

February 2016

# MASONRY

*The Voice of the Masonry Industry*

Volume 55, Number 2

Air Barriers and  
Insulation

Pump Maintenance

## Training Our Workforce

# MASONRY

February 2016 | Volume 55, No.2

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Shown on the cover is El Camino College, located in Torrance, Calif., and winner of the Brick Industry Association's Brick in Architecture Awards in the Residential – Colleges & Universities (Higher Education) category. The mason contractor was Silverline Construction. You can learn more about this project on pp. 68 of this issue.

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# Masonry Industry Workforce Development Efforts

By Jeff Buczkiewicz,  
President, MCAA



**AFTER A VERY PROLONGED RECESSION THAT SOME HAVE REFERRED TO AS THE GREAT RECESSION**, the construction industry, in general, has had to deal with a different issue: not having enough well-qualified tradesmen to complete all the work they would like to bid on. Masonry is not an exception to this. As I travel the country visiting chapters, the common comment I hear is, "I could use 30, 40 or even 100 more bricklayers for work I want to get."

That problem is so much better than the alternative, but still is an issue our industry has to deal with in order to maintain the spike in construction and market share. The reality is that every construction sector is scrambling to ramp up to full strength



Students in the Center of Applied Technology North's masonry program entered an American flag project in the It Makes a Village competition.

again, and it is exciting to see how innovative and creative the masonry industry can be in our effort to address the issue.

In the following reports, we are looking to share stories of programs that have been developed around the country to help address these needs. The people who have developed these answers to the issue are no different than anyone reading this. They see an issue, likely experience it, now have done something about it in their region of the country, and have seen success with their programs.

As an industry, we can unify and change lives as many in these regions already have by recruiting men and woman who have no experience in our industry, but are welcomed in and given tools from Day 1 to begin the process of learning a craft that can become a lifelong career. From AZ's crash course in becoming a tender, to high school programs such as Curtis Hoover's fantastic program in MD, to the creative partnership in TX between industry and university, the solutions are endless. We just have to set our minds to accomplishing them.

Recently, the MCAA Legislative Committee leadership met in D.C. to discuss our goals for the next few years. One of our priorities will be to re-focus our legislative efforts to attempt to use the Federal government to help promote and support the development of vocational programs around the country. We are planning to model several programs and show success from them – real people whose lives have been changed by being introduced to the world of construction and, in our case, masonry.

I hear regularly wonderful stories of young men and women who never quite fit into the school and

college path that young people are shoved into throughout school. The stories about how they did not care for class room instruction, it just never clicked, was not their interest, and the label our society placed on them as being failures or troubled kids is nearly criminal. Many of them will tell the story of how a trade helped them find their places in life, they could identify with it, and, most important, they loved doing it. That experience, if caught early enough at the high school level, can change a young person's life dramatically.

Another major component of our committee's task and goal will be to change the perceptions of the public and parents' opinions of the trades. Trades are not an alternate for people who can't handle college or high school. They are a fit for people who enjoy using their hands, and enjoy creating and building marvels. A career in the trades can lead to so many wonderful opportunities and success stories and has built a tremendous amount of successful individuals who love what they do and are true assets to their communities.

We will be working to show the reality. We will ask other trades to join us and will ask for a fair shake from the folks who helped diminish the respect and admiration of trades (by stressing the only way to succeed in life was college) – our school systems. Changing attitudes of the parents will be a critical goal in successfully addressing workforce issues.

I hope you enjoy reading the short articles of what is happening. If you have any questions about any of the programs or would like to contact the people running those programs, please feel free to reach out to the MCAA office.

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### Florida Masonry Apprentice and Educational Foundation (FMAEF)

THE FLORIDA ECONOMY has begun to recover, and the Florida Masonry Apprentice and Educational Foundation (FMAEF) and the Masonry Association of Florida are working diligently to get their apprenticeship programs back to full speed. FMAEF sponsors more than 130 high schools and technical colleges in Florida. These schools are certified to teach the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Construction Curriculums to more than 5,000 students.

