



The **g**BCA Education Program

Michael Magee

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS at the General Building Contractors Association (GBCA) is education. We are committed to providing educational services to a wide group of parties ranging from high school students, through apprentices and journeymen to middle and top management.

Especially in these challenging economic times, construction companies must have the ability to adjust to rapidly changing business conditions. New methods of operating, using equipment and materials and managing people are constantly evolving. The construction industry continues to be ever more complex and it is necessary for individual employees to possess a wide variety of skills (both "hard" and "soft").

Education and training is one of the main drivers of productivity growth in our industry and an educated and well-trained work force will benefit owners, contractors, the trades and, importantly, the end user. Contractors will be able to bid jobs competitively when they employ qualified workers in both the office and the field. Well trained workers will find it easier to find good jobs and advance their careers while simultaneously bolstering the local economy.

A dilemma that faces the union construction industry is that many employees (particularly in the trades) do not work for the same employer

throughout the year. In fact, many field personnel work for several different companies over the year as projects begin and finish. This does not particularly encourage companies to invest money in training their work force.

Education cost has also increased dramatically over the past decade and many individuals have difficulty raising the necessary funds.

Education Funding

A way for a company and its employees to keep educational and training costs to a minimum is through participation in an association sponsored education program. Such a program has been in existence at GBCA since the early 1960's and over 10,000 individuals have taken advantage of it.

The funding for the GBCA Education program comes predominantly from the IAP (Industry Advancement Program). Over 500 local construction companies contribute to this fund based on man-hours worked by their union employees working in the basic trades. A significant portion of the money raised through the IAP is used to provide education and training opportunities and pay for construction related courses for IAP contributing company employees and GBCA member employees.

Education Programs

Our education and training program sponsors courses for eligible individuals at a variety of local colleges, universities and institutions of higher learning. Also, GBCA, in conjunction with the American Society of Professional Estimators, offers courses in estimating and project management.

Construction related classes are given in a wide range of subjects ranging from blue print reading, building systems, estimating, scheduling and project management to name just a few. We sponsor courses to both those employed in the field and the office. Typically over 50 courses are offered per semester.

Registration is simple, but it is on a first come first serve basis so students are urged to sign up early. Classes take place in the evening allowing employees to work full time during the day. These courses are offered at no cost to the individual providing that certain attendance and grade requirements are met.

Our education program is specifically designed to be flexible and classes are offered throughout the region as well as at various union halls.

Apprenticeship

GBCA is also involved in the apprenticeship system that exists in the Philadelphia union construction industry. We believe the apprentice system is one of the main reasons

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the local union construction has the ability to guarantee work on budget and on time. The apprentice programs are jointly administered by management and the unions and they guarantee a constant flow of skilled labor for future projects.

Even though the construction industry has undoubtedly taken a battering recently, and the future is certainly challenging to say the least, it is probable that in the long run, there will remain a strong demand for qualified workers possessing up to date skills. It is widely agreed that union apprentice programs are superior to anything the non union sector can offer.

GBCA also sponsors the Supervisory Training Program (STP). This program is geared towards those journeymen who wish to become supervisors or job superintendents. It was developed by contractors for contractors and upon successful completion of 10 classes (dealing with such subjects as project leadership and management, planning and scheduling, communication on the job and productivity, among others) participants receive a certificate from the AGC.

GBCA is also dedicated to keeping member firms knowledgeable in the latest areas of interest in our industry. For instance, we sponsor "Green Advantage" training that is specifically geared towards the construction industry.

We run additional educational forums on a regular basis to keep members abreast of new developments in our industry as well as upcoming business opportunities.


GBCA has always been keen to promote construction as a potential career choice to high school students and to this end we work with local schools including CHAD and Mercy Vocational High School. To expose students to the collaboration and team work needed between architects, contractors and the building trades, GBCA has helped organize a design and build project/competition that takes place at the JAC open house in May of each year. The students are involved in the whole building process from initial design to final construction.

GBCA will continue to provide educational and training services to the entire construction community in order to ensure the long-term health of our industry. ■


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PO Box 1038
Southampton, PA 18966
p | 215-364-9446
f | 215-364-9485
www.rittercontracting.com
jritter@mycomcast.com





Michael Magee is the Director of Education for the General Building Contractors Association.