



# TRAINING news

*UA Education and Training Department*

September 2025 | Issue 47

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## Message from Raymond W. Boyd Director of Education and Training



### Back to School for All of Our United Association Apprentices

As Summer comes to an end, it's hard to believe that we are a month out of the Instructor Training Program in Ann Arbor. Everyone, from instructors to apprentices, has earned a well-deserved break. Our training center doors are set to open and welcome a new group of apprentices. Some may be second, third, or fourth generation, while others might be first.

The great thing about the United Association is that once our doors are open, everyone is supposed to be on a level playing field. We understand that not everyone joins our program with the same experience, drive, or commitment. But as instructors and apprentices, it gives us the chance to mentor and shape the future of the United Association.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UA Education and Training Department is to equip United Association locals with educational resources for developing the skills of their apprentices and journeypersons. By thus facilitating the training needs of the membership, we maximize their employability and prepare them for changes in the industry. We are committed to making training opportunities available across North America, allowing members to acquire new skills and remain competitive in the industry regardless of geography. In this way, we are determined to meet the needs of the piping industry and enhance employment opportunities for our members, while remaining fiscally responsible to the beneficiaries of the fund.

## INSIDE this ISSUE

|                                                                    |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| EPRI UPDATES.....                                                  | p2  |
| MEET YOUR NEW TRAINING SPECIALIST - DEREK MILES.....               | p3  |
| "MEASURED PROFICIENCY".....                                        | p4  |
| LESSONS FROM FIGHT CLUB .....                                      | p5  |
| THE CULTURE MUST CHANGE .....                                      | p6  |
| VIP MILESTONES AT ITP .....                                        | p9  |
| TRAINING CENTER'S TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES.....                         | p10 |
| THE UA LEADS THE WAY FOR HEAVY INDUSTRIAL<br>WELDING TRAINING..... | p10 |
| 2026 REGIONAL PLUMBING COURSES .....                               | p11 |
| DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT .....                                    | p12 |
| NEW 2025 UAOLR RESOURCES.....                                      | p12 |
| FUTURE INSTRUCTORS PROGRAM.....                                    | p13 |
| FIRE PROTECTION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE .....                   | p14 |

That's why our training centers must be a safe space for all those fortunate enough to be selected for our programs. They must be free from bullying, harassment, and any form of intimidation or bias. For us to produce the best-trained journey-workers in the industry, it begins with our members understanding that they are working and learning in a welcoming environment.



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Recognizing that not all students learn the same way allows us to create an inclusive environment where everyone can succeed. As training directors and coordinators, you need to be very careful when selecting instructors to teach the future of the UA. Those who have taught before know it's not easy to reach every student in a classroom and create a welcoming atmosphere.

Staying on message can be difficult at times, especially when we are teaching men and women who have worked a full eight to 10 hours and then need to sit in a classroom for three-and-a-half to four hours in the evening. That's why, four years ago, the United Association started the Future Instructors Program—to identify men and women who want to teach at their local training centers

The fourth and fifth-year apprentices in this program get an opportunity to see firsthand what it takes to develop lesson plans and create a well-structured environment for their students. They also observe what their instructors do during the summer to prepare for the upcoming semester. This experience gives them a new perspective on the organization they are part of, allowing them to return with a clear message for their peers and to address questions or concerns about the organization.

We believe this increases our retention rates and provides members with an early look at what a career in the United Association entails. Let us continue shaping the future of the United Association and remain welcoming to everyone interested in joining this great organization

Raymond W. Boyd  
Director Of Education and Training

## EPRI UPDATES

*Submitted by Michael Galfano, Assistant Director of Education and Training*



I hope this newsletter finds each of you well as summer winds down and we prepare for the fall training session. Thanks to our faculty, instructors, and WCC staff for an outstanding 2025 Instructor Training Program, which was a huge success. Congratulations to our International Apprentice Contest winners and contestants on a job well done.

I mentioned in February at the Pipe Trades Conference in Dallas that the EPRI program will be undergoing significant changes. I thought this

would be a good opportunity to review what EPRI does, our partnership, and current program updates.

