



# NCCER ACCREDITED TRAINING SPONSORS

## BEST PRACTICE PROFILES

*Each NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor has a unique outlook on the process of construction craft training. From industry associations and national contractors, to college systems and not-for-profit training centers, there are specific keys to success. NCCER surveyed some of the most successful training programs, and their Sponsor Representatives responded with insightful information and advice for those considering the implementation of a craft training program.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

VATTEROTT COLLEGE .....	2
LPR CONSTRUCTION .....	5
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION .....	7
MISSISSIPPI CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION FOUNDATION .....	10
CRAFT TRAINING CENTER OF THE COASTAL BEND .....	13
ABC PELICAN CHAPTER .....	15
ABC SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER .....	17

## VATTEROTT COLLEGE

Vatterott College is an Olivette, Missouri-based college system founded in 1969 specializing in career and technical training for students in the Midwest. The organization's first NCCER Accredited Training and Education Facility (ATEF) came aboard in 2008. Since that time, the college has significantly expanded its use of NCCER curricula, now offering NCCER credentials at 10 campuses across five states and online.

As of May 2013, Vatterott employs a team of 59 NCCER-certified craft instructors to deliver its programs and has had approximately 3,500 students earn NCCER's industry-recognized, portable credentials since becoming accredited. Vatterott's construction training programs that incorporate NCCER curriculum include Building Maintenance, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, Welding, Wind Energy and Your Role in the Green Environment (offered online as a continuing education course). Vatterott's construction craft training programs have graduation and hiring rates that meet and often exceed placement requirements set forth by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). Currently, Vatterott's craft training programs utilize the following NCCER curricula:

- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Electronic Systems Technician
- HVAC
- Industrial Maintenance Electrical & Instrumentation Technician
- Industrial Maintenance Mechanic
- Plumbing
- Welding
- Wind Turbine Maintenance Technician
- Your Role in the Green Environment

According to NCCER Sponsor Representative Melissa Gaines, Vatterott incorporated industry-recognized credentials into its construction training programs because it recognized the demand for skilled workers in the industry. "There is a shortage of qualified individuals in the workforce, and a future need for trained craft professionals to replace the retiring baby-boomers. Additionally, this generation prefers to learn at an accelerated rate and work with their hands. The traditional classroom-based learning environment is not as appealing to most young people as it was 15+ years ago," said Gaines.

Since accreditation, Vatterott has expanded and developed its programs and processes to include a number of innovative best practices, such as:

### Industry Outreach and Partnership

Industry advisory boards for each of Vatterott's craft training programs meet twice yearly to review training and update standards as needed. The individuals who sit on these boards represent a wide variety of organizations, ranging from local contractors and suppliers to large, national employers and government agencies such as FedEx and the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, the college has received numerous equipment donations that have helped to defray the costs of equipment maintenance and replacement as a result of ongoing communication with industry.

At its NCCER accredited locations, Vatterott has also partnered with local chapters of the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). ABC registers students with the U.S. Department of Labor for Registered Apprenticeship, provided the student makes the appointment for an interview and meets documentation requirements. Through these partnerships, Vatterott students are able to earn NCCER credentials, get on-the-job training documented as part of a Registered Apprenticeship program and are entered into a pool of candidates to be considered for employment by local contractors. ABC students who successfully complete NCCER curriculum and a Registered Apprenticeship program are awarded full credit equivalent to Vatterott's diploma program. ABC graduates are also permitted to enroll in Vatterott's Associates' Degree programs, and can earn degrees in as little as 30 weeks.

### Community Outreach

Through various community and education initiatives, Vatterott's craft training programs have incorporated community involvement as a way to offer its students on-site job experience while also completing NCCER performance testing at no cost. As a component of its programs, Vatterott requires its craft training students to work with Habitat for Humanity at least one day per month.

In recognition of Vatterott's contribution, the organization received the "American Dream Maker Award," from Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity in Independence, Mo. Vatterott craft training students also took part in an Extreme Makeover Home Edition project in Joplin, Mo. in 2012.

### Program Administration

In its on-campus facilities, Vatterott provides well-equipped, clean training rooms employing the most current technology. To help students understand how each craft affects the "big picture" of a project, instructor often employ projects that involve multiple crafts. Through this collaborative approach, each craft has its own stations where students perform their part of the project while individual instructors monitor them throughout the circuit. In addition to encouraging cooperative learning amongst students, this unique approach also maximizes efficiency for lab use and the performance testing required to earn NCCER credentials.