FMAEF is using the NCCER Construction High School Sponsorship program to prepare Florida students to become more highly skilled entry-level workers. Not only do they possess better hands-on skills, they also are educated in the soft skills needed to keep a job, once hired.

The Florida legislature has helped the construction industries in Florida by passing the CAPE Fund Act. This act established a source for the Department of Education



The Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council partners with the Florida Masonry Apprentice and Educational Foundation and the Department of Corrections to obtain both federal and CareerSource grants to expand masonry training within the Department of Corrections.

## SUCCESS STORY: Miguel Gonzalez

| By Jennifer Morrell

Career and Technical Programs in Florida to gain additional dollars if certain requirements are met. A student must obtain an industry credential from a course taught by a certified instructor using an industry-recognized curriculum and have an approved industry sponsor. The Cape-funded schools in Florida are beginning to see positive results with students using the NCCER construction curriculums.

During the Great Recession, the FMAEF started looking for additional sources to produce a skilled workforce ready to go to work when the economy turned around. The FMAEF began to work more closely with the Department of Corrections (DOC). There are eight masonry training programs in the Florida DOC. The FMAEF and the DOC held a Masonry Workshop at Baker Correctional Institute in September 2015. Twelve mason contractors and suppliers attended the event. They met with DOC administrators and staff to discuss expanding the opportunities for inmates

Miguel Gonzalez needed an elective in high school. He chose masonry – knowing nothing about the trade – and he loved it. Like many masons, Gonzalez likes working with his hands, and masonry was a natural fit.

Gonzalez's high school instructor noticed the rapid pace at which he picked up masonry skills. He encouraged Gonzalez to compete in the Bob Freeman Most Accurate Trowel competition, which he won twice. He later competed as a third-year apprentice in the MCAA Masonry Skills Challenge, winning second place.

Gonzalez credits much of his success to the Masonry Industry Training Association's bricklayer/mason apprenticeship program.

"The program showed me the ropes of how to become a journeyman," Gonzalez says. "It provided everything I needed. My instructor, Kennie Ott, was extremely helpful. He explained things in detail until you got it."

Gonzalez credits his program director, Lyn Oleson, with enrolling him in jobs, so he could work: "When I was out of work, she referred me to another company. She was on top of things and kept up with my school hours and on-the-job training hours."

After his apprenticeship, Gonzalez became a journeyman and, today, works for Nibbelink Masonry Construction Corp. in Lancaster, Calif.

Gonzalez's love of working with his hands makes the masonry profession a great fit for him, but it's not the only thing he likes about the profession.

"Working with rest of the crew members, they see masonry as a prideful trade," he says. "I enjoy that, because I have pride in it, too. I believe it's one of the most artistic trades. It stays forever. Cathedrals are built from it, and pyramids are the basics of masonry."

Gonzalez also feels a sense of accomplishment when he can drive his family by one of the buildings he worked on.

"It's a given that masonry is a hard trade, but it's very rewarding," he says. "I wouldn't switch this trade for any other."



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## EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

to obtain a viable trade, in order to be ready to enter the workforce once they complete their sentence. The highlight of the workshop occurred when the contractors and suppliers got to meet the inmates in the masonry classroom and lab. The inmates had the opportunity to show off their masonry skills and have one-on-one conversations about what they need to do to become masons. Following this workshop, the newly formed Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council began working with the FMAEF and the DOC as partners to obtain both federal and CareerSource grants to expand masonry training within the Department of Corrections.

In order to better benefit the students from the Florida schools and the young men and women coming out of the Department of Corrections and Regional CareerSource programs, the FMAEF and Masonry Association of Florida worked with the Department of Education Apprenticeship Division to establish a Hybrid Apprenticeship Program. This program is 4,500 to 6,000 hours long. If a prospective new apprentice has an NCCER Industry Credential and has successfully completed a CareerSource 12-week training program, sponsored by the local apprenticeship program, that apprentice becomes eligible for a credit of up to 1,500 hours of previous experience.

