



Published Nine Times Per Year

BulletinMONTHLY

Serving Professional Union Finishing Contractors in the Midwest

March 2009

Charting the Future of Diversity in the Finishing Trades

Opportunity Alliance of Illinois (OA) is a newly-formed entity of Painters District Council No. 30's (PDC 30) Joint Apprenticeship and Training Fund (JATF). Launched when the JATF was awarded a grant of \$1.25 million from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) under their Employment Opportunity Grant Program (EOGP), the grant was used to form a jointly directed program to expand the number of individual minorities and women entering and completing unionized apprenticeship training in the finishing trades.

Unionized building trades in large metropolitan areas have long been criticized for failing to provide equal employment opportunities for women and African Americans. While some improvement had been realized in Northern Illinois, the percentage of women and African Americans working in construction declined, notably between 1996-2005 (according to a March 2006 study commissioned by the City Colleges of Chicago).

As early as 2006, PDC 30 and FCAI began a dialogue on the quality of their workforce, the importance of the apprenticeship and training program and the need to focus on how apprentices entered this industry's apprenticeship program. "In some ways we were ahead of other labor groups," recalls Aaron Anderson, PDC 30's Director of Employer Recruitment and Retention, speaking of PDC 30's progress adapting to an increase of Latino tradespersons entering the finishing trades during the past two decades. "We are committed to an effort that strives for similar progress with regard to African Americans and women," said Anderson, adding that such a commitment is sometimes 'easier said than done.' "We also needed to educate our existing members, signatory contractors and organizational leaders about challenges related to diversity on the jobsite," he recalled.

The OA grant proposal was written in 2007, under the guidance of an advisory committee which included District Council representatives, signatory employers, JATF representatives and a group of benefits, legal, accounting and communication professionals who helped to develop the final proposal. But there were obstacles and barriers to overcome before OA's ambitious agenda could be fully realized. "We designed OA to respond to barriers affecting individuals within the targeted populations wishing to enter the trade, and barriers that affect the ability of the JATF and program partners to facilitate and advance successful diversity initiatives," Anderson said.

The OA program linked PDC 30 and the FCAI with six partner organizations that already work with the target population. With job readiness training programs of various forms already in place the program partner organizations are in a prime position to help recruit participants.

OA works to place a participant with a union employer, making the participant eligible to begin apprenticeship training at the JATF. Once an individual is working, OA provides them with a basic support package of financial assistance. A one-time monetary allowance is granted to help participants purchase clothes, boots and tools to begin in the trade, and if needed, resources are also available to help with moving expenses.

To continue receiving funding, participants must either be working or attending the apprenticeship school — ideally both simultaneously. The terms account for continued financial support during periods in which a participant might be laid off but still attending school, or periods in which they may be 'on hold' with the apprenticeship program but still working.

Opportunity Alliance's goal for its first year — June 2008 to June 2009 — is 15 participants. The program currently has nine participants [as of this publication date]. The goal for the second year — June 2009 to June 2010 — is to add an additional 25 participants, which would bring the total number for the program to 40 over two years.

Financial support through OA addresses basic needs, such as reliable transportation, child care, etc. that otherwise might hinder someone's ability to travel distances or arrive at work on time. The total support participants receive from OA, as well as the program partners, helps reduce the stress level of potential employees, making them more focused and safety conscious.

Whether you can offer a work opportunity right now or may be able to several months down the road, please consider hiring an OA participant as your next apprentice. Together, we can make a difference in the cultural diversity of Illinois' finishing contracting industry. Laura can be reached at 630-450-8451 or at laura@oaillinois.org. The OA Board of Directors from PDC 30 are Chuck Anderson, Aaron Anderson, Mike Ehrat and John Penney. From FCAI they are Justin Avey, Bill Nielsen, Kelley Oates and Rick Vandegraft. ☘

By
Laura Berry
Executive Director
Opportunity Alliance of Illinois



The Future is Here and it Looks Green

Someday our economy will recover.

