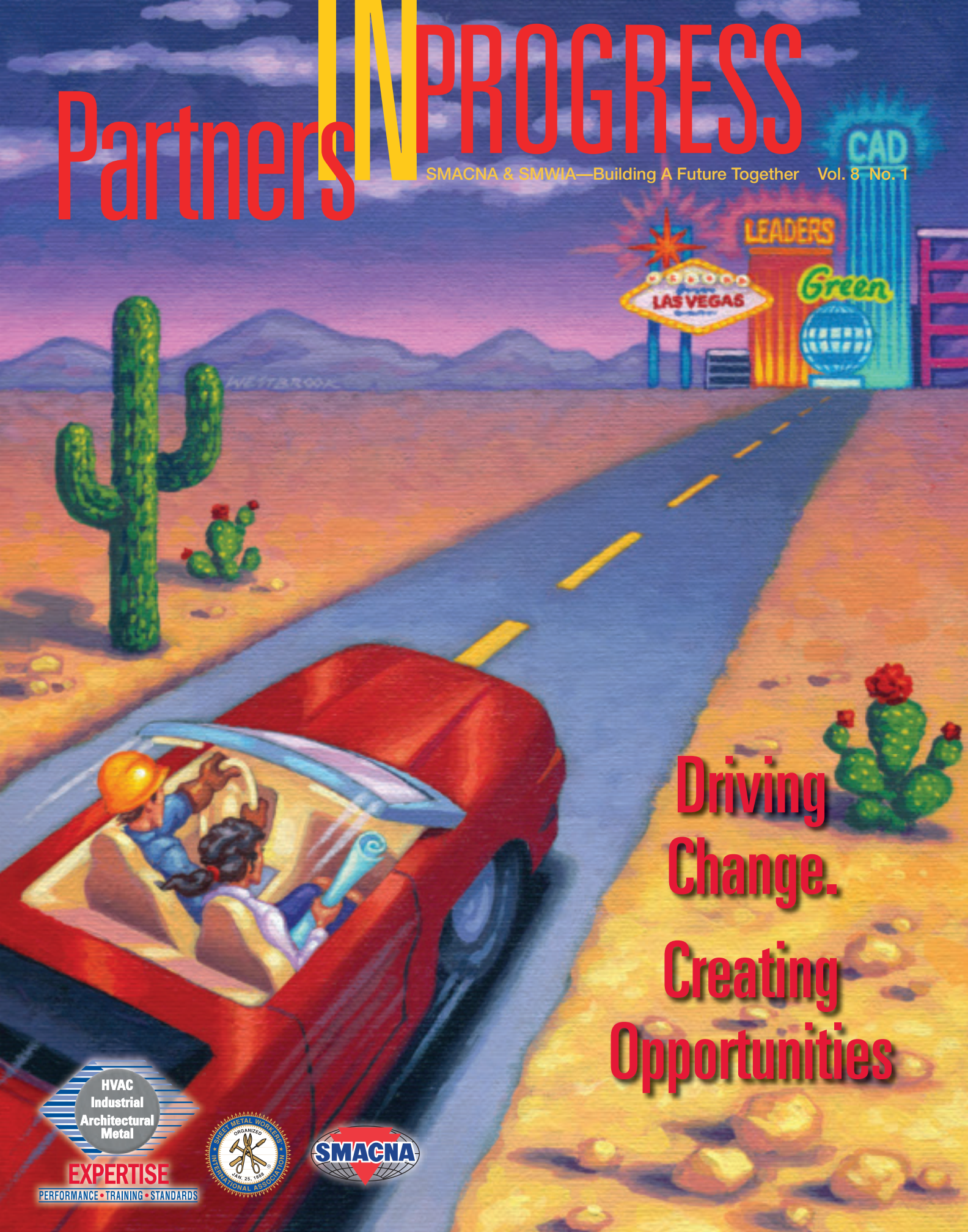


# Partners **IN** PROGRESS

SMACNA & SMWIA—Building A Future Together Vol. 8 No. 1



Driving  
Change.  
Creating  
Opportunities



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## Partners In Progress

Vol. 8/No. 1

**Michael J. Sullivan**  
**John Lindemulder**  
Co-publishers

**Kaarin Engelmann**  
editor@pinpmagazine.org  
Editor

**Deborah Barker**  
Creative Services

**Eric Westrook**  
Cover Illustrator

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## 2010 Construction Outlook: Wait 'Til Next Year

By Joe Salimando

It would be nice to deliver an exciting, upbeat outlook on the construction market. However, it looks like we'll have to wait until next year to do that.

As 2009 ended, chief economist Kermit Baker of the American Institute of Architects provided a "consensus" forecast for nonresidential construction. The bottom line came out ugly.

In plain English: "Nonresidential construction activity will decline another 13.4% in inflation-adjusted dollars in 2010, before finally posting a modest advance of 1.8% in 2011.

"The commercial and industrial sectors are expected to be uniformly weak in 2010, with declines close to 20% in most major categories. Institutional construction will fare better, with a modest decline of just under 2% projected for 2010 before reversing for a 3% gain in 2011."

McGraw-Hill Construction's forecast (released in October) calls for a rebound in the dollar value of construction starts of 11% over 2009. However, that forecast rests on two pillars: a big bounce in new residential construction (starts up 30%) and continued strong growth in public construction (think road-building).

In early January, *Engineering News-Record* (a MHC magazine) reported that construction unemployment had hit 22.7% in December, up from 19.4% in November.

Note that the figure does not include all of the illegal aliens employed during the 2003-2007 boom in housing construction.

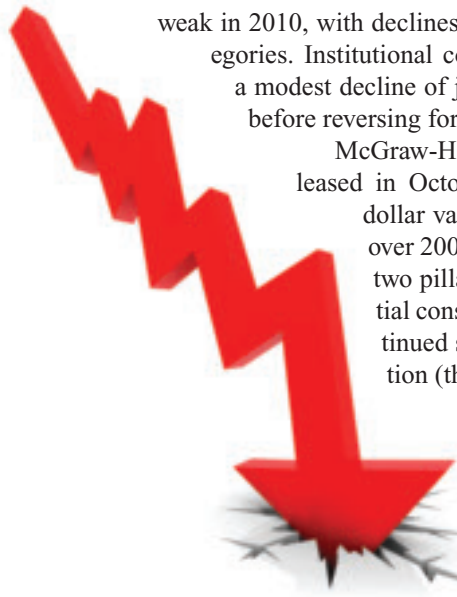
The previous high—using the old tracking system that goes back to 1948—came in February 1983, at 27.3%. Note that national unemployment (all industries) averaged 25% in 1932, the worst year of the Great Depression.

From this point of view, the construction industry is at depression levels. It's not pretty and no one can promise us that it can't get worse. Yet consider that the U.S. made it through the 1930s—a period many of our forefathers remember as a time that people pulled together.

And consider that data point above about February 1983. Things were really bad in construction at that moment, too. Yet somehow the industry (and the nation) recovered, posted the rah-rah growth of the 1990s, and thrived to ride the various bubbles of the 1998-2007 period.

Does that mean your employer and your local union will survive the 2010s? No, not for sure. It merely means you can. ■

*Salimando is a Virginia-based writer. For information about how to drive change and create opportunities in 2010, check-out the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference in Las Vegas at [pinp.org](http://pinp.org).*



# *Stepping on the Gas!*

Heading into the 2010  
Partnership Conference,  
how far have we come?

by Cari B. Clark

An illustration of a red convertible car driving on a blue road with yellow dashed lines. In the back seat, a construction worker wearing a yellow hard hat and blue shirt is leaning forward, and a woman with dark hair is sitting next to him, holding a rolled-up blue document. The car is moving towards the right side of the frame.

“Just Do It” is Nike’s slogan and was Mark Breslin’s challenge at the 2008 Partners in Progress Conference in Las Vegas. Breslin, industry expert and keynote speaker, challenged everyone there to choose one thing to strengthen the signatory sheet metal industry and its labor-management partnership and then “just do it.”

*continued on page 4*

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Breslin says that there's a bridge between "That's a great idea" and "We're doing it." So, what has been done on the partnership front by various locals and contractors throughout the country to improve their relations and strengthen the industry?



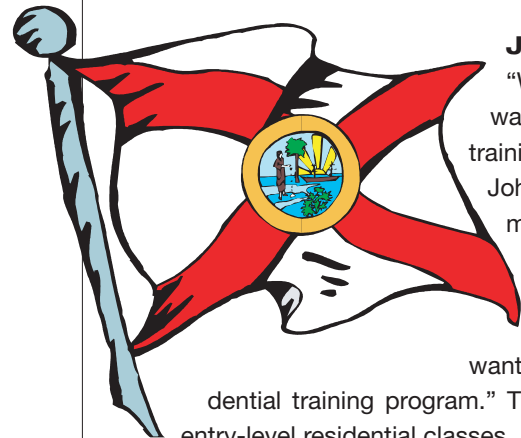
### Pueblo West, CO

Reggie Garcia is the vice president and chief estimator at Vision Mechanical in Colorado. He took Breslin's message to heart two years ago and brought his ideas to Bill Singleton, president and owner of the company.

"We came up with a game plan and decided to concentrate on industrial and school jobs."

Part of the strategy was to get the local on-board. Thus far, it has helped with concessions, better rates, and an LMCT fund.

In addition, Vision Mechanical has fueled its growth by implementing "lean construction" methods and investing in additional equipment. "At the moment we have the fastest production coil line in Colorado," Garcia says. The contractor employs 125 to 150 members of local 9 at any given time.



### Jacksonville, FL

"We have moved forward in expanding our training facility," says John Parker, business manager of local 435, in Jacksonville, FL.

