

CONSTRUCTION CONNECTIONS

Volume 2, Number 2

Note from the Director

The first week of March is recognized as “Women in Construction Week” nationally, and this annual celebration reminds us of the continued need for diversity in construction. It’s a difficult fact – recruiting and retaining women as trades professionals is not an easy task, despite offering progressive wages.

The recent Port Jobs report, “Building the Foundation: Opportunities and Challenges Facing Women in Construction” shows through data and focus groups practical steps that can be taken to increase women in trades. Some of Port Jobs’ findings are not new, but point to a continued need to improve access and support for women entering apprenticeships – steps that would benefit all people considering this viable career route.

The report is available at <http://www.portjobs.org/>.

There are growing numbers of women in engineering, design, urban planning, project management and construction company ownership. Their contributions to our industry are vital. Groups such as the National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC) and the National Association of Women in Masonry (NAWM) offer mentoring and personal development to women in these fields. To find out more about these organizations, go to <http://www.nawicpugetsound.org> (NAWIC) or <http://www.nawmonline.net/> (NAWM).

Renton Technical College Conducts Language Survey with Staff and Faculty

Kimberly Loreen, Instructional Improvement Administrative Assistant at Renton Technical College (RTC), recently conducted a survey with RTC staff and faculty to locate individuals on campus who can help with translation services when needed. She had 31 respondents college wide who can speak, understand, read and/or write in 23 different languages, with many people fluent in more than one!

“This is a quick way to find a resource if there are challenges in communicating with a student/individual who has limited English skills,” says Loreen.

It also provides an example to students of how they too can use dual language skills to their professional advantage in the future. Increasingly, all segments of our economy will need bilingual workers to communicate industry practices, and everyone benefits from multicultural interactions. In construction, bilingual skills ensure safety and productivity.

The Construction Center of Excellence has ESL for the Trades course content and materials on its website for free downloads at www.rtc.edu/CommunityResources/CCE

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Blueprint for Success: Construction Math Initiative A Huge Success

Rave reviews are coming in – teachers, counselors and workforce partners are excited about our Blueprint for Success initiative! We linked applied, industry-required math to the College Readiness Standards, and supporting this supplemental academic curricula with comprehensive career guidance materials.

This initiative is a commitment of business, labor, and education working together to reduce remediation rates from high school to college. It is funded through a capacity building grant made to the Construction Center of Excellence by the Transition Math Project and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

The lesson plans included in this toolbox align with grade level expectations for 8th, 9th, and 10th grades as a bridge to Essential Academic Learning Requirements. Teachers can use this toolbox to practice problem solving for the WASL, and to help older students prepare their portfolios and/or culminating projects needed for graduation.

The Construction Math Toolbox has been distributed at workshops held at Bates Technical College in Tacoma, the Yakima School District Math Resource Center, and Columbia Basin College in Pasco. **Please note:** There will be one more Construction Math workshop on Wednesday, May 1 at Renton Technical College, and our five-day Construction Math Institute (June 25 -29) in Pierce County is open to teachers statewide. Register **NOW** at <http://www.rtc.edu/CommunityResources/CCE/ComingEvents/>.

At these FREE workshops, teachers learn about the Transition Math Project and receive not only a copy of the toolbox, but all the fun “demonstration” materials that coincide with most of the toolbox lessons, courtesy of the Mt. Si High School Construction Technologies Department, and their terrific instructor, Gregg Meyers. Workshops also include a panel of construction employers and building a house!

The toolbox is available in limited quantities outside of the workshops. However, you can go to the CCE website and download all the lesson plans and ***Laying the Foundation: Construction Math*** book at www.rtc.edu/CommunityResources/CCE.

Exciting Television and Web Campaign Will Bring Construction Careers to Thousands of People throughout Washington

Submitted by Melissa Pressley, KIRO Television - Channel 7 Seattle

Construction is vital to our state's economy – every other industry depends on commercial and residential development to grow and prosper. Just think of hospitals, schools, retail stores, manufacturing facilities, and major road and infrastructure improvements. Without skilled construction workers, how can we compete in a global market, let alone offer citizens a thriving and accessible place to live?

