

MERIT SHOP
CONTRACTOR
WISCONSIN

TRAINING UP
GOLD MEDAL
APPRENTICES

PARTNERING
WITH
EDUCATORS

ABC OF WI
CARPENTRY
APPRENTICE
EARNS GOLD

MANAGING
THE MIDDLE



**BUILDING
SKILLS** **ATTRACTING &
RETAINING A
DIVERSE
WORKFORCE**

**INVESTING IN
PEOPLE**
PAGE 5


Associated Builders and Contractors
ABCWI.ORG



Pictured: 340AJ Boomlift



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MERITSHOP

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WISCONSIN



BUILDING SKILLS

ATTRACTING & RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

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Website: abcwi.org
ABC National: abc.org



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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Investing in People




THIS SPRING MARKS AN EXCITING PERIOD OF GROWTH for ABC Wisconsin, as both our membership and apprenticeship programs continue to expand. One of the most significant milestones is the purchase of our new building and the opening of our Center for Apprenticeship Excellence in Madison this fall. This investment will increase access to high-quality training for member companies in and around Dane County, while complementing our existing partnerships with schools and training providers across the state.

At its core, workforce development is about creating opportunity—and merit shops play a critical role in that mission. By emphasizing performance, skill, and advancement based on merit, our members are building strong, sustainable career pathways for individuals at every stage. Through registered apprenticeships, youth apprenticeship programs, and ongoing professional development, merit shops are not only filling today's workforce needs but also cultivating the next generation of craft professionals, supervisors, and industry leaders.

This issue focuses on the many ways our members are addressing workforce challenges head-on. While apprenticeship participation continues to grow, the demand for skilled workers remains high. You'll find an article highlighting the value of youth apprenticeship as a powerful pipeline into long-term careers in construction. We also feature AMCS, Inc., an ABC member leveraging youth apprenticeships, registered apprentices, and innovative training strategies to stay competitive and grow their team. Their results include repeat gold medal wins at the state apprenticeship skill competition and the national craft championship.

In addition, we spotlight members who are expanding multilingual services to better attract and retain a diverse workforce. Finally, Lee Hill, a popular ConstructionU instructor, addresses the ongoing challenge of developing middle management and offers practical strategies for preparing the next generation of leaders.

ABC Wisconsin is deeply committed to supporting merit shop workforce development at every level. We invest significant time and resources into training apprentices, foremen, managers, and senior leaders — ensuring our members have the tools they need to succeed. I encourage you to take full advantage of your membership by exploring the resources available on our website and participating in our educational offerings.

We exist to serve our member companies and to strengthen the merit shop philosophy by investing in people. By developing skilled, motivated, and adaptable professionals, we are not only building projects — we are building the future of our industry and our state. 



ABC WISCONSIN
IS DEEPLY
COMMITTED
TO SUPPORTING
MERIT SHOP
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
AT EVERY LEVEL.

— Kelly Tourdot, President



Owen Spitz works on his carpentry project at the National Craft Competition



WE DON'T HIRE ANYONE JUST TO FILL A ROLE - WE'RE HIRING THEM TO BE A FOREMAN.



AM Construction Services, Inc. apprentices (L-R) Timothy Gittel, Mark Singletary and Owen Spitz all won gold in carpentry at recent ABC Wisconsin Skill Competitions, and went on to earn Silver, Gold and Gold medals (respectively) in the ABC National Craft Championships in 2024, 2025 and 2026.



THERE AREN'T MANY PLACES WHERE PLUMBERS AND CARPENTERS ARE CELEBRATED – AND THEY SHOULD BE. THEIR WORK TOUCHES EVERYONE.

WINNING UP

GOLD MEDAL APPRENTICES

By Laura Kocum – Marketing & Communications Director, ABC Wisconsin

At the end of a long workday, the crew at AM Construction Services, Inc. (AMCS, Inc.) had a surprise waiting for carpenter Owen Spitz. Using a crane, they lifted a large plywood sign painted with the words: “Good Luck Owen!” As it rose into view, the team erupted in cheers. Spitz was headed to the National Craft Championships to compete in the carpentry division.

“It was kind of embarrassing,” Spitz said with a laugh, “but it was really cool to know that I’m supported by the whole crew.”

That support has followed Spitz throughout his carpentry journey, and it shows in his results. After placing second in ABC Wisconsin’s Apprenticeship Skills Competition in 2024 (just behind his coworker, Mark

Singletary), Spitz returned in 2025 to claim first place. He then advanced to the National Craft Championships in Salt Lake City, where he spent two days competing and ultimately earned a gold medal.

Each competition challenged participants to complete a project using provided plans and materials, testing not only technical skill and attention to detail, but also a strong commitment to safety. Spitz accomplished all of this while still training as a registered apprentice.