The NCCER Sponsor Representative has implemented an extensive, multi-layered evaluation system, including:

- Two student evaluations of instructors and courses per 10-week "phase";
- Supervisor evaluation of instructors during each phase; and
- A complete, audit quality evaluation of each ATEF site at least annually.

This detailed evaluation process allows for more efficient collection of data required for NCCER annual reporting, and allows the Sponsor Representative to monitor, evaluate and improve program performance.

## Instructor Training

As is always advisable, Vatterott's Sponsor Representative provides detailed guidance to newly certified NCCER instructors to ensure that they thoroughly understand their roles and responsibilities in the NCCER process. As such, she personally trains instructors to use the online training report form (Form 200) by providing written instructions, observing self-tutoring, correcting and working directly with instructors to demonstrate how she receives, approves, and forwards their forms to NCCER. This detailed process provides her with feedback on the utility of her instructor training processes and provides the instructors with an overall understanding of the credential submission process.

## Summary

Vatterott's craft training programs exhibit characteristics of a successful NCCER ATEF. The organization has exemplary record-keeping systems that are consistently applied throughout the campus system. The Sponsor Representative is enthusiastic and committed to complying with NCCER requirements, and has established multi-layered oversight systems to ensure that all campuses and instructors are aligned. The organization closely monitors the availability of tools and materials necessary for performance training and testing. Their training labs are extremely well equipped and kept in pristine condition, with the most current technology. Performance training is integrated into every class, and into community outreach activities (e.g. Habitat for Humanity).

When asked what advice she would give to career colleges interested in implementing NCCER training, Matthews noted the following as keys to success:

- Taking time to understand NCCER Guidelines and Program Compliance requirements;
- Offering initial training to instructors;
- Making sure all questions are answered from the employees concerning the process in a timely fashion;
- Reporting credentials after each course;
- Offering follow-up training to ensure that the NCCER process is understood;
- Developing a set of standards for timely credential submissions;
- Monitoring the ANR (NCCER's web-based credential database)
- Developing relationships with the construction community; and
- Keeping records in order.

## LPR CONSTRUCTION

LPR Construction is a steel erection and heavy industrial construction firm based in Loveland, Colorado. The company was founded in 1979 and now completes commercial, industrial and power plant projects across the United States. LPR first became accredited to deliver NCCER training in 2008. Initially introduced to NCCER by the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), LPR construction played a critical role in providing Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in NCCER's first edition of the Ironworker curriculum. LPR, as an organization, was prompted to deliver NCCER training and assessments as a way to provide their employees with portable credentials which would be recognized by the customers they served.

Currently, LPR employs 15 NCCER certified instructors, and over 2000 LPR employees have earned NCCER credentials since the organization was accredited in 2008. NCCER training is offered at LPR for the following craft areas:

- Pipefitter
- Welding
- Rigging
- Mobile Crane Operator
- Crew Leader
- Project Supervision
- Project Management
- Field Safety
- Safety Technology

LPR is also an Accredited Assessment Center (AAC) through NCCER and provides assessments for each craft training area they offer. LPR Ironworker assessment candidates have an average passing rate of 87% and Crane Operator assessment candidates have an average passing rate of 98%.

### Educational Partnerships

LPR leadership approached a local community college to help start an Ironworking/Welding program. The college was receptive in light of funding that was cut for Career and Technical Education (CTE). The Ironworking/Welding class was opened as an option to local high school students as well.

This partnership has benefitted LPR directly, enabling the organization to recruit the very best out of each Ironworking class for future employment. Each year LPR delivers a 100-hour Ironworker class for 25-30 apprentices that have no industry experience. Typically five to seven students from the college Ironworker program attend the class as new LPR employees.

To other construction companies looking to partner with local educational institutions, McClure advised, "Be persistent and very patient when dealing with school systems. The schools and state institutions do not operate with the same sense of urgency as the private sector."

## Benefits of Craft Training

LPR Construction has reported positive influence on their quality of employees, as well as better employee retention due to starting an NCCER craft training program. They have also seen a notable decrease in job-site injuries and an increase in projects being completed before deadlines.

NCCER training and industry-recognized credentials have also been attributed to benefitting LPR employees by defining a clear career path. “The industry-recognized credentials have served as a source of pride for our employees who did not complete higher education,” McClure said.