The Florida Concrete Masonry Education Council, the Florida Masonry Association of Florida and the Florida Masonry Apprenticeship and Educational Foundation are proud of what we have accomplished so far and will continue to work very hard to grow our masonry workforce.



### Center of Applied Technology North (CATN)

**THE MASONRY PROGRAM** at the Center of Applied Technology North (CATN) is part of the Magnet Program in Anne Arundel County, Md. Students attend CATN as a part of their regular school day. Our magnet programs offer rigorous, student-centered environments. CATN provides an environment where students can apply theory and knowledge toward skills proficiency with hands-on, real-world experiences. We draw our students from seven different



Shown are Masonry Industry Training Association apprentices at on-the-job training with the contractor's crew.





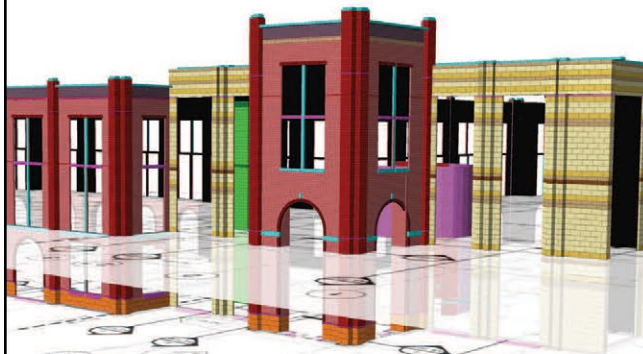
The Pennsylvania Concrete Masonry Association's Masonry Instructors Workshop provides seminars on topics of interest to the instructors.

high schools in the northern end of our county. We have 22 different programs for grades nine through 12, with some 1,500 students registered to attend.

Masonry at CATN is a NCCER Certified Program. In this program, the technical principles and application techniques required for a career in masonry are



Pre-job brick students spread mortar at the BAC/IMI International Training Center in Bowie, Md.



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presented. In their three semesters in the masonry program, which includes 116 hours in Level 1 and 420 hours for Level 2, students gain experience estimating quantity and cost of materials needed, reading blueprints, and designing and laying out projects. They practice skills needed for installing brick, block, stone and concrete.

The teachers working here at CATN are all professionals in their trade areas as are our business partners. For the 23 years that Curtis Hoover, former student (1974) and current teacher of the masonry program, has been teaching at CATN, he has only had to purchase his materials once, in his first year. With the exception of a few tons of sand and practice mortar, CATN business partners have provided all types of materials, brick, block, stone, pre-cast and more. Many of the business partners went through this program and are now successful masons, foremen and owners. In addition to their generosity with materials, many of our partners are also generous with their time. They come in to the classroom and speak to the students about their experiences and businesses, and also lend a hand with the SkillsUSA competitions.

All of our students leave with some kind of certification. The masonry students leave with NCCER Core and Masonry I certifications.

### **The International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC)**

AS THE NEED FOR SKILLED BRICKLAYERS GROWS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, training has become a critical issue for the masonry industry. The International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) has been able to respond effectively to this demand through its national training center and system of more than 60 local training centers that provide training, certifications and continuing education programs to members throughout their careers.

Many BAC members begin as apprentices through their local Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC), where local unions and signatory contractors plan together to meet workforce needs. In most cases, new apprentices are

## SUCCESS STORY: Matthew Demery

**| By Jennifer Morrell**

The Tender Training Program offered by the Arizona Masonry Guild and the Arizona Masonry Contractors Association may seem, to some, too good to be true. Six days (48 hours) of intensive, hands-on training resulting in a new career option – all for free? You bet.

Just ask Matthew Demery, who was at a point when he was ready to take a risk and build a better life for himself. Demery credits the program with putting his life and future on the right course.

