

Partners **IN** PROGRESS

SMACNA & SMWIA—Building A Future Together Vol. 6 No. 5

Industrial Market Growth: Are We Ready?

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SMWIA Codifies Excellence

SMWIA will present its new Code of Excellence Program to local unions beginning January 2009. The program is designed to enhance productivity, professionalism, craftsmanship, safety, attendance, fitness for duty, jobsite behavior, and responsibility.

“It covers things you would expect of every single person on the job, nothing that an average member wouldn’t be expected to comply with,” says SMWIA Chief of Staff Rich McClees. “It will demonstrate to employees and their clients that contracting the services of SMWIA members is synonymous with contracting excellence.”



SMWIA General President Michael J. Sullivan agrees. “The future of our membership and the SMWIA is dependent upon our ability to establish an added value to the employers and end users within the sheet metal industry.”

Attendees at the 2008 SMWIA Business Agents’ Conference indicated that the program offers value—especially when it comes to organizing new contractors—and that they would support it.

Prior to implementation, local union membership must ratify the Code. Specific issues of concern to locals, chapters, and contractors can be incorporated into the Code of Excellence Program; however, the key components of the Code must be consistently applied. Key components include:

1. **Commitment**—Commitment must exist at every level of leadership, with membership acceptance, in order to abide by the responsibilities stated within the program.
2. **Business Manager**—Business Managers or their designees are empowered to address workplace issues with members and to communicate to employers the individual workplace needs requiring management involvement.
3. **Member Professionalism**—SMWIA members have a responsibility to their union and fellow members to present themselves and represent their local union in a professional manner. This includes meeting employer and end user expectations about work performed.
4. **Member Responsibility**—If a member is failing to meet the standards, it is incumbent upon each member to assist each other in meeting standards.
5. **Consequences of Failure**—SMWIA members must clearly understand the consequences if they fail to meet the customer’s needs. The ability of the union to ensure good wages and working conditions is directly related to the memberships’ ability to perform.

“Contractor support and participation will be critical to the success of the Code of Excellence Program,” says SMACNA President John Ilten. “We recommend that SMACNA chapters and contractors meet with their Locals as soon as possible to discuss their needs and make possible ratification and implementation of the code.” ■

Grab the Bull by the Horns

NYC's sheet metal industry takes on the challenge of direct bidding.

By Skip Maloney



New York City SMACNA, SMACNA of Long Island, and Sheet Metal Workers' Local 28 have formed a partnership to grow market share for the sheet metal industry of New York via an Airside Direct Bid program.

Prior to World War II, much of the HVAC work on construction sites was related to “wet side” activities—moving water through pipes.

With the advent of air conditioning, more emphasis was placed on the “air side”—moving air through ducts. This work became the responsibility of a then-young sheet metal industry, but it was still subcontracted via the wet side—through mechanical contractors.

continued on page 4



Airside Direct's brochure addresses the many advantages of dealing directly with a sheet metal contractor.

continued from page 3

Typically, construction managers and general contractors put out for bid the air side portion of large multimillion-dollar work directly to sheet metal contractors. They recognize the benefits of this business decision include substantial cost savings, greater project control, top technical expertise, and immediate response.

The Airside Direct Bid program is designed to build on the business decision made by the construction managers and general contractors on large projects by informing them about the additional advantages of allowing air side contractors to bid directly on all dollar-value airside work.

Airside Direct means that projects are sketched quickly, allowing drawings to be distributed rapidly to other trades to expedite the project schedule. Further, because the program offers a substantial savings on jobsite overtime, it can typically reduce a five-week schedule to four weeks at no additional cost.



As part of the commitment to quality, the Airside Direct Bid contract includes all work that a sheet metal contractor traditionally performs plus any unique project requirements. Airside contracts must include all sheet metal ductwork, variable air volume and air outlets, duct insulation, air side testing and balancing, fans other than those directly associated with the air conditioning unit, dampers, functional louvers that are not part of the curtain wall, fan maintenance during the day shift, and all other work traditionally performed by the sheet metal contractor.



The labor management partnership had a public relations firm develop a brochure and conduct a targeted direct mail campaign to general contractors and construction managers in the New York City area.

“This has been marketed by us over the last six months, and we’ve seen a great deal of positive response,” says Tom Doherty, coordinator of the sheet metal industry of New York. “We’ve made presentations to construction managers emphasizing the depth and experience of our industry.”

Because the Airside Direct Bid program is a collaborative effort between the industry’s labor and management, it offers general contractors and construction managers more than elimination of a mechanical contractor middleman.

Incentives for choosing the direct bid option include reducing or eliminating overtime charges, guaranteeing no work stoppages, enabling an enhanced apprentice ratio, and providing project-specific work rules.

Sheet metal contractors who have all too often found themselves on the wrong side of the subcontracting equation are enthusiastically embracing the Airside Direct Bid program.

“The mechanical contractor is like a broker, sitting in some 20-by-20 office somewhere,” says Michael Checchi, president of the New York City Sheet Metal Contractors’ Association. “Why should he be marking up my bid prices?”

While happy with initial responses to the Airside Direct program, Michael Belluzzi, President and Business Manager of Local 28, recognizes that there’s a lot more work to be done. “We’ve just scratched the surface,” he says. “Progress seems slow, but we are making sure we take all the right steps.”

