



APPRENTICESHIP WORKS

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SHARE THE BENEFITS OF APPRENTICESHIP

Know someone interested in becoming an apprentice? Or an employer who wants to start an apprenticeship program? Information and resources are available at apprenticeshipmn.com.

FEATURED STORIES



3 RECENT APPRENTICE GRADUATIONS



5 SCHMINKEY PIVOTS TO A CAREER AS A PAINTER

‘I BUILT THAT’

Apprentices help build landmarks in the communities where they live

When travelers through Duluth see the gleaming 12-story Essentia Health St. Mary’s Hospital rising above Interstate 35, the estimated 9,000 tradespeople who helped make it possible can say “I built that.” The same goes for the crews who erected U.S. Highway 53’s 200-foot-high bridge — Minnesota’s tallest — in 2017 to cross the Rouchleau Mine pit on the southeastern edge of Virginia.

For Dave Cook and his 218 Trades team, their message to high school kids across northeast Minnesota is this: “That could be you building these community landmarks.”

“When you’re in these small towns,” said Cook, a career counselor, “that pride in that community makes such a difference.”

Led by the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (JET), a CareerForce Proud Partner, the regional 218 Trades initiative’s mission is to ensure graduates know there are high-wage, in-demand career opportunities that don’t require expensive

‘BUILD’ continues on page 2



APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA

■ 'BUILD' continued from page 1

four-year degrees or moving away from their home communities.

“We have counselors who go into almost every high school in northeast Minnesota,” he said. “The one thing that wasn’t being talked about was apprenticeships.”

The registered apprenticeship program teaches aspiring tradespeople through paid on-the-job training and workshops at trade-specific training centers that prepare them for pipefitting, plumbing, bricklaying, carpentry, flooring, iron work, operating heavy machinery and other trades. Participants learn job safety, essential construction site math, how to read blueprints, and to practice the specialized skills of each trade, such as welding, machinery maintenance, wiring or pouring footings.

In the first three months of 2022, 218 Trades counselors visited 19 school districts and talked to more than 620 students.



A rendering of the Essential Health St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth. (www.essentialhealth.org)

They might talk to a few students one-on-one, address an assembly of students or offer a four-part informational series about the trades. The series includes an overview of the many trades and a Meet the Expert session where tradespeople talk frankly to students about their job. There's also a financial literacy piece that advises students how to prepare for the ebb and flow of work and paychecks, from lucrative overtime to being laid off for some seasonal outdoor trades. A fourth session emphasizes professionalism in the trades including being dependable, reliable, putting away phones and other distractions, and taking pride in a job well done.

Workers already in the trades are also taking part by volunteering to talk with students and finding innovative ways to reach prospective apprentices early, such as the International Union of Operating Engineers' virtual apprenticeship pathway classes through Local 49.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters Union Local 361 celebrates each new apprentice by hosting a festive family-is-invited Signing Day, much like colleges do when athletes join their teams.

“Apprenticeships should be treated like gold,” Cook said. “This is your opportunity.”

The 218 Trades counselors also work to reach a more diverse group of potential apprentices by encouraging women, People of Color, Native Americans and LGBTQ candidates to take part. The counselors offer support and can seek out a mentor to help participants feel more comfortable in the trades.

They emphasize that for northeastern Minnesota residents who love where they live, the trades offer “thriving wages vs. living wages” without having to leave hometowns or accrue years of college debt. Even better, they'll have that chance to say “I built that” when working on roads and bridges, schools, hospitals, and other essential businesses that will be around for generations.

“Creating a linkage between the trades and individuals in our communities is imperative to our region's overall economy,” said Marie Domiano, executive director of JET. “As a workforce development organization which serves those most in need, we have the privilege and responsibility to build and foster relationships, promote diversity, and create opportunities for all people to become empowered and self-sufficient members of thriving communities.”

RECENT APPRENTICE GRADUATIONS

Congratulations to all of the new graduates and programs!

CEMENT MASONS, PLASTERERS AND SHOPHANDS

Twenty-one cement masons from the Cement Masons, Plasterers and Shophands Local 633 JATC completed their related training and were recognized April 8, 2022.



Pictured, left to right.

Back row: Jason Crusoe, Noah Stromme, Chris Kern, Business Manager Dave Schutta, Andrew Desens, Nnaemeka Chukwu, Joshua Kosanovich, Jon-Michael Hayden, Evan Sandven, and Rodolfo Beltran.

Middle row: Instructor Moke Eaglefeathers, Joe Abbott, Christopher Griffin, Shawn Rugg, Jordan Williams, Jack Schweiss, Seth Nelson, and Tanner Althaus.

Front row: Instructor Jerry Grob, Amund Pedersen, Korey Shimer, Travis Miller, Sam Foote, Instructor-Pete Dubay, and Apprenticeship Coordinator Brian Farmer.

FINISHING TRADES INSTITUTE OF THE UPPER MIDWEST

On May 25, 2022, 86 students at the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest were recognized for completing their apprenticeship education and becoming journeyworkers.

