



Career Expo to provide Students with Hands-on look at Construction Industry

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BELLEVILLE, ILL., OCT. 20, 2015 - In order to address an acute workforce shortage in the construction industry and raise awareness of the high-paying career options in all construction trades, Southern Illinois Builders Association (SIBA) and the Southern Illinois Construction Advancement Program (SICAP) are hosting the Metro Construction Career Expo for students on November 2, 3, 4 and 5, 2015. This year, for the first time, a special evening session is scheduled on Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. so parents can also attend and learn about the many advantages of a position with the construction trades.

The Metro Construction Career Expo will be held at the Belle-Clair Fairgrounds, 200 South Belt East, Belleville, Ill. The evening event on Tuesday, Nov. 3 is free and open to the public. Approximately 1,000 students from schools throughout Southwestern Illinois have already been signed up to attend the four-day event.

SIBA and SICAP aim to raise awareness about the advantages of career opportunities in the construction sector, which incorporates a variety of trades, including painters, carpenters, cement masons, electricians, plumbers, pipefitters, laborers, ironworkers, sheet metal workers, operating engineers and plasterers. Participants will enjoy hands-on learning experiences by visiting booths manned by representatives of the various trades. They also will be provided with trade-specific information on possible wage and fringe benefit packages, suggested curriculum choices and relevant skills needed to pursue a career in construction.

“These trades offer stable employment in our region, on-the-job training, high-wages and great benefits, and the ability to start a successful career with just a high school diploma or equivalent,” notes Donna Richter, Chief Executive Officer of SIBA. “As an added bonus, many apprentices also take college courses at no cost to them, ultimately

earning college credits, an associate's degree, other trade-specific certifications, or even a four-year degree. Clearly, it's a career path worth exploring, and we're looking forward to a great turnout."

The Metro Construction Career Expo is coming on the heels of the recent launch of a new outreach campaign, *Manufacture Your Future/Craft Your Future – A Career that Pays in Southwestern Illinois*. The campaign, which is being led by the region's two workforce investment boards and has financial support from SIBA/SICAP, is aimed at connecting high school students to almost 3,000 high-paying jobs that will be coming available in the manufacturing and construction sectors throughout Southwestern Illinois within the next five years. The Metro Construction Career Expo will help students and their families to get a clearer picture of those jobs, which 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.

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.