

# THE CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE ADVANTAGE



**WESTERN STATES**  
College of Construction

SPRING | 2024

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## The SMART Heroes Program Offers Free Training to Active Military and Veterans

The International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) started the SMART Heroes program in 2017 in collaboration with SMACNA, Helmets to Hardhats, the International Training Institute and Western Washington Sheet Metal JATC. The first location was established at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Dupont, Washington to provide free sheet metal industry training to active-duty US military men and women as well as recent separated veterans. In 2019, the second location formed at Fort Carson, Colorado Springs, Colorado offering the same training.



*SMART Heroes participants in Local 9, Colorado Springs.*

SMART Heroes is a seven-week course to earn the equivalent of their first-year sheet metal apprentice training. Once they graduate and separate from the

military, they can choose from 140 SMART Sheet Metal Industry locals to continue their apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship has become more relevant within the past couple of years as a good option for making good wages. You do not have to go to college racking up debt to make a good living. As a sheet metal worker, you are learning as you are earning a good livable wage. SMART Heroes graduates are bringing to the sheet metal industry skills learned in the military – working with heavy equipment; problem solving; critical thinking; being on time and improving productivity.

At the end of 2023, SMART Heroes (both locations) reached a big milestone graduating 500 SMART Heroes. As the demand grows for sheet metal workers, we will continue to grow the SMART Heroes program.



*SMART Heroes touring Air Force Academy Cathedral project – sheet metal worker role in the project.*

*Author: SMART Local 9, Colorado Springs Campus*

## RUSTY BIRDSSELL

### *Outstanding Apprentice*

My name is Rusty Birdsell. I am a Commercial HVAC Service Technician for UA Local 208.

I was led to my current trade because I have always been good at fixing things and enjoy the feeling of accomplishment when I can trouble shoot a problem and find a solution.

My favorite part of the WSCC Apprenticeship program is learning new things. Gaining new friends from class and being able to bounce ideas off of them to learn from their experiences also is an added benefit of participating in the program.

I would say many of my instructors have had a positive impact on my learning experience. I have instructors who have started their own company after becoming a

Journeyman and others who have worked on just about anything you can think of. I am anxious to learn anything someone will teach me.

In 5 to 10 years, I hope to be a lead technician at the very least, but maybe even a service manager.

My inspiration is my dad. He is the best man I know and can fix anything. He is also the best automotive technician I know. I hope to be as good at fixing HVAC equipment as he is at fixing cars.

In my free time, I enjoy fishing and playing video games.



## CORY CAMPANELLA

### *Outstanding Instructor*

My name is Cory Campanella and I work with Plumbers Local 3. I have been in the industry for 22 years.

I never thought I would want to be an instructor until I started the apprenticeship. Seeing how my instructors were willing to help everyone before, during, and after class motivated me to want to make that same impact on others. Those moments lead to me wanting to do the same for the next generation.

I have taught a wide variety of classes, including: welding, computers, shop, Trimble, drawing, layout, and print reading. I think welding and computers stand out as favorites to teach. I enjoy seeing how much progress my students make from the beginning to the end of the course. I'm really motivated by seeing the light bulb moments my students get during these classes.

I take personal responsibility of the students learning. If everyone is all on the same page with the instruction and students engage in the discussions with me, then I feel like I've done my job.

I try to leave students with a sense of brotherhood and fellowship. I encourage them to ask others for help and to be willing to help others when the shoe is on the other foot.

My older brother has been an inspiration for me since I got into the trade. He leads by example and has been a source of good feedback for me throughout the years.

I enjoy spending my time with family, camping, boating, jet skiing, and recently picking up how to wake surf.







## WSCC PARTNERS WITH TRIMBLE TO PROMOTE CAREERS IN SKILLED TRADES

Trimble and Western States College of Construction connected to brainstorm ways to promote post-secondary education and careers in construction. Trimble donated the XR-10 hardhat with HoloLens 2 for use at career fairs. The Trimble XR10 with HoloLens 2 allows frontline workers to overlay design models with the project for clash detection and status tracking as well as leveraging remote workflows for improved collaboration. Students, educators and counselors at career fairs are able to test drive the hard hat by manipulating a demo mechanical system in real time. Exposing students to field technology highlights different possibilities and career opportunities post-graduation.