Many of us see the EPRI abbreviation in various documents. Do we know what EPRI does and what value it brings to our UA members? EPRI is the Electric Power Research Institute. EPRI conducts research and development relating to the generation, delivery, and use of electricity for the benefit of the public. Through EPRI, the STE (Standard Task Evaluation) program was developed. The Standard Task Evaluations cover tasks performed by utility and supplemental workforces during outage work, including task analysis and objectives, written test items, and performance (practical evaluations). Through the STE process, personnel are evaluated on their ability to perform a given task in accordance with the standardized approach. Qualified utility and supplemental personnel are critical to a plant's ability to conduct maintenance tasks and help reduce the length of outages safely and effectively. The UA has been affiliated with EPRI since 2007. EPRI provides third-party accreditation for our members. Our Industrial Rigging & Signaling, Instrumentation Technician, and Valve Technician programs all utilize EPRI's Standard Task Evaluations.

UA locals currently request all EPRI exams and documentation through our UA Certification portal. All EPRI online exams are administered through Questionmark assessment portal, and all completed documents are uploaded to our certification department, which forwards the documents to EPRI's portal. As mentioned in February, EPRI notified the UA that all exam requests, exams, and documentation will be processed through EPRI's new LMS. Carrie King and I have been meeting with EPRI representatives monthly. Their transition to their new LMS has been a slow process. We are being told that EPRI is considering Blackboard for its new LMS. EPRI plans to have this new LMS in place by the fall of 2025. Following the full implementation across EPRI, individual programs such as the Standard Task Evaluations will be prioritized. The anticipated target date for STE conversion to their new LMS is the second quarter of 2026. We are currently working with EPRI to address the UA program needs for a smooth transition. The UA will provide training to our locals and EPRI administrators. We will send updates as they become available.

I would encourage all our training directors and coordinators to make sure your EPRI exam administrators have access to the "Certifications" tab on [UANet.org](http://UANet.org). This page lists all pertinent updated program information, bulletins, and program documentation, including program Quality System Manuals. With the proposed changes coming in 2026, this access will help our locals prepare for this transition. Please contact Carrie King, Certifications Manager, with questions regarding "Certifications" access.

In closing, I want to thank you for your tireless work, dedication, professionalism, and commitment to training. I believe we are accomplishing our training goals and honoring the UA Mission Statement.

*"The mission of the UA Education and Training Department is to equip United Association locals with educational resources for developing the skills of their apprentices and Journey workers. By thus facilitating the training needs of the membership, we maximize their employability and prepare them for changes in the industry. We are committed to making training opportunities available across North America, allowing members to acquire new skills and remain competitive in the industry regardless of geography. In this way, we are determined to meet the needs of the piping industry and enhance employment opportunities for our members, while remaining fiscally responsible to the beneficiaries of the fund."*

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, and let me know if I can be of any assistance. [mgalfano@uanet.org](mailto:mgalfano@uanet.org).

## MEET YOUR NEW TRAINING SPECIALIST- DEREK MILES

Dear UA Family,

My name is Derek Miles, and I'm honored to introduce myself as your new Training Specialist for Fire Protection. I'm incredibly excited to begin this next chapter with the UA, supporting our members through education and curriculum development.

My journey with the UA began long before I ever picked up a wrench. Growing up, I'd wait by the door for my father to come home from work, hoping to play catch or share a snack from his lunchbox. He was a hard-working UA member, committed to the fire protection trade and his family, and that work ethic left a lasting impression on me. I would like to congratulate my father, Ron Miles, for his 50 years of service to the UA.

I joined Sprinkler Fitters Local 483 in San Francisco, CA, as an apprentice in August 1997, just weeks after graduating high school. From that moment, I was all in.

Everything changed on September 11, 2001. Like many Americans, I felt the call to serve. After completing my apprenticeship, I enlisted in the United States Navy Reserves, joining the Seabees Construction Battalion. Their motto, "Construimus, Batuimus" (We Build, We Fight), perfectly aligned with what the UA had already taught me: how to build with purpose and precision. The Navy taught me how to fight and lead. I proudly deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, serving in the Falluja region in 2006-2007 and again in 2008. After returning to



civilian life, I brought back an even stronger "can-do" attitude, which led me to give back to my home local in a new way, through education.

