

MERIT SHOP REPORT

JULY 2011



Associated Builders
and Contractors, Inc.

Arkansas Chapter

PLAs - pg. 10-11

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Your resource for construction news.
MERIT SHOP REPORT

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Associated Builders & Contractors is a national nonprofit trade association of general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, and industry professionals who have joined together to advance the construction industry by aggressively supporting the Merit Shop Philosophy and the Free Enterprise System. ABC of Arkansas reserves the right to review any editorial material for submission in the *Merit Shop Report*.

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What is Red, White, & Blue?

Red, White, & Blue is a program that allows ABC members to sponsor the association throughout the year, without constant pursuit, for a one year donation of \$850. This program funds all educational seminars and workshops regarding pertinent information for our members. Our latest seminars covered topics such as contracts and lien laws.

If you would like to sign up your company, please contact Danielle at 501.372.2858/ Danielle@abcark.org.

President's Message

New ABC Employee for NWA and Western Arkansas



We would like to welcome Rose Wilson to our ABC TEAM as our NW and Western Field Representative.

Rose has owned her own business for the last several years and has extensive experience in events planning.

In addition, she is CPR certified and will be able to jump right in and help you with your CPR training needs.

Please join me in welcoming her aboard--- rose@abacark.com!!!

Upcoming Events

We have a few upcoming events that I would like to encourage you all to attend and meet some of our newest ABC and catch-up with a few of the older ones:

- Central Second Thursday on August 11, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza in Little Rock from 5:50 – 8:30.
- NW Arkansas Golf Tournament on Friday August 26, 2011 at Stonebridge Meadows in Fayetteville, AR. Last year this event had both an AM and PM flight and I have been assured by the folks in NWA that it will be bigger and better this year.

THANKS to all our volunteers that serve on the Councils in Central, Western, and Northwest Arkansas. Without your hard-work and dedication, these events would not be possible!!!

Membership Committee

Last month April Brown from ABC National, our Region 3 Senior Field Manager, came down and we decided that our Arkansas chapter is in need of

a Membership Committee to help grow our membership here in Arkansas.

She and I had lunch with 2012 Chairman Elect Colin Gorman and he agreed to Chair this committee. Thank you Colin!!

The committee will consist of two members from each Regional Council and at least one member of the Board of Directors. So far, Brandon Cage of Crain Chevrolet and Ben Fureigh of Fureigh Electric have agreed to serve on the Committee.

If you know of someone in your area who you feel would be a good candidate to be on this committee, please e-mail me at broachell@abcark.com and I will contact them to see if they would be willing to serve.

BILL ROACHELL



I am proud to be representing ABC Arkansas Chapter, its philosophy and vision on a part-time basis for the Northwest and West Regions. My objective is to assess the needs of members and potential members. Then, develop and implement strategies for meeting those needs that encourage growth and development for the association and members.

My background and passion is in sustainability of human energy. My Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management is from John Brown University and my Associate of Applied Science in Environmental Studies, Health & Safety Management is from NorthWest Arkansas Community College. I love to learn and teach and do so as I advocate sustainability of human energy as owner of C.I.R.C.L.E. Firm.

Photo by: Trent Wilson Photography, Rogers, Arkansas

ROSE WILSON

Construction Headlines

LEED RATING SYSTEM TARGETS HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

The U.S. Green Building Council's new LEED for Healthcare rating system will address needs specific to the health care industry at inpatient, outpatient, licensed long-term care and assisted living facilities, along with medical offices and education and research centers. Both new construction and major renovation projects that seek the rating must prioritize certain needs - patients' increased sensitivity to bacteria and chemicals, staff health, water usage and rural locations, among others - in order to qualify for certification.

So far, 225 medical facilities are certified under previous LEED standards and an additional 1,176 projects are registered for certification. For more information, visit www.usgbc/leed/healthcare.

PLAN PROMOTES INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) introduced legislation (S. 652) with bipartisan support calling for the creation of a federal infrastructure bank called the American Infrastructure Financing Authority. The proposed bank would cost about \$10 billion, but Kerry says the six-year plan would result in about \$600 billion in infrastructure investments.