LPR offers a direct incentive for earning NCCER credentials. All apprentices who are enrolled in an LPR Construction apprentice program receive a \$1/hour raise every six months with the successful completion of their assigned modules and performance tests.

With a successful training program now in place, McClure offered advice to those organizations who are starting their programs: “Identify the training program that will meet the most critical business needs first, and develop/institute that program. Once you have the first program running smoothly and effectively, add additional programs. Do not try and tackle all the training on your company’s wish list all at once. It’s like eating a whale; it must be done one piece at a time.”

## Assessment Coordination

Construction industry organizations across the board must balance the demand for craft workers with the fluctuations of each job site. NCCER assessments can give a broad picture of what skills each craft worker possesses before they even begin work. When LPR first began offering NCCER training, their protocol called for each new employee to be given an NCCER assessment for their craft within the first 30 days of employment. After some complications LPR revised their protocol, and each new hire is instructed to take their NCCER craft assessment before arriving on site. LPR uses the NCCER website to locate nearby assessment centers, helping to improve coordination.

## Summary

LPR Construction is an example of an industry contractor successfully implementing NCCER training and assessments for the benefit of craft professionals, and the greater organization as a whole. Semi-annual training meetings take place with key company stakeholders and training staff to address any issues in a timely manner. This top-down approach proves a serious commitment to craft training’s impact on the industry. With an intentional connection to the local education system, and a careful programming strategy, LPR has made the most of NCCER’s training, assessments and portable credentials.

# NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) represents the public school system for the entire state. North Carolina public schools started utilizing NCCER curriculum in the mid 90's through the initial leadership of Carolinas Associated General Contractors (AGC) Vice President, Tommy Caldwell, and NCDPI Consultant Sherrill Goodman. In 2009 NCDPI became the official NCCER sponsor for the established program, and is now represented by Craig Pendergraft, Education Consultant, Student Certification and Credentialing, Career and Technical Education for NCDPI.

Several decades ago, NCDPI recognized the industry demand for a skilled and trained workforce and sought out NCCER curriculum for their CTE program. The initial sponsor was the Carolinas AGC chapter. The curriculum process and credentialing of students was hampered by the underestimated number of student credential completions. This became a challenge for the sponsor. As the need for national industry recognized credentials grew, the NCDPI CTE division began to look for alternative ways to sponsor the NCCER program. After conducting industry and stakeholder surveys and meetings, the consensus was that NCDPI CTE would be best to sponsor a successful program.

The official proposal for adoption of the NCCER curriculum by State Board of Education, for the Construction Education Program areas, to include Carpentry, Electrical Trades, and Masonry, occurred during the 2008-2009 calendar school year. Currently, the NCDPI offers Core Curriculum, Carpentry, Construction Technology, Electrical, HVAC, Masonry, Plumbing, Welding, Weatherization, and Your Role in the Green Environment. Each craft training area is closely monitored by statewide associations, contractors, community colleges and other workforce development agencies in order to meet industry demand.

Currently, NCDPI has over 600 NCCER certified instructors teaching in their CTE division. In the past three years alone, 13,515 students have earned NCCER credentials. The program's success has been highlighted in the positive high school graduation rate - in 2012 94% of all North Carolina students enrolled in a CTE program graduated high school, compared to 80% of traditional students.

## Industry Partnership

In 2009, when the NCDPI program was restructured, official partnerships were established with various industry associations including: Carolinas AGC, the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC), the North Carolina Home Builders Association (NCHBA), the North Carolina Association of Electrical Contractors (NCAEC), the Carolina Electrical Contractors Association (CECA), the Brick Association of Carolinas, the North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association (NCMCA), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), many large and small contractors, and the North Carolina Community College System. Craig Pendergraft, NCDPI's sponsor representative, credits the success of NCDPI's construction education program to "the relationships that existed and continues to grow between all of our partners and the NCDPI consultants."

Each partnership plays a unique role for this statewide program. Local and state-level associations such as NCHBA, CACG, ABCC, NCMA, CECA, NCAE come together with local contractors and suppliers to support high schools by serving on advisory committees and providing guidance. These partners also arrange field trips, provide materials and supplies, serve as guest speakers, as well as chairing SkillsUSA® regional and state competitions.