"I saw a listing on Craigslist that said I could show up for a free training program," Demery says. "It said they'd provide the free training and explained how to be prepared, and to be ready to work hard."

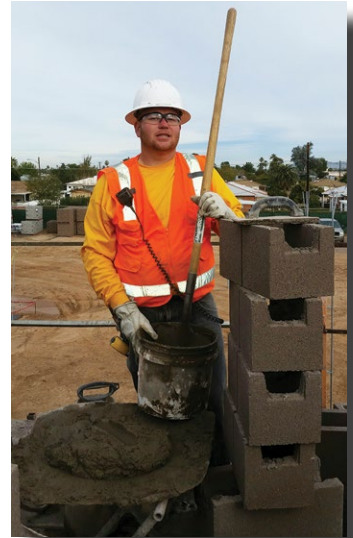
In addition to learning how to build scaffolding, mix mortar, set up a station and more, Demery left the program with his OSHA training card. He is particularly proud of that accomplishment and says it helps him on the jobsite during day-to-day activities.

"The program was great," he says. "They gave us tools, they provided us t-shirts, they fed us...and in six days, I felt really prepared to go on a jobsite and work."

As a football fan, Demery calls the hiring process that occurs at the end of the program "ingenious." Contractors watch the students perform their different tasks in a "tender combine" of sorts, and then are able to "draft" the workers they want.

Two months ago, Demery and one of his teammates during the combine – who is now his friend – were hired by Sun Valley Masonry in Phoenix. "I owe Sun Valley a huge debt for hiring me and want to be a good employee. I feel 100 percent comfortable doing the work. I work with guys with good hearts who feel more like friends than coworkers."

Becoming a mason is Demery's next goal. After all, it runs in the family: He only recently found out from his uncle that his own grandfather – who he only saw about three times – had been a mason. What a happy coincidence.



**William Kaufmann, a student in the Texas Masonry Council/University of Texas at Arlington - Division for Enterprise Development's accelerated masonry training certification program works on a panel.**

first prepared through full-time, pre-job training programs. Along with craft-specific technical and hands-on training, they learn about health, safety and workplace skills. When apprentices complete the eight-week program, they are ready to be employed and make a real contribution on the jobsite. During the next several years that follow, apprentices receive classroom, shop and on-the-job training to ensure that they continue to become proficient at their trade. While the number of BAC apprentices dipped during the recession, many local unions have recently accepted apprentices for training in groups ranging from 20 to 60.

The International Masonry Institute (IMI), a labor-management organization created by the members of BAC and the contractors who employ them, funds much of this training through a grant to the International Masonry Training and Education Foundation (IMTEF). In addition to supporting activities at local training centers, IMTEF operates the BAC/IMI International Training Center in Bowie, Md. At this facility, advanced certification programs and train-the-trainer courses are offered free of charge to qualified members, with travel and lodging costs also covered.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) courses ranging from the initial OSHA 10-hour to specialized confined space and hazardous waste programs are conducted by IMTEF's master safety trainers at the International Training Center. Local unions also offer numerous OSHA certifications at their training centers and are capable of meeting any specific jobsite requirements.

IMI offers popular certifications or upgraded training in grout and reinforced masonry, rain screens, and air barrier installation, among many others. The Historic Masonry Preservation Certificate program received the American Architectural Foundation's 2014 Oculus Award. This program helps union restoration

## SUCCESS STORY: Zack Zuidema

| By Jennifer Morrell

A fourth-generation mason, Zack Zuidema always assumed he would work in the family business his father had built, Jimmy 'Z Masonry Corp. He had been around masonry his entire life, after all. But his real passion for the trade didn't come to fruition until he was in college.

Working summers and winters as a laborer and an estimator taught Zuidema many aspects of the masonry business beyond the brick and mortar. He admired the masonry trade for the rich history it holds and opulence it can create. It was during this time of his life that he fell in love with masonry as a career.

"Masonry is the oldest trade in existence and, obviously, has an amazing history with the versatility and beauty that can be accomplished with brick and stone," Zuidema says. "At the same time, the buildings can be admired for generations."