At AMCS, Inc., his success is a point of pride, but not a surprise. In fact, AMCS, Inc. apprentices have earned awards at the last three national competitions. According to Project Manager Jim Cisco, that consistency is rooted in the company’s training philosophy, which begins early with youth apprentices.



Jim Cisco stands with Owen Spitz on stage, after Owen received his gold medal.

“We don’t hire anyone just to fill a role, we’re hiring them to be a foreman,” Cisco explained. “From the moment they step onto a jobsite, they start doing what the crew is doing.”

Rather than limiting young apprentices to cleanup tasks, AMCS, Inc. integrates them into real work right away. They learn to use tools, participate in framing, and gain hands-on experience across daily jobsite activities.

Spitz followed that same path. He joined AMCS, Inc. through his high school’s youth apprenticeship program, one of three to four students the company selects each year.

Candidates go through a thorough vetting process that includes a written test, a hands-on assessment, and evaluation of soft skills. Once accepted, they immediately begin developing practical skills and can transition into a registered apprenticeship.

From there, AMCS, Inc. encourages all eligible apprentices to compete.

“We want them to push themselves and not become complacent,” Cisco said. “Competition shows them what they’re capable of.”

Beyond skill development, these competitions also highlight the value of the trades.

“As you spend your years as a tradesman,

it can feel like people don’t fully understand what you do,” Cisco added. “Everyone who builds a doghouse thinks they’re a carpenter—but it’s not the same as doing it every day. There aren’t many places where plumbers and carpenters are celebrated—and they should be. Their work touches everyone.”

That sense of recognition is especially evident at the national level. The awards ceremony begins with a parade of competitors, as hundreds of spectators cheer them on with signs, lights, and music.

“It was really, really awesome,” Spitz said. “I had heard about it, but actually being there, seeing people celebrate all the hard work, it was amazing.”

Cisco attended the competition alongside Spitz and saw firsthand how far he had come.

“His foreman and I were just bursting with pride,” Cisco said. “We’ve watched him grow from the beginning.”

That growth reflects a broader cultural shift within AMCS, Inc., one that emphasizes mentorship and investment in younger workers.



“It’s taken time to change the mindset of our foremen and fully integrate youth apprentices into the crew,” Cisco explained. “But it’s paying off.”

Spitz agrees. “At first, I had to prove I was worth the investment,” he said. “Now I get to give that same opportunity to the younger guys and help train them.”


AMCS, Inc. is already seeing the benefits. Younger leaders often connect more easily with new apprentices, earning their respect while reinforcing strong habits, especially around safety.

Spitz credits much of his development to both on-the-job training and formal education, including ABC’s Transition to Trainer course.

“That class really helped me with communication and prepared me to lead,” he said.

Cisco emphasized that AMCS, Inc. invests heavily in training — both on the jobsite and through partnerships with ABC and local schools. The result is not only stronger skills, but also a culture of teamwork and mentorship.

“I’m so grateful for the opportunity to grow at AMCS, Inc. and compete at the national level,” Spitz said. “Everyone in the program has the same opportunities I have. It just comes down to whether you’re willing to work hard and put in the time. You can win gold, too.”

As Spitz steps into greater leadership roles, Cisco is confident that the culture will continue to thrive—producing not only skilled carpenters, but future leaders in the trades. 

EVENT REMINDERS



abcwi.org

- **Foreman Fundamentals**
May 8, Madison
- **The Future of Construction Sales: Using AI Without Losing the Human Edge**
May 12, Online
- **Apprenticeship Graduation Banquet**
May 15, Wisconsin Dells
- **Three Profit Killers in Construction (And How to Fix Them)**
May 20, Online
- **Qualified Rigger & Crane Signal Person Training**
May 27, Green Bay
- **Golf Scramble at The Oaks**
May 28, Cottage Grove
- **FA/CPR Training**
May 29, Appleton
- **10-Hour OSHA Construction Safety & Health Outreach**
June 1-2, West Bend
- **NEC Electrical Exam Prep**
June 4-5, Madison
- **30-Hour OSHA Construction Safety & Health Outreach**
June 11-12, Appleton
- **10-Hour OSHA Construction Safety & Health Outreach**
June 12, Madison
- **Networking Social**
June 17, Marshfield
- **Qualified Rigger & Crane Signal Person Training**
June 19, Appleton
- **FA/CPR Training**
June 22, Sheboygan
- **Networking Social: Sky Carp Baseball Game**
June 25, Beloit
- **Trenching & Excavation Competent Person Training**
June 26, Appleton



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ABC OF WISCONSIN CARPENTRY APPRENTICE EARNS GOLD

Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin is celebrating an apprentice who won top honors at the 2026 National Craft Championships (NCC). Owen Spitz of AMCS, Inc. earned the gold award in Carpentry.

The 37th annual competition showcased the skills of more than 200 of the nation's best craft professionals in trades like carpentry, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, power line and welding. The competitors vied for top honors in 15 competitions with skills on display in 11 crafts.