What's more – the construction industry is made up of many professions, and all of these opportunities pay well, offer great incentives, benefits, and mobility, and do require high end skills and talent.

To help Washington meet the intense demand for construction professionals, The Building for A Lifetime launched its television and internet campaign with KIRO TV and <http://www.kirotv.com/sponsors/11250917/detail.html> on March 13, 2007. The purpose of this campaign is to generate awareness of the construction industry, as well as the many great career opportunities.

The website has several interactive features, showcasing a variety of career paths and organizations. To date, these sponsors have helped this make this campaign a reality:

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Local 1
Construction Center of Excellence at Renton Technical College
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 46
Seattle Plumbers and Pipefitters United Association, Local 32
The Puget Sound Chapter National Electrical Contractors Associations
Puget Sound Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, and Allied Workers, Seattle Local 54
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning National Association, Western Washington Chapter
Sheet Metal Workers, Local 66
Western Washington Sheet Metal Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee
Washington State Building Construction & Trades Council, AFL – CIO

If you want more information on how to be a sponsor, please contact Melissa Pressley at 206.728.5082.

Big Bend Community College Student's Story an Inspiration to Women Considering the Trades *Submitted by Catherine Holstine, Big Bend Community College*

Jennifer Rogers never dreamed she would pursue a career in the male-dominated field of welding. "I always tell people who ask why I want to be a welder that I want to earn some "man money" when I graduate," Rogers says, laughing. "At first I was scared of this field because it is so dominated by men. After my first quarter and realizing the potential for a career, potential earnings and a solid future, I love it."

Rogers, 34, graduated from Ephrata High School in 1990 and immediately enlisted in the U.S. Army. Since then she has worked a series of low-wage jobs, as a cook, waitress, groundskeeper and housekeeper. She is now a welding student at Big Bend Community College (BBCC). "I made a series of bad decisions," she admitted. "I didn't like the way my life was going and realized I was the only one who could change it."

A skills test showed Rogers she would do well in non-traditional employment. She explored future job markets and decided to study welding. She entered the welding program with no previous experience. She maintains a perfect 4.0 GPA and has earned the respect of fellow students, instructors and advisors. "Jennifer is a fantastic student," said Shawn McDaniel, BBCC welding instructor. "She is progressing at an incredible pace."

Rogers must soon choose a program path in her welding instruction. She can choose to focus on pipe welding, production welding or construction welding. "Any of these are perfect options for Jennifer because she has the ability to excel in any of those fields," McDaniel said.

Rogers admits attending college is difficult for many reasons. "I've been afraid to go back to school for a long time," she said. "I was always thinking there isn't enough money, I've been out of school for 16 years and I'm raising a daughter on my own."

Shortly after she began attending BBCC, Rogers heard about Opportunity Grants during a presentation on campus. The program provides non-traditional financial aid to qualifying students. Rogers used the award to pay for daycare, materials, equipment and tools for the welding program. "I had no idea there was all this help out there for people like me," Rogers said. "Jennifer is exactly the kind of student the Opportunity Grant was designed for," said Andre Guzman. "She is a person who has the desire, dedication and discipline to do well. She is a role model for other students." Guzman is the BBCC Workfirst/Opportunity Grant coordinator. He assisted Rogers in becoming an Opportunity Grant student and continues to monitor her progress in school.

Rogers has set a goal of earning an Associate in Applied Science degree, going to work and supporting herself and her daughter. "As a mother I struggled to make ends meet," she said. "For so long I didn't think I could do it. I just had to set my mind to it and go out and do it. Here I am."

