

# THE CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE ADVANTAGE



WESTERN STATES  
College of Construction

WINTER | 2024

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## WSCC Cares Award

Each year the WSCC Cares Award is given to those in our community who go above and beyond in the service of others. This year, WSCC honors all our training and assistant training directors.

**Johnnie Norris**  
*Plumbers Local 3*



"Johnnie is a true asset to the plumbing industry and especially the Local 3 apprenticeship program. He is always looking for the next way to improve the pathway for apprentices coming through the program. He is a determined self-starter and never

backs down from a challenge. On top of his daily duties, he has never turned down an opportunity to serve on any board or committee related to the plumbing industry. He has a true concern for the well-being and development of our apprentices and has a knack for connecting with them, all the while still getting them to produce in the classroom and in the field. It is an honor to work side by side with him!"

– Sean Wyatt, Business Manager, Plumbers Local 3

**Andy Gilliland**  
*Sheetmetal Workers Local 9*



"For nearly two decades, Andy has worked for the SMART Local 9 Sheet Metal Workers' Joint Apprenticeship Training Center, providing the one true constant our program has needed. Andy has always stepped up and

taken the call to assist apprentices and journeymen alike; whether it's assisting members and instructors in the creation of a membership assistance program (MAP) for helping those dealing with addiction or mental health issues or remaining diligent and detail-oriented in the successful application to the Sheet Metal Workers International Training Institute, applying for and achieving platinum status within our International Association. This status propelled our program into becoming one of only two campuses nationwide offering the SMART Heroes Veteran's direct entry program. To date the SMART Heroes Program has graduated over 200 apprentices into the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, helping provide a second career for those who have served us all. Andy is a true asset not only to SMART Local 9 and our International Association, but to our industry as a whole, and I am both proud and honored to know he's a part of my team."

– Jon Alvino, Business Manager,  
Sheetmetal Workers Local 9

**Peter Carlson**  
*Sheetmetal Workers Local 9*



"With a career deeply rooted in the sheet metal industry since 2007, our newly appointed Colorado Springs J.A.T.C. Coordinator, Peter Carlson, has an impressive trajectory. What sets Peter apart is his

## U.S. ENGINEERING INVESTS IN APPRENTICE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

WSCC's contractor partners are finding unique ways to support and empower our students. U.S. Engineering has created an apprentice fellowship program. The Apprentice Fellowship Program in our Rocky Mountain region provides apprentices of all trades with opportunities to attend lunches, tour jobsites and U.S. Engineering facilities, and volunteer in the community. All apprentices from U.S. Engineering operating companies are invited to join the program. The program seeks to help forge connections with U.S. Engineering team members, to build camaraderie among apprenticeship classes and between trades, and to introduce career path options. As Joel Aragon—U.S. Engineering Construction General Superintendent and one of the program architects—notes, U.S. Engineering's investment in the Apprentice Fellowship Program is an investment to maintain a strong core of field teams into the future.



**U.S. ENGINEERING  
CONSTRUCTION**

Joel said, "We want apprentices to have the opportunity to build relationships early with the people they'll be working with for the next 30 or 40 years." He went on to explain that "if someone is interested in estimating, we want to introduce them to some of our estimators and show them that there's a career path there. Or if they're into VC, we can show them that path, too, and connect them to our team members doing that work."

The inception of Apprentice Fellowship Program was a group effort. Several team members in our Rocky Mountain Region worked together to bring the program to life and support

the future of our workforce. U.S. Engineering has around 90 first through fifth year apprentices.

We're ready to help these apprentices grow. As Tyler put it, "I'm really excited about this program and about the people who are participating. They're the most diverse group of apprentices I've ever seen—in age, gender, race, ethnicity—and I'm excited about what those different perspectives will bring to our business and to our customers."

## 2024 ACCE MID-YEAR CONFERENCE & Construction Education Consortium



**2024 ACCE MID-YEAR  
CONFERENCE & CEC  
February 21-25, 2024  
OMNI Hotel Las Colinas |  
Dallas**



## IN HONOR OF NATIONAL WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION WEEK



### Colorado Tradeswomen Invite You To Attend:

### WOMEN ON THE TOOLS

#### *Do you like to work with your hands?*

Consider a career in a construction trade! Join us at the **Women on the Tools** event to get hands-on experience and learn about various building trades in a female-friendly environment. Get practice with various tools and skills while learning how you can use them to thrive in your career! Construction trades offer a competitive wage and the ability to support yourself and your family!

