



Hudson Valley Construction Career Day held March 6th

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Michelle Polhamus, second from right, counselor at Beacon HS, and Devin Declerk, right, of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 21 of Peekskill, with students from Beacon HS. Photos by Ed Cody

Suffern, NY Over 550 local high school students met with trade-industry experts to engage in skill-building activities and learn about job opportunities in the region at the annual Hudson Valley Construction Career Day. Students from across the Hudson Valley filled the Rockland Community College Fieldhouse in Suffern on March 6th to learn about diverse careers in the construction and building trades and the advantages of apprenticeship training. Union representatives and private-sector companies worked with the teens to take part in hands-on skill-building demonstrations such as welding, carpentry and soldering.

Hosted by the Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc. (CIC) and the Building Contractors Association of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, Inc. (BCA), Construction Career Day is designed to reinvigorate the industry's labor force with young talent. The event is marking its 21st year of supporting tomorrow's workforce.

"Apprenticeships offer youths an opportunity to learn critical skills in the trades and prepare them to land good-paying jobs right in their communities," said Matthew Pepe, executive director of the CIC and BCA. "We're expecting to see significant investments in infrastructure at the federal level, which will mean even more opportunities for growth in our region's building and construction industries. We're proud to be a part of this important effort to strengthen our workforce, invest in our communities and benefit our overall economy."

Rockland County executive Ed Day praised the program. "I am proud to again be here hosting Construction Career Day," he said. "All too often, schools put value on college and don't put good value on the trades. The trades offer a tremendous option for our young people."

Assemblyman Colin Schmitt, R-99th District, described the trades as "the backbone of the middle class." "Now, more than ever, we need to ensure young New Yorkers benefit from the trades," Schmitt said. "This offers our youth a way to really have that perfect 'American Dream' life."

Also in attendance were Yonkers mayor Mike Spano, representatives of senators David Carlucci, D-38th District, and James Skoufis, D- 39th District, and other local leaders who applauded the initiative.

In the building and construction trades, registered apprenticeship programs provide participants with a high-quality, portable and nationally recognized credential that certifies occupational proficiency in the construction industry. Programs follow a “learn-while-you-earn” model, as participants obtain wages that are graduated upward as the apprentice accumulates greater skills and experience on the job. Students looking to qualify for bona fide apprenticeship opportunities will be expected to have a high school diploma or equivalent GED. There are more than 20 trades represented among the building and construction trade unions.

The Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc. is a professional trade organization, representing more than 600 contractors, suppliers, consultants and other professionals who service the construction and building industries. The CIC maintains day-to-day contact with local and state government officials who own and manage much of the region’s infrastructure and institutional facilities.

The Building Contractors Association of Westchester & Mid-Hudson, Inc. provides fast, reliable information to its members on virtually every subject related to building construction. Its primary mission is to improve conditions by negotiating labor agreements with local trades; lobbying local, state and federal governments to secure capital spending and beneficial laws; dispersing information about public and private bid lettings and awards; educating industry members on the latest requirements of laws, rules and regulations affecting daily operations; and providing networking opportunities for members.

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