The bank would provide loans and loan guarantees to companies to begin new projects, as well as improve existing infrastructure, such as highways, bridges, airports, railways and ports.

If approved, the federal government would provide up to 50 percent of the funding. Proponents of the bill are discussing public-private partnerships to come up with the additional 50 percent. However, opponents' state there is no clear funding source, and they fear the plan will benefit cities while neglecting rural areas.

Council News



CENTRAL COUNCIL

The Central Council has been busy the past couple of months. The golf tournament was a success and Blake Helm did a great job of chairing that event.

In the upcoming months the Central Council will be holding some events ranging from 'Second Thursday' to a Chili Cook-off. All of these events I know will be a success.

On a personal note I want to thank the ACEF for being kind enough to ask me to speak at their graduation night. It truly was an honor to be considered and asked to do something like that. I wish all of the students the best of luck in their careers and nothing but success.

Nathan Kovaleski
Central Council Chairman
Action, Inc.

WESTERN COUNCIL

The Western Council had a council meeting on July 22nd to discuss the remaining events for the year, some exciting opportunities. Be on the look out for more details.

NORTHWEST COUNCIL

The Northwest Council met on June 13th to finalize our summer events and start discussing our fall events.

On July 14th we held our 2nd Networking Night, I do have to sadly report we only had 18 members out but we did all enjoy each others company and would like to thank Lesley Pruitt with Felix Thomson for Chairing the event! I do have to mention that Lesley was unable to attend due to her 11 year old nephew Colton having his 3rd open heart surgery, the surgery was a success and he is doing GREAT!! For those of you that knew about the surgery she greatly appreciates the love, support and prayers! I would ask that we keep him in our prayers as he continues to heal, but again he came out like a champ!! He's a very tough little guy!!

We have settled with Stonebridge Golf Course for our golf tournament, Johnny Newby will be chairing this event. It will be on August 26th, we are having a golf committee meeting on the 21st to settle all the details and flyers will be coming out next week! We are, of course looking for teams, sponsors and any donations to the tournament. Just to let a little cat out of the bag guys...a little birdie tells me that a couple of Hooters girls are going to be driving one of the beverage carts, so this could be a lot of fun!! MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

On July 30th Steve Turner, Scott Burrows and myself had the pleasure of meeting with Congressman Womack and giving him a donation check from PAC for \$2500 and had a nice visit with him. He has agreed to come and speak with us at our next member dinner which will be at the end of October or beginning of November depending on his schedule, so everyone please be watching for details coming on that dinner.



Scott Burrows, Shannon Warren, Congressman Womack, & Steve Turner

Just a reminder to everyone that we are collecting can foods at all of our events for our end of the year donation to LifeSource, so please keep that in mind as you come out to each event.

We are set to have our next council meeting on August 10th where we will be hammering out the details for the chili cook-off and end of the year member dinner.

Shannon Warren
Northwest Council Chairman
SSI of NWA



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NW Golf Tournament

Stonebridge Meadows
Fayetteville, AR

Friday, August 26th

Mark your calendars!



More details will follow.

Rose Wilson, NW & W ABC Representative

Rose@abcark.org

479.287.7614

ABC Cares

Year Long Charity Project

The Northwest Council invites every attendee to bring a canned item or two to the event or make a donation. This 'Charity Project' will be a year long project.

We will make a presentation to a local organization at years end.

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Legal Update

THE EFFECT OF NLRB “QUICKIE” ELECTION RULES ON SMALL BUSINESSES

BY: BO LOFTIS

Soon, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) procedures governing union representation elections will likely undergo significant changes that will affect small businesses. On June 21, 2011, the NLRB issued a notice of proposed rulemaking that, if enacted, will drastically reduce the time between the filing of petition by a labor organization and an election. The new rules will reduce the time from petition to election from the typical 42 days down to 10-21 days, according to Brian E. Hayes, the lone dissenting opinion on the Board's decision. In essence, the new rules reduce the time a company has to prepare for a union election. This important preparation time allows companies to inform their employees about what it truly means to be a member of a union. Without sufficient time, employers will be unable to provide workers a complete view of unionization, leaving employees with only the union's presentation to base their voting decision.

