



Founded 1889

United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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International Training Program Week Events Honor Instructors, Apprentices & Veterans

Last week the UA held their 64th annual International Training Program (ITP) week of training at Washtenaw Community College (WCC). The week was filled with learning, educating, the Apprentice Contest, and was capped off with the Completion Ceremony for the many instructors who participated in the program.

The week began in Ann Arbor with a block party, 5-kilometer run and pub crawl organized in partnership with the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. The events also served as a fundraiser for the Semper Fi Fund, which assists wounded veterans. Thanks to a record number of 5K participants from the UA and the Ann Arbor community, the events raised \$38,050, surpassing the previous total for the sixth consecutive year. The UA matched those fundraising efforts and additional donations from vendors brought this year's total contribution to more than \$80,000.

Prior to the event, the Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau commissioned an economic impact study that showed [the WCC-UA partnership resulted in a \\$7.6 million financial gain](#) for Washtenaw County in 2016. We are proud that so many of our UA brothers and sisters live in, support and visit the city of Ann Arbor.

One of the highlights of the annual event on the WCC campus is the International Apprenticeship Contest. Through a series of state, district and regional competitions, 32 of the more than 43,000 UA apprentices from the United States, Canada and Australia earned the right to compete in five different skills tests.

Winners of this year's contests include:

HVACR: Michael Flores, Local Union 537, Boston, Massachusetts

PIPE FITTER: Jerry Wiess, Local Union 22, Buffalo, New York

PLUMBER: Donald B. Adams III, Local Union 322, Southern New Jersey

SPRINKLER FITTER: Christian Pierog, Local Union 853, Toronto, Ontario

WELDER: Nicholas J. Lerma, Local Union 597, Chicago, Illinois



Sean Dobbs of Local Union 486, Baltimore, Maryland was awarded the Allyn Parmenter and George Bliss Award. This award is given to an apprentice who exhibits outstanding qualities such as leadership, commitment, determination and work ethic.

The UA Completion Ceremony was held on Thursday, August 17, at the Eastern Michigan University Convocation Center. More than 137 newly certified instructors were recognized, as well as 29 members certified as training coordinators and another 11 who earned an associate degree from Washtenaw Community College.

In his address to the apprentices and ITP graduates, United Association General President Mark McManus called the 1,835 union members who traveled to Ann Arbor for the annual Instructor Training Program the backbone and the future of an organization that represents more than 343,000 plumbers, pipefitters, sprinkler fitters, steam fitters, welders and service techs across the United States and Canada.

United States Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta was the guest speaker at the ceremony. Secretary Acosta has supported apprenticeship programs as a tactic to close the nation's skilled trade gap. He praised the certified trainers who will now return to their locals and instruct the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Acosta noted there are 6.2 million open jobs in the nation, many of them that cannot be filled because of a shortage of trained skilled tradespeople.

"You will be profoundly impacting their lives and, by extension, their communities," Acosta said. "That's awesome."

The Completion Ceremony marked the union's 28th year of hosting its week-long Instructor Training Program at WCC, during which students can take college-level training courses to become certified UA journeymen and apprentice instructors. Those receiving associate degrees from WCC completed online courses in programs designed specifically for UA members. WCC President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca was part of the ceremony to award diplomas to the UA members who earned an Associate of Applied Science degree.

Congratulations to all of our instructors and apprentices on their hard work and accomplishments. We look forward to returning to Washtenaw Community College next year for the 2018 Instructor Training Week beginning on August 11, 2018.