For large organizations, like school districts, who are planning the launch of an NCCER program, Pendergraft suggests gathering support from associations and contractors who already use the NCCER process. He also encourages other sponsor representatives to educate their local workforce development agencies, community colleges and industry organizations that are not familiar with NCCER. In this way, there is support for the NCCER process “from the top down.” Taking ownership through accreditation for an entire school system gives a strong foundation for education and industry partnerships .

### College Credit

To provide a clear path for students, NCDPI involved the North Carolina Community College board in the initial advisory board for the NCCER statewide program. During conversations about seeking NCCER accreditation for the state of North Carolina, it was critical to provide a clear understanding about how student articulation would happen from high school level courses to those programs offering college credit. The conversation is still ongoing, allowing high school instructors to collaborate with college instructors who offer NCCER credentials.

### Program Costs

Implementing and maintaining an NCCER craft training program may have varying costs, dependent on the size, scope and type of organization sponsoring. The basic cost considerations for the NCDPI included:

#### Implementation

- Initial fee to become an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor
- Cost of sending 25 people to the Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program
- Accredited Training and Education Facility application fee for each school participating
- Bringing participating schools to NCCER standards based on facilities and equipment
- Teacher salaries
- Instructor Certification Training Program training and kits
- Textbooks – 25 books per set for each program, per school including teacher and student editions for Core Curriculum and levels one and two of specified crafts
- Annual NCCER maintenance fee

## Program Benefits

After four years as the official NCCER sponsor, the NCDPI has seen valuable benefits from their NCCER craft training programs. From the student perspective, high school students who have attained a credential, obtain a documented skill set, and are, therefore, more marketable in the employment arena (helping to reduce training costs for business owners) and better prepared to succeed in a post-secondary environment. A benefit for educators is the ability to gauge the level of understanding regarding specific skills and knowledge within a course of study and adjust instruction as needed to ensure student competence.

Overall, the value of CTE is highly recognized in North Carolina. The mission of NC secondary CTE is to empower all students to be successful citizens, workers and leaders in a global economy. The hands-on approach, a standard in the CTE classroom/lab, provides students the double value-added opportunity to “touch” and “experience” what they are learning. Students not only learn the theory, but put that theory to practice; using the relevant tools and equipment in relation to the curriculum and potential career choice in which the student is interested. Pendergraft advised that to make the most of an NCCER program, the sponsor should “Focus on the process of standardized, stackable credentialing that will lead to productive employment and post-secondary opportunities.”

## Summary

Running a CTE program over an entire state of public educational agencies is no small or easy task. Pendergraft noted that each achievement for the NCDPI has been a team effort:

“Communication, collaboration, and leadership are vital attributes that have helped to ensure success with implementing, maintaining, and growing our NCCER programs. The collaborative efforts between the NCDPI CTE designated NCCER Sponsor, State CTE Directors, Regional Coordinators, various other LEA staff members, the ICTP-trained classroom instructor, and Business and Industry Partners, combined with consistent communication and direct leadership have helped to make our programs successful.”

# MISSISSIPPI CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION FOUNDATION (MCEF)

At the request of the Mississippi construction industry, the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation (MCEF) applied to become an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor in 1996. The MCEF board recommended NCCER craft training for secondary and post-secondary craft training across the entire state, and together, they set a goal of building and ensuring a quality workforce in Mississippi.

Today, MCEF's NCCER craft training program oversees 200-250 craft instructors and approximately 4,500 high school students earn NCCER credentials each year. MCEF has developed an apprenticeship program for post-secondary craft training that had 309 students enrolled in 2012 alone. According to MCEF president and sponsor representative Mike Barkett, MCEF's NCCER craft training programs have an 80% graduation rate, and its apprenticeship programs have a 100% graduation rate. The crafts offered are as follows:

## High School

- Carpentry
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Masonry
- Sheet Metal
- Industrial Maintenance
- Construction Trades
- Welding

## Apprenticeship (for adults 18 & over)

- Carpentry
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Industrial Maintenance-Mechanical
- Sheet Metal
- Pipefitting
- Welding

## Industry Partnerships

The MCEF organization is in close partnership with industry. Organized in 1996, a coalition of construction associations joined together to establish MCEF. The nine major trade associations represented on MCEF's board are as follows:

- Associated Builders & Contractors
- Associated General Contractors
- American Subcontractors
- MS Asphalt Association
- MS Concrete Industries Association
- MS Manufacturers Association
- MS Road Builders Association
- National Assoc. of Women in Construction
- Southern Brick Institute

MCEF also partners with the State Board of contractors, MDE, SkillsUSA® and industry to host the annual MCEF SkillsUSA® Craft Championship. Industry partners provide sponsorships, judges, project managers and exhibits. All partners are involved with the planning committee.

