AWDI
American Workforce Development Initiative
Executive Summary

Facing a Crisis in Workforce Development

Meeting the demand for a highly skilled workforce in the building crafts trades is a national crisis that becomes more severe each day. America’s construction crafts workforce is aging and there simply are not enough young people entering the craft trades. Today, nearly one-third of all construction craftsmen are over the age of 50—and the average age is increasing every year. Unless something is done to attract younger people to the construction trades, the nation will face severe problems in any effort to build and maintain its infrastructure.

Collaborating to Solve the Problem

Recognizing the problem ahead for the nation, AWDI was formed as a non-profit corporation to address this issue by educating the public regarding the construction trades in a labor-neutral manner. AWDI’s board is currently made up of representatives of the National Building Trades Association, the Associated Builders and Contractors, and national construction users. In Alabama, AWDI helped to facilitate a collaboration among the Alabama AFL-CIO, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Alabama, Alabama Associated General Contractors, Inc., the American Subcontractors Association, the Alabama Construction Trade Unions, the Alabama College System, the Alabama Road Builders Association, the Alabama Construction Users Roundtable, the Alabama Department of Education and construction business owners to help solve the problem in the Alabama, where expanding auto, steel production and energy industries make the demand for a highly skilled workforce in the construction trade particularly acute.

Taking the Message to a New Generation

Research indicates that young people simply are not considering the construction trades as a viable career choice. As a result of both the image and knowledge gaps, young people from junior high school through junior college, who are prime candidates for careers in the construction trades, seldom even investigate the possibilities.

AWDI has developed a marketing and communications campaign under the brand GO BUILD™ to enhance the image of the construction trades and to inform young people, parents, educators, and others who influence career decisions, about futures in the construction industry.

The campaign is much like the highly successful campaigns created for recruiting to the armed forces. Campaigns like “Go Army” and “Army of One” have revolutionized military recruiting. Such a campaign, if combined with accurate information and effective
communication, promises to do the same for the construction trades.

Through the GO BUILD™ program, young people will be directed to a webpage where interactive video will show them construction trades professionals at work, in training, and at home. In addition to the “virtual experience” offered by the website, there will be a user interface where information seekers may request information and enter their personal data. This personal data will become part of a database of those interested in the construction trades. This database will be available to accredited training facilities and organizations recruiting for the construction trades.

It Started in Alabama and Georgia

The implementation of the GO BUILD™ program in Alabama and Georgia show two of the possible ways this program may be initiated.

The Alabama Model
A Legislative Initiative to Change the Future

The Alabama Legislature established a state agency to implement the GO BUILD™ program in this state. The agency is funded by a dedicated fee paid by commercial and industrial (non-residential) contractors, based on the payrolls of non-administrative employees. This funding approach has been endorsed by the 3,000-plus members of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Alabama, the Associated General Contractors of Alabama, the Alabama Road Builders Association, and the Alabama AFL-CIO.

The three members of the Board are representatives of the Alabama Building Trades, the Associated Builders and Contractors, and the Construction Users Roundtable. An Advisory Board representative of the construction industry and its major training partners has been established.

The Georgia Model

The Governor’s Office of Workforce Development has implemented the GO BUILD™ Program in Georgia, and it has funded the initiative with state appropriations and private and construction industry contributions.

Please visit gobuildalabama.com and gobuildgeorgia.com for more information.

Future Collaborations

AWDI seeks to complement, not compete, with existing organizations engaged in enhancing the access and excellence of construction education, training, placement, employment and professional development programs and activities. AWDI will collaborate with those who wish to better align the supply of skilled construction workers with the demand in a labor-neutral manner by using the GO BUILD™ program. This will provide better opportunities for workers, more skilled employees for construction businesses and enhanced economic development for Alabama, Georgia, the Southeast, and the nation.
Contact

Bob Woods – Executive Director
42 Inverness Center Parkway/Bin B255
Birmingham, Alabama 35242
Ph. 205.992.6327
C. 877.504.3483
RFWOODS@SOUTHERNCO.COM