



# CISCO

## CONSTRUCTION NEWS BRIEFS

Construction Industry Service Corporation - [www.cisco.org](http://www.cisco.org) - 630.472.9411 - Dan Allen, Executive Director

### FOCUS ON APPRENTICES DURING TWO-DAY CHA HANDS-ON EXPO

In the last issue of *Construction News Briefs (CNB)*, we highlighted the first day of the two-day event where CISCO, the Chicago & Cook County Building Trades and the Chicago Housing Authority joined forces to bring 12 different building trades and their representatives to meet with CHA residents to inform them about career opportunities within the union construction building trades.



*First-year Bricklayer Apprentice Ashley Wilkins demonstrates the art of laying bricks.*

The back-to-back days with CHA residents drew about 250 participants to the Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters Satellite Apprenticeship & Training Center in Chicago; as part of a unique Project Labor Agreement designed to recruit CHA residents into the building trades' apprenticeship programs.

This was the third and fourth such events as last year, the three organizations partnered to host two separate events in the summer as apprenticeship coordinators, instructors and even some first and second year apprentices showed attendees some of their common everyday tools and tasks and let residents get a feel for the work.

### APPRENTICES TELL THEIR STORY

During this July 26-27 Hands-On event, several apprentices were available from the Bricklayers, Ceramic Tile Setters & Finishers, IBEW Local 134 Electricians, Heat & Frost Insulators Local 17 and the Painters/Decorators District Council 14 to talk to the residents.

"Working in the trades is not a job, but a career. There's a future for you and your family, you see different things, and you meet new people."

We asked apprentices two main questions: 1) How they got into their training program?, and 2) If they could talk to students today about the trades, what would be their advice? Here is what they had to say:

### Apprentice Cornelius Brown - 1st Year Heat & Frost Insulators Local 17



*Cornelius Brown talks to CHA residents about insulation.*

Former Marine **Cornelius Brown** described working for Local 17 as exciting since traveling to different job sites means that the work stays fresh and exciting, and never gets old.

His advice to students: "Working in the trades is not a job, but a career. There's a future for you and your family, you get to see different things, and you meet new people."

Brown, who also worked in a non-union job prior to entering Local 17, said the difference between non-union and union is night and day.

"In the union, there is more camaraderie, and a real sense of security as the members have your back. You don't get cheated as you earn a good day's wage for a good day's work," he added.

### Apprentice Lori Barth - 2nd Year IBEW Local 134



*Lori Barth shows a resident how to properly wire a circuit.*

**Lori Barth** said she became interested in the electrical trade because her father was a local stage hand, and showed her various home repairs such as swapping out outlets.

"I would watch him do the switches, I got into it and I enjoyed it. Following his career, I could see that it was a pretty good gig," she said.

Her advice to students: "Careers in the trades offer fantastic job security. You become much more independent when it comes to fixing things around your own home. You don't have to pay anyone else, you can do it by yourself."

"Getting to use any kind of tools, and working with your hands is a worthwhile thing."

*More news and photos on the back page.*

# CISCO ON THE MOVE

## Apprentice Mikki Perrin - 2nd Year Ceramic Tile Setter



*Mikki Perrin shows a CHA resident how to use the tile-cutting tool.*

Another apprentice with military experience, **Mikki Perrin** explored college before the military, and after her discharge, was a manager for 5 years before that company went out of business. Looking to do something more physical than a desk job, she tried sheet metal work before landing in the ceramic tile trade - "tile finishing is pretty fantastic," she said.

Her advice to students: "I would tell students that a career in the trades is life changing. If you are undecided, give this a try because it is fair and equal pay for everyone; great benefits, and you get to earn money while you learn the trade."

"It's a can't lose situation. You receive a great experience and a better quality of life," she added.

## Apprentice Cory Alford - 2nd Year IBEW Local 134



**Cory Alford** was working in a grocery store when he saw a few construction workers on lunch and asked them about their trades. He became interested in electrical work after installing a radio,

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then talked to a teacher at Dunbar High School in the Electrical Program.

"It all fell into place after that. The Alsip Training Center was near my home, I applied, met the requirements and got in," he said.

His advice to students: "I would tell them that it is a great career, you can feed your family and receive good benefits and a pension."

Alford, who worked on the Wrigley Field project, said "you work with your hands, and that is a skill you'll have for life. And I can tell my friends, I had a part in the renovation of the Cubs historic stadium," he said.

"Getting to use any kind of tools, and working with your hands is a worthwhile thing."

## Apprentice Jamaal Steward - 1st Year Heat & Frost Insulators Local 17



*Jamaal Steward walks residents through a sealant demonstration.*

Army veteran **Jamaal Steward** started working for a non-union insulation company after he left the military and also performed carpentry duties by building scaffolds before he "took a chance on applying for a union apprenticeship."

"The work is the same, the hours are the same and the expectations are the same, but in the union you are treated better," Steward said. "Your superiors have been there before, and the system trains you to take

their place some day. Safety is more important on the job site in the union construction industry."

His advice to students: "Build for the future now! A career in the trades will keep you employed, and with the union 'brotherhood' you will develop relationships for the rest of your life."

## Apprentice Ken Morman - 2nd Year Painters/Decorators DC #14



*Ken Morman demonstrates a virtual spray-painting device in a training exercise.*

**Ken Morman** got into the painting trade because he said he "enjoyed the work ethic, and you are always moving."

"I really like the attention to detail on everything you paint. There's more variety than one thinks, too. You put up drywall and plywood, put up wallpaper and use a lot of metallic finishes on different surfaces."

His advice to students: "Pursue the career and chase it. There is money to be made in this lifestyle."

"School is not cut out for everyone. Some kids have trouble focusing in the classroom. While other people are more hands-on in their abilities, the trades gives people with those skills a great opportunity to enjoy a high-earning career."