While there is a lot to be said for and about this Airside Direct Bid program, there is also a sense among the labor and management representatives of the sheet metal industry of New York that the cooperation among the parties involved in the program is as significant as the program itself.

“Without the support of Local 28, we wouldn’t be able to offer these incentives,” Doherty notes. “Our contractors have the expertise, but the incentives are provided by the Local.”

“It’s essential for the health of our industry that SMACNA and the SMWIA work together on market expansion

Why Not Here?

Direct bidding could be the answer to market expansion for the signatory sheet metal industry beyond New York City. Ask the folks in Peoria, Ill.

“It’d play very well here in Peoria,” says Bill Comstock, business manager of Peoria’s SMWIA Local 1. “It would definitely be something that this union, in cooperation with contractors, would be interested in pursuing.”

With a total population estimated in 2005 at just under 370,000 people (compared to New York City’s population of over 8 million), Peoria is a city where most of the available sheet metal contracts would be defined as “small” and many of the sheet metal contractors are also mechanical and HVAC contractors.

Scott Ciccirelli, president of one of those combination mechanical/sheet metal contractors—The Pipco Companies, Ltd.—acknowledges the benefits of New York’s Airside Direct program, while noting that his company, by virtue of its dual capabilities, already bids the “air side” work directly.

“If I were strictly a ventilation house, I’d be all over a program like Airside Direct,” he says.

activities,” says Tom Luerssen, President of SMACNA Long Island. ■

Maloney is a freelance writer based in North Carolina. For further information about the Sheet Metal Industry of New York’s Airside Direct Program and other programs sponsored by the area’s organizational collaboration between labor and management, log on to their website at www.sheetmetalny.com.

The collage consists of five overlapping brochure pages. The first page on the left is titled "HIGH STANDARDS FOR OUR WORKFORCE" and features a photo of a worker. The second page is titled "HIGH STANDARDS FOR SAFETY" and includes a photo of workers in a shop. The third page is titled "HIGH STANDARDS FOR PRODUCTIVITY" and shows a worker at a workbench. The fourth page is titled "THE STANDARDS WE SET" and has a dark background with white text. The fifth page on the right is titled "THE STANDARDS WE KEEP" and features a photo of a worker in a hard hat.

Help Wanted

Find new opportunities in power generation projects.

By Steve Grieco

A new era of power generation projects is on the horizon, with dozens of nuclear, coal, and ethanol plants on the drawing board—some are even already underway.

“These are behemoth jobs,” says Rob Biedermann, President and CEO of JB Henderson Construction in Albuquerque, N.M., which has a contract for work at the National Enrichment Facility in Eunice, N.M. “Even the scraps that fall off the table are huge jobs, and because it is risky work, profit potential is higher than your typical commercial work.”

Federal agencies and industry are concerned about the lack of a skilled labor to complete these projects. “One of the greatest obstacles for the expanding power industry is lack of competent subcontractors,” says Ed Shyloski, International Vice President for Shaw Power Group’s nuclear division.

He attributes this void to simultaneous growth in multiple industries, natural disaster work, escalation in labor and raw materials costs, tighter financial guarantees that make it harder for subcontractors to obtain letters of credit, and tighter insurance coverage.

Profit potential is higher than your typical commercial work.

Some of the primary discriminators that Shaw Power Group uses when selecting subcontractors include:

- **safety**—is the contractor committed to safety; do records verify dedication to performing work in a safe manner?
- **quality assurance/quality control**—is the contractor cognizant of Nuclear QA/QC requirements and prepared to implement the necessary standards of quality?
- **estimating capabilities**—what are the contractor's estimating capabilities; is the contractor willing to stand behind estimates, or is it looking to be made whole via change order work?
- **financial resources**—can the contractor call upon Parent Guarantees or secure lines of credit to back their performance obligations at little or no cost to the Company?
- **supervision and manpower resources**—does the contractor have a large pool of craft labor to draw upon; are there existing relationships with regional labor and International unions; are field management personnel promoted from within to provide for a devoted, experienced supervisory staff?
- **equipment resources**—does the contractor have enough capital equipment and the maintenance facilities to maintain it; does it have strong business and cost relationships with major equipment suppliers if leasing will be required?

“We need to stand up and let both government and industry know we have the capabilities to support their projects,” Biedermann says.

Geography is possibly the biggest challenge to successful SMWIA and SMACNA involvement in energy projects, says Charles F. Mulcahy, SMWIA's Chief International Representative and Director of Jurisdiction.

“Much of the need—and opportunity—will be in the Southeast, where most new nuclear plants are planned. SMWIA and SMACNA have very low representation in these states,” he adds. “Signatory contractors in other regions of the country may need to step out geographically as a matter of survival.”

Mulcahy sees huge potential for ambitious contractors who are willing to get their feet wet in power generation work. Offsite fabrication for coal projects can include heavy ducts, vessels, conveyor systems, hoppers and chutes, and coal fuel piping. In addition, there is installation work covering sheeting, roof decking, louvers, HVAC, lagging, and dust recovery systems.

“Both SMWIA and SMACNA members can thrive with power generation work,” agrees Tom Szymczak, owner and operations manager of SSM Industries, Inc., in Pittsburgh. “The rewards are well worth the risks and time spent planning.”

Biedermann agrees, but advises contractors to go in with their eyes wide open. “If you have an interest, get involved now as much as you can and collect information as early as possible.”

