parents and school administrations. It is difficult to go into a class and try and change all of society's stereotypes of "construction" in a 45-minute presentation, however. And unfortunately, some schools and administrators will never get it. They have no idea how all the construction around them gets there, but they know that they don't want to be a part of it.

The good news is, for the majority of these visits, when the information and the opportunities are presented, there are flashes of revelation that come from a few in the room who suddenly understand it. Sometimes it is a student who takes a look around them and sees the money they can make. Sometimes it is a guidance counselor who makes sure to ask us back each year to talk to his students because the opportunities make sense. And sometimes it is the parent who wants to hug you, because

she has found a great opportunity for her son or daughter – those moments are out there and they are exciting each time they happen.

It is important to not let those moments get away, which is why it is so important to be a part of the school and a part of the student's high school history. ABC of Wisconsin is excited about some long-term solutions we have been a part of in the past couple of years.

## **NCCER Core Curriculum**

During the 2014-15 school year, ABC of Wisconsin was invited to be a part of a Fast Forward Grant that various high schools in Dane and Jefferson counties were a part of. In order to receive the grant, they needed to provide the high school students with industry-recognized certifications, which ABC of Wisconsin was able to do.

ABC of Wisconsin has been a certified training sponsor for the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) for over 20 years. In



the past two years ABC of Wisconsin has introduced this valuable certification to the high school level.

The "Core Curriculum" provides both written and skills assessments in the following topics:

- Basic Safety
- Introduction to Construction Math
- Introduction to Hand Tools
- Introduction to Power Tools
- Introduction to Construction Drawings
- Basic Communication Skills
- Basic Employability Skills
- Introduction to Material Handling

When completed, students receive a certificate of completion, a wallet card and a transcript verifying the topics that they covered in their training.

During the 2014-15 school year, over 75 students were certified. This year, the majority of the high schools from the original grant continued this training. In addition, two other high schools not part of that grant were certified to teach Core. In total, another 85 students will be receiving their NCCER Core Certification this year. This summer, at least an additional four high schools around the state (not just Dane and Jefferson Counties) are being certified to teach the Core Curriculum in the upcoming school year. Plus, conversations have started with 15 more schools.

ABC of Wisconsin oversees the certification, but more importantly, ABC is able to get into the classroom and get a chance to talk to the students about this certification as well as about future careers in construction. The original grant received amazing results. In fact, 35 of the original 75 students are working in the construction field either part-time or full-time (and it should be mentioned that not everyone was a senior at the time, so some are still in high school).

As time goes on, ABC members should be prepared to be see this certification from applicants and should

be aware that this certification is for basic construction training, but it also shows that they have attended a high school that went above and beyond to promote careers in construction.

### Construction Youth Apprenticeships


High schools have been offering Youth Apprenticeship to their students for years, but only last year were they approved to offer them in construction. A number of ABC members have already seen the benefits of participating in Youth Apprenticeship, and this month ABC contracted apprentices who have gone directly from the high school youth apprenticeship to the adult registered apprenticeship.

Currently, Construction Youth Apprenticeships are run through the Department of Workforce Development and are offered in:

- Carpentry
  - Electrical
  - Masonry/Concrete
  - Mechanical/HVAC
  - Plumbing/Sprinkler Fitting
- During the Youth Apprenticeship,

some of the Child Labor Laws are waived since the student is considered a "student learner" which has been very helpful to members. Though students under the age of 18 still cannot do everything, they gain valuable experiences that give them a great opportunity to learn more about the construction industry.

### ABC Continues to Help Recruit the Next Generation

There is no perfect or quick answer to help fix the skilled worker shortage, but ABC of Wisconsin continues to find new and innovative ways to bring schools and industry together. There are those who are willing to listen and change their mind about construction, and together, we can inspire them. 

*If you are interested in information about the high schools in your area that are participating in either the NCCER Core Curriculum Certification or the Youth Apprenticeship, please contact ABC of Wisconsin Recruitment & Training Director, Elizabeth Roddy at [eroddy@abcwi.org](mailto:eroddy@abcwi.org)*

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# NEW MEMBERS

For membership information contact **Deanna Regel**,  
Membership Coordinator – Associated Builders & Contractors of WI – 608-244-5883

## APRIL 2016 NEW MEMBERS



• **ALTIUS BUILDING CO.**

*Scott Drees*  
14170 W. Greenfield Ave., Brookfield, WI 53005  
**Phone:** (262) 641-8811  
**Description:** Altius Building Company is a Construction Management firm specializing in multi-family residential, commercial, retail and industrial projects. The Altius team is committed to delivering a high-quality, efficient product with uncompromising quality and integrity.  
**Sponsor:** Mike Becker, MCR Services, LLC  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 1