When it does the construction of new homes, commercial structures, and schools will resume. These new buildings will be green. Why wouldn't they be? Green in all of its forms, represents smarter uses of resources and better uses of energy. Why would an owner not want to do that, especially when their competition obtains premium rents for building green and when the government is mandating green? To be green, designers and builders follow the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC's) LEED® rating system.

So, let's assume that currently you are somewhere in the spectrum of LEED® knowledge. You have heard the term but are unclear as to what it really means. You are overwhelmed as you gain basic awareness of how much it really does mean...or you have done your homework and are able to speak LEED® fluently. Wherever you may fall on the continuum, the USGBC is implementing changes to LEED® that impact the entire green building industry. Get ready for the release of LEED® 2009.

Both parts of LEED® — the certification process for buildings and the accreditation of professionals — have received major renovations. The overhaul is part of the ongoing plan to increase the thoroughness and value of the entire rating process. One of the key features of this transformation is the separation of the creation and analysis of LEED® standards (handled by the USGBC) from the certification and accreditation processes.

At this time the newly created Green Building Certification Institute (GBCI), a sister organization to the USGBC, has begun to manage the LEED® Accredited Professional (LEED® AP) program and will soon take over the certification of buildings. Changes to the system are being made to address the rapid advances in sustainable building technologies and best practices that apply to these technologies.

LEED® '09 — The Building Certification Rating System

The rating system for certifying buildings will see many changes — some of which are confusing, but all are intended to streamline the process and make it more logical. LEED® '09 aligns the existing rating systems, synchronizes their point systems (like numbered credits in the different rating systems will carry the same weight and intent) and incorporates recent advances in building science and technology.

The number of rating systems has expanded. LEED® for New Construction (NC) will be known as Building, Design and Construction (BD&C). Existing Buildings (EB) will be known as Operations and Maintenance (O&M). Commercial Interiors

(CI) will become Interior Design and Construction (ID&C). Lastly, the new systems in the specialties of Homes (HOMES) and Neighborhood Development (ND) will become available.

Along with the number of systems expanding, the number of points available within the systems is also increasing. In the current LEED® NC v2.2, projects can achieve a total of 69 points. With the introduction of LEED® BD&C v3 (LEED® '09), the number increases to 100 points available, plus 10 potential bonus points (the other rating systems will also follow this increase to the 100 points +10 bonus).

The intents of the credits remains the same while the weight attached to some of the credits will change. No longer will accessibility to public transportation (v2.2-1 point available, v3-6 points available) be valued at the same level as providing views to the outdoors for employees (v2.2-1 point available, v3-1 point available). The increase of points available for specific

credits speaks to the urgency the USGBC sees around the issue of climate change caused by the carbon-based energy consumption of buildings and their occupants.

New prerequisites are being added to the standards. Buildings certified under the LEED® BD&C v3 system must undergo ongoing commissioning to retain their certifications. This means that once occupied, they must be inspected regularly to keep systems running efficiently, update technologies

employed and continue to use products that preserve the integrity of the structure. Without agreeing to this process during the initial phases of design and construction, a building will fail to achieve certification.

Another addition to the prerequisite list is found in the Water Efficiency category. Previously, this group had no prerequisite attached. However, with the roll out of '09, credit WE3.1 (Water Use Reduction-20 percent) from the old system has been upgraded to a mandate for all registered projects. Fresh potable water is an issue that many regions are coping with so in response, the USGBC is requiring that all newly certified buildings use at least 20 percent less than their non-green counterparts.

Most of the new bonus points deal with other regional issues. The USGBC is aware that structures built in different climates deal with different issues and can access different local resources so they are awarding points based on these differences in the new LEED® system. These regional options are determined by the regional USGBC chapters tasked with developing a pool of available regional points from which designers can choose. These new bonus points will have the ability to push a project from one level of certification to another but, not punish the project if they are not met.