In 2011, I began teaching in the Training Department at UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 483, and I knew immediately that education was my calling. I went on to graduate from the Instructor Training Program with an AAS degree in 2017, and later served as Assistant Training Director for Local 483. I've been fortunate throughout my career to be surrounded by incredible mentors, opportunities, and hard work, and now, I'm ready to give back at the International level.

As a UA Training Specialist, my primary focus will be on developing and updating curriculum for Fire Protection and ensuring our training remains current, effective, and aligned with industry needs. I will also be supporting initiatives related to NFPA codes and standards, helping to maintain the UA's high standards of safety and professionalism. In addition, I'll be responsible for reviewing ITF grant requests and identifying innovative training solutions. I will also coordinate special projects as assigned by the UA Director of Education and Training, all with the goal of advancing the education and capabilities of our members across the UA. My vision is to elevate fire protection training for our membership and expand our reach and market share by building innovative, relevant, and effective educational programs.

On a personal note, I met my wife, Jennifer, when I was just 15 years old, working at Tri-City Sporting Goods in Fremont, CA. She was my supervisor, and I knew from day one that she was something special. We married in 1997, and we'll be celebrating our 28th anniversary this year. Jennifer has been my rock, supporting me through every challenge and opportunity, including my military service and transition into education.

Outside of work, we share a deep love for the outdoors. Hiking in Yosemite, backpacking the John Muir Trail, or just enjoying nature's peace. I also enjoy knife making and blacksmithing; working with metal is a hands-on way I stay grounded and creative.

I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve the members of the UA in this new capacity and look forward to collaborating with each of you. If you have questions, suggestions, or want to connect, don't hesitate to reach out at [dmiles@uanet.org](mailto:dmiles@uanet.org).

I want to take this opportunity to personally thank Ken Schneider for his many years of hard work, leadership, and unwavering dedication to the United Association. Ken has been an instrumental figure in the fire protection industry, and his influence has been both far-reaching and deeply impactful.

Throughout his distinguished career, Ken brought passion, integrity, and an unmatched level of professionalism to everything he did. His

commitment to advancing the trade, supporting his fellow members, and mentoring the next generation of professionals has left a lasting legacy that will not be forgotten.

Ken's presence has been a powerful force for progress, and his absence will certainly be felt by all who have had the privilege of working with him. As he embarks on a well-earned retirement, we want him to know just how much we appreciate his contributions.

On behalf of everyone at the UA and the broader fire protection community, we extend our deepest gratitude and best wishes. May this next chapter be filled with health, happiness, and the relaxation you truly deserve. Enjoy every moment of your retirement, Ken—you've earned it.

In Solidarity,  
Derek Miles  
Training Specialist, United Association



### “MEASURED PROFICIENCY”

*Submitted by Trent Mauk,  
UA Training Specialist*

As I write this article, we are just weeks away from launching the UA Industrial Pipe and Tube-Bending Certification. This certification has been in development for several years now. The objective of the United Association Industrial Pipe and Tube Bending Program is to provide highly qualified Industrial Pipe and Tube Benders to fulfill the quality and workmanship requirements for all piping and tubing installations requiring bending applications. With dedication and numerous revisions from subject matter experts, we have reverse-engineered the standardized skills a certified tube bender will be able to demonstrate upon passing this exam.

One of the most challenging aspects of a skills-based certification is determining how proficient a member should be after completing the process. It's easy to get lost in the details of what might be required on one job versus another, or let personal experiences influence decisions.

A mix of technical ability and tube-bending theory that relates to everyday aspects, regardless of where a member is working or the type of bending required, was agreed upon.

To qualify for the UA Industrial Pipe and Tube-Bending Certification, a member must attend a Tube Bending Course taught by a Certified Tube-Bending Instructor. This instructor must have participated in the 20-hour 5015 ITP Tube-Bending Course within the last five years and received their Tube-Bending Certification to teach and administer this test.