• **B-E CONTROLS, LLC**

*Mary Schwartz*  
350 S Tower St., Ste. 3, Saukville, WI 53080  
**Phone:** (262) 268-0106  
**Description:** Thermal Moisture Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Jonas Thull, JT Rams LLC  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 1

• **EDWARDSON PLUMBING, LLC**

*Nicholas Edwardson*  
990 Hain Road, Edgerton, WI 53534  
**Phone:** (608) 290-9144  
**Description:** Plumbing Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Ross Kraemer, Kraemer Brothers  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 3



## FLANAGAN HOME BUILDERS, LLC

• **FLANAGAN HOME BUILDERS LLC**

*Denise Flanagan*  
5689 Fieldcrest Dr.  
Hartford, WI 53027  
**Phone:** (262) 297-1611  
**Description:** Providing quality and professional rough carpentry services for residential homes throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.  
**Sponsor:** Wayne Scherwinski, Craft Masonry Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 1

• **HOFFMANN LOCK AND GLASS LLC**

*Rick Hoffmann, Sr.*  
28611 75th St.  
Salem, WI 53168  
**Phone:** (262) 843-3336  
**Description:** Door and Window Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Dan Ross, Ross & Associates, Ltd.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 15

• **HOME PATH FINANCIAL, LP**

*Joe Tesch*  
5116 N. 126th St.  
Butler, WI 53007  
**Phone:** (920) 858-9040  
**Description:** Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Jay Zahn, R&R Insurance Services  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 22

• **JEMCO LLC ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR**

*John Prusinski*  
W143 S6756 Tess Corners Dr.  
Muskego, WI 53150  
**Phone:** (414) 690-9710  
**Description:** Electrical Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Troy Carlson, McClone Agency  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 5

• **KRINGS CUSTOM BUILDERS LLC**

*Tim Krings*  
W2144 Cty Rd T  
Mondovi, WI 54755  
**Phone:** (715) 495-3845  
**Description:** Colored Concrete Stamping/Flatwork – Residential/Commercial Construction  
**Sponsor:** Tim Carlise, Durand Builders Service, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 1



• **THE BOSON COMPANY, INC.**

*Kurt Boson*  
2613 W. Veterans Pkwy.  
Marshfield, WI 54449  
**Phone:** (715) 384-3184  
**Description:** The Boson Company is a construction management and general construction company with offices in Marshfield and Wausau, Wisconsin. Founded in 1932 and building Worship, Commercial, Food Process, and Corporate facilities throughout the Midwest.  
**Sponsor:** Brad Haessly, Total Electric Service, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 2

• **VAN DORF PLUMBING INC.**

*Kory Van Dorf*  
N1331 County Road EE  
Neosho, WI 53059  
**Phone:** (262) 716-7473  
**Description:** Plumbing Contractor  
**Sponsor:** Robb Steiner, Steiner Electric, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 8



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### MAY 2016 NEW MEMBERS

#### • BPI COLOR

*Steve Mueller*

11331 W. Rodgers St.

West Allis, WI 53227

**Phone:** (414) 327-5010

**Description:** BPI-Color is family-run with over 60 years' experience serving contractors, Eng/Arch with scanning/copying equipment, service and supplies, PLUS: Large Full Color Signage.

**Sponsor:** Dan Zignego, Zignego Co., Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 12

#### • BRICKNER PLUMBING

*Ryan Brickner*

3623 Paradise Dr.

West Bend, WI 53095

**Phone:** (262) 483-0148

**Description:** Plumbing Contractor

**Sponsor:** Robb Steiner, Steiner Electric, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 9

#### • CHIPPEWA VALLEY ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS

*Nathan Winberg*

7380 Homestead Rd.

Eau Claire, WI 54701

**Phone:** (715) 718-0123

**Description:** Electrical Contractor

**Sponsor:** Brian Shefchick, Shefchick Builders, Inc.

Beam Club Members-to-date: 1

#### • DJS CARPENTRY LLC

*Danny Soltis*

4262 S. 95th St.

Greenfield, WI 53228

**Phone:** (414) 333-7496

**Description:** Carpentry Contractor

**Sponsor:** Joel Sterk, SIA Insurance  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 17.5



#### • ENGELHART ELECTRIC INC.

*Chaise Engelhart*

633 Orion Trail

Madison, WI 53718

**Phone:** (608) 514-1610

**Description:** Engelhart Electric, Inc. is based in Madison, WI. The founders, Justin and Chaise Engelhart have a combined 33 years of experience in cellular, commercial, and residential electrical services.