"Our space was too limited, and we want to expand our residential training program." The union offers three entry-level residential classes, making up a 14-week course.

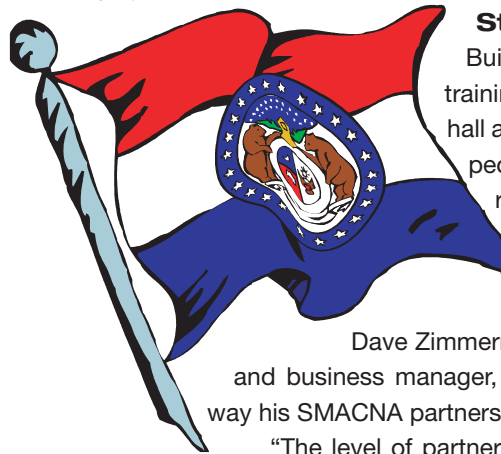
So far, 36 journeypersons have taken the new training, with the local's goal being to supply service personnel rather than installers only. "The new 4,500 square-foot building will have condensers outside and testing, adjusting and balancing air adjusters inside. We want to be able to train our workers in TAB," he adds.

Another project for local 435 is an outreach program, to identify all viable contractors in the jurisdiction and make personal visits to them. Even before 2008, the local fashioned a

piecework contract and signed a couple of contractors onto it. "This was easier in theory than in practice," Parker admits.

He says that while it's easier to train residential specialists to become industrial specialists than it is to re-train industrial workers, he keeps in mind that residential work is important to capture.

Parker looks forward to having a "first-class training facility for them to see. This is where I'll get my future workforce," he says. The new facility is expected to be up and running by June.



### St. Louis, MO

Building a new training facility/union hall and getting more people trained in residential work are also goals for local 36 in St. Louis, MO.

Dave Zimmermann, president and business manager, is proud of the way his SMACNA partnership is working.

"The level of partnership we have is fantastic. Our boards meet together quarterly to discuss ways we can improve man-hours," he says, "and I meet with contractors about once a month. We couldn't do what we do without good communication and partnership."

Butch Welsch agrees. He is president of Welsch Heating and Cooling and chairman of the SMACNA labor committee in St. Louis. "We have an excellent working relationship. We have enough headaches coming from the outside in our industry; we don't need it within our partnerships. We don't limit our meetings to a certain number each year. We meet whenever it's necessary."

Zimmermann cites stepped-up contributions of his contractors to making the dream of a new combination training facility and union hall come true. He's breaking ground in March on a 96,000 square-foot building (of which 56,000 square feet will be dedicated to training) located on a redevelopment "brown field" site right in St. Louis.

"The state will come in and clean up the site, and we are re-using the existing steel from the building that is there. It will be Platinum LEED green and state-of-the-art. There is no better time to get construction bids!"

Zimmermann is excited about having such a modern facility. "Our existing school is crowded. The biggest and best thing we can offer the market is our trained workforce."

St. Louis is unique in that union labor still does about 85% of the new residential work; however, there is a lot of room to grow in the residential service and replacement market.

## Breslin Returns to Raise the Flag

"We're no different than any other industry. We can't put off the day of reckoning," says Mark Breslin, strategist, speaker, and author on construction leadership, strategy, and labor-management relations.

"Look at what happened to General Motors. They sat around waiting for external forces to fix their problems, thinking 'We will be saved!' It didn't happen."

He will be at the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference in Las Vegas to continue spreading his message on strengthening the signatory sheet metal industry.

"In order to retain and grow market share, both management and labor need to look ahead—not just three to five years, but 10, 20, or even 50 years," says Dennis Canevari, president and business manager of local 162.

The partnership conference is a good place to start. For more information, visit the Partners in Progress website at [pinp.org](http://pinp.org) and click on the link to the conference.



Toward this effort, local 36's JATC is putting apprentices into a "super-concentrated" program that involves intensive classroom training for two weeks, twice a year. There is a cooling module in the spring and a heating module in the summer. Each session is followed by five weeks riding with a journeyman, paid for by the local.

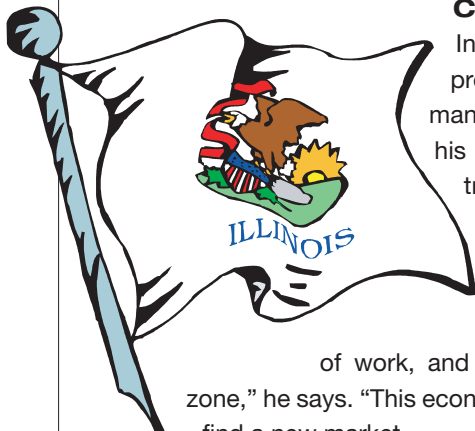
"This way, the apprentices are ready to drive a truck themselves after the first year, and contractors don't have to pay to have two guys on a service call."

Welsch, who helped develop the innovative training program, thinks it is working out well. "Through the union, we've got all the tools to accomplish what we need to do."

### Chicago, IL

In Illinois, John Boske, president and business manager of local 265, led his members and contractors to agree to a 30-cents-per-hour wage allocation for a retrofit fund. "We always have had plenty

of work, and we were in a comfort zone," he says. "This economy is what drove us to find a new market.



He says that the residential retrofit market is mostly non-union. After SMACNA contractors promoted a \$50 maintenance-agreement rebate last fall, more than 2,000 homeowners signed up to receive checks from the retrofit fund.

"The rebate generated a lot of work—more hours for our members, and more jobs for our contractors," Boske says. The partnership is contemplating adding an air-conditioning rebate for spring.



### Central, CA

Dennis Canevari is in a unique position in northern and central California. He is president and business manager of local 162, which has four separate units: Stockton, Modesto, Sacramento, and Fresno. Each has a different market.

Canevari's jurisdiction comprises 70 contractors and 2,600 SMWIA members, one-third of whom work in production. However, the market segment with the most potential for growth is residential HVAC. "Stockton created an LMCT fund for rebates to homeowners. Contractors used door hangers and other advertising to market the deals," he says.

In Sacramento, where the organization is large, LMCT funds are being used to reimburse signatories for journeyman training days. "Everybody wins," Canevari says. "Journeymen get needed training, and their employers aren't losing money."

In Fresno, where there are fewer signatories and a smaller HVAC market, the local joined with plumbing and electrical trades to cooperate on improving market share for everyone. (See the article on page 14 about the Fresno Area Construction Team.)

Developing leadership by using different management-training materials has also played a part in local 162's strategy. "This is a 'show-me' learning system," Canevari says. "We bring apprentices in and teach them what to do by showing them."

Another strategy involved creating t-shirts with the LMCT's website and phone number. "If our apprentices watched a Breslin tape and signed a commitment to be the best they could be, they could get a t-shirt. We ended up with 250 walking billboards spreading our message." ■

*Clark is a freelance writer based in Springfield, VA.*

# In the Driver's Seat:

## Foremen Steer the Industry

Strengthening the bottom line means training the future generation of leaders.

by Stephen Grieco

**A** moving vehicle without a driver is only headed for trouble. The same holds true for the signatory sheet metal industry. Ensuring enough highly trained foremen are available could make the difference between the industry hitting a tree and it gaining market share despite tough economic times.

Foremen are valuable assets for winning the job-by-job battles and maximizing the bottom line for each project. “Probably 85 cents out of every project dollar runs through foremen’s hands,” says Rick Reese, senior consultant and market manager for FMI, management consultants to the construction industry. “It’s really foremen who determine the profitability of a job.”

However, according to the Colorado Sheet Metal Workers Training Institute training director Larry Lawrence, a shortage of foremen is on the horizon. “Our industry is aging,” says Lawrence. “If we don’t train people to take their positions, we won’t have any supervisors.”

Although the recession has forced many foremen to delay retirement plans, the time is now to get new foreman trainees in the pipeline. “If we wait until we need foremen, we’re going to be stuck,” Lawrence says. “That’s why a few years ago we decided to double our apprenticeships.”

Training for SMWIA-SMACNA foremen has come a long way from the days when young craftsmen, many who just completed their apprenticeships, would be thrown into a job with little preparation. On-the-job training meant they were often running work by trial and error. In today’s competitive market, contractors can’t afford to risk too many errors with untrained foremen. “They need somebody who can hit the floor running and not risk possible losses,” Lawrence says.

That’s where formal programs, like the International Training Institute’s Foreman Training course, give SMWIA apprentices a leg up. They provide the foundation foremen need to be effective.

ITI’s course covers planning and organizing, human relations,

communication, and evaluation and training. “The training lets us know what to expect and what is expected of us,” says Jeremy Sharp, a fourth-year apprentice and foreman-in-training for local 9 in Denver.

Sharp found ITI’s modules on human relations to be especially helpful. “You can’t just take two guys off the street and expect them to work together,” he explains. “You need to match strengths with weaknesses and consider personalities.”

Quality training alone, however, is no guarantee for foreman success. For example, quick reaction skills are very important on the work site. “There are always surprises,” Sharp

## Leadership and Partnership

Developing strong leadership within the organized sheet metal industry is high priority for the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference in March. Related sessions include *Wanted: Foremen, Wanted: Project Managers, Get Ahead With A Leadership Makeover—Traits Contractors Look For In Their Future Leaders, and Are Leaders Born Or Are They Made?* For additional information, see [pinp.org/conf10/](http://pinp.org/conf10/).

says. “You can’t train for every situation. You have to think on your feet and adapt.”

Sharp learned how to “improvise, adapt and overcome” as a United States Marine. That foundation prepared him to run work for Simpson Company, a commercial and industrial HVAC contractor located in Johnstown, CO.