Spitz scored the highest of all competitors in the carpentry division. He was joined at the competition by three additional competitors from Wisconsin, including Joshua Clauss, (HVAC), Joseph Julga (electrical) and Matthew Kuefler (plumbing).

All were recognized at ABC's Careers in Construction Awards ceremony during ABC Convention 2026 in Salt Lake City on March 20.

The individual competitors advanced to the NCC after receiving the top score in their respective fields during ABC of Wisconsin's Skill Competition on December 5 in West Bend.

Established in 1987, ABC's National Craft Championships annually highlight the achievements of those who are the future of the construction industry. Craft trainees and apprentices travel from all over the country to demonstrate their superior skills, training and safe work practices and compete for top honors in their chosen craft. For the training sponsors, employers and ABC chapters, the NCC demonstrates a strong commitment to the career paths the construction industry offers.

"There are exciting opportunities to pursue multiple career paths in construction, and this national competition showcases exactly what those paths look like," said 2026 Chair of the ABC National Board of Directors Thomas "Murph" Murphy, vice president, Power & Construction Group, Scottsville, New York. "These Wisconsin champions are outstanding in their crafts and have a bright career path ahead of them. Congratulations to the honorees and all competitors, who are true craft professionals." [ABC Wisconsin](#)



ABC of Wisconsin sent four apprentices to compete at the National Craft Championships. L-R are Matthew Kuefler of Dave Jones, LLC (plumbing), Joseph Julga of NSI Electrical Contractors, Inc. (electrical), Owen Spitz of AM Construction Services, Inc. (carpentry) and Joshua Clauss of Epic Systems Corporation (HVAC).



Owen Spitz of AM Construction Services, Inc. receives the gold medal award for carpentry. He is joined by ABC-WI member and Craft Championship Chair Steve Sjolander (left), along with other program leaders.



UW-Platteville's Construction Management Team placed 3rd overall and 2nd in estimating.



THE 37TH ANNUAL COMPETITION SHOWCASED THE SKILLS OF MORE THAN 200 OF THE NATION'S BEST CRAFT PROFESSIONALS IN TRADES LIKE CARPENTRY, ELECTRICAL, HVAC, PLUMBING, POWER LINE AND WELDING.



UW-Stout's Construction Management Team was a finalist in the competition.



ABC of Wisconsin's most prestigious individual award was presented to Dan Bertler. He received the 2026 Wes Meilahn Award for outstanding dedication, leadership and service to the chapter and the merit shop construction industry. The award is named after chapter founding father Wes Meilahn, known for his unwavering commitment to ABC's mission.



Few have influenced ABC of Wisconsin's networking success as much as Jerry Daniels. Daniels was awarded the Chairman's Beam Club award at an ABC member awards banquet. The award recognizes Daniels' success at recruiting more than 100 new members to ABC of Wisconsin.



PARTNERING WITH ***EDUCATORS***

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES – TOGETHER

By Tom Martin – Career & Life Ready Coordinator, CESA 3

Across Wisconsin, educators are working hard to ensure that students see the construction trades not simply as an option—but as a respected, rewarding, and essential career path. Yet we cannot do this work alone. If we are truly going to strengthen the future workforce for the construction industry, we must do it together with the contractors who represent the ABC.

Members of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin have something that no textbook, classroom, or simulation can replicate: real-world expertise. The knowledge gained from years in the field—running crews, solving problems on the jobsite, delivering projects, and

mastering the craft—is exactly what today’s students need to see and experience.

That is why we are asking ABC contractors to consider partnering with educators in construction academies across the state.

Some contractors may hesitate at the idea. A common concern we hear from contractors is, “I’m not an educator,” or “I don’t have time to babysit students.” But the reality is quite different.

First, you don’t have to be an educator. In fact, that’s precisely why your involvement matters. Students do not need another lecture—they need authentic exposure to professionals who can speak honestly about the trade. They want to hear how projects come together, what it takes to succeed on a jobsite, and how someone builds a long, successful career in the industry.

Your stories, your experiences, and your expectations carry tremendous influence.



Second, these are not students who need babysitting. The young people enrolling in potential construction academies have already demonstrated something powerful: a genuine interest in the trades. They are there because they want to build, solve problems, and learn from professionals. They want to understand what opportunities exist locally and what skills they need to succeed working for companies like yours.

These students are motivated. They are curious. And they are eager to learn from the very people who are shaping the built environment in their communities.

Construction academies give contractors a chance to help answer the questions students are already asking:

- What does a local career in the trades really look like? Can I stay in my community? Can I stay in my county?
- What skills should I start developing now? What math, science and communication skills do I need to succeed?
- What companies are hiring locally?
- What does it take to earn a spot on a professional crew?