Join Us For:

## GRAND JUNCTION APPRENTICESHIP OPEN HOUSE

Learn About a Career in the Skilled Trades



### Activities Include:

- Hands-on Projects
- Meet & Greet with Program Director, Faculty, and Current Apprentices
- Tour of the Facility
- Scavenger Hunt
- Prizes, Snacks, Beverages—Safety Gear Provided

MAY  
10  
2024

10 am – 5 pm

UA Local 145  
3168 Pipe Ct. #100  
Grand Junction, CO 81504

We look forward to welcoming Students, Parents, Teachers, Counselors, Navigators, Administrators, Officials, and Community Members

Click [HERE](#) or Scan the QR Code to Signup:



## HEALTH &amp;

## WELLNESS CORNER



## MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION IN CONSTRUCTION

Why is it important? Mental health issues and suicides are highly prevalent in the construction industry. In fact, the number of suicides in the construction industry is 3 times higher than the US average. Here's how we can work together to improve mental health in construction.

The nature of the construction industry can often impact mental health and well-being. Long working hours, strenuous physical labor and a male dominated "tough guy" culture can increase stress and lead to substance abuse, depression, and increased risk for suicide. Here are a few items to consider:

1. Advocate for mental health in safety planning.
2. Create a safe space for talking about mental health.
3. Stay Educated and Alert
  - a. Know the warning signs of increased suicide risk:
    - i. Anxiety, agitation, aggressive behavior, withdrawal, reckless behavior, mention feeling like a burden, changes in sleep, increase in alcohol consumption.
  - b. Know the signs of Imminent Danger:
    - i. Express feelings of desperation, hopelessness
    - ii. Tying up loose ends: giving away tools and possessions.
    - iii. Saying a final goodbye to coworkers, friends, family.
    - iv. Sudden mood change: shifting from despair to calm.
    - v. Talking about suicide or wanting to die.
    - vi. Seeking access to means.



If you witness any of the above suicide warning or imminent danger signs, tell your foreman or supervisor. Refer to National Crisis Line: 988. Call 911 for immediate emergency.

**Remember: Talking about suicide does NOT put the idea in someone's head. It gives them permission to talk about it & they are usually relieved.**

- Take a Mental Health First Aid Course
- Consult Employee Assistance Program

**Your mental and emotional wellbeing matter. You are not alone. Consult with your employer and local union hall for additional mental health resources.**

## KELSEY JOHNSON

### *Outstanding Apprentice*

My name is Kelsey Johnson. I am an HVACR apprentice with Local 192.

I was introduced to a “non traditional” career through a program called Climb Wyoming. This program provides an opportunity for single mothers to train in different career paths. I completed the course in the spring of 2019, and joined the UA as a first year apprentice that summer.

I enjoy the satisfaction of completing a project. The fact that we are earning a honest wage as an apprentice is also a major benefit.

My JATC Coordinator, Dan Meyer, has be a great influence on my apprenticeship. He has encouraged me to continue this process by providing me opportunities to attend the Future Instructors Program as well as the National HVACR Education Conference.

In 5 years, I'd like to see myself as a journeyman working on AHUs, rooftop units, and even chillers. In 10 years, I would love to be an Instructor of HVACR classes for the apprenticeship.

My inspiration is my family. I knew early in my pregnancy that I would be a single mother. This motivated me to change the projection of my finances and overall lifestyle. Growing up, my parents were not financially stable, so I knew I wanted to provide a comfortable childhood for my son.

In my free time, I love to explore new experiences ranging from hiking trails to new restaurants. I always have fun incorporating some kind of art into my day also.



## JOE GOLIK

### *Outstanding Instructor*

My name is Joe Golik and I am a HVAC Technician and Instructor at Local 58 with 16 years of experience.

I heard about the open position for an HVAC instructor at the training center and Dee Sharp told me I would be a good instructor so I decided to give it a chance. It's been a great learning experience.

I teach refrigeration, pneumatics, steam, hydronics, controls, start, test, and balance. My favorite is refrigeration, it's challenging.

I leave a positive impact on students by building relationships. I take the time to get to know each student and I personalize my approach to instruction.

Craig Migliaccio with AC Service and Clifton Beck with Esco Industries inspired me. They are great instructors!

In my free time I work on a 1976 Pontiac. I love hot rods and going to car shows! I also enjoy hanging out with my family.





