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SMACNA Contractors and the SMART Union workforce partner in collaborative COVID-19 efforts

Unprecedented, uncertain times call for the best in reliability and quality. Members of the signatory sheet metal industry are working hard—and working together—across the United States and Canada on projects that are helping to protect frontline workers, individuals experiencing illness, and community members.

In Connecticut, Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) member Hillery Company and International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) Local 40 have partnered to fulfill thousands of orders for aluminum nose strips, which increase the efficacy of handmade face masks.

“It started with an idea, and in less than a week, we had around 3,000 requests from people all across the country,” says Joe de la Cruz, vice president of the Hillery Company. De las Cruz reached out to Local 40 for help, and Business Manager David Roche immediately agreed.

“My only thought was, ‘Let’s get going,’” Roche says. “As soon as we heard they were getting inundated, we got sheets of metal and started chopping them up.”

As word spread, so did the number of requests, so Roche contacted Paul Pimentel, communications and research at SMART, and asked him to put the message out to the SMART Army.

Pimentel created an online request form and began publicizing it on social media on April 7. Within hours, the union had over 100 requests. When each request comes in, SMART assigns it to a Local near that ZIP code. The Local then works with a union contractor in the area to produce the strips and deliver them to the volunteer or organization.

As of the end of April, SMACNA and SMART in the United States have manufactured and delivered over 13.5 million. In Canada, SMACNA-BC and Local 280 have manufactured and delivered 16,000 nose strips to volunteer groups across British Columbia.

Additional projects underway under the expertise of SMACNA and SMART partnerships include:

- ! In Indianapolis, Indiana, Bright Sheet Metal and the skilled workforce at Local 20 have manufactured 35 intubation boxes for delivery to healthcare centers across the state and as far away as New Jersey and Duke University in North Carolina. Approximately 100 more, along with more than 50 desk shields, are under manufacture as of the end of April.
- ! In Chicago, Illinois, SMACNA member CT Mechanical and Local 265 are proudly working on the conversion of the old Sherman Hospital in Elgin to a facility for COVID-19 patients.
- ! In Philadelphia, the Penn Medicine project has been pushed up by 15 months to help care for COVID-19 patients. SMACNA member Southland Industries and the skilled workforce at Local 19 were a part of opening the facility to house 119 additional beds.

- ! In Boston, Massachusetts, members of Local 17 working for SMACNA member J.C. Cannistraro answered the call for more hospital beds, working round the clock to help convert the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center into a 1,000-bed field hospital in just three days.
- ! Innovative boxes for installation outside of carryout restaurants are being manufactured by Local 33 sheet metal workers employed by Vent Heating and Cooling in Northern Ohio, West Virginia.

“In my 17 years as a business manager, I’ve never had such a satisfying feeling as I have now, being part of this movement,” Roche says.

“The union jumped right in and we have brothers and sisters all stepping up to support communities and each other,” says de la Cruz. “We are part of something bigger than ourselves.”

For information about these partnerships or other ways SMACNA and SMART members are working together in the fight against COVID-19, reach out to press@pinpmagazine.org.

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The International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) and the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association (SMACNA) have a labor-management partnership that is more than 75 years old. The goal of these Partners in Progress is to maintain an effective cooperative effort that demonstrates their expertise in the heating ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), architectural metal, and industrial sheet metal markets. For additional information, visit pinp.org.