### COME CELEBRATE WITH US!



EXPLORE A FINANCIALLY  
SMART CAREER CHOICE!

LEARN HOW TO GET PAID  
WORKING EXPERIENCE  
AS YOU TAKE CLASSES  
WITH FREE TUITION!

GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE  
FROM PROFESSIONALS!

FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT!

ALL AGES WELCOME!

**March 9th, 2024**  
**10:00 am - 3:00 pm**

**17100 E. 32nd Place**  
**Aurora, CO 80011**

RSVP @  
[coloradotradeswomen@gmail.com](mailto:coloradotradeswomen@gmail.com)

*\*Long pants and close-toed shoes required\**

# 5 TIPS FOR STAYING WARM ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN WINTER

When the temperatures drop, elements of the cold introduce barriers for construction workers that can hinder performance and productivity on the job. They can also pose a risk to one's health and safety. Make sure that you have the tools and knowledge to be prepared for the elements that may affect your performance or put your safety at risk. Below are five ways for tradesmen to stay warm on construction job sites.

## 1. LAYERS, LAYERS, & MORE LAYERS

Did we say layers? One of the most common ways to stay warm is by simply layering clothing. The standard of layering is to have 3 types of layers; a base layer, a middle layer, and an outer layer. This layering strategy is proven to help keep you warm through the harshest of environments.

### *Base Layer (underwear)*

Starting with a base layer or thermals is a great way to make sure that your body has something close to the skin keeping your natural body heat close to yourself while also allowing moisture to wick away from your skin and into the fabric of your clothing. Moisture and sweat directly on your skin is a recipe for a cold day at work so make sure to avoid this by investing in some high-quality thermals that will wick moisture away.

### *Middle Layer (insulation)*

The middle layer is crucial for keeping in the heat your body naturally produces. The insulation that a thin-down jacket will provide makes sure that none of the heat your body produces is escaping.

### *Outer Layer (shell layer)*

The outer layer and/or shell is meant to keep you protected from the direct elements weather can throw

at you—snow, rain, and wind. Typical shells are waterproof and are rated for various strengths of wind. Think of it this way, without a good shell, you are going into battle without any armor.

You can always take layers off but you won't always have the luxury of adding layers once you have left your home.

## 2. DON'T FORGET YOUR HEAD AND FEET

We have been told that you lose a large amount of body heat through your head and feet. Though we have no data to prove this, it is still something to take into account before heading off to work. It can be easy to forget proper headwear because it's not every day that we leave the house with a beanie or something to keep our heads warm. Likewise, it can be easy to overlook the importance of insulated boots and wearing good socks that are made specifically for wicking moisture away from your feet to keep them dry and warm.

Though these items may not be as important as a good jacket or pants, we often overlook the importance of something to keep your head and feet warm which can lead to a miserable day on the job.

## 3. PROTECTIVE GLOVES

Hands are the most widely-used body part in construction, and keeping these warm is extremely important. Although the tendency for many workers is to remove their gloves and continue working, this only increases the chances of frostbite. Finding the right type of lightweight gloves can help workers keep their hands warm. If this still doesn't work, glove liners are another option that you might consider. The most effective way to keep your hands warm is by using mittens, and a combination of a glove liner with mittens is ideal when taking breaks or resting in the cold.

## 4. POCKET/HAND WARMERS

Though gloves are the most effective way to keep your hands safe from the elements, it is not always possible to operate equipment with them on. An alternative that you may consider is using pocket/hand warmers to

## HEALTH &



## WELLNESS CORNER





## OUTSTANDING APPRENTICE AND MENTOR

Third-Year Plumber Apprentice from Local 3, **Dunia Marquez**, received an outstanding apprentice award from Apprenticeship Colorado and the Office of the Future of Work, along with her Program Director, **Johnnie Norris**, who received an award for outstanding mentor. Also pictured, **Denise Miller**, Apprenticeship Colorado Director.



### 5 TIPS FOR STAYING WARM ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE IN WINTER...Continued from Page 4

keep your hands toasty. There are many options for this, including disposable, refillable, or rechargeable devices that you can typically buy online or in sporting goods stores. Investing as little as \$30 can typically get you through an entire winter.