For educators, these partnerships are equally important. Schools want to ensure that students are learning the right skills, the right habits, and the right expectations that contractors value. We want students to



STUDENTS DO NOT NEED ANOTHER LECTURE — THEY NEED AUTHENTIC EXPOSURE TO PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN SPEAK HONESTLY ABOUT THE TRADE.

understand jobsite professionalism, teamwork, safety, and craftsmanship—long before they enter the workforce.

In short, educators are not trying to replace contractors as trainers. We want to work with you and for you.

Together, we educators can create learning experiences that help students move from curiosity to career—through construction academies, work-based learning opportunities, and eventually Youth Apprenticeships that place students directly with you.

When contractors step into classrooms or open their jobsites to students, they do more than help a school program succeed. They help shape the future workforce of the construction industry in Wisconsin.

The need is real. Contractors across the state are searching for the next generation of skilled professionals. At the same time, students are searching for careers that offer purpose, stability, and pride in their work. Construction offers all of these—and more.

But students need to see it. They need to hear it. And most importantly, they need to learn it from you.

This is our invitation to ABC members: partner with Wisconsin's educators. Share your expertise. Tell your story. Show students what is possible.

If we work together—contractors and educators—we can ensure that Wisconsin's construction industry remains strong, innovative, and filled with talented professionals who are proud to build the future of our communities.

The next generation of builders is already in our classrooms.

Let's build their future—together. 



Tom Martin

A PARTNERSHIP THAT PROTECTS

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ABC CELEBRATES OUR

| Company | City | Anniversary | Company | City | Anniversary |
|---|----------------|-------------|--|------------------|-------------|
| J. Cox Plumbing, LLC | Winneconne | 5 | C&V Plumbing | Germantown | 5 |
| Bontempo Plumbing & Drain Cleaning | West Allis | 5 | Harbor City Plumbing | Port Washington | 10 |
| American Construction Services | West Bend | 5 | Mach IV Engineering & Surveying LLC | Green Bay | 10 |
| Kinsman Construction, Inc. | La Valle | 5 | Sand Country Electric, LLC | Wisconsin Rapids | 10 |
| Chippewa Concrete Services, Inc. | Chippewa Falls | 5 | KBK Services, Inc. | Ashland | 10 |
| Croell, Inc. | La Crosse | 5 | Fox Plumbing & Water Care, LLC | Burlington | 10 |
| Baylake Electric, LLC | Baileys Harbor | 5 | Electric 1, Inc. | Portage | 10 |
| C. Braaksma Electric, Inc. | Waupun | 5 | Jon DeBelak Plumbing & Heating | Sussex | 10 |
| Precision Electrical Contractors, Inc. | New Berlin | 5 | Premier Building Solutions, Inc. | Mount Horeb | 10 |
| Lindquist Electric, Inc. | Ironwood | 5 | Fire Protection Specialists | Bangor | 10 |
| North Central Fabricators, LLC | Braham | 5 | Midwest Plumbing, LLC | Waukesha | 10 |
| Triple L Cleaning, LLC | Holmen | 5 | The Boson Company, Inc. | Marshfield | 10 |
| Great Lakes Skilled Trades, LLC | West Allis | 5 | Erspamer Plumbing, Inc. | North Prairie | 10 |
| Sand Valley Builders, LLC | Chicago | 5 | Edelman LLC | Elkhorn | 10 |
| Element Electric, LLC | Franklin | 5 | McKeefry & Sons, Inc. | Pulaski | 10 |
| Ever Ready Electric, Inc. | Mazomanie | 5 | Schmitt Electric | Muskego | 10 |
| Brad Tanck Plumbing, LLC | Sturgeon Bay | 5 | Redeker Dairy Equipment, Inc. | Brandon | 10 |
| Collins Plumbing Services, LLC | Sharon | 5 | Spectrum Insurance Group | Eau Claire | 10 |
| E80 Millwright & Rigging, LLC | DeForest | 5 | Monroe Truck Equipment | Monroe | 10 |
| Independent Flooring Contractors, Inc. | Eau Claire | 5 | Hoffmann Lock And Glass, LLC | Salem | 10 |
| CLG Electric, LLC | Genoa | 5 | Engelhart Electric, Inc. | Madison | 10 |
| Exact Electric, LLC | Milwaukee | 5 | B-E Controls, LLC | Saukville | 10 |
| Advanced Electric, LLC | Fond du Lac | 5 | Sterr Crazy Plumbing, LLC | Hartland | 10 |
| Gillett Electric, LLC | Neenah | 5 | Lueder Electric, LLC | Fort Atkinson | 10 |
| H&M Wiring | Oxford | 5 | A & A Plumbing Of Milwaukee | Milwaukee | 10 |
| Grady, Hayes & Neary, LLC | Waukesha | 5 | Wegner CPAs | Madison | 10 |
| Ideal Midwest | Clinton | 5 | Wolf Electric, LLC | Merton | 10 |
| H.I.S. Comp., LLC | Hartford | 5 | Long Life Roofing Co. | Wisconsin Dells | 10 |
| DAAXIT, The Contractor's CFO | Twin Lakes | 5 | Bri-An PHC, LLC | Waukesha | 10 |
| Wide Effect Talent Solutions | Dousman | 5 | Staab Construction | Marshfield | 10 |
| J.J. Keller & Associates, Inc. | Neenah | 5 | Chippewa Valley Electrical Contractors, Inc. | Eau Claire | 10 |
| Dave Burns Plumbing, Inc. | Muskego | 5 | Sabel Mechanical, LLC | Fond du Lac | 15 |
| E. C. Merrill, Inc. | Fond du Lac | 5 | Miller Electrical Enterprises, Inc. | Big Bend | 15 |
| Caliber Construction, LLC | Janesville | 5 | Erickson Excavating Of Cumberland, Inc. | Cumberland | 15 |
| USI Insurance Services | Kimberly | 5 | McCabe Roofing and Sheet Metal | Hokah | 15 |
| Mark Cardinal Concrete Construction, Inc. | Fond du Lac | 5 | J & W Transfer | Janesville | 15 |
| In The Lite, LLC | Merrill | 5 | Drees Electric, Inc. | Marinette | 15 |
| Quality Electric, LLC | Reedsville | 5 | B&B Electric, Inc. | Eau Claire | 15 |
| Arena Americas | Oak Creek | 5 | Side X Side Construction, LLC | Fond du Lac | 15 |