## CONTRACTOR HIGHLIGHT

Tolin Mechanical is a privately held commercial HVAC services and facility management company serving building owners and operators throughout the Rocky Mountains, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.

Established in 1948 in Denver, Colorado, Tolin Mechanical initially focused on mechanical refrigeration construction and services. Over the years, our offerings have grown into a full service facility management company for our client's technical and mechanical systems. We now provide services in Colorado, Arizona, Wyoming and Washington DC and partner with commercial, industrial, institutional, and government organizations to maintain their buildings for safe, healthy, and energy efficient operation.

As we celebrated an incredible milestone of 75 years of success last year, we revamped our core values – **Growth, Respect, Integrity, Innovation, and Partnership.**

These values reflect who we have evolved into as an organization, solidify our unique culture, and serve as a guiding compass for both daily and strategic decision making.

As an organization that has thrived for over three-quarters of a century, we recognize the importance of staying true to our roots and legacy, while embracing change. The core of our previous values, mission and customer commitments still ring true. These have served us well and have certainly been a major component of our growth and success over the last 75 years. However, in this dynamic and evolving world, we felt the need to redefine our identity and focus on values that resonate more deeply with our employees, customers, and stakeholders of today. Through introspection and open dialogue, we identified these five core values as the pillars upon which we will build our future success.

Growth, Respect, Integrity, Innovation, and Partnership are not just words on paper; they represent the very essence of our culture.

These values encapsulate the principles that guide our interactions, decision-making, and collaborations within the organization and with external partners. They will serve as a constant reminder of the kind of company we aspire to be.

### CLIENT FOCUSED

Every Tolin Mechanical client receives individual attention, not a boilerplate service plan. While we've grown over the years and can now rely on the national resources of Service Logic, we haven't forgotten that our success is based on our deep local relationships and one-on-one interaction with our clients.

### TEAM DRIVEN

We're proud of the customer-centric team we've built over the years, made up of some of the most talented

engineers, HVAC technicians and sales professionals in the mechanical services industry. In fact, most of our clients are long-term satisfied repeat customers because they trust our team to consistently help them:

- reduce energy costs
- reduce costly downtime
- extend equipment life
- prevent expensive repairs

All team members are regularly trained on the latest technical and energy knowledge through our unique, industry-leading training program administered by Service Logic. Both our veterans and brand new hires are guaranteed to be professional and knowledgeable.

### TECHNOLOGICALLY SOUND

Our commitment to providing clients with world class energy efficiency solutions requires an investment in outstanding business systems. Tolin Mechanical has invested in a state-of-the-art service dispatch center and a customized tracking and tasking system. VoIP, Data, Accounting and CRM tools are integrated to deliver the consistent, high-quality service our customer base has grown to expect.





## WSSC HIRES SHEET METAL CAMPUS LEAD WITH OPPORTUNITY NOW FUNDS

Western States College of Construction is excited to introduce Cliff Rivard, Sheet Metal Campus Lead to the team. Cliff has been in the sheet metal industry for over ten years and has experience in the various facets of the trade. He earned his teaching certificate from EGCC and an Associate of Occupational Studies degree from WSSC, both of which



have enhanced his instruction of first year math at the Denver campus. He is elated to take on the role of Sheet Metal Campus Lead for the WSSC.



## INSTRUCTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Instructors from Local 3 Denver Plumber's Campus and Local 208 Denver Pipefitter & HVACR Campus participated in the first two sessions of Instructor Training covered under the Opportunity Now Grant. Leah Gutmann lead each two day event with a total of 35 participants including Local 3 Business Manager, Sean Wyatt and Program Director, Johnnie Norris, along with Local 208 Program Director, Eric Ortega, and Assistant Program Director, Joe Peneton. Sarah Harkssen and Cliff Rivard, the new Campus Faculty Leads for the Denver Plumber's Campus and Colorado Statewide Sheet Metal, also participated to prepare for taking over the course later this year. The Instructor Training Program fulfills the first certification course of the Professionalism in Construction Degree Program. Local 58 Colorado Springs Plumber, Pipefitter, & HVACR Campus is scheduled for Instructor Training in late April, and Local 9 Statewide Sheet Metal for September.

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



- Outstanding Apprentice Highlight
- Outstanding Instructor Highlight
- Contractor Highlight

- Project Highlight
- WSSC Cares Highlight

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