The certification examination consists of a 50-question multiple-choice written exam and a hands-on performance test. A passing score of 80% or above must be achieved on the written portion, and all elements of the hands-on performance test must be completed to pass. Individuals who do not receive a passing grade on any one of the portions of the certification examination will be allowed to re-take that part of the examination they did not pass.

Individuals must pass both the written and practical portions of the certification examination to be certified. The written and practical portions of the certification examination may be taken at separate times, in either order (it is, however, recommended that the written portion of the exam be taken first). Should the portions of the exam be taken at separate times, a maximum time of 12 months is allowed between satisfactorily completing both portions of the certification examination.

The written test portion covers the following percentages:

- 10% Simple method of bending
- 10% Calculating simple offsets
- 20% Calculating equal spread offsets
- 20% Calculating rolling offsets
- 20% Calculating setback and advancement measurements
- 20% Isometric Interpretation

For the practical exam, the candidate will be given an isometric spool drawing that they must bend a section of 1/4" tubing. This spool piece will have six 90-degree bends with two termination points that must pass through a test jig with a tolerance of no more than a 1/8" plus-or-minus. This is a Pass or Fail test.

This certification, along with the other certifications available to our UA members, will continue to provide our UA Contractors with a standardized product and a measured proficiency allowing our competitors to play catch-up once again.

## LESSONS FROM THE FIGHT CLUB

*Submitted by Laura Ceja, Special Representative of Training and Outreach*

A few weeks ago, when I was home, in between all the travel, my husband and I were sitting on the sofa, and he started to watch one of his favorite

movies, *Fight Club*. I immediately grabbed my phone and started browsing shoes on Amazon, occasionally looking up at the television—then something caught my attention. I heard Brad Pitt’s character, Tyler Durden, say, “It’s only after we’ve lost everything that we’re free to do anything.” This statement resonated with me. After one of the toughest years of my life, everything I have and everything I do has taken on a greater significance. I have never been more aware of how important everything we do at the UA’s International Training Fund is. We have to keep fighting the good fight and keep doing what we are doing to make sure the UA thrives. Unlike *Fight Club*, at the UA, there’s only one rule: Everyone talks about our club, everyone talks about the UA. To that end, I was flying all over the country spreading the word to get new members for our club.

In March, I was in Las Vegas for the HVAC Excellence Conference. We set up our booth and reached out to hundreds of attendees, making sure we spread the word about the UA. I also attended the Instructor Training Program Boot Camp in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at Washtenaw Community College. Here, we helped prepare new Instructors to make sure they have the knowledge, skills, and information to ensure their success.



**Mr. HVACR himself, UA Director Brian Kelly, at the HVAC Excellence Conference**

June and July were busy. I was in Kansas City for the Women in the Mechanical Industry conference. I spoke to our partners in the mechanical industry about our “Build Stronger Together” program, which is designed to foster professionalism in the workplace and, by doing so, increase our retention and membership. I also traveled to Atlanta for Skills USA.



**Attendees at The California State Pipe Trades Council, 103rd Convention**

I staffed a booth with area UA Organizers in order to spread the word about career opportunities at the UA to the 16,000 attendees.

Then, in July, I went to Boston for our UA Staff Meeting. I gave a report about increasing our overall membership by targeting women. I emphasized the importance of reaching out to women, not because they are women, but because they are potential members to help us increase our ranks. I also updated everyone on the upcoming TWBN Conference

In this same month, I had to go back to Cali for the ASCA Conference in Long Beach. I gave a presentation to school counselors about the UA trades, and our benefits and career opportunities. I also staffed a booth with local UA Organizers and spoke to the attendees about the UA’s career opportunities.

And talk about taking the fight to the streets, July ended with a trip to the homeland, Minnesota. We gathered the troops and blitzed Minneapolis. Scores of UA Officers and Organizers targeted worksites and saturated the area to get the word out and recruit new members. I wish the UA would have blitzed Minneapolis 30 years ago. It would have saved me the trouble of sitting on a Greyhound bus for three days to go join Local 761 in Burbank, California.



**Blitzing Minneapolis with Kristopher Winget, Secretary-Treasurer, LU 669, left, Bennet Klante, LU 34, right**

August saw the end of my fight schedule at ITP week. As I am writing this, I am preparing for 10 days of training the trainer. I will have more for you in the next newsletter.