R LONG-TIME MEMBERS

| Company | City | Anniversary | Company | City | Anniversary |
|---|-----------------|-------------|--|----------------|-------------|
| Bill Lorrigan Construction, Inc. | Reedsville | 15 | Cru Concrete | Dane | 30 |
| Frantl Industries, Inc. | Lannon | 15 | R&R Insurance Services, Inc. | Waukesha | 30 |
| Performance Roofing Systems, Inc. | Richfield | 15 | ECONOPRINT, Inc. | Verona | 30 |
| Hartung Electric, LLC | Elmwood | 15 | Olympic Builders General Contractors, Inc. | Holmen | 30 |
| Lakeview Electric Contractors, Inc. | Saint Cloud | 15 | Allstates Rigging, Inc. | Two Rivers | 30 |
| JPK Builders | Burlington | 15 | Rozelle Enterprises, Inc. dba Delta Electric | Whitewater | 30 |
| S & D Masonry, Inc. | Neenah | 15 | F.B. Reeder Corporation | Clinton | 30 |
| Peters Concrete Company | Green Bay | 15 | Kuehl Electric, Inc. | Neenah | 30 |
| Pauli Plumbing, Inc. | Watertown | 15 | BDO USA, LLP | Madison | 30 |
| Milestone Plumbing, Inc. | Wauwatosa | 15 | Lincoln Contractors Supply, Inc. | Milwaukee | 35 |
| Hartje Lumber, Inc. | La Valle | 15 | AMA Heating & A/C, Inc. | Green Bay | 35 |
| AssuredPartners | Madison | 15 | Van Oss Electric, Inc. | Denmark | 35 |
| Twin Lakes Transit, Ltd. | Eden | 15 | Kirner Electric Inc. dba Davis Electric | Prairie Du Sac | 35 |
| Cherry Drywall, LLC | Thorp | 20 | Buss Electric | Greenville | 35 |
| SVA Certified Public Accountants, S.C. | Madison | 20 | Northwest Builders, Inc. | Rice Lake | 35 |
| S. Meyer Electric Service, Inc. | Sheboygan Falls | 20 | Heartland Construction, Inc. | Slinger | 35 |
| Trillium Construction | Madison | 20 | LaVenture Crane & Rigging, Inc. | New Richmond | 35 |
| Absolute Construction Enterprises, Inc. | Racine | 20 | VOS Electric, Inc. | Green Bay | 40 |
| W.D.S. Construction, Inc. | Beaver Dam | 20 | Karls Mechanical Contractors | Chilton | 40 |
| Southport Mechanical, LLC | Caledonia | 20 | Walsdorf Roofing Co., Inc. | Kiel | 40 |
| Schoenwalder Plumbing, Inc. | Waukesha | 20 | Earth, Inc. | Arpin | 40 |
| TRICOR Insurance | Beloit | 20 | Carew Concrete & Supply Co., Inc. | Appleton | 40 |
| Town & Country Glass Co., Inc. | Kenosha | 20 | Aon | Green Bay | 45 |
| Axley Attorneys | Madison | 20 | Hausz Brothers, Inc. | Fort Atkinson | 45 |
| Wieser Brothers General Contractor, Inc. | La Crescent | 20 | Friede & Associates, LLC | Reedsburg | 45 |
| Meyers Electric, Inc. | Wales | 25 | Zignego Ready Mix | Waukesha | 45 |
| Foust Foundations, Inc. | Fort Atkinson | 25 | LaLonde Contractors, Inc. | Waukesha | 45 |
| Idealair Heating & Cooling, Inc. | De Pere | 25 | Tri City Glass & Door | Appleton | 45 |
| Eagle Mechanical, Inc. | Sturgeon Bay | 25 | Madigan Refrigeration & Energy Systems, Inc. | Lodi | 45 |
| B & Z Electrical Contractors, Inc. | Woodstock | 25 | Schaus Mechanical, Inc. | Manitowoc | 45 |
| Best Built, Inc. | Green Bay | 25 | Poellinger Electric, Inc. | La Crosse | 45 |
| Richardson Electric, Inc | Durand | 25 | Zignego Co., Inc. | Pewaukee | 45 |
| Antczak Construction, Inc. | Cameron | 25 | American State Equipment Co., Inc. | Milwaukee | 50 |
| Gene Frederickson Trucking & Excavating, Inc. | Kaukauna | 25 | Faith Technologies Incorporated | Menasha | 50 |
| J & J Baumhardt Trucking, Inc. | Eden | 25 | Barricade Flasher Service, Inc. | Oak Creek | 50 |
| MCL Companies, LLC | Eau Claire | 30 | Rennhack Construction Co., Inc. | Reeseville | 50 |
| Bauman Construction | Chippewa Falls | 30 | Gilbank Construction, Inc. | Clinton | 50 |
| The Brehmer Agency, Inc. | Butler | 30 | Kraemer Brothers | Plain | 50 |
| First Business Bank | Madison | 30 | | | |