Washington Business Week Set to Launch Construction Week Pilot This Summer

Submitted by Shannon Matson, Washington Business Week/Foundation for Private Enterprise Education

Washington Construction Week, delivered by the Foundation for Private Enterprise Education, is a pilot program designed to expose high school students to the exciting career possibilities in the construction industry. Modeled after the award winning Washington Business Week Program, this new industry-focused camp will allow high school students from across Washington to learn more about exciting career opportunities, develop critical workforce skills, and network with industry professionals.

In its pilot year, Washington Construction Week will serve approximately 100 high school students and will be hosted at Central Washington University, July 22-28, 2007. Students will live in dorms and experience college life while working on project teams mentored by industry professionals. In addition to attending seminars and workshops throughout the week, students work through a series of group activities, including a home building project, a public policy debate, and a series of hands on workshops.

Get Involved! Washington Construction Week needs industry volunteers, sponsors, and students to make this program a success. To find out how you can get involved, contact Shannon Matson at 800-686-6442 or shannon@wbw.org

Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA Family Center) Hosting First Career Fair on March 31

Forwarded by Michael Thurman, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries

NAYA Family Center, located in Portland, Oregon, is hosting its first career fair, featuring apprenticeship and construction job opportunities on March 31, 2007 from 11am to 4pm. This event is open to people 16 years or older, and women are encouraged to attend. This is a great opportunity for Southwest Washington residents, too!

For more information, go to the NAYA Family Center website at <http://www.nayapdx.org/>.

Toll-free Number Connects Oregon Workers with Construction Opportunities

Submitted by Kaylene Selk, Oregon Department of Transportation

The Oregon Department of Transportation's Office of Civil Rights has opened a toll-free, bilingual phone line so that Oregonians interested in highway construction jobs can find out about employment or apprenticeship opportunities with ODOT's contractors on highway construction projects.

When they dial 1-877-972-5700, callers will hear a greeting and can leave a message in English or Spanish. Within 48 hours, they will hear back from a Civil Rights specialist in their location telling them about employment and apprenticeship opportunities in their area and how to get involved.

Just as in Washington State, Oregon is facing a shortage of qualified highway workers for apprentice and skilled journey-level positions. Understanding how to access these career paths can be challenging, but a practical step to improving access is creating an easy link between apprenticeships and the public.

Two Great Contests Offer Students Recognition and Financial Rewards

Submitted by Tiffany Merkel-Rinke, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Two great opportunities are available now for students.

The **Association for Career and Technical Education** (ACTE) is sponsoring a "Career and Technical Education Essay Contest" in the memory of former ACTE Senior Director of Communications, Cliff Weiss (1951 -2004). This year, students will be asked to respond to the question, "How will what you learned in CTE help the American economy in five years?" The essay should be no less than 500 words in length for postsecondary and no more than 500 words in length for secondary students. Maximum Award: \$250 and publication in ACTE's Techniques Magazine. Eligibility: students enrolled in at least one CTE course. Deadline: March 30, 2007.

<http://www.acteonline.org/about/awards/CWMEC/index.cfm>

Youth Venture, the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and **MTV Tr3s Voices** will select teams of two or more youth every week through June 29th who submit great ideas for encouraging their peers to graduate from high school and college. Tu Voz My Venture winners will receive grants to create their ventures -- an organization, business or club to help young Latinos stay in school and prepare for college and careers. Maximum Award: \$1000. Eligibility: youth ages 13–20. Deadline: June 29, 2007.

YOU Can Help the Transition Math Project Connect Math to Careers!

Submitted by Chris Gilder, Transition Math Project and the Center for Learning Connections

You may know the Construction Center of Excellence has worked on projects linking college-level math standards to real-world, construction based scenarios and career guidance. Their work is connected to the larger Transition Math Project, which is a collaborative of K-12 and higher education committed to reducing remediation in math between high school and college.

We're looking for industry and labor leaders representing many of today's high demand, cutting edge professions to help us demonstrate the importance of gaining and retaining math concepts. If students understand how and why a skill is used, they are more apt to retain it, and apply it to their own problem solving and decision making.