**Sponsor:** Dan Bertler, Supreme Structures Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 8

#### • GENERAL SPRINKLER CORPORATION

*Michael Winiecki*

1863 Buerkle Road

White Bear Lake, MN 55110

**Phone:** (651) 484-5903

**Description:** Mechanical Contractor

Beam Club Members-to-date: 7

#### • HEARTLAND BUSINESS SYSTEMS, LLC

*Dan Jennings*

1700 Stephen St

Little Chute, WI 54140

**Phone:** (920) 788-7720

**Description:** Computer/IT Consulting

**Sponsor:** Brian Welch, Bob & Dave's Landscaping

Beam Club Members-to-date: 7

#### • KVA ELECTRIC

*Shane Bennett*

17134 State Hwy 80

Richland Center, WI 53581

**Phone:** (608) 475-9768

**Description:** Electrical Contractor

**Sponsor:** Jerry Daniels, Joe Daniels Construction Co.

Beam Club Members-to-date: 100



#### • MASTERGRAPHICS INC.

*Michael Dunham*

N19W23993 Ridgeview Pkwy W Ste. 100

Waukesha, WI 53188

**Phone:** (800) 873-7238

**Description:** MasterGraphics is your trusted technology partner, serving the building industry with consulting, training and support for Autodesk software, 3D printing and scanning and wide-format printing.

**Sponsor:** Bob Engler, Engler Electric, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 18



#### • MONROE TRUCK EQUIPMENT

*Sarah Monson*

1051 W 7th St

Monroe, WI 53566

**Phone:** (608) 328-8127

**Description:** Monroe Truck Equipment, Inc., a leading manufacturer of specialized truck equipment, including snow and ice control equipment.

**Sponsor:** Gene Jacobson, PDC – Electrical Contractors

Beam Club Members-to-date: 18.5



#### • THERMA-TRON-X, INC.

*Ronald Julian*

1155 South Neenah Avenue

Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

**Phone:** (920) 743-6568

**Description:** Therma-Tron-X, Inc. (TTX) manufactures industrial finishing systems including E-Coat, autodeposition, and powder and liquid paint systems for product manufacturers and contract coaters.

**Sponsor:** Bill Monfre, Quality Insulators, Inc.  
Beam Club Members-to-date: 10

#### • WOLF ELECTRIC

*Garrett Wolf*

PO Box 574, Merton, WI 53056

**Phone:** (414) 640-1737

**Description:** Electrical Contractor

**Sponsor:** Bill Rozga, Rozga Plumbing & Heating Corp.

Beam Club Members-to-date: 20.5

For membership information contact **Deanna Regal**,

Membership Coordinator – Associated Builders & Contractors of WI – 608-244-5883



# EVENTS

Check [www.abcwi.org/events](http://www.abcwi.org/events) for more information

### CONFINED SPACE TRAINING

La Crosse

July 12, 2016

9:30 am – 4 pm

### 10 HR. OSHA CONSTRUCTION TRAINING

Appleton

July 15 & 29, 2016

7 am – 12:30 pm

### BREWER'S OUTING

Milwaukee

July 22, 2016

5 pm – 9:30 pm

### CONFINED SPACE TRAINING

West Bend

August 4, 2016

9:30 am – 4 pm

### 10 HR. OSHA CONSTRUCTION TRAINING

Stevens Point

August 9 & 16, 2016

8 am – 1:30 pm

### LEINIE LODGE BREWERY TOUR & NETWORKING SOCIAL

Chippewa Falls

August 10, 2016

5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

### FA/CPR TRAINING

Milwaukee

August 16, 2016

7 am – 11 am

### FA/CPR TRAINING

Milwaukee

August 16, 2016

12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

### 10 HR. OSHA CONSTRUCTION TRAINING

Eau Claire

August 23 & 30, 2016

10 am – 3:30 pm

### FA/CPR TRAINING

Madison

August 23, 2016

7 am – 11 am

### FA/CPR TRAINING

Madison

August 23, 2016

12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

### 10 HR. OSHA CONSTRUCTION TRAINING

Madison

Aug. 26 & Sep. 2, 2016

7 am – 12:30 pm

### SPORTING CLAY SHOOT

Johnson Creek

September 7, 2016

1 pm – 5:30 pm

### CONFINED SPACE TRAINING

Eau Claire

September 14, 2016

9:30 am – 4 pm

### CONFINED SPACE TRAINING

La Crosse

September 27, 2016

9:30 am – 4 pm

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