SOME OF OUR MOST TECHNICALLY SKILLED EMPLOYEES — MANY OF OUR CONCRETE FINISHERS AND FOREMEN — ARE EITHER BILINGUAL OR NATIVE SPANISH SPEAKERS.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

BUILDS SUCCESS FOR ABC MEMBERS

By Laura Kocum – Marketing & Communications Director, ABC Wisconsin

As attendees gathered around ABC's SuperCon '26 registration table, a new audience stood out. For the first time, Spanish-speaking crews were signing in and heading to safety training in their native language. The demand was so high that organizers had to move the session to a larger room at the last minute to accommodate the crowd.

Tony Zignego, ABC Board Member and Chair of ABC's Inclusion Committee, anticipated strong interest. At Zignego Co., Inc., multilingual crews are essential to completing projects. At least half of his workforce speaks Spanish as their primary language, making it critical that training, leadership, and daily communication are delivered in a way they fully understand.

"Aligning your core values to ensure everyone feels included is essential,"



Tony Zignego

Zignego said. "Within those values, finding ways to bring teams together, even through their differences, is what ultimately makes a company successful."

For Zignego Co.,

that commitment goes beyond words. The company has invested significant time and resources into communicating in the languages their crews speak and ensuring employees feel valued. They've even updated their logo to reflect the nationalities represented across their workforce.

"We believe we have a tremendously gifted workforce," Zignego said. "Some of our most technically skilled employees—many of our concrete finishers and foremen—are either bilingual or native Spanish speakers."

Their approach starts with onboarding. New employees are paired with same-language mentors to support a smoother transition. The leadership team includes bilingual supervisors, jobsite signage is provided in both Spanish and English, and training is delivered in workers' primary languages. This intentional approach has paid off.

"Over the past 25 to 30 years, this has become a self-sustaining cycle at Zignego, helping us attract and retain some of the best craftspeople in the industry," he said.

Zignego is not alone. Many ABC members are embracing multilingual workforces and investing in the tools

needed to support them—ensuring crews are safe, well-trained, and confident on the job.

Stevens Construction Corp. recently hired a bilingual administrative assistant to keep up with the growing demand for Spanish-language help.

"Since adding this position, we've been able to more effectively explain benefit offerings, resulting in increased understanding and utilization—especially in healthcare. This has been a meaningful step in ensuring all employees can access and fully benefit from the resources available to them," explains Mandy Basham, Human Resources Manager at Stevens Construction Corp..

The company already has Spanish language training for their crews, and believes it makes their projects more cohesive, and it builds trust and camaraderie within their teams.



Mandy Basham

"It supports career growth by giving team members the opportunity to develop new skills in their first language," she said. "It also ensures jobsite safety by ensuring critical

safety training is clearly understood when delivered in Spanish.”

Basham says their HR documents, handbooks, and company policies are translated into Spanish, and the company makes it a point to issue all communications in both English and Spanish, to ensure employees are well-informed and feel included.

Eugene Krol, General Manager at K Komfort, Inc., believes these efforts to speak the language of the crews are crucial. “As an employer, it’s essential to create an environment that sets your crews up for success,” he said.

His company employs individuals who speak Spanish, Russian, and English. To bridge communication gaps, K Komfort relies on translation apps, bilingual employees, and multilingual signage.

