

Metro Construction Career Expo to provide 1,000 students with hands-on look at careers

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Evening session being offered for parents and students to explore this career path together

BELLEVILLE – With thousands of skilled workers in the construction trades set to retire this decade, more and more opportunities are arising for today's youth to take advantage of the promising future this industry can have for them. The Southern Illinois Builders Association (SIBA) and the Southern Illinois Construction Advancement Program (SICAP) are hosting the 18th Annual Metro Construction Career Expo from October 31 through November 4, 2016, with opportunities for both students and their

parents to gain a better understanding of the variety of construction trades careers available and the path to pursue one.

Themed, “Earn while you learn with no college debt,” The Metro Construction Career Expo will be held at the Belle-Clair Fairgrounds, 200 South Belt East, Belleville, Ill. An estimated 1,000 students from St. Clair, Madison and Monroe Counties will visit with their schools during the day and gain hands-on-experience as they participate in interactive activities at booths manned by representatives of the various trades, including painters, carpenters, cement masons, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, laborers, ironworkers, sheet metal workers, operating engineers and plasterers.

The public is invited to participate in a special parent/student evening event from 5 – 7 p. m. on Thurs., Nov. 3, 2016. During the evening session, parents attending by themselves or with their children will be able to visit different stations for each of the trades to chat with representatives to learn more about what each involves, and how their children can start preparing for a future in the construction trades with suggested curriculum choices and relevant skills needed. They also will be provided with takeaway information, including wage and fringe benefit packages for the individual careers.

The construction trades jobs to be filled in the coming years are accompanied by a high wage, averaging almost \$33 per hour plus benefits of \$22 per hour, for a total of \$55 per hour. Individuals pursuing this path also have the advantage of being able to earn while they learn, as their participation in an apprenticeship program makes them part of the workforce from day one.

“As more jobs begin to open up, it is important for us to raise awareness about the tremendous opportunities the construction trades offer for students seeking a secure future,” stated Donna Richter, Chief Executive Officer of SIBA. “Many families do not realize the stability, on-the-job training, high-wages and great benefits that come with a career in one of the many construction trades in our region. Knowing more about the opportunities will help pave the way for more of today’s youth to be ready to start a successful career with just a high school diploma or equivalent.”

The Metro Construction Career Expo is an important event in the ongoing outreach initiative, *Manufacture Your Future/Craft Your Future – A Career that Pays in Southwestern Illinois*. The campaign, led by the region’s two workforce investment boards, is aimed at connecting high school students to almost 3,000 high-paying jobs soon to be available in the manufacturing and construction sectors throughout Southwestern Illinois. For more information about the Metro Construction Career Expo, or to sign up a school group to attend, please contact Donna Richter at SIBA at (618) 624-9055.

Established in 1945, Southern Illinois Builders Association (SIBA) represents over 500 construction companies throughout Southern Illinois and is the largest regional contractor association in Illinois. Contractor members range in size from small, closely-held firms doing less than \$250,000 volume per year, up to companies performing several million dollars in volume. The Southern Illinois Construction Advancement Program (SICAP) is a not-for-profit industry fund powered by employer contributions based on hours worked by craftsmen of: Carpenters District Council of Greater St. Louis & Vicinity; Southern and Central Illinois Laborers District Council; Southwestern Illinois Laborers District Council; Plasterers and Cement Masons East St. Louis Local 90; Plasterers & Cement Masons Local 143 Serving Southern Illinois Counties; Operating Engineers Local 520; and Painters District Council 58.