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LEED® '09 — The Accreditation Structure

Members of the design and construction community that do not complete LEED® AP credentialing prior to July 2009 will go through a much different process than their predecessors. In the new configuration of LEED®, professionals seeking this designation will need to understand the multiple credentialing system as well as tiered requirements.

The tier system improves on the existing exam system by allowing for specialized career tracks while providing a mechanism for the differentiation between levels of expertise; from fundamental to comprehensive to extraordinary.

For instance, those involved in the field of green building but with no direct exposure to LEED® projects — i.e. manufacturers representatives, educators, real estate attorneys or appraisers — will be accredited through Tier I. This tier will carry the designation of LEED® Green Associate. Those pursuing this credential will now have eligibility requirements, including the submission of an application with documentation of employment supporting LEED® projects, either directly or through working in sustainable occupations which uphold green building principles.

Accepted applicants need to pass a core exam demonstrating their knowledge of environmental building concepts and practices. It also requires those who pass the exam to sign a code of ethics/disciplinary policy. To maintain Green Associate status, 15 hours of biennial education needs to be completed, ensuring that their knowledge is kept current. [Cost for the core exam is \$150 for USGBC members and \$200 for nonmembers.]

Professionals within the design and construction fields seeking LEED® AP designation will go through the Tier II system. The eligibility requirements for this tier include documentable direct involvement on a LEED® project within the past three years. Documentation comes from either registered and completed LEED® online templates or employer verification. Applicants need to pass an advanced exam in a program of their choosing. These exams correspond with the main LEED® rating programs and distinguish one area of expertise from another. Tier II allows individuals to attain the title of LEED® AP+. Specialists acquiring this designation need to successfully complete 30 hours of biennial continuing education as well as continuing documentable work on LEED® projects. They also need to sign the disciplinary policy. The rank of LEED® AP also carries a biennial credential maintenance fee of \$50. [Fees for the exams are \$300 for members and \$450 for nonmembers.]

The highest level in the tier system is reserved for those professionals that demonstrate exemplary contribution to the field of green building. These professionals must go through a peer review process to attain the title of LEED® Fellow. As of yet, no exact fees or requirements for this process have been determined.

Finally, how is the new LEED® dealing with those that have already become accredited?

Since 2000 about 77,000 people have become qualified as LEED® AP's, acknowledging their understanding of and contributions to the LEED® rating system. This group represents the frontrunners of the industry and not much changes for them.

They are integrated into the new structure and given the designation of Legacy LEED® AP. These professionals will be grandfathered into the new system and while there are no new exam requirements for current LEED® APs, the changes to the system will place new demands on them.

To 'opt in' to the structure, current APs are required to sign the same disciplinary procedure document as all other APs and continue their education. If these needs are met, their designation changes to LEED® AP. If not, Legacy LEED® AP status still applies; however, they will be considered inactive.

As the economy picks up, according to Turner Construction Company's "Green Building Barometer," 75 percent of commercial real estate executives say the credit crunch will not discourage them from building green.

LEED® in the Future

Moving forward, the LEED® credit systems and exams will be reviewed and changed every two years. This accomplishes two goals.

First, it allows the credit weighing structure to evolve as the physical and economic climates change. Second it allows LEED® to adopt technologies and strategies as they become available. Part of the continuing education necessary for professionals to maintain accreditation speaks to these changes.

As the economy picks up, according to Turner Construction Company's "Green Building Barometer," 75 percent of commercial real estate executives (including developers, rental building owners, brokers, architects, engineers and others) say the credit crunch will not discourage them from building green.

In fact, 83 percent said they would be "extremely" or "very likely" to seek LEED® certification for buildings they are planning to build within the next three years.

So, the future is here and it looks green! ☘

www.FCAofIllinois.com

The Lesson of Kaizen and GM

Last year Toyota Motor Corp. received one million suggestions from their employees on how to improve productivity, quality and the workplace. Also last year, Toyota began its final challenge to GM as the number one automaker in the world. Their net market worth is \$ 103 billion. GM is begging and broke. I believe that all these facts are inter-related. I also believe the reason for Toyota's success and our lesson to learn is embodied in a concept they call "kaizen". (Kaizen (Japanese): "kai" the action to correct / "Zen" for good).