Before accepting bids or designating approved suppliers, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires contractors to acquire Nuclear Quality Assurance, Level 1 (NQA1) certification and to demonstrate a safety culture.

“It's not just about doing quality work,” Biedermann says. “It's about doing quality work while documenting that the work has been done in a certain manner.”

In order to help meet such requirements at the National Enrichment Facility, JB Henderson partnered with competitor Yearout Mechanical to create an entity called H-Y TECH. This spin-off has already generated significant revenue for its parent companies, winning projects over large, out-of-state contractors.

One reason for this success has been careful planning for cash flow needs. Because H-Y TECH's labor costs approach seven figures per week when work is in full swing, management requested accelerated (weekly) billings and established paid-when-paid agreements with suppliers.

SSM Industries' Szymczak says the track Biedermann and H-Y TECH have navigated may actually be easier than the one he experienced from the late-1960s until the mid-1980s, during the last boom in power generation work.

Szymczak's company—then called Schneider Sheet Metal—underwent strong, steady growth during that period, working on two coal fire plants and five nuclear facilities. Each project involved installing more than two million pounds of sheet metal as ducts and hangars. Financial payout amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars, but Szymczak recalls horror stories related to the seismic and welding inspections. “You don't have to worry about that sort of thing happening today,” he says. “New generation nuclear power plants use precise construction specifications.”

SMWIA and SMACNA offer assistance to ambitious contractors considering power plant projects, helping them make connections with major general contractors. They held a Power Generation Summit in Washington, D.C. to showcase the latest information on the growth of the power industries.

Further, the International Training Institute has developed concentrated training—a fast track for welders with some experience who want to get into an apprenticeship—to address the tremendous need for welders. ■

Grieco is a freelance writer based in Blacksburg, Va. Presentations from the Power Generation Summit are available for download on the Industrial Contractors Council's page at smacna.org/councils/industrial.



Take a Deep Breath

© Corbis

Opportunities in the industrial ventilation market are expanding

By Skip Maloney

Industrial ventilation work could provide opportunities for signatory contractors and SMWIA Locals over the next five years, according to a recent study commissioned by the National Energy Management Institute (NEMI), which is sponsored by the SMWIA and SMACNA.

This work covers maintenance, service, design and replacement of fume, particulate, and dust collection systems. It also covers all ductwork systems (hoods, exhaust stacks, dampers, equipment supports) and sheet metal fabrication (chutes, hoppers, conveyance equipment, structural support frames and platforms, fans and blowers).

In the *Industrial Ventilation Market Research* report, FMI predicts that between 2008 and 2013 the industrial ventilation market could increase 56%, with potential growth of almost 150%—from \$1.5 billion to \$3.8 billion—over the next 10 years. Performing this work will require 44% more union craftsmen, increasing totals from 1,600 in 2008 to 2,320 in 2013.

Predictions were based on a thorough scan of industry/trade publications and government data based on a 5% response rate to a questionnaire.

“Had the report garnered a larger sample,” says Mike Chase, a market research analyst with FMI and co-author of the report, “I think that it might have indicated greater opportunities for growth in the power generation market.”

What’s driving this growth, despite difficult market conditions? FMI claims that among the most important factors are concerns for employee safety, energy savings, and code compliance. Indeed, regulatory changes on the horizon will create growth opportunities in the industrial ventilation market.

What it all comes down to is SMWIA Locals, and signatory contractors, SMACNA chapters, and JATCs would do well to adopt a pro-active approach to the industrial ventilation market.

FMI’s report recommends creating educational material on this market and creating new types of certification, based on Green Building and energy efficiency initiatives.

“Locals, contractors, chapters, and JATCs would do well to adopt a proactive approach to the industrial ventilation market,” says Rob Stoker, Business Representative of the San Francisco/East Bay area’s Local 104. In a recent round of negotiations, cooperation between contractors and the union expanded the definition of work that can be performed by SMWIA Production Workers, which helped secure the contract and laid the groundwork for future industrial contracts.

“The market could increase from \$1.5 billion to \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years.”

According to Stoker, only about 5% of Local 104’s current work comes from the industrial market. “But if more contractors bid on this sort of work, there will be more opportunities for young apprentices to fall in love with this work and for us to sign up more members.”

Potential skill sets required for industrial ventilation services include rigging and hoisting, airflow design application, mechanical industry experience, and TAB certification.

Though the skills are not much different than required for traditional or architectural fabrication, basic tools will need to be larger and capable of higher capacities.

“Most important, providers of industrial ventilation must have the ability to adapt to evolving customer demands and market changes,” Chase concludes. ■

Maloney is a freelance writer based in North Carolina. The study is available on NEMI's website (nemionline.org) in the Downloads section.

Stay Limber

Melrose Metal Products' success lies in adjusting to changing markets.

By Skip Maloney

When Mitch Hoppe's father, Harry, decided to become a contractor in 1976, he purchased Melrose, a sheet metal company established in 1925 and engaged in San Francisco's cannery industry.

Despite changes in the Bay area's industrial market, Melrose Metal Products continues to flourish more than 80 years later in its 40,000 square foot fabrication facility. As one of the largest industrial sheet metal contractors in the area, Melrose generates between 50,000 and 60,000 sheet metal man hours per year.

"From that time until now," says Hoppe, "we've postured ourselves to go after work in the industrial market—from searching for new opportunities to cultivating those already in existence."