The proposed rules offer a number of changes that the NLRB claims will streamline and modernize the representation process. First, the new rules establish that there can be electronic filing of election petitions and other documents germane to the election. Next, the rules establish that pre-election hearings will be held seven days from service of the petition of a hearing notice. In addition, a party must raise all issues and the reasoning behind them within this seven-day period or risk losing the legal right to pursue these issues. By limiting the window to seven days, a significant disadvantage is created for employers seeking to avoid

unionization. This particularly impacts smaller businesses that may not have access to the resources and legal counsel necessary to handle the myriad of issues that come along with a representation election, especially one that will take place so quickly.

Further changes create additional burdens. The new rules require an employer to provide an electronic list of all eligible voters to the union in two days. This time period has been reduced from the previously allowed seven days. Additionally, the new rules prohibit litigating bargaining unit issues until after the election when the dispute involves less than 20 percent of the bargaining unit. This change increases uncertainty about which employees can properly vote in the election. In the past, these matters could be solved prior to voting.

These changes come as somewhat of a surprise since President Obama recently issued Executive Order 13563, directing that federal agencies like the NLRB refrain from making swift regulatory decisions without performing an in-depth cost-benefit analysis. Further,



Hayes' dissent points out that the Board has been meeting its goals concerning the timeliness of processing election petitions, making these rules seemingly unnecessary. For fiscal year 2010, 95.1 percent of all initial elections were conducted within 56 days of the filing of the petition and the median time for an election was 38 days. In fact, 86.3 percent of all representation cases were closed within 100 days, beating the organization's own target rate of 85 percent.

These proposed changes should be a reminder to employers to constantly be ready for a union organizing campaign. Businesses should anticipate issues that could possibly arise in a union election and develop a plan to handle these situations. Otherwise, the shortened election time could well result in a lack of preparedness and an inability to present a sufficient case to employees to remain union free.

Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus, P.C. is an Arkansas-based law firm practicing in multiple complementary areas. For more information, call (501) 371.9999 or visit www.cgwg.com.



Tax Tip

Independent Contractor versus Employee?

This question has become a real hot button for the IRS. The IRS began a three-year employment tax audit initiative in 2010. These random audits will be more invasive than previous employment tax audits and could involve more than one tax year. They have now targeted the construction industry. The IRS will be auditing all workers classified as independent contractors to determine the main issue of whether or not you have the right to control and direct what they are doing, how they get it done, who had financial control, and the relationship you have with the worker.

What will it cost you if a worker becomes classified as an employee?

- Additional payroll taxes (including employee's and employer's Social Security and Medicare taxes, unemployment taxes, and employee's income taxes), penalties, and interest
- Potential back overtime pay under wage and hour laws
- Additional pension plan contributions or possible loss of deduction for an employee benefit plan for failure to contribute the proper amounts



What steps can you take to minimize the risks of having workers reclassified from independent contractors to employees?

- Use a written agreement outlining the relationship and the terms of the work
- Don't use the words "hired", "employee", "employed"
- Don't use employees to do the same type of work as the independent contractor
- Make sure the written agreement has specific completion dates. Include liquidated damage clauses if the work is not completed
- Don't pay any of the independent contractor's expenses unless it is specifically outlined in the agreement
- The independent contractor needs to furnish his or her own tools and materials

You must be consistent with your treatment of workers. If you treat them as an employee one year and an independent contractor the next, it will cause a problem if you are selected by the IRS for review. Also, for all independent contractors that you pay over \$600, you must issue a form 1099 at the end of the year for the total amount of payments you made to them.

Another way the IRS becomes aware of an issue with employee classification is by workers who are laid off attempting to get state unemployment benefits. If they are an independent contractor, they cannot collect unemployment benefits. If they file for unemployment benefits, it could lead to a state inquiry and IRS notification. A written agreement will help make clear that the worker is not an employee and is not eligible for unemployment benefits.



If you do get selected for an employment tax audit, contact your CPA immediately. If you are unsure about your understanding or compliance with the independent contractor rules, you can find extensive guidelines in IRS publications and at IRS.gov.