Why is this important? Because the new game in our already tough market is how to keep every dollar we've got rather than chasing new ones. We had fifteen years of relatively fat times. Now, the new plan is getting and doing more with less. And the real question is how much money is our union industry leaving on the table by not tapping into our own apprentices and journeymen's buy-in and best ideas? This does not happen by putting out some lame suggestion box. Kaizen defines Toyota's approach to everything they do. For it to work it must operate with three principles in place: leaders and workers consider both work process and the results (not results alone), leaders and workers are taught why things are done & given the big picture and managers (foremen?) promote a learning, non-judgmental, non-blaming approach to allow re-examination of existing practices.

This simple and yet obviously powerful business strategy is applied from the CEO down to the production employees; all with one central theme—continuous improvement. How much time are we spending on this subject with our students and supervisors on this subject and why should you? There are a number of reasons.

1) The GM Lesson: if you don't focus on continuous improvement and instead depend on old school thinking, your competition will eventually kick your ass. You can't increase (or even maintain) wages and benefits indefinitely just because the members want them. What got us here, won't get us there in the future. Construction is still in many ways a very traditional business model. It generally does not actively encourage a structured focus, discipline or commitment to continuous improvement vs. price vs market relevance. We need to breed this kind of thinking from the first moment of apprenticeship.

2) The Culture Lesson: a central theme that employees come to understand, embrace and act upon is what defines an industry culture. Our culture needs to be High Value, High Performance. Nothing less can be priced at our level. In a tough market you need to start reinforcing this culture; asking your guys to take initiative and telling them that their jobs depend on it.

By
Mark Breslin
Breslin Strategies

"We had fifteen years of relatively fat times...Fat times are over."

3) The Empowerment Lesson: the second most powerful at-the-workplace motivator, behind praise and recognition, is participation in decision making. One million times per year Toyota employees rise to the challenge of improvement within their company. They know for absolute certain that everyone has the opportunity and obligation to create value. And supervisors are listening respectfully. What does this do for performance and unity? Again, how does our construction culture measure up? Or can even one great idea make it past the foremen's desire to maintain his authority? Do we teach that big picture or just how to perform the task at hand?

How? = A New Way of Managing & Teaching

The current management system and model in construction is something out of the dark ages. Contractor management systems are generally pretty good until you get to the field. Kaizen dies a horrible death on ten thousand jobsites every day in North America. In our industry, a great suggestion to a foreman is usually treated as a challenge to his authority—especially by an apprentice. After he is shot down what lesson has been taught them loud and clear?

My Italian contractor grandfather was a hard-ass yeller and screamer. And much as I revere his memory, some traditions die hard, but die they must. A culture of High Performance must be built on new ways of managing—engagement, motivation, empowerment, codes of performance, peer-to-peer accountability and, of course, constant improvement. Fat times are over. Faster and smarter is required to even hope to compete with our open shop counterparts. From apprentice to foremen we need to communicate effectively about this NOW. Their job is not to have all the answers, but to harness the talent of the team. It is not about ego and authority; it is about results.

Apprenticeship development needs to take a quantum leap forward. It will always be about skills, but perhaps most importantly it needs to focus on teaching people to think. How do I fit into the big picture of this industry? How do my individual efforts matter? How does my compensation relate to my performance and those around me? How do I contribute to improvement of processes and productivity? How do I lead to obtain buy-in and consistent improvement?

Toyota's kaizen is about teaching people to think differently. That is what has provided them with world-class products and market leadership. GM has been about mis-placed pride, conformance, and tradition. The lessons are obvious. The solution is difficult. **The time is now.** ☘

FCAI Member Helping Troops in Afghanistan

When disaster strikes somewhere in the world or war news is announced on the evening news, people find it sad and shocking...and then they move on with their own lives. But when there is a direct connection to home, to your community, to your own friends and family...the news becomes that much more real.