What has made possible such long-term success? "We embarked from a solid base," Hoppe adds. "Dad started Melrose Metal with industry experience, some tools, a bit of equipment, and an infrastructure."

Coming from the SMWIA ranks, Harry ensured his firm would be signatory. (He went on to serve on SMACNA's national board of directors, as president of California SMACNA, and as president of what is now Bay Area SMACNA.)

Those early years taught lessons about working in the industrial market, including how to build with extra heavy duty materials and components, such as 100% stain-





less steel. “No environment is harder on equipment than a cannery,” Hoppe says.

Such schooling came in handy in the 1970s and into the 1980s, when Melrose Metal Products was able to capitalize on a strong industrial base that included work for Caterpillar, Peterbuilt and Mack Truck.

Today, the “smoke-stack industries” are all but gone from the San Francisco Bay Area, along with their support personnel and the smaller companies that supplied them with parts.

“We service what’s left,” Hoppe says. “We have also found a niche addressing the needs of the service-oriented industries that replaced the smokestacks.”

In many cases, Melrose has helped transform what was formerly industrial space into something more suitable for new tenants. “As a result,” Hoppe adds, “we’ve played a part in revitalizing the old industrial areas.”

That doesn’t mean industrial work is dead at Melrose. “We manufacture and install various forms of equipment for foundries, refineries, automotive plants, sugar producers, and coffee companies,” Hoppe says. “We also do ancillary work, such as structural platforms and decks, to support manufacturing process.”

This type of industrial work requires fabrication capabilities beyond what an average HVAC shop is equipped to perform. “Most sheet metal contractors can’t handle the heavy gauge materials our clients require,” Hoppe says.

Performing industrial work isn’t all about having the right equipment. It also involves ensuring access to adequate numbers of trained craftsmen.

“We’ve learned to communicate with the Local about our present and future labor needs—from welding to rigging and hoisting work—so that when we make the call, there is someone available to fill it,” Hoppe says.

With industrial market growth looking positive, Melrose and other SMACNA contractors and Local 104 have worked together to identify ways to make bids not just competitive, but also attractive to potential clients.

“If contractors are more competitive in their bidding and bring in more contracts, then we can put more of our members to work,” says Rob Stoker, Local 104’s business representative.

SMACNA and SMWIA’s partnership during the last contract negotiation resulted in creation of a new worker classification, Industrial Specialist, which allows contractors to offer substantial savings to prospective clients.

“We had to consider where the market was going if we didn’t make some sort of ‘outside the box’ change,” Stoker says. “This solution may not only help us save the industrial market for signatory contractors, but also it could create industrial market expansion.” ■

Maloney is a freelance writer based in North Carolina. For more information about Melrose Metal Products, visit the company’s website at gomelrose.com. Get insight into the Industrial Market by visiting SMACNA’s Industrial Contractors’ Council web page at smacna.org/councils/industrial.

Warming Up to Industrial Work

Creating a Local Industrial Addenda may open doors to increasing market share. By mid-2008, 21 Local Industrial Addenda had been filed at SMACNA’s Labor Relations Department—10 in the Midwest, five each in the South and East, and one in the West. SMACNA recently compiled a report to compare these addenda.

Most locally negotiated Industrial Addenda are intended to provide some relief from Building Trade terms and conditions on fabrication and installation of industrial materials and products.

Although existing Addenda vary widely, they can be divided into two broad categories, the majority that pertain to shop fabrication of industrial materials and products and a few that cover fabrication and installation work within an existing manufacturing facility but do not contain separate Industrial Worker classifications or reduced wage or fringe rates.

Virtually all local Addenda contain language that requires companies to subcontract installation and erection to contractors employing journeyworkers sheet metal workers. In addition, most local Industrial Addenda require the company to furnish information to the union on the sale of fabricated products and equipment to general or specialty contractors.

About half of the Addenda contain shift premiums. They are generally expressed as a percentage of the employee’s hourly rate. Several of these prohibit shift work unless the shifts are more than two or consecutive five days in duration.

To obtain the full report on Industrial Addenda, download a copy from SMACNA’s Industrial Contractors Council web page at smacna.org/councils/industrial.

No Time Like the Present

ITI's Industrial Curriculum prepares workforce for contractors' demand.

By Cari B. Clark

Rumors of the demise of industrial work in North America is greatly exaggerated, says Steve Kowats, industrial specialist for the International Training Institute (ITI).

"A wide variety of industrial work is currently available," Kowats says.

"Most manufacturing companies need someone to handle ongoing maintenance of custom sheet metal systems, expansion projects, and construction of related items, such as safety guards for production line workers."

In fact, a resurgence of industrial work in North America has given rise to demand for training on how to design, construct, maintain, and repair sheet metal items used in manufacturing, food service, automotive work, pharmaceuticals, and waste containment.

Kevin Malley, marketing representative for SMWIA Local 12 in Pittsburgh, says industrial work is changing in new and unique ways. "For example, we have a contractor who makes stainless steel containers to hold expended fuel rods from nuclear power plants."

With new methods for energy production on the table, sheet metal work is becoming more and more in demand. Local 12 works with another signatory contractor with contracts to assist with methane reclamation from landfills.

"Ten to 15% of our jobs are industrial," says Nathan Dills, vice president of Midwest Fabricators, LLC in Oklahoma City. "Three of our accounts are always in need of work. One moves ingredients for dog food through stainless steel ductwork."

