



The Construction College Advantage



Welcome to the first WSCC newsletter of 2026!

We're excited to introduce this new format and share the latest updates as we continue working to make a positive impact in our community.

We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our partners and advocates. Your continued support during this time of change is much appreciated as we work to strengthen our programs and services.

Since our last newsletter, we've welcomed new team members, launched new initiatives, and taken a thoughtful look at how we operate. These efforts help us identify opportunities to enhance our work and advance our mission: to become a symbol of educational excellence that fuels the success of our graduates, industry, and society.

We look forward to continuing our work together and sharing updates throughout the year about WSCC ongoing initiatives, achievements, and more. Stay tuned!

WSCC Team

In this newsletter you can expect:

Community Highlight

Apprentice Spotlight

Instructor Spotlight

Outreach Insights

Staff Updates

What's to Come



Community Highlight - WSCC Cares

On Saturday, January 17th, a group of Local 3 apprentices participated in the first WSCC Cares project of the year, along with two WSCC staff members, Sarah Harkssen (Local 3) and Cliff Rivard (Local 9). This group helped pack 899 boxes of food, which means they packed 27,420 pounds of food and 22,850 meals to be distributed across Colorado and Wyoming.

A huge thank you to Food Bank of the Rockies for partnering with WSCC to make this project and impact a reality!

To learn more about WSCC Cares and read about the projects that took place in 2025, you can visit the WSCC Cares page [HERE](#).



Apprentice Spotlight

This apprentice spotlight is focused on a rockstar 5th year apprentice at Local 3 in Aurora, Colorado: **Dylan Hass!**

Dylan is the president of the Local 3 student council, plus has also been involved in WSCC Cares events. He was in the military and worked as a patrol officer for Jeffco Schools before deciding to become a plumber. This move was sparked by him reading about how the U.S. was severely lacking in plumbers.

He loves being out in the field, getting hands on new equipment and learning new ways to build. He hopes to open his own union company with Local 3 one day!



Instructor Spotlight

Join us in recognizing two WSCC instructors for this instructor spotlight:

Tim Severance and Mike Cranford!

Tim & Mike not only make an impact through teaching each week, but they have been involved in several efforts outside of the classroom. They have attended several local career fairs to connect with high school students interested in learning more about a career in the trades, plus they have been hard at work on a team developing a pre-apprenticeship curriculum at WSCC to be launched soon.

We are fortunate to have these instructors on our team and are thankful for all they do!

Outreach Insights - TACT Gala, Career Fairs, & Local Food Drives

On October 24, 2025, WSCC instructors Cliff Rivard and Mike Cranford attended the TACT (Teaching the Autism Community Trades) Oceans of Opportunity Gala at the Denver Aquarium.

It was an event filled night with delicious food and recognized the hard work that TACT's students had put into their lessons in the workshop. Cliff and Mike talked with several students who mentioned a family connection to the trades and an interest in taking up the trades.

Overall, a successful night for an organization that has a deep belief in its mission and a contagious exuberance for service to their students.



WSCC instructors connected with local high school students at two career fairs recently: the October 2025 Jeffco 10th Grade Career Expo and the January 2026 Arvada HS Futures Fair.

The Jeffco Career Expo provided an opportunity for WSCC staff to discuss potential career paths in the trades with high school sophomores. The Arvada HS Futures Fair was designed for all students to speak with representatives from 2-year and 4-year colleges, trade schools, military, and apprenticeships to learn more about various options for their future.



WSCC is thankful for these events where we can share more about careers in the trades with a future generation. We hope to see some of these promising students in one of our WSCC programs in the future!

During the 2025 holiday season, three locals held food drives in an effort to collect canned goods and other non-perishable food items for local members and community food pantries. The three locals were Local 3, Local 9 (Denver), and Local 208.

Local 3 hosted a "Members Helping Members" food drive, where people were invited to drop off food to help their fellow Local 3 members and their families during the holiday season. Many people contributed to and were helped by this food bank. Multiple expressed that it truly helped them and their families.



Staff Updates - Five New Employees, Including the Editor!

Since the last newsletter in March 2025, WSCC has welcomed five new employees!

See below to learn more about the newest members of the WSCC team.



Mike Cranford
Instructor & Recruiter

Mike joined the team in June 2025. He is an instructor and recruiter for the Southern Colorado Region with WSCC. With 9 years in the Sheet Metal Industry and 5 years in the Marine Corps, he leans on his experiences to bring in and prepare the next generations of construction workers for their careers.



Marisa Hasty
Administrative Assistant

Marisa joined the team in August 2025. She is an experienced higher education and communications professional with a strong background in strategic planning, program administration, and event management. Marisa provides administrative support in pursuit of the college's mission to elevate construction education.



Carlos Rivera
Assistant Program Director

Carlos joined the team in July 2025. He is a 21-year member of Pipefitters Local Union #208 and completed his apprenticeship in 2009. He has been a certified instructor since completing the UA Instructor Training Program in 2015 and provides support for the college in his role at Local Union #208.



Tim Severance
Instructor & Recruiter

Tim joined the team in June 2025. He has 22 years of experience as a plumber, including service & construction, estimator, project manager, and safety officer. Tim has been an instructor with Plumbers Local 3 JATC since 2009, teaching the UA plumbing curriculum courses, and currently teaches CPR/AED/FA, OSHA, and Backflow/Water Quality classes.



George Villarreal
Assistant Coordinator

George joined the team in April 2025. He is a seasoned construction professional with extensive experience in field supervision, project coordination, and team leadership. Currently a coordinator for the SMW local 9 JATC, George has spent over six years mentoring crews, managing complex projects, and driving organizational success.

What's to Come for *W*SCC!



WSCC staff and partners will be attending the **2026 ACCE Midyear Conference** (American Council for Construction Education) taking place in Irving, TX from February 26-28, 2026.

This conference offers significant value for professionals and institutions involved in construction education and program accreditation, featuring in-depth sessions on emerging industry trends and providing targeted training, discussions, and insights directly relevant to meeting the ACCE accreditation standards that Western States College of Construction must satisfy.

We are excited to have this opportunity to learn, engage, and continue ensuring our programs align with expectations and best practices.

Upcoming Programs

BOOST Pre-Apprenticeship Program

- **B**uilding **O**n **O**ccupational **S**killed **T**rades: a pre-apprenticeship program developed for potential apprentices to explore subject matter across trades.
- Registration is not yet open, but the inaugural program is set for summer.

Heavy Metal Summer Experience

- Summer camp to provide exposure to sheet metal, piping and plumbing for students aged 15-19.
- Camps will be offered in Pueblo, Colorado Springs, & Grand Junction.
- Dates to be set in June & July 2026.

Thank you for reading!

Have something to contribute for a future WSCC Newsletter?

Submit your story and images by emailing the Editor at marisa@westernstatescollege.org

Submission deadline for April 2026 edition: **Friday, April 17, 2026.**

THE EDITOR



Marisa Hasty
WSCC Administrative Assistant