All in all, it's been a busy five months, but nothing has given me the freedom to do anything, like thinking I had lost everything. What had become routine for me has taken on a whole new importance. I have enjoyed every opportunity I've had to reconnect with my co-workers, UA members, and our industry partners. I have enjoyed every opportunity I have had to help bolster our ranks and spread the word about our amazing club. What we do at the ITF makes a difference, a huge difference. I'm tired of hearing that the UA "is the best kept secret." Well, no more; I can't keep a secret! Remember, the only rule at the ITF is: We DO talk about the ITF. And, we DO talk about the UA. And, we go out and find as many members as possible to join the fight. We must keep fighting for all our members. We need to make sure that wherever we go, we are providing the UA with the best training and development opportunities, the most professional work environment, and the best ways to recruit new members. At the UA, we never stop fighting! We NEVER tap out!

## THE CULTURE MUST CHANGE

*Submitted by Michael S. Parker, UA Local 296*

Transitioning from active-duty Army through the United Association Veterans In Piping program into the UA Local 296 apprenticeship was a profound shift—one that challenged my expectations and ultimately reshaped my sense of purpose. Coming from a background rooted in discipline, professionalism, and unity, I initially struggled to find those same values reflected in my new environment.



*Michael Parker demonstrating one of the "Strong Man" competition pieces he created while he was deployed as a welder in the Army*

From the outset, I faced discouragement. I learned that previous Veterans in Piping candidates had left the program, and that sense of defeat lingered. Some individuals even asked when I was going to quit, as if giving up were the norm. But I chose a different path.

The early environment was difficult. I encountered harassment and inappropriate comments that made me



*Michael instructing the UA 296 1st year apprenticeship class*

question my place. Rather than speak out, I remained silent believing that, as an apprentice, my voice didn't carry weight. Fear held me back, but it also taught me the importance of courage and advocacy.

Despite the challenges, there were bright spots. A few exceptional Instructors offered encouragement and demonstrated the kind of leadership that truly inspired me. One of them was Mark Hosick—then President of UA Local 296, now the Business Manager, and my predecessor, mentor, and friend. It wasn't his words that made the greatest impact, but his actions. Through his example, he showed me that meaningful change is possible—and that it begins with people who genuinely care.



*Michael graduating at ITP 2023 as the first VIP Training Coordinator Certification with his proud BM Mark Hosick*

Three years into the program, my perspective shifted. I realized I could either remain frustrated or become part of the solution. I chose the latter. I decided to become an Instructor—not just to teach, but to help reshape the culture and lead by example. I wanted to show others what's possible when we commit to growth and integrity.

When I was chosen for the role of UA Local 296 Training Director, I found myself grappling with a belief I deeply held—one I encouraged in others but struggled to articulate. I wanted to inspire a sense of unity and purpose, but I hadn't yet found the right words or approach to express it fully.



Then the UA announced a regional class called Build Stronger Together, hosted at Local 32 by Training Coordinator PJ Moss. The moment I heard about it, I didn't hesitate—I jumped at the opportunity, knowing it could help me bring that vision to life.

*Build Stronger Together Regional Train-the-Trainer Program, February 2024*

Now, I believe in the power of collective transformation. Together, we can build a culture rooted in respect, mentorship, and strength. We owe it to each other—and to those who follow—to lead with unity and purpose. Real change begins within, and I'm proud to be part of that journey.

## Why are respectful workplaces important to the United Association?

Respect is the cornerstone of any thriving organization. For the United Association, which represents hundreds of thousands of skilled

professionals across North America, fostering a respectful workplace is not only a matter of ethical responsibility, but also a crucial driver of success, member well-being, and organizational excellence. In a profession built on teamwork, trust, and precise execution, the quality of daily interactions shapes the safety, effectiveness, and reputation of every individual and the United Association as a whole.

We will explore why respectful workplaces are essential to the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, detailing the benefits, the risks of disrespect, and actionable steps to nurture a culture of respect. At its core, respect in the workplace means acknowledging the inherent worth of every member, regardless of their role, background, experience, or identity. It manifests in professional conduct, open communication, active listening, and equitable treatment. For a union such as the United Association, which unites members from diverse communities, ages, and levels of experience, mutual respect is the glue that binds the organization together.