#### 5. STAY FUELED

When the temperatures are cold, your body's instinct is to turn up the heat. As your body produces heat to keep you warm, it is using more energy and burns more calories than it does on a typical day. It is very important to keep your body fueled with healthy and protein-focused food so that you don't run out of gas. Bringing some additional snacks to eat throughout the day is a great way to ensure your body can continue to produce and you don't become fatigued quickly.

#### BONUS TIP: KEEP EXTRAS IN YOUR VEHICLE

While you may do your best to prepare every day for working in the cold weather, you cannot always predict the weather or the condition of a project site. You can walk into work with layers and hand warmers, but some days, it may not be enough. The next best thing you can do is keep extra items in your vehicle. Bring an extra pair of socks and shoes in case your current pair get wet. Keep extra gloves or shirts on hand for various reasons, along with different styles of coats and jackets in your vehicle

to not only help adjust to the conditions, but to also keep moisture from seeping into your layers.

#### IN CONCLUSION

Staying warm isn't always the easiest to manage. As we've mentioned, adding layers upon layers is typically how most tradesmen find warmth during colder months. It's also important to consider the circumstances of the job site you're on. Preparing to work in an open air project versus a building that's nearing completion require different approaches. Preparing your gear the night before and keeping extras in your vehicle are the best ways to be prepared.



## CONTRACTOR HIGHLIGHT

**Olson Plumbing & Heating Co.** was started by AE Olson in 1917 with his 3-wheel Indian motorcycle and side cart. We have served the community for over a century and had the opportunity to work on many landmarks and local projects.

Olson is a family-owned company based in Colorado Springs with branches in Pueblo, Canon City, and Denver. With a wide range of mechanical and plumbing services, we are one of the few companies that offer a complete line of residential services, full new construction, and everything in between.

Our service department provides HVAC, mechanical, plumbing, utility, and lining services to homeowners within the community. It's a great way to become someone's favorite person when you can fix their heat in the dead of winter or their AC in the heat of the summer.

Our special projects division services a wide range of commercial industries—healthcare, schools, hotels, spas and resorts, office buildings, and so many more. They take on remodels, new construction, repairs, and maintenance, and have developed great relationships across the community by providing outstanding customer service.

Our construction division has been a part of great projects around the community: healthcare projects like Centura, UCHHealth, Children's, Craig Hospital, Parkview, St. Mary Corwin, and many others; high purity projects like Entegris, Atmel, DPIIX, and Microchip; military projects at USAFA, Norad, Peterson, Schreiver, and Ft Carson; renewable energy like Vestas; and landmarks like the Broadmoor and all the way to the top of Pikes Peak.

With 5 generations having worked at Olson, family is at the core of our values. Every team member is treated like family here. We put on a variety of yearly events where the whole family is invited to participate. We know that balance between work and family is critical to happiness and success. We focus on making sure we are addressing any employee and family-related needs. We recently built a new facility



and have an area dedicated for employees to be able to bring their kids to work on an unplanned sick day or when needed.

Olson believes in opportunities and growth for our team members. We make every effort to provide the opportunity to be promoted within the organization and encourage employees to speak up about their interests. Through classes, training, or shadow opportunities, we can provide exposure for different positions within the organization to explore different career opportunities.

Olson believes deeply that it is critical to be an active participant in the community we serve. Many of our team members serve on local boards, volunteer, and engage in community service projects. We contribute to a number of worthy organizations across the front range like the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region, Children's Hospital, Cheyenne Village, Goodwill, Peak Vista, 4H, and many more. We feel that this helps us build a better place to work and live.

Olson is proud to be a part of the WSCC industry changing program which provides individuals with an opportunity to get paid to earn a degree, career opportunities, and provide an education for skilled tradespeople in construction. This allows our team and our community to grow. Quality work and excellent customer service are at the heart of our core values and WSCC is committed to helping us teach individuals these skills alongside the installation and technical skills to be successful. There are such great opportunities within construction, and we are committed to making our team members and the construction industry apprenticeship programs successful.



## TANNER BONDS

### *Outstanding Apprentice*

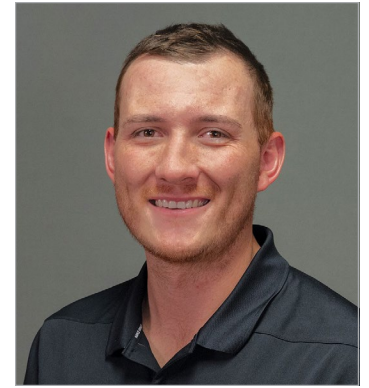
My name is Tanner Bonds. I graduated from the Local 9 Sheet Metal Apprenticeship Program in the summer of 2020 and recently had the chance to be part of the WSCC pilot program from which I graduated this Fall.