Established in 1982, Ferguson, Cobb & Associates, PLLC specializes in financial management, accounting, and tax services for the construction industry. The firm offers financial statement preparation, tax planning and preparation, multi-state contractor's licensing, surety and bonding assistance, and business continuity planning.

Pursuant to IRS Circular 230, this letter is not intended and cannot be used to avoid IRS penalties or promote, market or recommend to another party any transaction or matter addressed herein.





APRIL BROWN,
Senior Field Manager, ABC National

A reasonable and prudent person need only look further than campaign finance reports to surmise that political paybacks are still alive and well in Washington, D.C. Despite failing to pass such onerous and job killing legislation as the Employee Free Choice Act, the current administration is continuing to use their influence to give Big Labor an advantage.

Federal Agencies

The Obama Administration's most recent handout toward Big Labor is demonstrated by the proposed rules by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

On June 21st, DOL's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) published a notice of proposed rulemaking to reinterpret what constitutes "persuader" activity under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA).

The proposal will have a substantial impact on employers and the attorneys and consultants they hire to assist them before and during union organizing campaigns. The proposal may also impact advice given to employers outside the context of union organizing campaigns. Another effect of the proposal is that it will make it more difficult for employers to get advice on critical aspects of labor relations, and may also have an impact on ABC efforts to advise contractor members on labor issues of vital concern to them and their employees in the future. ABC has serious concerns with this proposed rule and will be participating in the comment process.

Not to be out done, on the following day, June 22nd, the NLRB published a notice



PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS

Support open competition for all construction jobs. Say **"NO"** to union-only project labor agreements

of proposed rulemaking to overhaul the procedures it follows before, during and after the union representation election process. As proposed, these drastic procedural changes will have a substantial impact on employers—resulting in hasty union representation elections within 10 to 20 days of a union filing for an election, compared to the current average election time of 31 days. Such "ambush" elections would severely limit an employer's ability to effectively communicate the impact of unionization to its workers. The proposed rulemaking is clearly an attempt by the NLRB to advance Big Labor's agenda at the expense of American job creators.

For more information on either of the aforementioned proposed rules contact ABC National's Senior Manager of Labor and Employment Policy, Sean Thurman, at Thurman@abc.org.

Project Labor Agreements

Days after taking office, President Obama signed Executive Order 13502, radically changing federal contracting rules to favor his largest political supporters. This order encourages federal agencies to require wasteful and discriminatory project labor agreements (PLAs) on federal construction costing more than \$25 million. When required

on public construction, PLAs deny the 87 percent of the construction workforce that chooses not to join a labor union an opportunity to work on projects funded by their own tax dollars.

PLAs typically require all contractors on a covered project to recognize the union as the sole representative of their employees, hire their workers from union hiring halls, pay into union pension and benefit funds and operate under union work rules. In non-Right to Work states, PLAs also require that workers pay union dues as well. The requirements included in PLAs are designed to put the demands of one special interest group ahead of the public by restricting the awarding of contracts to only contractors who are willing to participate in these anti-competitive schemes.

These provisions not only unnecessarily increase labor costs for nonunion employer, but also provide no additional benefit to workers because the contributions that their employers make on their behalf into the union pension funds are not accessible unless they join the union and become vested in their pension program.

Regardless of the political motives for encouraging their usage, government-mandated PLAs stifle competition and therefore increase costs, not just for nonunion contractors and employees, but also taxpayers. In fact, numerous studies demonstrate that PLAs increase costs by as much as 18 percent when compared to non-PLA projects, even when both types of projects are subject to prevailing wage laws.

and ensuring equal opportunity for everyone in the construction industry to compete for public projects.

For more information on what can be done in your state, contact ABC National's State Affairs Senior Manager, Andy Conlin, at Conlin@abc.org.