Since the factory's production line shuts down on weekends, Midwest Fabricators provides overtime work there every other weekend. "We employ about 20 guys on Saturday and eight or 10 on Sunday," Dills says.

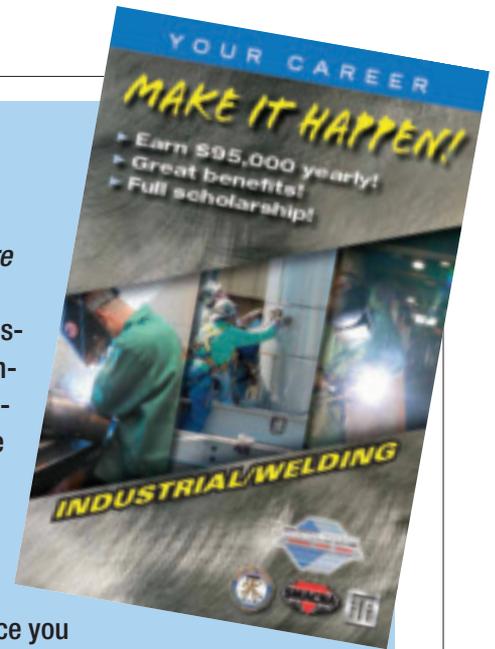


Make it Happen!

Excerpted from ITI's Your Career: Make It Happen (Industrial/Welding) brochure

ITI's Industrial Curriculum covers all the skills you'll need to work in an industrial sheet metal jobsite. By mixing classwork, projects and on-the-job training, your SMWIA training will make you a well-rounded professional, thoroughly familiar with critical safety and effective work practices. During the apprenticeship, you will see, hear and experience sheet metal work.

Your teachers are veteran industry professionals. You get hands-on instruction, using state-of-the-art tools and equipment. Your textbooks include the most up-to-date information about how the trade works today. Your classroom is a learning laboratory giving you valuable experience you will apply on the job. At the same time, you will be working in the trade—earning and learning alongside skilled journeyworkers—to understand how your class work applies in the real world.



Other work includes fabrication of chemical waste containment, and recycling containers. “We use guys to work on stainless or black iron, depending on the application,” Dills adds. He says that in the Oklahoma oil fields, welders are being scooped up left and right.

Kowats has been instrumental in creating ITI's curriculum for industrial training. He also designed the instructors' training program. “We spent a year working with a task force consisting of contractors and top craftsmen to determine its contents.”

The Residential curriculum features four levels or modules of expertise for apprentices:

1. Residential New Construction Installer
2. A/C Finish Installer
3. Retrofit Technician
4. Residential Service Technician

It's possible to use the program to train to any or all of these levels, depending on regional needs or specific goals.

The program also provides an overview of materials and installation, duct design, commonly used systems and new technology, market trends, thermal and mechanical cutting, welding, safety practices, and intensive mathematics.

Once the curriculum was written, it had to be converted to a presentation format. “The industrial curriculum has a very large scope. It is DVD driven and covers everything from system design to finishing and polishing,” Kowats says.

It also covers thermal and mechanical cutting, several types of welding, safety practices, and intensive mathematics.

At Local 124 in Oklahoma City, industrial training is a career path, rather than part of general training, says apprenticeship coordinator Trent London. “Apprentices learn drafting, reading blueprints, and how to design. In addition, there's a full module on materials handling, covering hoisting and rigging.”

As apprentices complete this type of specialized training, contractors are better able to bid related work in their areas, because they have the confidence that there will be a workforce to support it.

“Our plan is each year to work more hours toward specializations,” says Pat Cassidy, certified welding instructor for Local 12 in Pittsburgh.

Dills has been happy with the results he's seen coming out of ITI's programs. “The journeyworkers and apprentices we get are coming to us fully prepared to do what we need them to do,” he says. ■

Clark is a freelance writer based in Springfield, Va. For more information about the Industrial Curriculum, visit the International Training Institute's website at sheetmetal-iti.org/curric_weld.htm.



Recruiting: 101



Tips for meeting workforce needs.

by Ricardo González

It's getting more and more difficult to recruit quality craftsmen for the construction trades. As a result, the signatory sheet metal industry is searching for creative solutions for workforce issues.

Recruiting is really another word for marketing. It is about selling the industry to potential apprentices, anyone with experience in the trade, parents and families, and even counselors who direct people into colleges and universities instead of the trades.

“Go after the best, and you’ll be the best.”

Effective recruiting programs—such as TradeUp New Mexico and Florida’s industry nights—are systematic, professional, and serious about taking the sales perspective. They offer brochures, posters, websites, and follow-up calls and letters for prospective workers.

Who Do I Recruit?

Whereas it’s possible to teach job skills via apprenticeship, it’s unlikely to make much difference in a person’s character, regardless of how much effort you devote. Thus, resources are better used recruiting individuals who already possess desirable personal and interpersonal skills.

Start by making a list of the top 10 qualities of your best apprentices, journeyworkers, foremen, and supervisors. Make sure any new recruits have at least seven of these characteristics. Go after the best, and you’ll be the best.

One of the qualities to pay particular attention to is aptitude for leadership. As Mark Breslin said at the Partners in Progress Conference, the best way to solve market expansion issues is by increasing our ability to supervise.

Leaders are people who have ambition, desire, and vision. They want to grow. They want to move up. They feel and sense a unique calling, different from a person who simply wants to follow-through on assignments.