At Simpson, prospective foremen who have completed classroom instruction continue to develop their skills through on-the-job training. Sharp is now getting OJT and participating in Simpson’s mentoring plan—working with an experienced senior foreman for development purposes.

“Sink-or-swim is not an effective training program for a new foreman. It’s a recipe for disaster for the employee, the project, and the company,” explains Kent Campbell, managing member at Simpson.

“ITI Foreman Training should be a curriculum requirement even if the sheet metal worker does not have the desire to run work,” Campbell continues. “At a minimum, this training will add an element of appreciation and respect for the role of a foreman.”

According to Lawrence, about 20% of graduates from his program ultimately become foremen. Local 9 also draws its leadership from the Helmets-to-Hardhats program that connects former members of the military—who typically have supervisory experience—with construction careers.

Sheet Metal Workers local 15 JATC in Sanford, FL, also offers the ITI Foreman Training course. John Songer, an administrator for the local, says he wishes he had access to the training during his apprenticeship.

Songer was one of those guys who learned to be a foreman the hard way, with no formal training. “I was a journeyman for three days, and then they made me a foreman,” he recalls.

Fortunately, Songer had good technical and soft skills and, with the help of his industry-veteran father, was able to make it through that trial by fire; however, all of Songer’s local 15 apprentices are required to take the ITI Foreman Training course.

“To compete in our industry, we have to be very efficient,” says Songer, who sees significant contractor and union benefits from training more foremen. “Especially with HVAC, a well trained foreman can be the key to the whole system.” ■

*Grieco is a freelance writer based in Blacksburg, VA.*

**Sink-or-swim is not an effective training program for a new foreman. It’s a recipe for disaster for the employee, the project, and the company.**

# Portrait of a Good Foreman

"In the most successful companies, the foreman is not just a builder," explains Rick Reese, senior consultant and market manager for FMI, management consultants to the construction industry.

Reese, who is also the director of SMACNA's Project Manager's Institute, believes a good foreman must have business sense and be an active member of the team in planning, controlling costs, and increasing efficiency.

"The best foremen are able to think a week or two ahead about job activities and predict resources that will be needed to complete the job on time. Less productive foremen are reactive rather than proactive," he says.

Getting on top of issues, even before they occur, is vital. "Crews will come to work with their brains, not just their hands," he says. An excellent management technique is to have a huddle with crews at the beginning of each shift—setting daily productivity goals, discussing safety, and inviting suggestions from everyone.

Communication shouldn't stop there, though. Foremen should work with their project managers. "Beginning with the take-off meeting, these two people need to be on the same page," Reese says.

Although this can be difficult when the PM is a recent college grad working with an older foreman who has been in the industry for years, it has to be done.

To make this type of communication easier, training centers such as local 9's in Colorado require all fourth-year apprentices to complete the ITI curriculum for foreman, supervisory, and project management training.

"There's a lot more to leadership than telling people what to do all day," says Jeremy Sharp, a fourth-year apprentice and foreman-in-training for local 9. He finds himself thinking about projects during evenings, weekends, and even while lying awake in bed.

Sharp says he's motivated by the challenge to see if he can turn a profit on a job and beat deadlines. "Running work isn't just an eight-hour day. Anyone who is doing it for the money is not doing it for the right reason."







# DRIVING CHANGE CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

# 2010

## PARTNERS IN PROGRESS CONFERENCE

MARCH 18-20, 2010 • CAESARS PALACE • LAS VEGAS



**NEMI**

# DRIVING CHANGE

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

2010 PARTNERS IN PROGRESS CONFERENCE

## Your chance to be a force driving the changes necessary to create the opportunities for the future.

The economic climate has created a number of challenges for the union sheet metal industry. Both labor and management are at the crossroads of making some strategic changes in how we do business. A responsive labor-management relationship will make the going a lot easier.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

So mark your calendar to join us March 18-20 at the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference. This groundbreaking event will spark innovation, strengthen bonds between labor and management, plus involve our apprentices as team players.

### APPRENTICES JOIN PARTNERSHIP

New to this year's program, 500 of the top apprentices will be active participants in the program. A leadership

track will guide the apprentices through the spectrum of market opportunities and leadership skills necessary to advance in our industry. The International Training Institute (ITI) has eliminated regional competitions allowing all local apprentice contest winners to participate in the 2010 Unified Apprenticeship Contest March 15-18.

### WHY WE NEED YOU

We have a lot on our plate. To truly succeed we need the leaders in our industry, Business Managers, Agents, Contractors, Chapter Executives, Apprentices and JATC Coordinators — all to participate — to hear and be heard. The more voices we have the better the dialogue will be. *That is why we need you!*

## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2010

**Registration:** 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2010

**Breakout Sessions:** 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**Conference Opening Ceremony:** 5:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Dinner and Apprentice Competition Awards

**Entertainment** – The Passing Zone

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010

**General Session:**

**Keynote Speaker, Mark Breslin:** 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

**Regional Breakout Sessions:** 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2010

**Closing Speaker, Mark Breslin:** 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

## THE BUZZ: WHAT PAST CONFERENCE ATTENDEES THINK

“Great conference” ... “Excellent”

“Provided valuable information and frank discussions”

# SNEAK PEAK AT SOME OF THE GREAT SESSIONS

## ARE LEADERS BORN OR ARE THEY MADE?

Join **Mark Breslin**, keynote speaker, in this discussion on what makes someone a good leader and what we as an industry need to do to create leaders. Learn from other union officials, JATC coordinators, and contractors what skills, attitudes and knowledge create opportunities for successful leadership. Explore what the industry needs to do now to invest in and foster our next generation of leaders.



**Mark Breslin**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR CAPTURING AND MAINTAINING MARKET SHARE

With market share down what are contractors and union partners doing to get more work? See how some labor/management partnerships are successfully stepping up to the task. Don't miss General Secretary Treasurer Joe Nigro's Top 10 Excuses for Not Increasing Market Share!

## EMERGING GROWTH MARKETS

Get insider information from the big players in tomorrow's marketplace. The potential is astounding.

## USING ALL THE TOOLS IN THE TOOLBOX

Market opportunities such as TAB, Retrofit, Direct Bid, Commissioning, LEEDs, BIM, and Fire Life Safety all come together to create the opportunities of the future. Learn how these areas can spell opportunity if your partnership is effective.

## RESIDENTIAL + SERVICE MARKETS = \$\$\$\$\$

Residential and service businesses generate steady income and employment during good times and bad. It's easier to enter this market than you think. Hear how the experts did it.

## SIZE DOESN'T MATTER: MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL CONTRACTORS

Learn what's required for small contractors to take the leap of faith to increase their bottom lines. A small contractor backed by a local union partnership can give the contractor courage to chart new waters.

## WANTED: FOREMEN, ESTIMATORS, PROJECT MANAGERS

These people must be organized, cool under pressure, great communicators and have exceptional coordination skills. They make the difference between profit and loss. Is the industry producing super stars who can meet workplace demands? Learn about the training and resources available for foremen, estimators, and project managers. Three individual sessions address the specific training requirements for each job title.

## TOWN HALL MEETING WITH SMWIA LEADERSHIP

For Contractors only. Enjoy this private opportunity to hear from the SMWIA general president and several of his top officers. No questions will be off limits in this candid town hall session.



"Necessary for success in the industry"

"It strengthened our partnership even more"

"Breslin didn't pull any punches!"



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS CONFERENCE  
MARCH 18-20, 2010 • CAESARS PALACE • LAS VEGAS

Important: To ensure proper registration, PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY and complete the form in its entirety.

NAME Last First NAME TO APPEAR ON BADGE

ORGANIZATION NAME TITLE

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE (PLEASE INCLUDE AREA CODE) FAX

E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please check the appropriate title below.  SMWIA or Local Affiliate  SMWIA staff  
 SMACNA Contractor: Your Chapter Name \_\_\_\_\_  ITI Staff  
 SMACNA Staff  Non-SMACNA Contractor  JATC Coordinator  JATC Trustee  
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- Thursday, March 18th-Saturday, March 20th \$199.00 per night (plus room tax of 12%)

After January 8, 2010, room rates will increase to \$249.00 per night (plus 12% room tax) from March 14-20, 2010

**CUT OFF DATE:** January 8, 2010 for the Early Bird Rates. After January 8th for the rate of \$249.00, reservations must be made by Friday, February 12, 2010. Reservations made after February 12, 2010, will be accepted on a space and rate available basis.

It is important that you reference "Partners in Progress" when making your reservation in order to get the special conference rate. All reservations must be accompanied by a non-refundable first night room deposit, plus tax. Reservations billed by a major credit card will be billed immediately. Check-in time is 3:00pm (Monday- Thursday) and 5:00pm (Friday-Saturday). Checkout time is 11:00am.

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REGISTRATION FEES

	Amount Due
<b>Early Bird Conference Package @ \$625</b> (October 15, 2009–January 8, 2010) Includes admission to all Thursday, Friday and Saturday events including 1 ticket to the dinner	
<b>Conference Package @ \$695</b> (After January 8, 2010) Includes admission to all Thursday, Friday and Saturday events including 1 ticket to the dinner	
<b>Non-SMACNA Contractor Conference Package @ \$925</b> (Valid October 15, 2009–January 8, 2010; \$995 after January 8, 2010)	
<b>Thursday, March 18th Awards Dinner @ \$155</b> _____ # of Tickets (Please note 1 dinner ticket is included with the conference package) Please purchase additional tickets for guests not attending the conference.	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENT</b>	

Check here if you have any ADA-related needs or dietary restrictions, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR MORE INFO REGISTER ONLINE OR FAX OR MAIL

# Why Keep the Tank Full?

Recruiting remains vital despite the tough economy.