Graduates represented all programs including commercial painter decorator, coating application specialist, drywall finisher, glazier, glassworker and sign technician. All graduates will have access to continuing education throughout their careers to stay up-to-date with the latest construction technologies.



BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS GRADUATES

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Local 1 of Minnesota/North Dakota/South Dakota recognized 30 apprentices across four occupations for completing the related training portion of their apprenticeships at a celebration on May 26, 2022.

The BAC Local 1 staff would like to thank their union members, signatory contractors, industry partners and the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, and a special thank you to their apprenticeship instructors Matt Hopkins Sr., Mitch Reins, Craig Lundberg and Mike Churilla.



Tile setters



Tile finishers



Bricklayers



**Pointer,
cleaner, caulkers**

PANDEMIC INSPIRES A PIVOT TO PAINTING TRADE

In 2020, 23-year-old Kailee Schminkey of Elk River aspired to be a nurse. She was trying to pay college tuition with cash rather than take out loans. Then the pandemic quarantine made that impossible. She needed a new plan.

She took her dad's advice and followed him into the finishing trades as a painter.

Instead of a day dressed in scrubs and bustling between patients, she's donning hot-pink stilts, safety gear and spraying high ceilings and walls in renovated warehouses, apartments and commercial buildings throughout the Minneapolis area with Eden Prairie-based 360 Wall Systems.

Through her employer and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), she's also in the registered apprenticeship program. That means she earns while she learns. As she progresses through 6,000 hours of on-the-job experience, she attends safety, skills and technical classes twice a month at the Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest in Little Canada. Most apprentices complete more than 400 hours of classes over three years.

The IUPAT has several specialties within what's called the finishing trades, including drywall, glazier and glass specialists, but Schminkey thrives as a painter.

"I can do a variety of different roles with the company I'm at," she said. "I'm not stuck doing one thing every day."

She also enjoys the production work. "I love the fast-paced go-go-go," she said. "It makes the day go by really fast." She doesn't mind working in higher lofted areas and can laugh about the fact her fake eyelashes may have turned white from the overspray by the end of her day.

Schminkey often works on small crews of two people working in sync with workers from other trades on larger



Kailee Schminkey

projects. If they're painting and finishing a larger space, they might have a crew of up to eight people.

She's in a larger group when she has classes at the institute. She likes meeting other apprentices during breaks. That includes talking to Karen apprentices who have fled persecution in Myanmar (Burma) and resettled in the Twin Cities.

"I really enjoy hearing their stories and getting to know them," she said, citing those experiences as eye-opening and humbling.

As the union membership evolves and becomes more diverse with women, people of color and a blend of cultures joining the ranks, she sees a shift toward work crews being more welcoming and inclusive.

Schminkey said one of her favorite classes at the institute addressed how to communicate better on the job, be more polished and working on the professional skills that could help them move into front-office leadership roles as they advance in their trade.

For now, she's grateful for an active, on-the-go career that suits her and her personality as someone who's an avid camper, angler and hunter. She's not the type to sit at a desk all day.

"A lot of people can relate to that," she said. "That's what makes our trades attractive."

She also likes that she can still be herself with her stand-out hot-pink stilts and long eyelashes. Like others, she has a lot to learn during her apprenticeship, but she feels empowered by the skills she's learning and rises to new challenges without worries about tuition.

"I can leave with a smile on my face knowing I put in my best effort every day," she said.

STAFF MEMBERS SHARE ABOUT APPRENTICESHIP FOR VETERANS

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry staff, along with Helmets to Hardhats, participated in the 16th annual Minnesota Veterans Career Fair on May 18, 2022. Apprenticeship Minnesota staff provided information and resources about registered apprenticeship programs.

Helmets to Hardhats assists active military members and veterans transitioning back into civilian life through opportunities in registered apprenticeship in the building and construction trades. Veterans participating in an apprenticeship program registered with the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry can use their G.I. Bill benefits to supplement their income while they build their career. Helmets to Hardhats in Minnesota is supported by the Construction Careers Foundation.

For more information about Helmets to Hardhats visit helmetstohardhats.org. Read about apprenticeship and G.I. Bill benefits at dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/gi-bill-benefits-and-apprenticeship.



Staff members, left to right, Jeremy Parker, Meghana Slovick and John Stiffen shared information about registered apprenticeship at the Minnesota Veterans Career Fair.



INITIATIVE TACKLES MENTAL HEALTH IN FINISHING TRADES

The Finishing Trades Institute of the Upper Midwest launched the Helping Hand initiative to normalize conversations about mental health and create an environment where people feel comfortable asking for help. Read more and watch a video about the program at cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/initiative-tackles-mental-health-in-finishing-trades-construction-field-weve-saved-lives/?amp.

APPRENTICESHIP MINNESOTA BY-THE-NUMBERS

	April	May	June
Sponsor information			
Active sponsor	206	206	206
New sponsors	1	2	0
New occupations	1	1	1
Apprentice information			
Total apprentices	10,847	11,032	11,124
Women	831	838	838
People of Color	2,300	2,334	2,385
Veterans	732	750	755
New apprentices	284	562	390
Graduations	105	236	195

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