“In today’s competitive environment, where companies are all looking for the best talent and projects, having an edge is critical,” Krol said. “Providing language access is a powerful way to grow your team and maintain a safe job site.”



A bilingual sign is used on one of Zignego Co. Inc.'s job sites.

There are also clear business advantages. “We’re able to serve customers who don’t speak English by connecting them with our Spanish- or Russian-speaking employees,” Krol explained. “That flexibility expands our reach and builds loyalty because customers know they can communicate effectively with our team.”

ABC is continuing to expand its language offerings to support member companies. The Construction Inclusion page on the ABC

website features a wide range of resources, including more than 365 Spanish-language training videos, bilingual construction signage, and OSHA materials in multiple languages.

Plans are already in place to expand Spanish-language programming at future SuperCon events—ensuring that every worker has access to the training and resources they need to stay safe, confident, and successful on the job. [abc.wisconsin.com](#)

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THE *MANAGING* *MIDDLE*

THE LEADERSHIP GAP CONSTRUCTION
CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE

By Lee Hill – Assistant Operations Manager-North America, Capital Railroad Services

Walk onto almost any commercial jobsite in America and you'll see two investments the construction industry has made well. On one side, apprentices are being trained, credentialed, and developed in structured pipelines. On the other, senior leaders attend executive programs, strategy sessions, and leadership retreats. But between those two groups sits the largest, and most overlooked, population in the company: middle managers.

Foremen, lead operators, superintendents, project engineers, and department managers are the people who translate plans into production, expectations into behavior, and culture into reality. Yet in many construction companies, we promote them into leadership and then assume they'll figure it out. That assumption is costing the industry more than we realize.



The Most Promoted... and Least Prepared Leaders

In construction, middle managers are rarely hired into leadership roles, they are promoted into them. Often, the promotion is based on technical skill, tenure, or reliability. What's missing is formal preparation for the human side of leadership.

New supervisors suddenly become responsible for:

- Managing people they used to work beside
- Enforcing policies they were never trained to apply consistently
- Addressing performance issues, conflict, attendance, and behavior
- Communicating expectations clearly under pressure
- Handling uncomfortable conversations involving discipline, documentation, and escalation

Without training, these leaders default to what feels safest:

- Avoiding conflict
- Staying “one of the crew”
- Hoping issues resolve themselves
- Escalating too late, or not at all

The result shows up as turnover, morale issues, culture drift, and risk exposure—not because leaders don't care, but because they were never equipped.

The Hidden Cost of Skipping the “In Between”

When companies underinvest in middle management development, the costs rarely appear on a balance sheet, but they show up everywhere else. Weak frontline leadership contributes directly to:

- Higher employee turnover
- Inconsistent enforcement of standards
- Safety shortcuts and unreported concerns
- Rumors and unprofessional behavior going unaddressed
- Burned out project managers and superintendents



WHEN COMPANIES UNDERINVEST IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT, THE COSTS RARELY APPEAR ON A BALANCE SHEET, BUT THEY SHOW UP EVERYWHERE ELSE.

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FOREMEN, LEAD OPERATORS, SUPERINTENDENTS, PROJECT ENGINEERS, AND DEPARTMENT MANAGERS ARE THE PEOPLE WHO TRANSLATE PLANS INTO PRODUCTION, EXPECTATIONS INTO BEHAVIOR, AND CULTURE INTO REALITY.

Most importantly, it breaks the leadership pipeline. Without intentional training at this level, companies struggle to develop their next generation of senior leaders. They're forced to hire externally or overburden existing executives who already have full plates. In other words, we train people how to work and how to lead at the top, but not how to lead in the middle, where the work actually happens.

Middle Managers Are Culture Carriers

Culture isn't set in the boardroom; it's enforced on the jobsite. Middle managers decide:

- What behavior gets corrected and what gets ignored
- Whether safety and professionalism are non negotiable or flexible
- How respectfully issues are handled
- Whether employees feel supported, coached, or abandoned

If we want consistent standards, accountability, and respect across jobsites, we have to train the people who enforce them daily. That training doesn't require turning foremen into corporate executives. It requires practical, field ready leadership development focused on:

- Clear communication
- Consistent expectations
- Coaching versus discipline
- When to document and when to escalate
- How to lead former peers
- How to stop problems early instead of managing crises later
- How to manage projects

These are teachable skills, but only if we choose to teach them.

Building the Missing Bridge

The strongest construction organizations are beginning to recognize that workforce development is not a two step ladder, it's a continuum. That continuum includes:

1. Apprentices learning technical skill
2. Frontline leaders learning how to lead people
3. Mid level leaders learning systems, accountability, and decision making
4. Senior leaders focusing on strategy, scale, and long term growth

Programs designed specifically for middle managers, like those offered through ABC's Construction U, fill the most critical gap in that continuum. They give developing leaders a common language, practical tools, and the confidence to do the job well. Just as importantly, they send a clear message: Leadership here is intentional.