By Cairine Caughill

Within 10 years, about one-quarter of today's sheet metal workforce will retire or leave the industry. Waiting until the last minute to fill those positions is like failing to think about the gas gauge until after the truck's engine cuts out by the side of an isolated country road.

Organized sheet metal can't afford to leave itself stranded. "We can usually fill empty positions if we don't care whether or not the people we are filling them with are properly trained," says Mike Harris, ITI program administrator.

He's concerned about the four- to five-year gap between recruiting new apprentices and turning out experienced journeypersons. "If we bring the untrained people in now, we can

train them as we go along so that they are ready to fill slots as they open up."

Theoretically, then, this should be a great time to be an apprentice. However, with the economy remaining in recession mode—and the construction industry recovering slower than others—many programs are reluctant to indenture apprentices because there is little work to be done.

Such conventional wisdom leaves the sheet metal industry in a classic *Catch-22* situation. "We need to have people in the pipeline, regardless of the current economic situation. Even if members aren't working, they are getting older and nearer retirement. The deadline to replace them is approaching quicker than most people realize," Harris says.

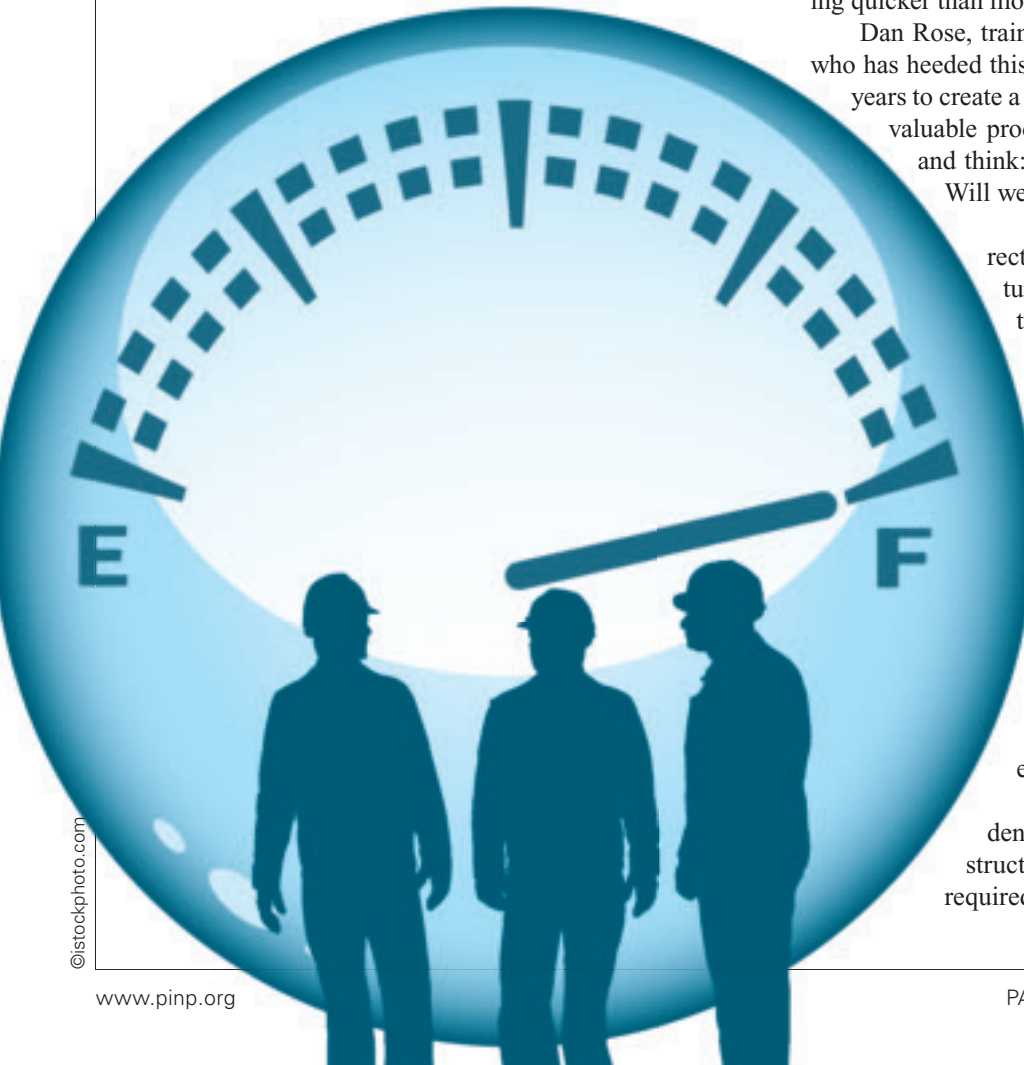
Dan Rose, training director for local 88, is one of those who has heeded this message. His mantra is that it takes five years to create a journeyman—one of the industry's "most valuable products." "We have to look on the horizon and think: What will happen five years from now? Will we be prepared?"

Dan Andrews, local 36 training director has similar concerns. "With the downturn, we're going to lose 1-1/2 to 2 years of training new guys...Instead of 700 members with 40 years of experience, we've got guys with 5, 10, 15 years of experience."

It's this weakening of "institutional memory" that most concerns Jim Boone, president of New England Sheet Metal. He worries that slow recruiting and lack of apprenticeship opportunities will reduce knowledge transfer between generations. "Five years of apprenticeship training is a good start, but it's not the same as that training followed by years and years of experience."

Boone, who is also SMACNA president-elect and president of Fresno Area Construction Team (FACT), believes partnership is required to meet the challenge of preparing the

*continued on page 14*



*continued from page 13*

next generation. “Providing apprentices and new journeypersons with the time to understand the different circumstances they’ll be facing on the job site requires buy-in from both the union and contractors,” he says.

Las Vegas contractor Steve Kimmel, president of Pahor Mechanical, shares Boone’s point of view. Kimmel uses periods when jobs are scarce to build—giving younger people extra training and responsibility. “That way, when the economy recovers, our people are more seasoned and ready to go full steam ahead.”

(See sidebar “The Death of Mentoring” on page 15 for labor-management strategist Mark Breslin’s ideas to develop apprentices.)

Kimmel’s advice to his apprentices is that they should improve their skill sets, take every opportunity to learn, and find ways to become valuable employees. “Companies keep the best and get rid of the ones who aren’t so good,” he says.

Local 9 Training Director Larry Lawrence has noticed that with the shortage of work, apprentices are really stepping up. “It creates a sense of competition or survival of the fittest. All of our apprentices realize that if they don’t show up for work, there’s another apprentice waiting to take their job.”

Despite all of local 9’s efforts, not all of the apprentices have positions. “We’ve been starting classes with the knowledge that we’ll have jobs for them in the future,” Lawrence says.

Second-year apprentice Skylar Griffin, in local 9, is practical. He was laid off in October and has been on the apprentice waiting list since then. “I know it will pick up soon. I keep my eyes focused on what I can do tomorrow that will prepare me for the next day and 10 years down the road.”

Rose’s program has similar issues. He reminds apprentices that even if they are unemployed, they are getting a free education and building for their futures while they are in the JATC.

Erik Vasquez, an apprentice in Rose’s program, signed on in June 2009. He knew that layoffs were a possibility, but he decided it was worth the risk to do something he enjoyed. The skills he’s acquired go beyond working with sheet metal. “I’ve learned to manage my money carefully because if I get laid off, I want to have enough to eat.”

Some apprentices can’t wait for times to get better; they have to find other work to support their families today. Locals are working outside the box to support and hold onto such apprentices. For example, in St. Louis, Andrews encourages them to find a job that’s not in a related industry.

Local 36 has programs to help ease the financial burdens faced by their unemployed members, including a dues relief program and a benevolent fund that pays health and welfare. They also give a monthly grocery ticket to members who aren’t working.

“These programs are designed to sustain the membership enough so that when things pick up the people who really want to do this work will be around,” Andrews says. ■

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*Caughill is a freelance writer based in Ontario, Canada.*

## Filling Up with Premium

Recruiters always try to make the most of their money, especially when the economy is sluggish. Larry Lawrence, training director for Colorado’s local 9, has found the current climate an opportunity to look for high-quality candidates who are committed to their career choice. “I’ve had success recruiting apprentices from colleges and through Helmets to Hardhats.”

Helmets to Hardhats ([helmetstohardhats.org](http://helmetstohardhats.org)) is a program that connects veterans to promising careers in construction via cooperation with trade unions and contractor associations such as SMWIA and SMACNA.

Jim Boone, president of New England Sheet Metal and SMACNA president-elect, says that it’s also the ideal time to introduce experienced sheet metal workers to the advantages of union membership. “This economy makes it possible to find really well-qualified people who weren’t available in the past because they were working elsewhere.”

Boone has combined recruiting with public relations efforts in Fresno as president of the Fresno Area Construction Team (FACT). FACT ([fresnofact.com](http://fresnofact.com)), formed in 2005, is a partnership of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing unions and contractors who have a common goal of demonstrating commitment to building a better community.

“FACT was an organization much needed and whose time had come. The area was being bombarded with anti-union messages, and the mechanical trades—their unions and associations—had to join forces to tell a positive story to area decision-makers and purchasers of construction products,” says Mark Bowers, Central Valley SMACNA executive vice president.

In addition, the FACT team developed a “Build-A-Skill” program to increase awareness of careers in the skilled construction trades and the advantages of union. “Too few people in the community realize that we offer robust workforce development and employment solutions,” Bowers says.