A common agenda of recruiting and training a quality workforce for the construction industry helped develop a foundation for this long-standing partnership. Each association has a representative on the MCEF Board of Directors. The board meets six times a year with an executive board meeting intermittently as needed. MCEF benefits greatly from having this direct tie with industry.

### Educational Partnerships

MCEF has a ten-year, on-going partnership with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to deliver the NCCER curriculum and credential high school students in 198 programs in 106 career and technical centers. MCEF has an additional agreement with MDE (on an annual contract basis) to monitor Mississippi's high school construction CTE programs.

Additionally, MCEF has a partnership with the Mississippi State Board of Contractors to offer scholarships to outstanding high school seniors in construction CTE programs in Mississippi's ATEF schools to continue their education in preparation for careers in the industry.

A common agenda with all stakeholders in industry and education has been the greatest key to success for the MCEF. Barkett also advised that programs should “communicate and communicate often” with all possible partners.

### College Credit

MCEF has articulation agreements with all community colleges that offer CTE construction courses for up to 32 academic hours for the apprenticeship program.

- MS Gulf Coast Community College
- Copiah-Lincoln Community College
- Hinds Community College
- Holmes Community College
- Jones Community College
- Pearl River Community College
- MS Delta Community College
- Northwest MS Community College
- Itawamba Community College
- Meridian Community College
- Southwest MS Community College
- East Central MS Community College
- East MS Community College
- Northeast MS Community College

In order to establish recognition of NCCER craft training for college credit at these institutions, MCEF made the request and showed how awarding credit would benefit the student, MCEF, and the college. For MCEF, offering college credit is often an incentive for students to enroll in NCCER training and gives them the opportunity to progress. 72% of apprenticeship students indicate that receiving college credit is extremely important to them and their long-term career goals.

When asked for advice on creating college credit opportunities for NCCER craft trainees, Barkett responded, “Develop partnerships with secondary schools, state department of education, community colleges, and industry. Secure an articulation agreement and continue to communicate with high school and college CTE directors on its use.”

## Program Costs

Each NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor has varying costs and revenue sources. For MCEF, all secondary programs are funded by an annual \$600,000 grant from the Mississippi State Board of Contractors. The post-secondary apprenticeship program is set up with a tuition-based format to cover costs.

MCEF has also received several DOL training grants for training youth, underemployed and unemployed. Many of these participants entered the MCEF apprentice program to further their training and begin careers in construction.

## Program Benefits

By offering craft training directly tied to an industry-recognized credential, students are given a jump start into the construction industry. High school students who graduate from the MCEF secondary program earn NCCER Core and Level 1 credentials in their particular craft. For apprenticeship students, their NCCER credentials provide recognition in the construction industry and an advantage in the hiring process. After 17 years as an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor, MCEF staff has continued to see that NCCER program graduates are work-ready and the courses of study are relevant and current.

## Summary

Due to a long-term relationship with the Mississippi Department of Education, and purposeful partnership with area industry leaders, the MCEF has seen state-wide success for implementing and maintaining an NCCER training program. All education and industry partners came together, laid their respective individual agendas aside, and agreed on a common agenda – quality construction education.

# CRAFT TRAINING CENTER OF THE COASTAL BEND

The Craft Training Center of the Coastal Bend (CTCCB) was founded in 1987 by The Coastal Bend Business Roundtable and local contractors represented by The Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC), Texas Coastal Bend Chapter to provide craft training in the Coastal Bend of Texas. When NCCER training programs were developed, CTCCB immediately began using the curriculum and became an Accredited Training Sponsor. The CTCCB primarily offers craft training toward the industrial crafts due to area demand and financial support from the industrial construction sector.

The CTCCB currently employs 23 NCCER certified instructors. According to CTCCB president and NCCER sponsor representative, Dr. Anne Matula, 5,189 students have earned NCCER credentials since CTCCB began delivering craft training, and 95-98% of graduating students are employed in the construction field.