Zuidema has competed in numerous regional competitions as well as large-scale competitions during World of Concrete/World of Masonry in Las Vegas. He won first place in the 2015 MCAA Masonry Skills Challenge, second-year apprentice division.

In May 2015, Zuidema placed in the top 10 in the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers' (BAC) North Central Region competition, which qualified him to compete in the BAC/IMI International Apprentice Contest. He finished in first place in the brick category during the contest, held at the International Training Center in Bowie, Md. His next competition will take place during World of Concrete/World of Masonry, when he'll compete in the Skills Challenge as a third-year apprentice.

Clearly, Zuidema is leaving his mark in masonry by winning numerous competitions and forging a career at Jimmy 'Z Masonry. And, as he will tell you, he didn't get to this level alone. In addition to hands-on training throughout his life, he has benefitted from instruction through the IMI, where he received training through the Apprentice Program at the District Council Training Center in Addison, Ill.

"This program basically starts from the ground, up with everything masonry, in order to build up the apprentices with everything they would need to know about the trade," Zuidema says. "Through classroom time spent learning about the industry to hands-on training with all the various materials or projects we might run into on a job, the training center really does a good job at preparing an apprentice for the field."

Zuidema encourages anyone considering masonry as a career to give it a try. "Being a very physical trade, it is understandable that people can get worn out or frustrated," he says. "But if there were ever an instance when working hard can get you ahead, masonry would be it."

Zuidema reiterates that companies are always looking for young, driven, ambitious people, and the career can offer a good living. He refers to his favorite quote from Thomas Jefferson: "I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have."



contractors secure work by demonstrating the superior qualifications of their workforce.

Through IMTEF's Instructor Certification Program, BAC instructors learn how to structure a training program

that meets the needs of members throughout their working lives. Instructors are also updated on the latest technical and industry information, ranging from new building products and systems to changes in health and safety regulations. More than 600 instructors have attended the Instructor Certification Program, bringing these best practices back to their local unions throughout the country.

Innovation in the construction industry presents both challenges and opportunities for new training programs. The growing use of Building Information Modeling (BIM) and high-tech devices on the jobsite requires bricklayers to become comfortable with an entirely new set of tools, and the training curriculum has been adjusted to reflect that. Within the BAC training structure, technology like IMTEF's Training Management System allows JATCs to track every member's training history and easily determine what programs should be offered. It even allows members (and contractors, through their own portals) to view important information like current OSHA certifications on their smartphones.

### **Pennsylvania Concrete Masonry Association (PCMA)**

**RECOGNIZING THE NEED** for a trained, skilled mason workforce, the Pennsylvania Concrete Masonry Association (PCMA) has focused on workforce development for almost 20 years. This effort includes a connection with not only the 40 secondary and three post-secondary votech schools with masonry programs, but also liaisons with the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Specifically PCMA provides assistance for student recruitment with promotional materials and personnel to visit the schools; encouragement, recognition and awards in the form of a tool bag and level, given annually to each school for presentation to the top masonry student; *Masonry Magazine* is provided to each school for industry information and to facilitate reading requirements that must be met by students for graduation; advocacy with votech school administrators

## **SUCCESS STORY: Chris Sutherland**

**| By Jennifer Morrell**

The son of a mason, Chris Sutherland began going out on masonry jobsites around age 8. He worked for his father's masonry business at night, on the weekends and during the summers. The trade runs deeply in his family as he also has two brothers who are masons. An uncle and cousin are masons as well.

So masonry seemed predestined, but Sutherland's original plan was to study architecture upon graduation in 1997. It was costly, so he began work with a local mason contractor in Florida. After a year and a half of working as a tender, he began an apprenticeship program at the urging of his employer.