According to Boone, response to the effort has been positive. “More and more talented young men and women are contacting our apprenticeship schools to sign up and take the test.”



# The Death of Mentoring? by Mark Breslin

If you are like me, you did not get to where you are in life without someone mentoring you. I think of mentoring as someone taking a personal interest. Someone really understanding and extending themselves above and beyond a basic relationship. A real connection of trust, communication and mutual benefit.

Yes, mentoring is a very powerful tool and concept that no one really learns but almost always plays a key role in most of our personal and professional lives.

It is this powerful and positive force that seems now at risk in our industry. I was unaware of the decline until quite recently, but the proof now seems overwhelming.

I have had the privilege of speaking to more than 120 local and regional union gatherings in the past few years. The audiences vary but almost always there are a good assortment of contractors, foremen and gray haired journeymen. There are almost always apprentices.

I have asked those audiences the same question over and over. "How many of you have had someone mentor you for success?" Without exception, almost 95% of the older, more experienced guys raise their hands.

But when I ask this follow-up question, the problem becomes clear. "How many of you now are taking a personal interest in and mentoring someone in your company or industry?"

In one gathering of 900 foremen, almost every hand went up and every guy had been mentored. When asked what they were doing, they were all together only mentoring 26 guys.

When I speak at contractor meetings the numbers do not rise much. When I speak for labor management groups or even union leader groups, the mentors are fewer and fewer. It is truly in our interests to find out why. This industry cannot survive the death of mentoring.

I asked the guys that don't mentor why and the responses were as follows:

- the kids today are not willing to be mentored,
- is not worth the time to invest in them,
- I don't have the personal time to do it, we are moving too fast, or
- I just don't think about it that much

On the other hand when I ask the young guys why they think they cannot obtain mentoring, their responses are:

- they don't want to teach us because we are a threat to their jobs,
- they think mentoring is yelling at us or toughening us up instead of showing us how to succeed in the work and the industry, or
- no one has offered and I wouldn't know how to find or ask someone.

There has never been a time in our industry when there

was a greater need to ensure that the generations that follow are better than those that preceded. For purposes of competition, pension stability, and union brand, this is a no-compromise strategic necessity.

And despite excellent training, relevant curriculum and strong contractor-union leadership, no one factor has more upside potential for influencing performance than does mentoring.

I would suggest seven strategies that the industry adopt in service of both the mentoring practice and the outcome:

1. Contractor go to all of their foremen and ask them who they are mentoring. Every foreman in the United States and Canada should be actively developing at least one person.
2. Discuss with foremen the purpose of the mentoring and determine if they clearly understand the benefit and best methodology.
3. All business managers in the United States and Canada talk about the importance of mentoring at their next union meeting and at least one time per year in the future.
4. All union leaders tie the message of mentoring to the long term benefits that serve everyone in order to break down any old school thinking about not teaching the new guys out of fear or insecurity.
5. Apprentice directors obtain a respected volunteer journeyman to be the Big Brother for each apprentice class group of 20 or more. This is a go-to guy on a personal and professional development basis.
6. Apprentice schools teach new guys the importance of mentoring and encourage them to do it for each other and when they rise in the trade.
7. Finally, everyone who is reading this take on the task. Find one more person to mentor personally.

I personally am mentoring six guys right now. I am a pretty busy person, but I know that I would have never achieved anything without those who saw in me more than I saw in myself. I meet with them monthly. I hear about life, work, marriage, dreams, problems and more. Mostly, I listen.

When I do speak, I know it really matters. I see them changing their lives right in front of me. My payoff is the realization that I have done the right thing for the right reason for the right person. And, if in the process I can help our industry succeed, then that is even a greater incentive.

As you go on with your business of the day today, ask yourself what valuable life lessons you have that others need. They are waiting out there for you now. Let us not let this great tradition die. ■

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*Breslin is a strategist and author specializing in labor-management challenges. He will be speaking at the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference. For more information on Breslin, visit [breslin.biz](http://breslin.biz).*

# Don't Miss the

Building Information Modeling is leaving the dock whether or not we're onboard.

By Cairine Caughill

Virtual worlds are not just part of James Cameron movies like *Avatar*. They are showing up in the construction industry in the form of building information modeling (BIM) tools.

"With BIM, you build everything virtually, using all the data from every team, before you start erecting the physical building" says Tom Soles, executive director of Market Sectors for SMACNA. The end result is less waste in the construction process, more productivity in the field, fewer design problems, and higher profits.

"Waste comes in the form of performing work out of sequence, waiting for design review comments, using inefficient construction methods and redundant design and construction processes, and lack of teamwork and communication," says Matt Cramer, president of Dee Cramer, Inc. in Michigan. By integrating the work of the entire construction team, BIM buoys the bottom line.

Tom Payne, director of business development at Miller Bonded in Albuquerque, N.M., has witnessed the positive effect BIM has on projects. He estimates that it has allowed his firm to reduce rework by at least 25%.

"BIM allows us to see both cost and time savings, and jobs go more smoothly." On one recent Miller Bonded project requests for information (RFIs) were reduced from 4,000 to 500.

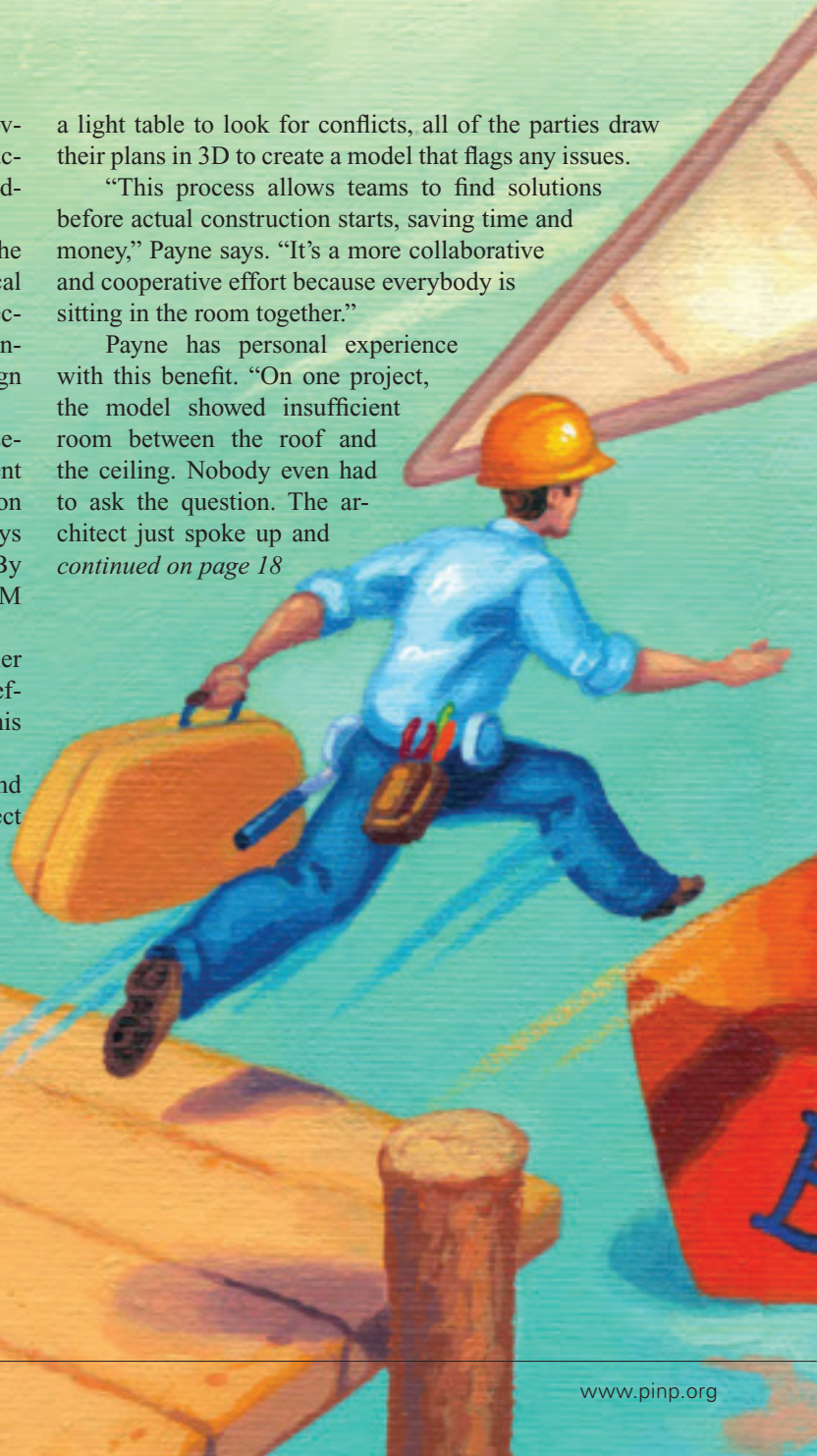
Fewer RFIs are a result of BIM's clash detection software. Rather than the time-consuming and cumbersome process of drawing and re-drawing plans, and then laying them on top of each other on

a light table to look for conflicts, all of the parties draw their plans in 3D to create a model that flags any issues.

"This process allows teams to find solutions before actual construction starts, saving time and money," Payne says. "It's a more collaborative and cooperative effort because everybody is sitting in the room together."