The crafts training programs offered at the CTCCB include:

- NCCER Core
- Electrical
- Industrial Painting
- Instrument Fitter
- Instrument Technician
- Pipefitting
- Mobile Crane Operations
- Plumbing
- Scaffold-Building
- Field Safety
- Safety Technology
- Welding (SMAW & GTAW)

## Industry Partnerships

A long-standing, founding partnership with the members of the local ABC chapter have provided much needed support for the CTCCB. Through these members, the CTCCB was connected directly to the local refineries and industrial plants. Open communication about the industry's workforce needs led to the implementation of specific craft training programs at the CTCCB.

There is also a financial benefit to the close industry partnership - each industrial partner owner contributes 12 cents per contractor man-hour, while local contractors contribute funds for buildings and machinery.

## Program Costs

The CTCCB has calculated that for each student, the average costs for craft training is \$1,800 per semester. This does not include capital costs.

## Program Benefits

For the CTCCB, craft training has a clear and practical benefit. The surrounding industry demands a certain type of craft worker and they need to be trained properly. NCCER credentials are recognized by the major industry partners, and help graduates to quickly secure a job.

## Summary

A successful craft training program has become a legacy at the CTCCB. Industrial and contractor partners have a direct link to the training center in order to create a pipeline of qualified craft workers. This network of relationships benefits all parties - students, owners, contractors, and the administration at the CTCCB.

# ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS PELICAN CHAPTER

The Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Pelican Chapter represents the Baton Rouge and St. Charles areas of Louisiana and grew from the initial Louisiana State ABC chapter headquartered in New Orleans. ABC chapters across the country have a long-standing commitment to NCCER curriculum and craft training programs, and the Pelican Chapter is no exception. Accredited as a Training Sponsor in 2001, ABC Pelican Chapter is responsible for the training of over 2,000 students per year. Each student who successfully completes the training program receives an NCCER credential, ranging from level completion to knowledge verification. The member contractors represented in the ABC Pelican Chapter are familiar with NCCER credentials and require them for their craft professionals.

As of August 2013, the ABC Pelican Chapter employs over 100 NCCER certified instructors. The ABC Pelican Chapter sponsor representative estimates that 70-75% of all craft trainees who enroll in a program graduate with NCCER credentials. Specific craft training is offered for the following crafts:

- Electrical
- Instrumentation
- Millwright
- Pipefitting
- Carpentry
- NCCER Core
- Heavy Equipment Operations
- Mobile Crane Operations

ABC Pelican chapter offers written assessments and Performance Verification (PV) in all NCCER crafts and is also an Endorsed Accredited Assessment Center for Mobile Crane, Rigging and Signal Person Performance Verifications. For Performance Verifications in other crafts, the ABC Pelican Chapter looks to contractors who are Accredited Assessment Centers to offer PVs to those craft professionals they hire. Eligible contractors assess employees on the job site in order for craft professionals to attain the NCCER Certified Plus credential.

## Educational Partnerships

The ABC Pelican Chapter, and its contractors, are currently partnering with area high schools and career centers to donate and sponsor technical classes. The partnerships started with contact being made and maintained by a Director of Workforce Development as well as training personnel with member contractors. This started in the late 90's and continues today.

Through its effort to maintain and support technical education programs in the surrounding area, ABC has worked to develop this partnership and helped encourage these efforts. It is through these efforts that the Adopt-A-School program was born in 2003. This program has experienced exceptional growth since its inception and was renamed to Program Partners in 2007. Program Partners is a joint venture between ABC, area schools/career centers, and ABC member contractors. There are 15 ABC contractor members partnered with 43 schools/career centers in the Greater Baton Rouge multi-parish area. Through these programs, there are 76 career training classes being offered to area students.

Having contractors invested in the students and programs is essential to the success of the school partnership initiative. Contractors donate time, money, consumables, sponsor field trips, guest speak for classes and attend career and job fairs.

When asked for advice on successfully developing a partnership with a school, the ABC Pelican Chapter sponsor representative offered, “contact career and technical supervisors, coordinators, and directors first to tell them what you would like to do and why. Then take the plan to school board personnel and with their approval, to the schools themselves. Maintain relationships and do not let them stagnate.”

### **Program Costs & Benefits**

The ABC Pelican Chapter has an annual operations budget of approximately \$2 million. Funding is sourced from member contractors and educational grants. For the 2013 fall semester, the ABC Pelican Chapter is at capacity with 1,400 students and according to the sponsor representative, almost all students who graduate, find a construction craft job immediately. These graduates are seen as highly employable since the contractors and plants in the area require NCCER credentials for employment.