With these characteristics in mind, reaching out only to the same population groups currently in the industry is no longer adequate. Women and minority groups offer an untapped labor source with the potential to solve our workforce shortages.

Hispanics, or Latinos, are one of the fastest growing groups in the United States and Canada and often exhibit a strong work ethic and desire to succeed—exactly what we need. Still, recruiting Latinos into the sheet metal workforce carries a unique set of cultural and business challenges.

For example, when recruiting family members, if one family member leaves, you may lose several others; and if someone dies, funerals typically last two or three days—all day and night, in the Latin culture.

Where Should I Recruit?

Talented sheet metal workers don’t simply appear on your doorstep. Typically, it’s necessary to go looking for them. Contractors that work closely with their Locals can develop cooperatives to recruit the best people for the available opportunities. Whether your company finds the right people and sends them to the Local or the Local finds them is not the main issue. The issue is working together to find the correct people.

The following are my three top places for recruiting Latino workers:

Schools. Many young people have no immediate plans to enter college. In fact, the high school drop-out rate among Hispanics in the United States is around 50%. Among those who graduate, many simply don’t have the finances or motivation to sit in a classroom day after day learning theory. This

leaves a large pool of talented youth who are looking for viable alternatives.

Reaching into high schools through establishing pre-apprenticeship programs and supporting vocational programs keeps the doors open for those who are most suited for the trades. Such a strategy ensures that individuals who are fluent in English (or else they couldn’t graduate) and who like to work with their hands keep apprenticeship in the trades on their radar and are ready to apply.

Ensure that counselors, teachers, and parents realize there is an alternative to paying tuition (getting paid while training) and that construction is not the job of last resort, rather it’s a rewarding profession with unlimited opportunities for smart, talented people.

Churches. Every minister I know wants to help the people in the congregation find a good career. This not only helps the minister get a firm footing with the family, but it also helps the level of donations to the church.

Ministers are well-placed to know the character traits of those who they recommend and will go out of their way to send you good people, since their reputation is also at stake. If your area has a sizable Hispanic population, you may benefit from making good friends with several of the local Hispanic ministers and holding a job fair with their support.

Latino Associations. In many regions, one or several social organizations cater to the needs of the Hispanic community. They often hold frequent job fairs that allow you to reach deeper into the community and speak directly to your most promising prospects. Just pick up your local *Páginas Amarillas Hispánicas (Hispanic Yellow Pages)* and let your dedos (fingers) do the walking.

Communicate!

Relationships between Locals and contractors need to be strong and cooperative in order to optimize any recruiting initiative.

Leonardo Otero, Director of Field Operations for Yearout Mechanical in Albuquerque, N.M., has seen that principle in action. “Sometimes we have found the right people and send them to the union for membership and training. Other times, we ask Local 49 to recruit for a new skill that is required in the industry, and they do a great job finding and training the right people.” ■

This is the second in a series of articles about dealing with cultural issues in the workforce. Ricardo González is the founder and CEO of Bilingual America. He can be reached at 888-850-1555, via e-mail at rgonzalez@bilingualamerica.com or through Bilingual America’s website at bilingualamerica.com.



Put the Industrial Expertise website to work for you.

By Jim Pierzynski

INDUSTRIALEXPERTISE.COM

SMACNA contractors and SMWIA Locals can use the Industrial Expertise (*IndustrialExpertise.com*) website as an effective online marketing resource to help them capitalize on the growing opportunities in the industrial market sector.

This site—launched in January 2005 by the Sheet Metal Industry Labor-Management Cooperation Fund—showcases the superior expertise of signatory sheet metal contractors.

Since its launch, site traffic has progressively increased, with nearly 4,000 site visits recorded in August 2008. Following is a tour of the various sections of the site along with descriptions of the benefits each section provides.

Becoming more familiar with the site will help you remember to direct potential customers there and potentially gain more business. Don't forget, also, to use the Industrial Expertise logo on your letterhead, invoices, and other printed materials and to link to the *IndustrialExpertise.com* website from your own website.

HOMEPAGE

The homepage is a colorful overview of items included on the Industrial Expertise website. A search feature on the top, right, allows you to find what you are looking for on the site without browsing through all of the content. Browsing, however, is well worth the time.

In addition to browsing, you can subscribe (or unsubscribe) to the Industrial Insights newsletter from the home page. Click on the link at the top of the page to “Sign Up for an E-Newsletter” or the link toward the bottom of the menu at the top, left. You can preview an online version of the newsletter before subscribing.

SMACNA members should e-mail Barbara Hansen bhansen@smacna.org to request modifications of e-newsletter subscriptions.

Links in the Expertise section on the bottom, right, provide quick access to the featured projects and case studies found in the What We Do section of the site (described below). Click on any one area of expertise to go directly to items in the category. To learn more about the highlighted case study, click in the Case Study section.

Clicking on the link at the top of the page will take you directly to the “Find a SMACNA Contractor” page (described below). There is also a link to the SMACNA website at the top of the page.

Don’t ignore the small print at the bottom of the page. Clicking “Contact Us” will open an e-mail addressed to info@industrialexpertise.com. This section also provides a mailing address, phone, and fax information for Industrial Expertise.



WHAT WE DO

This section showcases projects performed by signatory contractors with expertise in power plant, high-tech, pharmaceutical, manufacturing, waste removal, food processing, and automotive work.