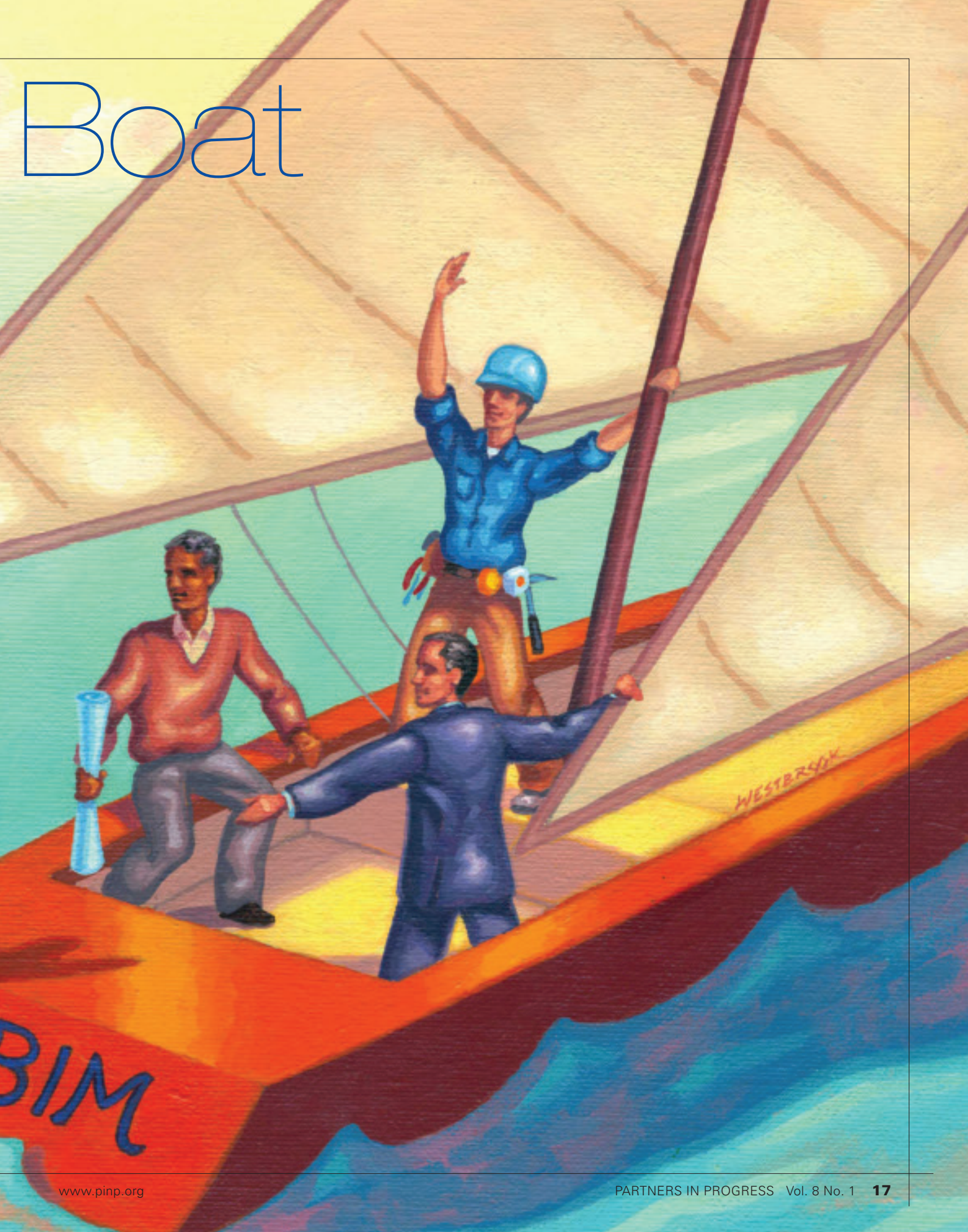
Payne has personal experience with this benefit. "On one project, the model showed insufficient room between the roof and the ceiling. Nobody even had to ask the question. The architect just spoke up and

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# Boat



*continued from page 16*

said, 'It looks like we need to lower the ceiling about eight inches.' They lowered the ceiling, and we fit everything in."

Of course, BIM's greatest benefits can be realized only if all parties involved in the project are using it. "Everyone has to be drawing in 3D. If the general contractor or the construction manager allows one firm to opt out, you'll fail to get a clash-free model despite spending all your time and energy on the effort," Cramer says.

Miller Bonded places so much importance on having everyone use BIM that the company offers to help fill in some of the gaps. "We've been known to draw in a cable rack—and other major components—for an electrical contractor who is not participating in the process," Payne says. "It's worth it for the end result."

Still for that end result to deliver the desired results, contractors and their craftsmen have to develop a new mindset. When Dee Cramer first introduced it on a couple of jobs for GM in Flint, Mich., his field workers kept calling the office to say the ductwork wasn't going to fit.

"We just kept reassuring them they could trust the drawings. We told them, 'make sure you're at your right elevation and just keep hanging duct,'" Cramer says.

"They called back in and said, 'We're gonna hit the steel...' and we said, 'Just keep hanging at that elevation.' They did, and we missed it by a couple of inches."

Cramer was proud that the sheet metal team used their training to look ahead and anticipate issues. "We just had to help them understand that if they trusted the model and the drawings, everything would work out."

"Our team is so committed to the use of this tool that long time suppliers who were not or could not get onboard and demonstrate their readiness to use BIM were replaced in favor of new allies."

That's why Cramer doesn't recommend trying to learn BIM on the fly. "You've got to walk before you can run. I would buy the software and invest in the hardware and start training myself before I got a job."

He says that waiting until after the job is in hand, the schedule is urgent, and everyone is under-the-gun to get up-to-speed could cause everything to capsize.

However, moving into the BIM world requires significant financial investment. Steve Sneed, assistant training coordinator at Local 36 in St. Louis, MO, estimates that it can cost close to \$20,000 for AutoCad, a computer to load it on, and BIM software. Cramer urges contractors not to hold back despite the cost when the right opportunity presents itself. He

## Partnership and BIM

Matt Cramer, president of Dee Cramer, Inc. in MI, and Steve Hunt, BIM/CAD manager of Dee Cramer, Inc., will present BIM Basics at the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference in Las Vegas. They will discuss what it takes to get involved in Building Information Modeling. Other related break-out sessions will cover Best Practices for Capturing and Maintaining Market Share, Using All The Tools In The Toolbox, and Adjusting To Meet A Changing Industry. For additional information, see [pinp.org](http://pinp.org) and click on the link to the 2010 conference.



says his company saw return on investment on the first job they did, and that payback came within six to nine months. Still, because interoperability of software can be a challenge, Cramer recommends doing some homework before making the plunge.

SMACNA is working to help contractors make the leap onto BIM technology. "We've developed a variety of different educational programs and webinars. In addition, SMACNA has a whole section of its website devoted to BIM," says Soles.

Soles is so enthusiastic about BIM-related resources because he believes it's the way the construction industry is moving. "Within the next 10 to 15 years, BIM will be such an expected component of new construction, operations, and maintenance that only those who are knowledgeable and proficient at it will survive," he says.

According to McGraw Hill Construction's survey, more than 40% of contractors are already using it for at least some portions of their work and customers are already demanding it.

In the *FMI/CMAA Eighth Annual Survey of Owners*, John Moebis, AIA director of construction for Crate and Barrel, is quoted as saying: "Our team is so committed to the use of this tool that long time suppliers who were not or could not get onboard and demonstrate their readiness to use BIM were replaced in favor of new allies."

Another reason Soles encourages the organized sheet metal industry to get onboard with BIM is that it provides a great opportunity for the SMWIA-SMACNA partnership to shine. "It's a natural fit because we've always had a key role in project coordination because we occupy so much space in a building and have to coordinate with other trades." ■

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*Caughill is a freelance writer based in Ontario, Canada. Download the FMI/CMAA Eighth Annual Survey of Owners at [fmiresources.com](http://fmiresources.com) in the Market Sections menu under Owners.*

# Our Team Is Established



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# Where Is Everybody?

According to the BLS, it's not BS to continue recruiting efforts

by Joe Salimando

**D**uring 2008, about 171,000 sheet metal workers were employed in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. About one-third of them were members of the union.

During the next decade, the industry will need about 11,000 more trained craftsmen to deal with anticipated growth in the number of new buildings and older buildings requiring energy efficiency retrofit work or architectural restoration. It's an increase of only 6.5%.

Such slow growth could leave apprenticeship coordinators thinking they are off-the-hook. The problem is that it's not the full story.

More slots for sheet metal workers will open up as the result of replacement needs—workers who leave the trade as a result of retirements, discouragement, injury, termination, or death. Thus, instead of 11,000 tool belts to fill, there are likely to be more than 51,000.

Furthermore—as BLS breaks out heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers separately from sheet metal workers—that number doesn't include an additional 136,200 openings, which is a whopping 44% of today's HVAC/R workforce.

What all this means is that nobody can sit back and believe that recruiting should take a back burner in this economy. In fact, the BLS *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2010-11 edition, points out that “job opportunities [for sheet metal workers] in construction should be good, particularly for individuals who have apprenticeship training or who are certified welders...” ■

*Salimando is a Virginia-based writer.*

## Perform Your Own Investigation

Many resources are available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at *bls.gov*. The question is how to sort through it all. Here are some tips:

- Employment projections are available in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. It can be found at [bls.gov/oco/ocos214.htm#projections\\_data](http://bls.gov/oco/ocos214.htm#projections_data). The latest information is for 2010-2011.
- For an employment outlook comparing 2008 and expected 2018 numbers, take a look at [bls.gov/emp/#tables](http://bls.gov/emp/#tables) and narrow the data down to sheet metal workers.
- A breakdown by industry is available for heating, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers at [ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/ep/ind-occ.matrix/occ\\_pdf/occ\\_49-9021.pdf](ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/ep/ind-occ.matrix/occ_pdf/occ_49-9021.pdf) and for sheet metal workers at [ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/ep/ind-occ.matrix/occ\\_pdf/occ\\_47-2211.pdf](ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/ep/ind-occ.matrix/occ_pdf/occ_47-2211.pdf).