A Challenge to Business Owners

If you're a construction business owner or executive, ask yourself:

- Who develops my foremen and supervisors once they're promoted?
- How consistent is leadership across my jobsites?
- Am I building leaders—or hoping I don't lose my best workers?

The future of our workforce doesn't depend solely on attracting new talent. It depends on whether we prepare the leaders who guide that talent every day.

Training the "in between" isn't optional anymore. It's the difference between organizations that grow sustainably, and those that are constantly fighting the same fires. abcwisconsin.com



Lee Hill



milwaukeetool.com

MARCH 2026

• Angel's Dream Construction

Sam Mugurdumov
 10874 Tartan Court
 Mequon, WI 53097
 414-702-8707

Description: General Contractor

Sponsor: Matt Goebel, Stevens Construction Corp.

Beam Club members-to-date: 1

• Elite Electrical Installations LLC

Kurt Toczynski
 513 McLean Ave.
 Tomah, WI 54660
 608-387-3779

Description: Electrical Contractor

Sponsor: Adam Wieser, Wieser Brothers General Contractor, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 8

• Integrity Environmental Services, Inc.

Jake Erdman
 1821 Dolphin Drive
 Waukesha, WI 53186
 262-798-1453

Description: Specialty Contractor

Sponsor: Matt Dabson, Corporate Contractors Inc. (CCI)

Beam Club members-to-date: 1

• Jakel Plumbing, Heating & Electrical Contractors Inc.

Paul Jakel
 800 Old Hwy 29, P.O. Box 566
 Abbotsford, WI 54405
 715-223-6563

Description: Specialty Contractor

Sponsor: James Feroah, Great Lakes Skilled Trades, LLC

Beam Club members-to-date: 4

• Sandra Dempsey Network

Debbie Novak
 DBA Source TEN
 N92W20343 Foxview Court
 Menomonee Falls, WI 53051
 414-614-0391

Description:

Sponsor: Jay Zahn, Hausmann Group

Beam Club members-to-date: 75

• Wiebe Plumbing LLC

Nathan Wieberdink
 327 S. 5th St.
 Cedar Grove, WI 53013
 920-668-8737

Description: Plumbing Contractor

Sponsor: Courtney Stelter, Ansay & Associates, LLC

Beam Club members-to-date: 11

APRIL 2026

• Ampere Electric LLC

Abby Ollhoff
 13495 12th Ave.
 Merrill, WI 54452
 715-218-3746

Description: Electrical Contractor

Sponsor: Tom Altmann, Altmann Construction Company, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 51

• Anovia Health

Jake Brehm
 1794 Allouez Ave., Suite C – Box 230
 715-905-0061

Description:

Sponsor: Adam Mueller, CPA, Staab Construction

Beam Club members-to-date: 2

• Beardsley Concrete LLC

John Beardsley Jr.
 P.O. Box 081726
 Racine, WI 53408
 262-930-2677

Description: Specialty Contractor

Sponsor: JR Reesman, Reesman's Excavating & Grading, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 45

• Brusio Electric, LLC

Andrew Brusio
 5339 Newman Drive
 Rhinelander, WI 54501
 715-362-5675

Description: Electrical Contractor

Sponsor: Jeff Disher, Disher Electric, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 11

• IVO Systems

Eric Christensen
 7 N. Pinckney St., Ste. 300 Madison, WI 53703
 414-405-2648

Description:

Sponsor: Sam Daniels, Daniels Construction

Beam Club members-to-date: 7.5

• Korff Plumbing

Meryl Pratsch
 W4873 County Road U
 Plymouth, WI 53073
 920-893-8400

Description: Plumbing Contractor

Sponsor: Gerry Krebsbach, K-W Electric, Inc
 Beam Club members-to-date: 43

• Loger Construction, LLC

Kate Loger
 P.O. Box 386
 Mount Horeb, WI 53572
 608-658-6491

Description: Specialty Contractor

Sponsor: Kevin Day, Corporate Contractors Inc. (CCI)

Beam Club members-to-date: 23.5

• Morreau Construction LLC

Austin Morreau
 13211 White Cedar Road
 Two Rivers, WI 54241
 920-323-3036

Description: General Contractor

Sponsor: Chad Zeller, CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP)

Beam Club members-to-date: 6

• Peninsula Electric

Brian Flaten
 6286 Maple Run
 Egg Harbor, WI 54209
 920-473-0622

Description: Electrical Contractor

Sponsor: Stuart Johnson, A.C.E. Building Service, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 7

• Voskuil Electric LLC

Jon Voskuil
 1111 S 2nd St.
 Cedar Grove, WI 53013
 920-980-8535

Description: Electrical Contractor

Sponsor: Gerry Krebsbach, K-W Electric, Inc.

Beam Club members-to-date: 44



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