For example, projects cover an HVAC update at a launch complex at Cape Canaveral Air Force station; design and fabrication of 15 air filtration units for a nuclear power plant in Taiwan; and \$50,000 worth of piping, plumbing and industrial sheet metal for state-of-the-art Pfizer Pharmaceuticals laboratories.

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Bring Together Partnership and Expertise

Through a series of focus groups, SMACNA and SMWIA have determined that many of your potential customers don’t recognize our organizations or have any idea what a sheet metal worker does.

It’s for this reason that the SMACNA and SMWIA partnership developed an Expertise message to promote the industry.

Several years later, are contractors and locals in your area taking advantage of this branding tool? Is there a link to *IndustrialExpertise.com* from your website? Does the Industrial Expertise logo appear on your letterhead, invoices, and advertising?

One place to start is to complete and submit the simple licensing form found on the Partners in Progress website (right the side at pinp.org). Another is to promote your Industrial Expertise using a press release, such as the one found in *Partnership Communicator*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, excerpted below.

Sample Press Release Promoting Industrial Expertise

contact: Bones McCoy
123-456-7898
bmccoy@smwialu987.org
New Effort On ‘Industrial Expertise’

Teams Workers & Managers

Union workers in industrial HVAC have formed an alliance with their employers—members of the East Podunk Chapter of the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association (SMACNA).

Dan Skinner, business manager of Local Union 987 of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, said his members were looking forward to working with the contractors.

“We need to demonstrate to our past, present, and potential future customers what we can do, and how well we do it,” said Skinner. “We’re using the ‘Industrial Expertise’ logo because that’s what we offer customers.

“For example, not many building owners in Urbanville know that our union and the contractors work together on training. We have a facility on Kennedy Street—our apprenticeship and training center.

“We train apprentices there—the workforce of the future, men and women who are earning while they learn. And we also offer courses there allowing SMWIA members to upgrade their skills—adding new capabilities and expertise, so they can help customers with state-of-the-art solutions to for industrial HVAC problems.”

Mary McKenzie (owner of McKenzie & Mulligan AC, Inc.), president of the SMACNA Chapter, said the cooperative venture itself sent an important message to owners of all industrial facilities.

“Many might have in their heads a stereotype, of union and management battling each other,” McKenzie noted. “SMWIA and SMACNA are working together—we have been, and now we’ve formalized it.

“For pharmaceutical, manufacturing, or power plant facility owners—or architects who design with sheet metal—the message is simple: We’re united to solve your problem, building your system, troubleshoot an installation, build a building, and delight you, the customer.”

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See next page for photography & additional information
2nd page of release

Photos enclosed:

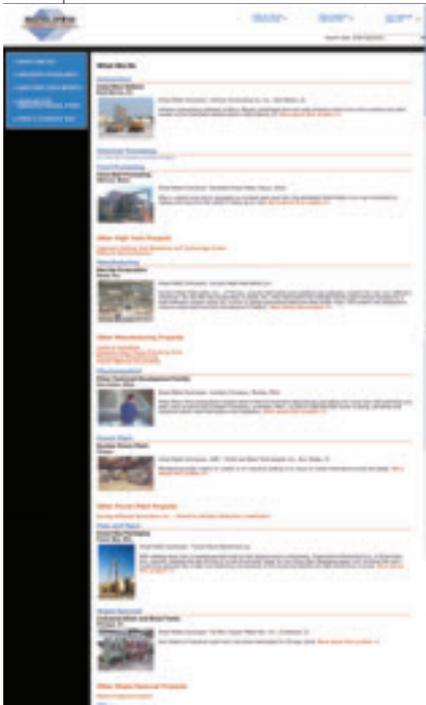
- 1 – glossy color photos of McKenzie & Skinner shaking hands.
- 2 – photo of union leaders and contractors talking about future plans at table
- 3, 4 and 5 – photos of Residential Expertise team members on the job.

NOTE: Skinner & McKenzie are available for interviews. Contact Bones McCoy, 123-456-7898 to set up an interview – bmccoy@smwialu987.org.

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Signatory contractors can submit projects to be included here—the most popular section of the Industrial Expertise site—using SMACNA’s *Industrial Insights* newsletter submission form located at smacna.org/members/pdf/councils/08IndustrialSubmissionForm.pdf. (UserID and Password are required for access.)

Complete and submit the form to Rosalind Raymond via fax at 703-803-3732 or via e-mail at rreymond@smacna.org. Send CDs with high quality pictures of projects to her at SMACNA headquarters. Contact the *Industrial Insights* staff directly at 703-803-2996 with questions or to obtain a copy of the form.



WHY HIRE OUR EXPERTS

This section includes four main areas in which Industrial Expertise contractors are superior in the industrial sheet metal industry—performance, training, standards, and safety.



It’s an excellent resource to convince clients to make contract decisions based on the “big picture,” rather than only on price. For example, industrial owners need contractors whose performance excels when it comes to

- responding to emergency situations,
- meeting tight project deadlines, and
- enabling customers to comply with strict government standards.

Further, they benefit from an industry that is well-trained. Thus, the site discusses the industry’s formal apprenticeship program, journeyworkers training, and certifications.

It also covers the emphasis that signatory contractors—and the entire signatory workforce—place on safety. The section concludes with the fact that signatory contractors have lost workday incident rates well below the national average.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS

This section emphasizes that customers who hire Industrial Expertise contractors get a company and workers who live by—and have been instrumental in developing—the industry’s standards.