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# Made of Metal

## Make way for women in the trades.

By Jessica Krippendorf

Federal, provincial, and association-led initiatives to draw women into trades are rolling out in every province, both as a way to mitigate Canada's impending labor shortage and as a way to encourage fulfilling, well-paying careers for women.

"Attitudes about women in construction have shifted dramatically over the past 10 years and will continue to shift as numbers rise and generations change hands," says Abigail Fulton, vice-president of BC Construction Association, which offers the Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP) for Women.

STEP for Women recently received funding from the B.C.'s Industry Training Authority (ITA) to expand its program to hire a provincial director—as well as outreach representatives in each of the Northern, Southern Interior, Vancouver Island, and Lower Mainland regions—who network with employers, interview and assess participants, establish placement and mentorship, and provide retention support.

"The biggest problem women in trades are facing is not the work," says Fulton, "It's the numbers—feeling like you are the only one."

She believes it's necessary to hit about 15% of women in the workforce before women will become accepted and comfortable. "We just aren't there yet. When we get to that point, I think we will cease to be an underutilized group."

One way to increase the number of women in the industry is to expose them to the trade early and make them aware of the pleasant realities of working in the industry.

Sheila Sadler is a sheet metal worker at Viaduct Sheet Metal who recently finished her journeyman's hours. She started in the trade five years ago when a customer at a restaurant where Sadler was working got her connected with the local 280 training center.

Sadler had completed the BCIT Women in Trades program and studied structural steel fabrication, but prospective employers didn't see heavy steel and her small stature as a good match. She went back to waitressing.

When she told the story to the customer, he immediately brought her the union paperwork, which Sadler filled out on a Wednesday, only to be hired by Downtown Custom Metal Works two days later. "In a way I was kind of given sheet metal," she says.

She enjoys the challenge, the physical aspects of the job, and the ability to support her children on her wage alone. "I don't have to rely on anyone to take care of us, and that gives me an inner strength," she says.

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Sheila Sadler



Susan McCurdy

*continued from page 21*

One advantage of working with Viaduct is that the shop stays up-to-date on technology, which keeps her on her toes. "I'm learning the new spiral machine, and that's a good mental challenge. When you get good at something, you naturally think you're good at everything. Having new challenges brings you back to reality."

Come of those challenges have come in the form of people within the industry, but Sadler says she has also gotten a lot of help and support from good people in the union.

"If you show people you can do the work, they'll accept you," she says. "As soon as other workers see that I do my eight hours and respect them because they're more experienced, there's no problem."

Dispelling misconceptions about what it means to be a woman in trades is a message Sadler tries to get across while representing the union at tradeshow and recruitment events. "I am a journeyman at work, and at home I'm a woman and a mom. I wear jewelery and I vacuum," she laughs. "I want to show everyone that it is possible to be both."

Susan McCurdy entered sheet metal in 1993, after a 10-year career in the mining industry. She also attended BCIT's Women in Trades program and enjoyed the sheet metal component. McCurdy signed up for the five-month pre-apprentice course, was accepted into the union, and went to work the day after the course finished.

"I liked the idea of working with my hands, and especially of seeing the evidence of a good day's work—a pile of sheet metal fittings ready to be shipped to the job site," she says. "I also liked the idea of having the option to work in the shop as opposed to being an installer in the field. Most other trades require constant travel to different job sites."

After six years with United Metals, McCurdy started with Viaduct Sheet Metal, where she completed her apprenticeship hours. In 2006, she left the floor to run the newly acquired 3D Duct Detailing program, which is her current position within the company.

McCurdy's work mainly involves drawing ductwork into AutoCad mechanical background drawings provided by engineers, and downloading them for plasma cutting and fabrication.

While McCurdy experienced a few bumps in the road related to being a woman entering a traditionally male dominated career, she says they were more like annoyances than barriers. Surprisingly, the negative attitudes she came up against were from younger men rather than from the "old timers" who had been in the trade many years.

"I had encountered similar attitudes during my mining career, so I think I was fairly well equipped to deal with them," says McCurdy. "It also helped that I entered the trade at 30 years old and already had thick enough skin to cope."

McCurdy thinks attracting more women to trades might be a matter of exposing them to the option. "Starting early—even in elementary school—and letting them know that going into a trade is a viable option is important," she says.

Sixteen years ago, not everyone was convinced that this was the right choice for McCurdy, but after numerous opportunities to travel and being offered the chance to implement the 3D Duct program, she is certain that it was. "I am still learning every day and that's what keeps it interesting."



Nicky Stockton studied at BCIT at the same time as McCurdy, and the pair went through the pre-apprentice program together. Stockton started at United Sheet Metal, but was laid off after nine months. Afterwards, she went to Cross-town for nine years, and she has been with Main Sheet Metal for the past 5-1/2 years.

Stockton chose architectural sheet metal because of the variety, which is why working at Main doing small, custom jobs has been a great fit for her.

"You never know from one minute to the next what material you'll be using. You might be working on props for a movie set, stainless kitchen pieces, or aluminum or copper ornamental work. I like that variety and also that you get to see a job through from start to finish."

Working in trades wasn't a stretch for Stockton, who grew up around her father's and grandfather's metal working shops. She'd used tools and learned early that she enjoyed working with her hands.

"Although the lack of women in trades may have to do with women not wanting to get their hands dirty, there are plenty of men who feel the same way," says Stockton. "I think it's really more about whether or not a person is mechanically minded."

Overall, Stockton says her trade needs more people, not just more women. "Trades are something I would like to see more people aspire to rather than settle for," she says. "A lot of youngsters are just using it as a filler while they are on their way to something else bigger and better. It would be nice to see people who really want it, male or female."

She thinks that if they understood they get a decent wage to train straight out of school, and that in four years they could make "quite a lot of money," they'd be more encouraged.

Like Sadler, Stockton had to prove herself, especially while she was apprenticing. She pushed herself to acquire more skills both in the shop and at night school. "I wanted to be better. I think I had to be better," she says. ■

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*Krippendorf is editor of British Columbia SMACNA's Sheet Metal Journal. This article was originally published in Sheet Metal Journal, Summer 2009.*

# Drop the Green Flag for Excellence

**A** belief that SMWIA craftsmen and women are the best in the world at what they do and have been for generations is not always enough to convince a building owner or manager to award work to a signatory contractor.

“It’s time for all of us to take a hard look at ourselves and our industry and to renew the personal commitments each of us made when we became SMWIA members—a commitment that called on us to be the best craftsmen and women in the world.

“That commitment now is in writing, and that document is called the SMWIA Code of Excellence program,” says SMWIA general president Michael J. Sullivan in the presentation of the Code of Excellence DVD, recently created by SMACNA and SMWIA.

The Code of Excellence is an SMWIA program that demonstrates to employers and their clients that contracting the services of its members is synonymous with contracting excellence.

Basic tenets of the program include a commitment to working a full eight hours when getting paid for eight hours and demonstrating a professional appearance. Contractors’ responsibilities include addressing job performance issues in a timely manner and ensuring proper job planning, supervision, and layout.

“I hope the Code of Excellence DVD does the job, helping us build pride and peer pressure to deliver excellence—every day, on every job,” says former SMACNA President John Ilten.

He urges contactors to take time for a reality check and become better and sharper. He also urges labor to recognize that the product they are selling may not be perceived as valuable and as exclusive as it once was.

“We’re counting on the skill and expertise of our sheet metal workers to deliver the professional excellence required as we sit at the table with the owners throughout the construction process,” Ilten adds.

Included on the Code of Excellence DVD are testimonials from craftsmen and women about their commitment to the program. “I think that anything you work for that hard,

you should put your all into...,” says Tamara McCollough, journey person from local 73.

The DVD has been sent to all signatory contractors, SMACNA chapters, JATCs, and SMWIA business managers, agents, international representatives, and organizers for them to use in promoting the program.

In addition, it will be shown at the 2010 Partnership Conference in Las Vegas, and order forms for free copies will be in each registration packet. Copies are also available free of charge on the Partners in Progress website at [pinp.org](http://pinp.org). Click on the “Order DVDs” button at the bottom of the page. ■





SMACNA contractors and SMWIA members will have to adjust to a changing industry.

By Skip Maloney



**L**ane shifts, whether you're in a vehicle on an interstate highway or looking at the future of the HVAC industry, can be tricky. All the warning signs, announcements, and diagrams in the world don't amount to much if the "driver" isn't paying attention or fails to stay fully alert.

"Our trade is transforming and creating a shift in the way we do business. We can't exist anymore just hanging duct work," says Tony Picarazzi, administrator of the National Energy Management Institute (NEMI).

Finding out how SMACNA contractors and SMWIA members can create a strategy to adapt and capitalize on the changing marketplace was the driver behind New Horizons Foundation's *The HVAC and Sheet Metal Industry Futures Study*.

New Horizons Foundation is an industry initiative sponsored by SMACNA contractors and chapters, industry partners, and leading academic researchers.

"Conclusions in this report aren't from a crystal ball, Ouija board, or a futurist's brain. They were formed from speaking



with a cross-section of knowledgeable individuals within the industry and represent a potential future state,” says George “Butch” Welsch, owner of Welsch Heating and Cooling Company in St. Louis and chairman of the futures task force.

### Future Trends

Factors driving change within the HVAC industry will be sustainability, globalization, work force, and technology. “We expect to see rapid growth in the demand for HVAC services,” Welsch says.