Some of the Key Elements of a Respectful Workplace include:

- **Communication:** Speaking and listening with civility, even during disagreements.
- **Inclusion:** Valuing the contributions from all members, regardless of seniority, background, or identity
- **Fairness:** Ensuring that opportunities, recognition, and discipline are administered impartially.
- **Support:** Offering help and encouragement, especially to apprentices and new members.
- **Accountability:** Addressing disrespectful behavior promptly and constructively.

Moving forward to the Benefits of Respectful Workplaces for the UA.

Respectful workplaces are safer workplaces. When team members trust and value each other, they are more likely to communicate clearly about hazards, follow safety protocols, and watch out for one another. In the high-risk environments where plumbers and pipefitters operate—such as construction sites, industrial plants, and confined spaces—miscommunication or hesitation can have dire consequences. A respectful culture empowers every member to speak up, report concerns, and ask questions, all of which prevent accidents and save lives.

Our work requires seamless coordination, whether installing complex piping systems or troubleshooting emergencies. Respect breaks down barriers, encourages knowledge-sharing, and helps resolve conflicts constructively. When members feel valued, they are more likely to contribute ideas, offer solutions, and support each other through challenges, resulting in higher-quality workmanship and greater project success.

Workplace stress is a reality in the trades, amplified by long hours, demanding conditions, and tight deadlines. Disrespect—such as bullying, harassment, or exclusion—compounds this stress, leading to anxiety, depression, and burnout. By contrast, respect fosters a sense of belonging and psychological safety, reducing absenteeism and turnover, and enhancing job satisfaction and overall well-being.

The construction industry faces a skilled labor shortage, and the United Association is always working to recruit the next generation. Young workers, women, and individuals from underrepresented groups are more likely to join and stay in an environment where they feel respected and welcome. A respectful workplace is a powerful recruiting tool, enhancing the United Association's reputation and helping to ensure a steady pipeline of skilled professionals.

The United Association's strength lies in its unity—standing together to advocate for members' rights, safety, and prosperity. Disrespect undermines solidarity, erodes trust, and weakens the union's voice. By cultivating respect, the United Association demonstrates its commitment to fairness and justice, both internally and when negotiating with employers or advocating for legislative change

Failing to nurture respect comes at a high cost:

- A lack of trust can lead to ignored warnings, shortcuts, and serious safety lapses increasing the risk of **Accidents and Injuries**.
- Environments where bullying, discrimination, or favoritism are tolerated drive down engagement and productivity and creates an environment of **Low Morale**.
- Members are more likely to leave, taking their skills and experience elsewhere.
- Disrespectful cultures repel potential apprentices and can tarnish the United Associations image with the public and industry partners
- Workplace harassment or discrimination can result in costly grievances, lawsuits, and settlements

The United Association invests in leadership and communication training, teaching members how to recognize, prevent, and respond to disrespectful behavior. Our programs emphasize teamwork, conflict resolution, and the importance of diversity and inclusion from day one.

The United Association establishes clear codes of conduct and anti-harassment policies, ensuring that everyone understands expectations and the consequences of violations. Reporting mechanisms allow members to raise concerns confidentially, with the assurance of prompt, fair investigation.

Mentoring programs pair experienced journeypersons with apprentices, fostering knowledge transfer and a culture of mutual respect. Peer support

groups help address issues early and provide a sense of belonging.

The United Association actively celebrates the diversity of its membership—across age, gender, ethnicity, and experience—through recognition programs, events, and outreach. By highlighting the achievements of all members, the United Association reinforces the message that everyone's contribution matters.

Respect starts at the top. United Association leaders, from business managers to stewards, are expected to model respectful behavior, set the standard for others, and hold themselves accountable.

Creating and maintaining a respectful workplace is an ongoing process that requires vigilance and commitment. As new technologies, materials, and challenges reshape the plumbing and pipefitting industry, the UA's ability to adapt—and thrive—will depend on its members' willingness to listen, learn, and support one another.