Sutherland is a natural at perfecting the skill and art of masonry. He has won 14 competitions – first place in all of them – including the MCAA Masonry Skills Challenge (three-time winner) and SkillsUSA (gold medal winner). So it's no surprise that a few years later, the Masonry Association of Florida/Florida Masonry Apprenticeship and Educational Foundation created a traveling trophy in his honor for third-year, first-place Apprenticeship Competition winners to add their names each year.

The foremen at his company took notice of his abilities, and he moved through the ranks rapidly.

"I actually ran my first job toward the end of my third year in the program, before I graduated," Sutherland says. "After I finished the program, I was the foreman on my first big job."

He earned the respect of the 65 people on the job under him, including masons who were three times his age. He returned that respect, which is probably why Sutherland is a favorite of many. He learned that the job doesn't end when you go home. He learned to study prints, complete time sheets and other paperwork, and even repair equipment during the weekends. He learned about the commitment of a foreman.

In 2004, the masonry program coordinator recruited Sutherland as an instructor. He became certified through NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research). When that coordinator retired the next year, Sutherland's wife filled the position. Sutherland became lead instructor. After a few challenging and unpredictable years, the program is strong. He works in the field fulltime during the week, and part-time as an instructor. He and his fellow instructor, Dennis Hall, are producing competition winners and quality bricklayers.

"Learn how to lay brick and block, and you can go anywhere in the world and get a job," Sutherland says. "College isn't for everyone. Learning to lay brick with an apprenticeship gives you an education that you can make a good living with, and you will get paid as you learn."

"There are very few places I can go without seeing a building I worked on," he says. "It is something to be proud of. Masonry has contributed to the comfortable life that my wife and I enjoy, and I hope to help with the same for others. I never thought I would be a teacher, but I am so glad to be giving back."



to maintain and increase masonry curriculums in the vocational technical schools; and SkillsUSA Pennsylvania competition assistance and awards for the statewide winners.

The most important initiative is the annual full-day Masonry Instructors Workshop, which is in its 11th year. The PCMA provides seminars on topics of interest to the instructors as well as the latest information in the industry. A Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) representative also attends to provide information the instructors need to know regarding their curriculum and allow the instructors to voice concerns to PDE.

As this workshop provided a vehicle for the instructors to meet each other and interact, PCMA developed for them the Masonry Instructors Association of PA, which runs as an autonomous committee of PCMA. This gives the instructors a voice with PDE and others to advocate for curriculum content, testing and more, while providing a way to communicate regularly with each other on a variety of topics.

In 2013, PCMA assimilated the Maryland; Washington, D.C.; and Northern Virginia areas into the association as a standalone committee of PCMA, dba Mid-Atlantic Masonry Association (MAMA). At this time, the instructors from these areas were invited to attend the annual workshop and, subsequently, joined the instructors association, which facilitated the name change to the Masonry Instructors Association.

## Arizona Masonry Guild

THE ARIZONA MASONRY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (AMCA) and the Arizona Masonry Guild (AMG) have developed the Tender Training Program, a six-day training program that is targeted to people are looking to enter into our industry but have no formal masonry experience. It is important to note that trainees are not paid for their time in the six-day training program. AMCA and AMG underwrite the cost of the entire training program.

The Tender Training Program was specifically designed to focus on four skill areas: mortar mixing and tempering; stocking masonry materials and accessories; building scaffold; and jobsite safety (OSHA 10 course).

## SUCCESS STORY: Michael Kern

By Jennifer Morrell

Mike Kern is an admired instructor at Berks Career and Tech Center (BCTC), and he has mentored many a student to success along the way. One of those students was his own son, Michael, who is an old pro at winning masonry contests and works as a skilled mason on the job today.

"We have help with training through the PCMA's Masonry Instructors Association of PA (MIA)," says Mike Kern. "We have assistance in preparing for how skills competitions are judged and perfecting training techniques. And, we instructors are able to share best practices, which helps us in the classrooms. Therefore, it helps the students."

Kern says businesses are involved in the MIA as well, which can show instructors what companies want. New products and techniques can be taught and incorporated into the program. For example, a new anchoring system for masonry might be introduced.