### **Summary**

The ABC Pelican Chapter attributes the success of their craft training program to the tremendous assistance from both local industry and the contractors that support it. By closely monitoring the submission of all NCCER forms, and carefully hiring qualified instructors, the ABC Pelican chapter has been able to maintain its reputation as the premier training facility in the Baton Rouge area.

# ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

The Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Southern California Chapter represents the Anaheim area of California. ABC chapters across the country have a long-standing commitment to NCCER curriculum and craft training programs, and the Southern California Chapter has continued this tradition. Starting with the initial *Wheels of Learning* curriculum, ABC Southern California has used NCCER curriculum and assessments for its craft training programs since the inception of NCCER as an organization. The chapter's official accreditation was given in 1994, and now ABC Southern California employs approximately 73 NCCER certified instructors in its craft training program. Since training began, 4,120 trainees have earned NCCER credentials, and over 80% of all students who begin craft training, complete the program.

Currently ABC Southern California offers training in the following craft areas:

- Electrical
- Electronic Systems Technician
- HVAC
- Plumbing
- Sheet Metal

## Industry Partnerships

ABC Southern California uses its direct tie to construction industry contractors for job placement purposes, taking on students only when there is a need for that particular craft in the Southern California area. For instance, the waiting list to enroll in an electrical training program is 600 names long. When the need for electricians rises, each person on the waiting list is called to fill an additional class. All apprentices are dispatched to work for member contractors. Upon graduation, most apprentices stay with their initial employers. Each craft training student is sponsored by a member contractor and is employed throughout all of their training. This direct pipeline of trained and credentialed craft professionals keeps costs down for member contractors and the industry as a whole.

## Educational Partnerships

To initiate partnership with local schools, ABC Southern California sends information about their apprenticeship training program to all of the high schools, colleges and other training institutions in the five counties that the chapter serves. ABC Southern California staff attends job fairs and gives presentations throughout the community explaining the advantages and career opportunities in construction. At some local events, a representative from ABC Southern California will show a 7 ½-minute video about apprenticeship that features testimonials from apprentices in different trades. In addition, they provide a handout that describes what apprenticeship is and its advantages, what each of the five trades does in the industry, an application and the construction career path.

Some of the various partnerships include, local high schools, colleges, pre-apprenticeship programs, prisons, at-risk youths, probation departments, Job Corps and alternative High Schools. With each partnership, the chapter gains name recognition and new applicants.

Doug Sawyer, the NCCER sponsor representative for ABC Southern California offered this advice for organizations looking to develop new partnerships: “Find the person in the organization that will be your ‘spark plug’ - a person who really believes in apprenticeship and values construction as a viable and valuable career choice.”

### Cost

ABC Southern California calculates that for a craft training class to break even, at least 15 students must be enrolled in each class with an annual tuition of \$1,200. For the entire year, the chapter’s direct training cost is \$94,845 which does not include facility rental, cleaning and utilities.

### Benefits

Long-standing members of the ABC Southern California chapter can clearly see the quality of students who are NCCER trained. Students also quickly recognize the benefits of their credentials as they directly relate to the job market. Sawyer even had a student visit 8 years after graduation and tell about his experience working in the United States and abroad, and gave credit to his NCCER training and credential that gave him the ability to find a job, even out of the country.

This encounter underscored what the ABC Southern California staff already knew - they are providing training that has a proven success record and is accepted with high standards throughout the industry and the country. To emulate the success that this ABC chapter enjoys, Sawyer suggested that new Accredited Training Sponsors, “hire the best instructors that they can find.” He also emphasized that administrators must be personally involved in the students’ learning and make themselves available to their students, while also making sure to establish, and consistently enforce, rules and regulations that govern their training programs.

### Summary

ABC Southern California has stayed successful in training over several decades to their high standards and commitment to the NCCER curriculum. Each staff member and instructor has high regard for the Subject Matter Experts who contribute to NCCER training programs. This solid foundation allows for each trainee to learn their craft and be a productive and safe member of the construction industry.



*Please contact Jennifer Wilkerson, NCCER Director of Marketing and Public Relations at [jwilkerson@nccer.org](mailto:jwilkerson@nccer.org) or 386.518.6908 if you have any questions or would like more information about NCCER Best Practice Profiles.*