Overall, I had an excellent experience throughout my entire apprenticeship. I was fortunate enough to have found the program that changed my life and put me in the position to be able to accomplish what I have so far in my career. Going in I had little idea of what a union or what an apprenticeship was. Now that I have gone through the program and understand what it can provide, I have tried to make it one of my many purposes to share my experience with everyone I can, and how I believe many people can benefit from what a union apprenticeship has to offer. The associate degree program that the WSCC built and will be including in apprenticeships soon is one of the best classes I have ever had a chance to be a part of. The soft skills that I was able to learn have helped me in both my professional and personal life. The addition of these skills into the apprenticeship program will create and help retain more well-rounded leaders in the industry.

I think apprenticeship training is typically a time of immense growth and self-realization for a lot of people. If I had to choose just one valuable lesson I've learned, it would be the importance of relationships. Everything I've achieved to this point cannot be accredited too just myself. The relationships I've built and mentors I've had are the examples of reasons this industry can be so rewarding.

I have always been a firm believer that everyone around you has something to offer and teach you,

from first year apprentices to superintendents. I think I naturally gravitate towards the people that have similar morals as myself and my ability to lean on them at any time has been priceless.



I recently assumed a role as a Project Engineer at U.S Engineering. After seven years in the field, and the completion of the degree program, I felt I was in a good position to offer something to my employer. Being a project manager has always appealed to me, from the ownership over a project, to being involved in more than just the sheet metal aspect, I thought it was a great place to put myself to ensure that I could continue to grow and learn for years to come.

The advice I want every apprentice to have is to never stop learning. Continue to look for opportunities even after your apprenticeship, whether it's geared towards personal or professional growth. More often than not your contractor will support you in that, but you'll never know unless you put yourself out there.

Most important in my life are those I go home to every day—my wife, Whitney, and my two pups, Sophia and Gabriella. Recently I was asked about what I want my life to look like when I'm 90 years old. The answer I came up with was simple—I want to have made a difference in the lives of the people around me. Whether that's my wife, an apprentice, or an owner of the project I'm working on. If I always keep that goal in mind, I'm confident my career will continue to evolve, and I will leave behind a legacy that I can be proud of.

**On November 7th, 2023,  
16 students were awarded their official  
Associate of Occupational Studies  
diplomas from WSCC.**

**At the celebration, graduates  
were invited to share their  
experience with board members.  
WSCC is very proud of our  
first graduating class.**



*WSSC CARES AWARD...Continued from Page 1*

passion for teaching, which emerged during his time in architectural sheet metal. Observing a genuine joy in imparting knowledge and witnessing the growth of others, he decided to transition into education. Serving as an architectural instructor for local 10 for an impactful five-year tenure, our coordinator honed his skills in shaping the next generation of sheet metal professionals. Today, Peter brings his wealth of experience and passion to the role of Training Coordinator. His commitment to education, professional development, and the broader sheet metal community is evident."

– Andy Gilliland, Statewide Local 9  
Sheetmetal Training Director



**Brian Summers**  
**Sheetmetal Workers Local 9**

"With over four decades of dedicated service in the sheet metal industry, Brian stands as a seasoned professional and integral figure within the

Grand Junction apprenticeship program. A second-generation member of SMART Local 9, Brian embodies the essence of the program, serving as its cornerstone. Throughout his extensive career, Brian has adeptly balanced the preservation of traditional apprenticeship models with a forward-looking approach that seamlessly integrates new technologies and addresses evolving industry demands. Brian Summers as an integral part of the Colorado Sheet Metal Workers Joint Apprenticeship. His unwavering commitment is a testament to his invaluable contributions to the program's success. His wealth of experience, dedication to mentorship, and adaptability to industry changes make him an exceptional coordinator, shaping the next generation of skilled professionals in the sheet metal trade."