Mike Kern's son, Michael, always worked with his father in the summers in both masonry and general construction, and he truly enjoyed it. He decided he should attend Berks Career and Technology Center to learn a skill before attending college – whether or not he ever used the skill.

As it turned out, college wouldn't be a step in Michael's path to prosperity. His journey began and ended with BCTC, where he honed the masonry skills he'd need for a career as a mason at Witmer Masonry.

Michael's masonry journey began with several awards for his masonry prowess. He and his TeamWorks team won State during his sophomore year and took fifth place at Nationals. They won State again during his junior year and took first place at Nationals.

"When I was in 12th grade, I entered SkillsUSA on my own for masonry," Michael says. "I had learned the ropes and knew I could approach the competition and make it work. I was able to plan out the project in my head and implement it."

He took first place, and the rest is history. After graduation, Michael began working for Witmer Masonry. He started as a laborer and has worked his way up the ladder. He earned an apprenticeship title after 18 months, fully transitioning into a mason in about two years' time.

Even with his father as his instructor, Michael had to learn, in addition to masonry skills, how to work and how to labor.

"There's a lot to learn on jobsite, but I was well prepared," he says. "I will pick up wisdom along the way."

Michael Kern says he has a job he enjoys: "It's hard work, but like my dad says, it's like going out with a bunch of guys and putting a project together while having fun."



The 48-hour training program focuses on a few skills and provides plenty of opportunities for trainees to practice these skills throughout the week.

Participants spend about 75 percent of the time practicing mixing, stocking and building scaffold. Various stations are setup throughout the lab area. Trainees work in teams of three and rotate through the stations multiple times throughout a day. Member volunteers observe the trainees to ensure they are being safe, but they also evaluate whether the groups are working together effectively as a team and

communicating with each other on how they are planning to complete each task.

Graduates enjoy the opportunity to meet members of the industry, especially mason contractors who plan to hire graduates of the program. Many of these contractors share their stories on how they got started in the industry and stories from their days as tenders. This really hits home with a lot of our trainees and really illustrates the great opportunities that are available in our industry.

The Tender Combine is held on the last day of the hands-on training, during which contractor members interested in hiring a graduate can see the candidates in action. The trainees working again in small teams are timed as they rotate through the mixing, stocking and scaffold stations. At the conclusion of the combine, a draft is held, and mason contractors have an opportunity to select the candidates they would like to hire. Mason contractors are then allowed time to present their job offers to each candidate.

In the June and November sessions, all graduates of the program were hired by mason contractor members.

A significant success story comes from the November training session, when a graduate who was a U.S. veteran living in a homeless shelter entered the training program. He was one of the top performers during the program and was hired by a member. He has moved out of the homeless shelter and is excited about learning more about masonry construction. He now has his sights set on applying for an apprenticeship program in 2017. The Tender Training Program is not only a great tool for recruiting new talent into the industry, but also the pipeline to continue the growth of the apprenticeship program and produce the craftsmen needed to sustain and build the industry in the future.

### Texas Masonry Council (TMC)

In 2015, the Texas Masonry Council (TMC) and University of Texas at Arlington - Division for Enterprise Development (UTA-DED) launched the first-ever accelerated masonry training certification program. The program materialized when members of the TMC and UTA sought to address the shortage of masonry workers in the Texas.

## SUCCESS STORY: Stephen Benson

By Jennifer Morrell

Stephen Benson wasn't originally a fan of high school. In fact, he tried four before finding Center of Applied Technology-North (formerly North Arundel Vo-Tech), where he learned his life trade: masonry.

"I tried masonry on the fly, and I liked it," Benson says. "I liked working with my hands."

But, moreover, Benson says, he liked his instructor, Curtis Hoover. And as many know, a good instructor can make all the difference in a young person's life.

"Curtis gave me a chance other teachers didn't give me," Benson says. "He showed respect, when others didn't care. So, I gave him all the respect in the world, and I paid attention."