He anticipates the combination of code creation and compliance, performance issues related to energy costs, the sustainability movement, and consumer preference will align and create this significant market demand. Furthermore, he says that anyone who wants to compete in 2012 should understand that

- residential and nonresidential building will become heavily focused on energy conservation, sustainability issues, and “green” (environmentally friendly) construction;

*continued on page 26*



## New Opportunities. New Horizons.

*Excerpted from the New Horizons Foundation newsletter.*

Many New Horizons Foundation contributors are actively involved in the Foundation’s programs and projects. NHF sat down with Fred Streimer of Streimer Sheet Metal Works in Portland, OR, and Guy Gast of the Waldinger Corporation in Des Moines, IA, to get their perspective on how the Foundation is helping them in their business.

**NHF:** Has the Foundation produced materials that are valuable to helping you run your business, especially in challenging economic times?

**FRED:** For me, one of the most valuable things about the Foundation is that it causes business owners to think rather than to do things the same old way. We need to think “What business are we in?” “How should we run it?” We need to focus on operations.

There was a great Foundation project about the difference between union and non-union shops. A classic comment in the report was that non-union shops are more focused on the operations of their business. They are more involved in the actual running of the business—not just worrying about clauses in contracts. We need to pay attention to those kinds of findings. Overall, I’m impressed with the selection of projects. What I see has broadened my view.

**GUY:** I agree with Fred’s comment about making business owners think. I can identify two major benefits to the Foundation. First, it gives me a strategic platform

to help me deal with and react to changes in the sheet metal industry. For example, the Futures Study is valuable because it helps me frame the direction in which I want to take my business. Second, some of the Foundation research recommendations help me to optimize the business that I do have. I would especially recommend the studies on Schedule Compression, Lean Construction, and Pre-Construction Planning.

**NHF:** Is the Foundation as well-known as it should be with signatory contractors and the union?

**GUY:** Many small to mid-size firms are concentrating on getting work and performing work. Time is their challenge. They need to take the time to think about the future of their contracting company—not just tomorrow’s schedule.

Chapters can create an awareness of the value of NHF research findings. In our Chapter, we get a first-hand view and briefing on each new product. From there, it’s up to us individually to decide what recommendations to use or not.

**FRED:** I would certainly like to see New Horizons get better recognition. Too many don’t see or understand the direct value. Guy is exactly on point. Getting our chapters and locals involved is key. They can keep members more attuned to what the Foundation is accomplishing.

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- the demand for retrofit and service work will grow to meet building performance expectations and to serve the large supply of building inventory; and
- building information modeling (BIM), building information systems, lean management techniques, and other productivity tools will become standard operating procedure.

“Despite the current downturn in the residential market, all indications are that this market will be strong in the future,” Welsch says. He has been a long-time advocate of the benefits of being involved in residential and service work.

Welsch expects to see a shift toward more multi-family units, and smaller structures, which will necessitate different building and HVAC requirements.

Furthermore, he thinks that sustainability and green issues will increasingly trickle down to the residential market. “Homeowners will become more driven by performance issues and less by cosmetic appearance.”

Green construction is becoming even more important in the non-residential marketplace. “In many ways ‘green’ is not a new concept for us. In the sheet metal industry, we’ve been working ‘green’ for years,” says Reggie Hohenberger, business manager of local 33.

Philadelphia-area contractors and local 19 felt strongly enough about the issue that they created their own “green expertise” logo and website. Green HVAC Solutions is an initiative design to spread the word about the importance of improving indoor air quality while reducing wasteful energy consumption of HVAC systems.

David Allen, principal and executive vice president of McKinstry Company in Seattle, thinks it’s vitally important to the industry to make that known and get a green strategy in place sooner rather than later. “Should we let some management company test, adjust, balance, tweak HVAC systems or should we do it?”

“Green certification and experience could make the difference between winning and losing contracts” says Hohenberger.

Many building owners are already indicating that they’ll require some level of green certification on almost all new construction and retrofit projects, and the trend is only expected to increase.

Another thing more and more building owners will require—and contractors will need to survive—is proficiency in BIM and other productivity tools. (Read the article on BIM in this issue.) “Our craftsmen will need different training and to adopt an entirely new way of thinking,” says Matt Cramer, president of Dee Cramer, Inc. in Michigan.

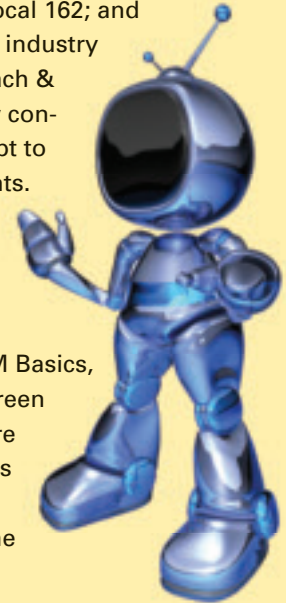
## What to Do

“There’s a lot to be done between now and 2018,” says Dennis Bradshaw, executive director of the New Horizons Foundation. “We have to find a way to go around those built-up excuses about people can’t do things and get them excited about taking the right steps now.”

## The Future Ain’t What It Used to Be

Get additional perspective about the future of the HVAC industry by attending a Thursday breakout session on the subject at the 2010 Partners in Progress Conference in Las Vegas. Speakers David Allen, principal and executive vice president of McKinstry Company in Seattle; Dennis Canevari, business manager and president for local 162; and John Garofalo, a principal of industry consulting firm Callahan/Roach & Garofalo, will talk about how contractors and locals must adapt to changing market requirements.

Additional related breakout sessions will include Emerging Growth Markets, Green Expertise, Resident & Service Markets = \$\$\$\$\$, BIM Basics, and Mining Gold from the Green Building Revolution. For more information, visit the Partners in Progress website at [pinp.org](http://pinp.org) and click on the link to the conference.



“Change is coming faster and faster,” says Michael Sullivan, general president of SMWIA. “It’s kind of like rolling a snowball down the hill. It’s picking up speed all the time.”

Sullivan is concerned about addressing two big bumps in the sheet metal industry’s way: contractors and union members. “We need contractors to adapt to the change, do business different than in the past, and take on new markets. We also need to get SMWIA membership on the same page, understanding that the industry will change whether or not we do, and educating themselves to deal with it.”

Sheet metal contractors of the future will likely look different than those of today. “In some respects, they’ll be more specialized, which means the old model of ‘one-size-fits-all’ training will become a relic of the past,” Sullivan says.

Welsch agrees. “We’ll need skills and expertise that we’ve never needed before. Sometimes the changes are small, but they matter. If we keep doing things the way we’ve always done, we’ll find that our customers have moved on without us.” ■

*Maloney is a freelancer writer based in North Carolina. Download a copy of the study executive summary in the New Horizons Foundation’s bookstore at [newhorizonsfoundation.org](http://newhorizonsfoundation.org). Hard copy and PDF version of the study are available for sale.*

# You're In My Territory Now!

Find solutions to regional issues in the Partners in Progress regional breakouts.

**P**ut business agents and chapter managers in the same room. Throw in a few competing contractors, and mix with apprentices and journeymen from neighboring jurisdictions. What do you get?

Problems? The answer is problem solvers.

“When you have both labor and management at the table it gives instant validation to the ideas that are presented. It lessens the ability for one side to use the excuse that it is ‘the other sides’ idea,” says Robert Zahner, senior vice president of Zahner Co.

This concept is what’s behind the biannual Partners in Progress conferences. In 2010, to ensure the concerns discussed and the solutions presented address regional issues—and not just a national perspective—this year’s conference will offer regional breakouts, with separate moderators for the Northeast, Midwest, South, Southwest, and West.

Regional breakouts were first implemented at the 2008 partnership conference and were met with enthusiasm. The most often heard comment from attendees was that they wished the sessions were longer.

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“Sometimes when we hear a great idea, we think ‘that’s fine for them, but it would never work here,’” says Joe Nigro, general secretary-treasurer of SMWIA. “When the ideas come from someone who deals with the same market conditions, labor issues, and personalities, it’s possible to identify the realistic solutions.”

In preparation for the conference, SMACNA and SMWIA asked their members to rate the importance of several issues. The organizations compiled the results by region.

Participants in the Northeast, Midwest, South, and Southwest all ranked attracting better quality applicants to the workforce as their most important issue related to training and future leadership needs.

Those in the Western and Rocky Mountain states and provinces are more concerned about finding ways to provide instruction on new and emerging technologies.

As for issues related to competitiveness and expanding market share, respondents from the Northeast and Rocky Mountains are concerned most about developing labor and management collaboration to advance the industry. The Northeast also considers reducing or eliminating ratios as a vital discussion topic.

In Midwestern and Western states, concerns are more

related to addressing health and welfare costs, while the Midwestern and Rocky Mountain states are anxious to find ways to increase or regain market share in industrial work.

Respondents from Southern, Southwestern, and Western states want to address pension funding issues. Furthermore, Southern, Southwestern and Rocky Mountain states want to discuss ways to increase market share in the residential and light commercial markets.

Rocky Mountains is the only area that ranks increasing and regaining market share in the architectural market as “very important.”

During each of the regional sessions, participants will sit at tables with both labor-and management representatives and spend time discussing and developing plans of actions.

As part of the wrap-up of the PINP conference on Saturday morning, Mark Breslin, strategist, speaker, and author on labor-management relations, will present ideas from these plans of action.

“Men, at some times, are masters of their fate,” says Breslin, quoting Shakespeare. “These sessions are your chance.”

He thinks that more than just a vague “good idea” is necessary to change strategies.

“The format used with the regional breakouts is good for obtaining buy-in and putting together a workable action plan.” ■