The Transition Math Project is launching an exciting and easy way for you to share your use of math on-the-job with students. This kind of project is called an Audio Web Journal, and we would be asking you to:

- ✦ Record yourself describing the importance of math to your industry and particular profession
- ✦ Give an example(s) of a specific math equation used on the job, including solutions/formulas, describing how being competent in math improves efficiency, accuracy and safety
- ✦ Provide a written transcript of your recording (so we can have a fully accessible experience)

Provide a picture of yourself and/or a picture you at work

The final "journal entries" will be posted on the Transition Math Project's website. Preparing for and recording your project should not take more than 1-2 hours maximum, but the contribution of your time and experience will last much longer!

If you are interested in participating in an Audio Web Journal, please contact Heather Winfrey at 425.235.2352, extension 5582, or hwinfrey@rtc.edu, or Chris Gildner 206.878.3710, extension 5154 or Cgildner@highline.edu.

TMP also offers periodic online events to provide teachers with detailed information about the College Readiness Standards. These online events use the **Illuminate! Live** tool. To register, please go to: http://www.transitionmathproject.org/events/2007%20In%20Service/march_2007is.asp. The College Readiness Standards (and a host of other math resources!) are available at the TMP website, <http://www.transitionmathproject.org>.

YOUR FEEDBACK WANTED! Take the Construction Center of Excellence Survey

Heather Winfrey, Director

In the nearly two years I've been with the CCE, we've developed, compiled, and shared a range of free resources for partners across Washington and in 24 other states who access our Center. We're interested in your feedback if you have used or reviewed our materials; please take a minute to answer our easy online survey at <http://www.quia.com/sv/110145.html>

If you have been receiving this newsletter, but haven't looked at our other offerings, please check out just some of what we can provide for you.

The CCE website (www.rtc.edu/CommunityResources/CCE) offers comprehensive resources, including 2000+ construction related publications through our inter-library loan system, a calendar of upcoming events statewide, a crosswalk of colleges and apprenticeships offering construction training, and links to local, state and national organizations. We're always happy to promote your organization's efforts and products online. These are just some examples of our online products:

ESL for the Trades is a complete package for teachers, including a course syllabus and related materials. This course was designed and piloted at RTC.

Laying the Foundation – Construction Math Book was compiled in 2005 by 17 colleges and apprenticeships statewide, and gives contextual, rich math examples teachers can incorporate into their math or CTE programs.

Construction Math Toolbox builds on the work of the Laying the Foundation by providing fun, hands-on lesson plans, career guidance materials, and academic resources in a single resource.

Washington State Construction Network – Speakers' Bureau: Looking for a local construction industry representative to attend your next event? The CCE has a listserv of dedicated volunteers ready to come to your school, conference or special event. Contact us and we'll send an invitation to this group.

Our newly updated **Resources Handbook** provides a comprehensive listing of construction workforce partners and training statewide, with a special focus on two-year colleges and apprenticeships.

SAVE THE DATE!

Snohomish County Construction Carnival Scheduled for June 14

Submitted by Heather Villars and Sam Samano, Snohomish County Workforce Development Council

On June 14th, the Naval Station Everett Support Complex at Smokey Point will be transformed into a Construction Carnival, complete with hands-on activities for people interested in learning more about the construction trades. Attendees will have the opportunity to ride a boom lift, drive a crane simulator, frame a house, wield a cutting torch, and much more!

Additionally, representatives, including many journeymen, from the building trades and local apprenticeship programs will be on-site answering questions and conducting demonstrations. Join ironworkers, cement masons, millwrights, plasterers, pipe fitters, electricians, carpenters, sprinkler fitters, boiler makers, and more for this exciting day!

This event is being sponsored by the Snohomish County Workforce Development Council and its Construction Skill Panel, the Construction Careers Partnership. For more information contact Sam Samano at (425) 921-3419 or by email at lsamano@snocowdc.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Washington State Boiler Operators Symposium is June 28 and 29!