FIND A CONTRACTOR

Perhaps the most important part of the Industrial Expertise website is the Find a Contractor section. It enables potential customers to find—and hire—you to complete their industrial work. Users can search by state, as well as within local municipalities. There are even entries for foreign countries, such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

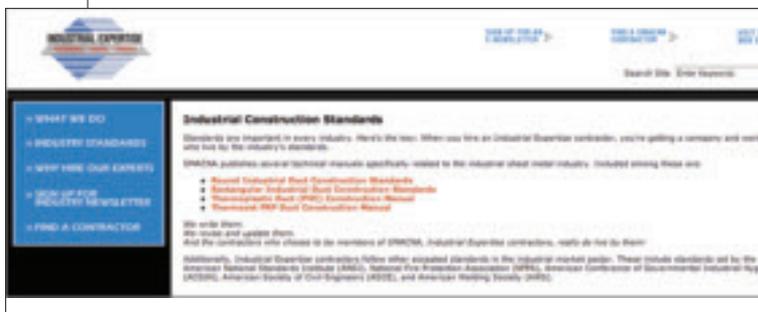
Be sure to check out your entry—as if you were a potential customer—to ensure that everything is listed properly. If you are a member of a Local, find out if the entries for signatory contractors in your area are accurate. (Direct problems to info@industrialexpertise.com.)

Don’t miss this opportunity to take full advantage of a valuable marketing tool. ■

Pierzynski is a Florida-based writer with previous experience on SMACNA’s staff.

This is the second-most popular section of the site. From here, it is possible to download four technical manuals specifically related to the industrial sheet metal industry:

- Round Industrial Duct Construction Standards,
- Rectangular Industrial Duct Construction Standards,
- Thermoplastic Duct (PVC) Construction Manual, and
- Thermoset FRP Duct Construction Manual.



Got Your Back

Management, labor, and government in Indiana combine efforts to increase safety.

By Cairine Caughill



It might sound unlikely, but Indiana's sheet metal industry and the state's Department of Labor have formed a safety alliance. For Phil Gillespie, Executive Director of SMACNA Indiana, it's a step in the right direction.

"We enjoy a different atmosphere in Indiana. We—both SMACNA Indiana and Local 20—have always laid aside political differences to do what is best for the industry," Gillespie says.

"Further, we never shy away from the government regulatory agencies. Instead, we become as involved as possible...Generally, the state people welcome input from industry."

That's not to say that the alliance happened overnight. It was a concept discussed by SMACNA, SMWIA Local 20, and Indiana's Department of Labor some years ago, but it didn't take flight until it caught the attention of new staff at the DOL.

Even then, implementation required two years of brainstorming, followed by another six months developing an alliance document. According to Gillespie, the biggest challenges were developing trust between the parties involved and helping everyone catch the vision of what could be achieved.

When Gary Pierson, a business representative from Local 20, heard about the alliance, he thought it was a great idea. The union already had a good relationship with the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) and SMACNA, and the time seemed right. "I thought it would be a good bridge with our contractors throughout the state, IOSHA and the state."

Such alliances have been tried before, in other areas and industries, but never with labor, management, a professional safety representative, and a state regulatory agency. *continued on page 20*



INSafe: A Different Approach to Safety

INSafe, a division of the Indiana Department of Labor, works with Indiana's employers, employees, labor unions, trade organizations, and others to ensure workplace health and safety. Services are free and include group training and seminars, on-site consultations, educational publications and training materials, and voluntary health and safety programs.

This organization is completely separate from Indiana's OSHA enforcement. Consultants visit work sites upon request. They do not issue citations or impose penalties for violations of Federal or state statutes identified during the consultation visit. Further, request for a visit does not trigger a Federal or state inspection.

Consultation is a voluntary and confidential service; however, anyone who requests assistance is obliged to correct any serious hazards identified. For additional information, visit the INSafe web pages at in.gov/dol/insafe.htm.

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Under the alliance, the state will provide training, consultation, and access to state INSafe workplace safety consultants. Union officials will share safety-related data and will promote member-company participation in state safety programs.



Indiana Labor Commissioner Lori Torres leads the signing of a historic safety alliance agreement. Behind her (from left) are Robert Baldwin of Safety Resources, Gary Pierson of Sheet Metal Workers Local 20, Phil Gillespie of SMACNA, and Sean Keefer and Jeffry Carter of the Indiana Department of Labor.

IOSHA and DOL already gather safety information from SIC codes. The new data will give them statistics specific to the sheet metal industry.

Now in the development stage, details about the alliance are currently being shared with contractors and union members throughout the state. When contractors register, they commit to submitting safety numbers on a quarterly basis. Reaction so far has been positive. After just two months, there was participation from every area of the state.

Union members have also been receptive to the alliance, Pierson says. "Everybody's very safety conscious...It's reassuring the membership that we're doing the right thing."

The next stage for the alliance will be regular committee meetings to develop recording and reporting procedures that will reveal trends in accidents and determine where to focus attention.

Gillespie's hope is that the alliance will continue long past the two-year term and become a real partnership with a common goal.

"Safety requires an environment of cooperation, not just enforcement. No single entity by itself can achieve the results we all want. Together, we do it better." ■

Caughill is a freelance writer based in Ontario, Canada.

Partners **IN** PROGRESS

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