– Andy Gilliland, Statewide Local 9  
Sheetmetal Training Director



**Beto Herrera**  
**Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 58**

"We at local 58 are fortunate to have a Beto Herrera as Training Director for our campus. Even though his dedication to the apprentices,

membership and the UA is unmatched, and it often goes unappreciated he continues to work tirelessly for the program. Even though Beto is not one for accolades and he doesn't do what he does for them I would like to recognize him for all he does for the JATC and the membership of Local 58. He has implemented new programs along with new state of the art training labs making it possible to double the number of apprentices in our program since he has been in position. Beto has been an asset to Local 58 and our apprenticeship program and I hope he is here for some time to come."

– Dale Thrower, Business Manager  
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 58

**Daniel Schulte**  
**Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 145**



"Daniel has been the Training Coordinator for UA Local 145 for almost seven and half years. Daniel for very involved with all aspects of the training department. He is not only the Training Director but also an instructor and the Locals

CWI (Certified Welding Inspector). His favorite part of the job is when his apprentices get that "Ah hah" moment when the light bulb clicks in their heads and everything comes together for them. He leads his apprentices with integrity and courage, setting an example for others to follow."

– Brian Almquist, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 145



WSSC CARES AWARD...Continued from Page 8

### Dan Meyer

#### Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 192



Dan Meyer has been a local 192 member for 25 years. He went through the Apprenticeship in 1997 and worked in the field as a Pipefitter and on his last job in the field he was a G.F for Azco in Cheyenne. Dan became the Training Coordinator in 2020 for

Local 192. He is a great asset to Local 192 and I'm glad to have him part of our Team!

– Rich Martin, Business Manager,  
Plumbers & Pipefitters UA Local 192

### Eric Ortega

#### Pipefitters Local 208



"Eric's dedication to our program is second to none! From the first day he started as Training Director he jumped head first into the position while contributing countless hours to improving educational opportunities to our apprentices

and journeyworkers. I wish all of our members were able to witness the amount of sacrifice he's willing to make for the betterment of our training program

and their career development needs. Local 208, our officers, and our members are lucky to have someone with the passion, commitment, and dedication that Eric brings to work every single day!"

– Gary Arnold, Business Manager,  
Denver Pipefitters Local 208

### Joe Peneton

#### Pipefitters Local 208



"Denver Pipefitters Local 208 is lucky to have our friend and brother, Joe Peneton serving as the Assistant Training Director. Joe is a tremendous asset to our training program, our apprentices, our members and our local. He comes to

work every day with an unrelenting drive to help our instructors and apprentices succeed. His steady and positive attitude is contagious, when things get stressful or apprentices are feeling the pressure of our demanding program, his unshakable support makes all the difference in the world. Joe is a special person and every single member is lucky to have him fighting in our corner."

– Gary Arnold, Business Manager,  
Denver Pipefitters Local 208

## DAVE DAVIA ACCEPTS LEADERSHIP ROLE WITH COLORADO CONCERN

Rocky Mountain MCA announced the departure of Executive Vice President & CEO, Dave Davia, to take the helm at **Colorado Concern**.

Dave Davia has played an instrumental role in the formation of Western States College of Construction. His leadership and commitment to the school are invaluable and we can't thank him enough. The WSSC team wishes Dave all the best on his next endeavors.



## WSCC HIRES FIRST CAMPUS LEAD—SARAH HARKSSEN, UNDER OPPORTUNITY NOW GRANT



Sarah Harkssen has been a plumbing foreman for a few years, and is now excited to take on her new role as the Plumbing Campus Lead at WSCC. She holds a master plumbing license and various certifications. During her apprenticeship, she won

numerous awards, placed second in the UA District 5 Apprenticeship Competition, and helped form and

is an officer of the women's committee with other women from UA Locals 3 and 208. Since graduating from the apprenticeship, she has been enjoying teaching and leading not only within her role as a foreman, but also by being a math instructor at her union. Sarah recently obtained an Associate of Occupational Studies from WSCC, and is thrilled to now be able to help others in her union accomplish this as well. In her spare time, she likes to paint, fence, play video games, and spend time with her cat. She had a previous career in animal medicine, but became a plumber because she loves problem solving and building things she can be proud of.

### WSCC INVITES YOU TO SUBMIT STORIES FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER



- Outstanding Apprentice Highlight
- Outstanding Instructor Highlight
- Contractor Highlight

- Project Highlight
- WSCC Cares Highlight

Please contact Jordyn Grote at [jordyn@westernstatescollege.org](mailto:jordyn@westernstatescollege.org) for information.