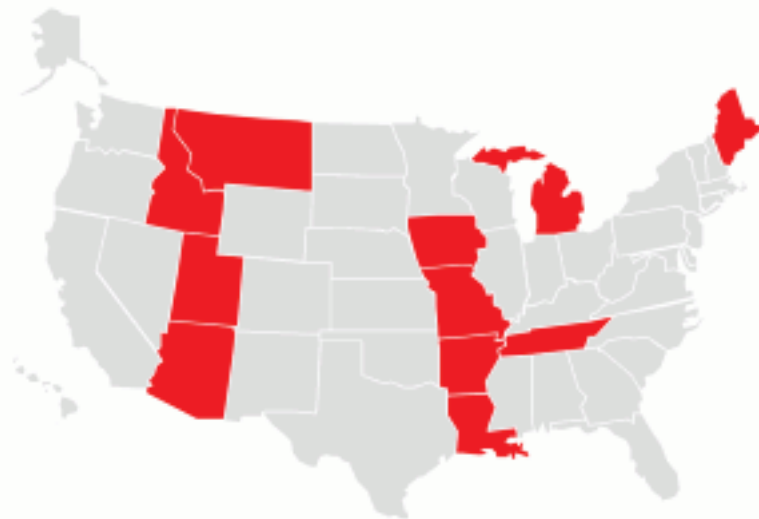
Get Active, Take Action!

We need all members of Associated Builders and Contractors, our allies, and our friends to help defend free and open competition from special interests. Communicate your opposition to union-only PLAs to elected officials on our ABC grassroots website.



thetruthaboutplas.com

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) is a national association representing 23,000 merit shop construction and construction related firms in 75 chapters across the United States. The purpose of the PLA website is to inform the public about an important issue in the public interest. Nothing in the website is directed at any particular employees of any particular employer. Nothing in the comments or views posted on the site should be considered to be legal advice or opinion. For more info, email: stateaffairs@abc.org. | [Privacy Policy](#)



States and localities to ban government-mandated PLAs

Requirements that nonunion contractors contribute to Big Labor's multi-employer pension programs are one of the most problematic aspects of PLAs. These provisions ensure that nonunion contractors are at an extreme competitive disadvantage because these stipulations typically force nonunion contractors to pay pension benefits twice. These employers are forced to pay into the union pension plans in addition to contributions made on behalf of workers to existing 401 (k) company plans.

In an effort to discourage the use of wasteful and discriminatory PLAs, 11 states have adopted measures to prohibit the use of PLAs on state funded projects. Currently, Arkansas (2005), Arizona (2011), Idaho (2011), Iowa (2011), Maine (2011), Michigan (2011), Montana (1999), Missouri (2007), Louisiana (2011), Tennessee (2011), and Utah (1995) have banned the use of government-mandated PLAs either through legislation or executive orders - ultimately protecting taxpayer dollars

Workforce Development

Training the Merit Shop: Telling Our Story

MIKE GLAVIN,

Senior Field Manager, ABC National

How many times have we heard it? From the halls of Congress to local planning commission meetings, PLA defenders and Davis-Bacon peddlers alike bellow forth that the merit shop represents “unsafe, untrained, and unskilled workers.” A bogus argument to be sure, but lies will often prevail in the absence of the truth. The stark reality is that merit shop advocates have never possessed the tools necessary to tell the true story of merit shop training. Over the next few months, the Trimmer Construction Education Foundation will be working with both chapters and members to collect and compile the data needed to fight back against these charges.

In 1960, ABC members created the merit shop’s first training programs in the face of violent opposition. In the intervening fifty years, merit shop instruction has more than proven itself. It turns out safe, well-trained, highly skilled construction professionals. ABC chapters, affiliates and member companies have trained the workforce that built our nation. Unfortunately, this reality has been overshadowed by an un-silent minority and their political benefactors.

The goal of this extensive project is simple: To validate the position that ABC members and chapters are thoroughly and extensively engaged in workforce development, both directly through training initiatives and indirectly through outreach. In the coming months, ABC will seek to measure all aspects of training, including

registered apprenticeship programs, craft training programs, safety training, as well as continuing and management education.

The time has come to shine a bright light on the world-class programs that are creating the workforce of tomorrow.

Achieving a clear and universal picture of merit shop training will require the full participation of every training entity in the association. This is an opportunity for our entire federation to loudly proclaim the merit shop’s commitment to building the future and silence the critics of open competition.