Renton Technical College is pleased to join forces again with Bates Technical College, and the Western Washington Stationary Engineers Training Trust Locals 286 and 609 to co-host the Washington State Boiler Operators Symposium, June 28 – 29 at Renton Technical College.

This event is designed for new and experience boiler operators to meet the requirements for refresher certification, as approved by The Steam Certification Board of Tacoma and The Steam Licensing Advisory Board of Seattle.

Advanced registration of \$95 includes lunch and refreshment breaks both days – registration and program details will be available at the Renton Technical College website homepage, www.RTC.edu.

Puyallup Hosting Career Conference May 1

Submitted by Claudia Cooley, Puyallup School District

The Puyallup School District and Puyallup Chamber of Commerce are co-hosting the 2007 Greater Puyallup Career Conference on May 1. This event targets juniors and seniors in the four Puyallup High Schools. Students will have the chance to participate in job interviews with business representatives, attend business and career-focused seminars, and learn about post-secondary opportunities.

"More than 40 business, industry, and labor professionals have signed on to be a part of the conference," said Claudia Cooley, the school district's assistant director of career and technical education. "There is going to be great community involvement," she said.

Booth space, sponsorship, and other outreach opportunities are still available – go to <http://www.puyallupsummerchamber.com/> for details.

Did You Know...

...Governor Gregoire cited Centers of Excellence as an innovative approach in helping Washington's Workers gain 21st Century Skills?

...that Big Bend, Lower Columbia, Green River and Everett Community Colleges were recognized by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges for their model Tech Prep programs? Go to: <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e-wkforcetechprep.aspx> to read more.

...that federal spending on training and other job programs has fallen from an average of \$63 per worker in 1986 to \$35 per worker in 2006, according to the Economic Policy Institute?

...that the Northwest Multiple Listing Service reports housing prices have jumped 12% in Pierce County, and 9% in King and Snohomish Counties?

...a typical wood-framed home requires about 15,000 board feet of lumber?

...Hurricane Katrina is estimated to be responsible for \$75 billion in damages, making it the most costly hurricane in American history? Habitat for Humanity is offering a Disaster Corps program for volunteers – go to http://demo.habitat.org/disaster/disaster_corps/faq.aspx for details

...the Western Governors University is regionally accredited, and is the first online college accredited by the National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education? Washington was one of the founding states of this non-profit university that offers education, IT, business and health care degrees – go to <http://www.wgu.edu/index.asp> for details

Upcoming Events

High Wage Job Training

Pre-Apprenticeship Union Training in Painting-Taping & Cement Masonry Trades
March 19 - 22, 2007
Tacoma, WA

City of Tacoma/LEAP Brownsfields Environmental Training

April 2007 - June 2007
Tacoma, WA

2007 WABO Annual Education Institute

April 2 - 6, 2007
Vancouver, WA

Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council Quarterly Meeting

April 19—20, 2007
Spokane, WA

Snohomish County Job Fair

April 19, 2007
Everett Community College, Everett, WA

Living Future/Sponsored by Cascadia Green Build and AIA Seattle

April 25 - 27, 2007
Seattle Center, Pavilion A, Seattle, WA

Upcoming Events cont.....

2007 Women in Trades Fair

April 27, 2007

Seattle Center Fisher Pavilion, Seattle WA

Welding Rodeo 2007/ 6th Annual Welded Sculpture Competition

May 18 and 19, 2007

Bellingham Technical College

Snohomish County Construction Carnival

June 14, 2007

Naval Station @ Smokey Point

Washington State Boiler Operators Symposium 2007

June 28 and 29, 2007

Renton Technical College

Aviation, Construction, Engineering and Safety

Young Women Academy (ACE)

July 6 - 8, 2007

Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA

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Sean Lewis, [Absher Construction](#)

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