Six months ago, Dori Higdon, wife of Dennis Higdon, Mid-Illinois Companies, Peoria, teamed up with her best friend Barb whose son Greg is currently serving in the Army somewhere in the Afghan mountains. Barb is a member of Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc., a non-profit organization formed during WWII. Blue Star began as a group of volunteer mothers working in hospitals and train stations, shipping care packages to their children fighting overseas. Organization membership waned over the years, but the 9/11 attacks saw a resurgence of activity with mothers hanging the well-recognized sign in windows across the country, and gathering essentials for shipment to this country's war zones.

Barb and Dori gather items for shipment to Central Illinois' Charlie Co. 1-178 Infantry.

During a break at FCAI's February Conference, Dennis spoke about this project "Think about this," he began. "You're out of supplies and waiting for your clean laundry and other items. But if there's any bad weather or fighting in the area, the chopper will probably be diverted and those kids on the ground won't get essential things — like a change of socks or underwear."

Too young to have served in the Vietnam War, Dennis remembers friends that served and how badly soldiers were treated back in the 1960s. It wasn't that people didn't care. It was just because that war was so unpopular...the soldiers got caught up in the emotions of the protests and protesters.

The Higdon's and other volunteers didn't want that to happen again, so they became involved, as Dennis said, "just friends helping friends, because it helps us feel more connected to our kids."

A long list of items are needed for 'care packages' for the soldiers and Dennis helps spread the word. He made a presentation at a recent FCAI Central Chapter Meeting regarding this project. When Chapter President Bernie Wright, Bedrock Painting, Inc., Normal, won the evening's 50/50 drawing, he donated it to Charlie Company.

As of early March, a little over \$1,000 and a half-ton pickup truck of supplies had been collected, "with 65 percent of that coming from local contractors and other Central Illinois service organizations," Dennis said. But they don't only need essentials for the inside of the packages. They also need packing materials and money for postage.

With the current state of the economy it's not the best time to ask for donations. But no matter how bad it gets at home, it's probably worse in the mountains of Afghanistan.

To assist in this project, send items and donations (made out to Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.) to: Mid-Illinois Companies, 905 NE Adams St., Peoria, 61603. ☺

Items Needed

Toothbrushes	Pain Reliever
Toothpaste	Turns
Mouthwash	Socks (Black or Green)
Dental Floss	Hand Warmers
Hand Sanitizer	DVDs
Baby Wipes	Blank CD's
Gold Bond Powder	Disposable Cameras
Deodorant	Magazines (Hunting/Fishing/Auto)
Bar Soap	Crossword puzzles / Sudoku books
Lip Balm	Books
Eye Drops (For Dry Eyes)	Cards
Razors	Pens/Pencils/Sharpie Markers
Hard Candy	Hand Held Games
Snack Foods	Gun Oil Wipes (REM Oil Wipes)
Prepackaged Cookies	Lens Cleaning Wipes
Granola Bars	<u>Packing Items:</u>
Energy Bars/drink powders	Packaging Tape
Beef Jerky	Ziploc Freezer Bags
Slim Jims	Note Cards
Powdered Drinks	Pens
Chewing Gum	Funds for Postage

FCAI Annual Baseball Event



Gehl Club, Miller Park, Milwaukee
7 pm Friday, May 8, 2009
All You Can Eat! All You Can Drink!
\$110/person
630-264-7880





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Upcoming FCAI Events

Friday, May 8
FCAI Annual Baseball Event
Cubs in Milwaukee
7 pm - 10 pm

Monday, June 29
FCAI Associates Meeting
FCAI Office
11:30 am - 1 pm

Friday, July 31
NiPDi Fishing Tournament
Winthrop Harbor, IL
12 pm - 5 pm

February 5 & 6, 2010
FCAI 3rd Annual Conference
Westin Lombard