ABC National Field Staff have already begun contacting chapters and training affiliates to solicit information on their education programs. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Glavin (glavin@abc.org).

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Safety

FirstSTEP:

Your Safety Road Map Starts Here...

Starting a safety program can be a daunting task. That's why each year, ABC offers its STEP (Safety Training Evaluation Process) program. STEP is a proven and valuable resource designed specifically to support ABC members in the development and continued improvement of safety and training efforts, with a collective goal of ensuring continued worker wellbeing and health.

But for some, STEP can be more like a big JUMP. That's why ABC is proud to introduce FirstSTEP--a building block for those companies who are looking to establish a comprehensive safety training program. If you are a smaller contractor that wants to "start somewhere" with safety, then this tool was developed for you! You will notice that this road map gives you some very basic components to consider as you work on constructing the foundation of your safety program.

For best results, we encourage you to concentrate on building the program around your company's culture, the way YOU do business and the way your employees approach their jobs. While these components may be universal, there is no single right way to integrate them into an organization. The only true "right way" is your way. So make use of resources available, but take the little extra time needed to make them truly yours.

The progress you make by participating in this program will bring returns many times over for your business and your employees alike. Some returns will come quickly, such as reduced injuries, improved productivity and stronger OSHA compliance. Other returns will continue to get better with time, such as gaining a competitive advantage in your market, lowering workers comp

costs, preventing costly OSHA fines and pre-qualifying for profitable work as you progress into the full STEP program.

Questions? Please contact Chris Williams, Director of Safety, at cwilliams@abc.org.



STEP
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for higher employee productiv-
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Member firms of Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) that participate in the Safety Training and Evaluation Process (STEP) program are among the safest construction companies in the nation. Make STEP part of your company's strategy to improve safety and productivity.

www.abc.org/step

¹Figures based on 2007 STEP data compared to 2007 Bureau of Labor Statistics industry averages. ²Incidence Rate represents the number of OSHA recordable incidents per 100 employees per year. ³OSHA Citation Rate represents the number of citations per federal OSHA construction project. ⁴Experience Modification Rate (EMR) (MOD Factor) measures a company's safety performance against similar businesses over the past three years and is one of the factors used to determine workers' compensation rates. ⁵DART Rate represents the number of OSHA recordable incidents that involve "Days Away, Restrictions and Transfers" per 100 employees per year.



Associated Builders and Contractors, 4250 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203

WWW.ABCARK.ORG



APPRENTICESHIP CLASSES START SOON...

It's that time of year again, the start of another wonderful year of apprenticeship. If you have an apprentice who is currently enrolled in one of our locations, please have him or her call our office to confirm their placement in a class. If you have a new apprentice who needs to enroll, call Laura Wood at (501) 372-1590 to request a registration packet.



Below is the list of start dates for our locations across Arkansas:

Location	Date	Location	Date	Location	Date
Northwest Arkansas – N.T. I.	Aug. 9	Little Rock – Electrical ACEF Edu. Center	Aug. 1	Jonesboro - ASU Technical	Aug. 2
Fort Smith – Adult Education Center	Aug. 9	Little Rock – Plumbing ACEF Edu. Center	Aug. 3	Forrest City – E. AR Comm. College	Aug. 1
Morrilton – UACCM	Aug. 1	Little Rock – HVAC 1 & 2 ACEF Edu. Center	Aug. 8	Little Rock – HVAC 3 & 4 ACEF Edu. Center	Aug. 11

ACTE / ACE SUMMER CONFERENCE

ACTE and ACE held their summer conference for Arkansas educators and career counselors in Hot Springs July 24th and 25th. ACEF was there to help the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition and the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coordination Steering Committee (AACSC) promote apprenticeship to over 500 middle and high school educators from around the state. On Monday, the AAC demonstrated the mobile training unit, with many of the educators taking part in actual training on the various technologies exhibited in the mobile trainer. Response was good and many of the educators expressed a desire to have the mobile trainer come their schools for the benefit of their students. The AACSC co-sponsored a giveaway to Big Cedar Lodge at the closing luncheon on July 26th, which they also co-hosted.