Benson says Hoover has a good knack for identifying when a student has an outside issue, paying extra attention and extending additional effort to the kids who need it.

"He goes above and beyond to help his students," Benson says. "Curtis is like a second father to me now. We hunt and spend time together."

Before Benson even had a license, he helped Hoover on the weekends with side jobs. Eventually, he began doing concrete work, but he never stopped working on the side with Hoover. For two years, Benson worked as a stone mason on a \$28 million residential home.

Benson later found himself with three side jobs, and decided to combine his efforts into one business for himself: All Ready Finished Concrete and Masonry. He has owned the business for eight years and employs five people, including his superintendent, Jason, who is a friend from his vo-tech days.

Benson has a method that seems to make working for him a foolproof exercise. He provides everything: the trucks, the tools, the skid steers – everything. All a worker has to do is show up on time, and he is set with a job that offers 40 to 50 hours per week – and Benson's crew works in the rain.

Benson is only 30, but he grew up in an environment with a strong work ethic. It has shaped his success today.

"I grew up rebuilding churches in the summer with my dad, and there were no excuses," he says. "I try to teach my young workers life lessons and look at my guys like family, instead of employees."

Skills can be taught. Work ethic can be a little more difficult to teach later in life, if it's not already instilled, Benson says.

Benson can attest that college isn't for everyone, and he knows firsthand that he is a hands-on guy, rather than a "classroom" type. Demonstrate to him, and he can excel.

Some people are meant for masonry. Just ask the guy who gives his employees paid time off and Red Wing boots for Christmas.



Resources from the university's division of enterprise development and more than 20 masonry manufacturers and construction companies were pooled to launch two masonry schools in the Houston and Dallas regions.

The partnership between the TMC and UTA-DED offers a masonry training certification program in Houston and Dallas regions that provides Level 1 training. The program is designed to fit months of education and training in one eight-week session. Classes run eight hours per day, five days per week. The students leave the program with a 10-hour

OSHA certification card and training in brick and CMU construction.

The TMC/UTA-DED partnership prides itself on recruiting, marketing and promoting the program to hundreds of schools and independent school districts across the state. This is the first-ever comprehensive, hands-on training in Texas in an indoor warehouse facility combined with classroom instruction (in both English and Spanish). The undeniable advantage of the program is that its participants are quickly prepared to leave with the ability to go out and obtain good-paying jobs. Future plans to expand into the Austin and San Antonio markets.

### Masonry Industry Training Association (MITA)

THE MASONRY INDUSTRY TRAINING ASSOCIATION (MITA) aims to promote masonry, training and recruiting, and apprentice younger skilled talent toward jobs and careers in masonry. MITA teams up with high schools, continuation high schools, boys' homes, adult schools, regional occupational programs, and workforce innovation opportunity act Title I youth program services (WIOA) to promote and teach masonry to as many young people as possible as a pathway to a career. MITA is a bricklayer/mason apprenticeship program approved by the State of California DIR CAC DAS, and Federal DOL.

One can only become a brickmason/blockmason through apprenticeship. MITA's apprenticeship takes 3.6 years. With MITA, contractors benefit with motivated pre-apprentice and apprentice employees. Suppliers and vendors benefit with craftsmen who are better skilled to install their products. All MITA members benefit by being in compliance with public works, California Labor Code Section 1777.5, and requests for dispatch of apprentices in ratio to journeymen.

For the first time ever in the 16-year history of the Top Notch Trowel competition, an *all girls* team won the annual Jim Broncatello Perpetual Trophy. At the California Regionals Fastest Trowel, held simultaneously with California Regionals Apprentice Skills Challenge, high school masonry students take part in their own Most Accurate Trowel competition. California's Fastest Trowel winner, heading to WOC again, is one of MITA's first apprentices. **IMAS**



Shown are participants in the Arizona Masonry Guild/ Arizona Masonry Contractors Association's Tender Training Program.

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