CONSTRUCTION INSTRUCTOR HIRED FOR YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM

Congratulations to John Crotts on his new position as the construction educator for the Youthbuild program. The Little Rock Workforce Center partnered with Little Rock School District and ACEF and in late spring was awarded a 1.1 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide GED, career and pre-apprenticeship training to disadvantaged youths.

Mr. Crotts has over 15 years of instruction experience in the construction industry and was an education major at the State Teachers College, now known as UCA, in Conway. He will provide instruction in general construction knowledge with a focus on electrical, plumbing and carpentry trades.

Enrollment is Still Open

ACEF will conduct “open registration” through the first week of the Fall Semester (first week in August).

The advantages of ACEF apprenticeship training includes:

- The option of on-line training when your apprentices are traveling
- A curriculum that requires your apprentices to meet performance as well as written standards
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Remember to Beat the Heat

*Heat is hard on the heart:
how to take precautions*

The real issue during the summer is protecting our hearts against the extreme hot weather that has descended on the area. The American Heart Association wants everyone to stay safe, stay healthy and take precautions to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can have serious effects on health.

Here's what you need to know:

How does hot weather affect the heart?

Extremely hot weather causes dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. These risks increase when the humidity is above 70 percent and the temperature is above 70 degrees F. Heat and humidity interfere with the body's natural cooling process.

Physical activity outside in hot and humid conditions can be hard on your heart.

This is true even for athletes who haven't yet adapted to the heat. The problem is made worse because the heart is trying to deliver blood and oxygen to your working muscles while your body is trying to cool off by sweating. If you sweat too much, you lose fluid. This decreases your total blood volume. That means your heart has to pump even harder to get the smaller volume of blood to your working muscles, skin and the other body parts. When you lose too much fluid, your body temperature rises and your nervous system doesn't work properly. Extreme fluid loss can lead to brain and heart damage.

A good way to monitor your body fluid level is to weigh every morning after using the bathroom. If you weigh two pounds less than normal in the morning, you're probably dehydrated and need to drink more water before doing any vigorous physical activity. (You may have lost weight as water but not as fat.)

What precautions should be taken?

Dress for the heat. Wear very lightweight, light-colored clothing in breathable fabrics such as cotton, or a newer fabric that repels sweat. Add a hat and/or sunglasses. Choose the early morning or late evening to be outdoors. Before you get started, apply a water-resistant sunscreen with at least SPF 15, and reapply it every two hours. Drink up. Stay hydrated by drinking a few cups of water before, during and after your outdoors. Drink even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic beverages. Take regular breaks. Find some shade or a cool place, stop for a few minutes, hydrate and start again. If you are thirsty, you may already be dehydrated. Stop and hydrate immediately. Take breaks as needed and get out of the sun if possible. Certain heart medications like beta blockers, ace receptor blockers, ace inhibitors, calcium channel blockers and diuretics (which deplete the body of sodium) can exaggerate the body's response to heat. Always check with your healthcare professional.

Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If any symptoms appear, stop exercising and cool down immediately by dousing yourself with cold water. You may need to get medical attention. **Heat exhaustion can progress quickly to heat stroke, which can kill you.**



What are the symptoms of heat exhaustion?

heavy sweating cold, clammy skin dizziness or fainting (syncope) a weak and rapid pulse muscle cramps fast, shallow breathing nausea, vomiting or both

What are the symptoms of heat stroke?

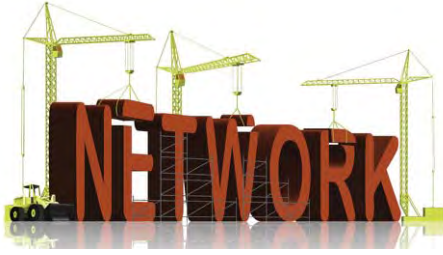
warm, dry skin with no sweating strong and rapid pulse confusion and/or unconsciousness high fever throbbing headaches nausea, vomiting or both

If you experience these symptoms, seek medical attention right away.

By taking precautions, everyone can get through the heat – and the cicada plague visit – in good shape.

For more information, visit www.heart.org.





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Opportunities

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