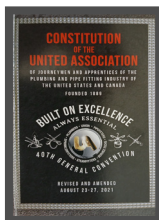
Every member of the UA has a role to play:

- Speak up against disrespectful behavior, whether directed at you or a colleague.
- Be open to feedback, and willing to learn from mistakes.
- Welcome newcomers and help them find their place within the organization.
- Celebrate achievements and recognize contributions, big and small.
- Embrace diversity as a source of strength and innovation.

A respectful workplace is not just “nice-to-have”—it is essential to the health, safety, and long-term success of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters. By fostering respect at every level, the UA honors its heritage, protects its members, and sets the highest standard for the industry. Together, by building trust and treating each other with dignity, the United Association can continue to lead with pride, unity, and excellence for generations to come.

### It's in our constitution!

At the core of the United Association's values lies a clear and unwavering mandate: “The United Association recognizes that every member is entitled to just treatment and as a matter of policy, the United Association embraces and supports the anti-discrimination laws of the United States and Canada.” This statement, found in Section 198 of the United Association Constitution, is not merely a formality— it is a guiding principle that defines how we treat one another, how we conduct business, and how we shape the future of our union.

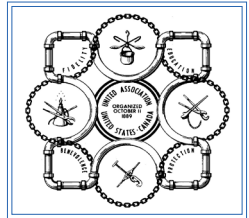


By embedding these values in our constitution, the UA declares that respect for each individual is not optional; it is required. Every member, regardless of their background or identity, is guaranteed just treatment—fairness that is both a right and a responsibility. Our embrace of anti-discrimination laws from both the United States and Canada underscores our transnational commitment to equity and justice.

This foundational policy serves as a beacon, guiding our members to act with integrity, to speak out against injustice, and to foster a culture where no one is left behind. It signals to every apprentice, journeyperson, and leader that our collective strength is built on the dignity, inclusion, and well-being of all.

### It's in the UA Pledge!

At the heart of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) lies a steadfast commitment to dignity, equality, and respect for all individuals. Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment are not just policies we adopt—they are the very foundation of who we are and what we stand for. These principles are embedded in our identity and are the reason for our existence as a union.



From the moment a member takes the oath to join the UA, they pledge to uphold the values of fairness, inclusion, and mutual respect. This pledge is not symbolic—it is the first act of membership and a solemn promise to stand against all forms of discrimination and harassment, whether based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other characteristic.

The UA fosters a culture where every member is valued and empowered. We believe that a diverse and inclusive workforce strengthens our union and the industries we serve. Our training programs, workplace policies, and leadership development initiatives are all designed to promote equity and ensure that every member has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive environment.

We actively enforce zero-tolerance policies against harassment and discrimination, and we provide clear channels for reporting and addressing any violations. Our commitment is not reactive—it is proactive. We educate, we advocate, and we lead by example.

In every job site, training center, and union hall, the UA stands united in its mission to protect the rights and dignity of all workers. This is not just a part of our work—it is the core of our identity. It is what binds us together and drives us forward. ■

### VIP MILESTONES AT ITP

*Submitted by Mike Hazard, UA Training Specialist*

We are often thanked for the success of the UA's Veterans in Piping (VIP) program, but the truth is this program belongs to all of us—so the real thanks go to all of you! From the members who welcome VIPs into their locals, to the instructors who dedicate countless hours to training, to the UA leaders who continue to invest in opportunities for veterans — none of this would be possible without the support of the entire UA family. It is through this shared commitment that the VIP program continues to change lives, strengthens our industry, and honors the service of our nation's heroes.



Every summer, the Instructor Training Program (ITP) is one of our favorite times of the year. We are grateful to witness firsthand the achievements of our VIP graduates and the careers they are building. These men and women, who first served our country in uniform, are now continuing their mission of service in the classroom and on the jobsites. Their presence at ITP is a powerful reminder of how the discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills honed in the military translate seamlessly into careers — and now into mentorship — in the United Association.

For many instructors, ITP is the highlight of the year. As Alyssa Tamayo, UA Local 100, VIP graduate and Robotic Total Station Master Instructor, shared:

*"As a Master Instructor for the 3045/46 Robotic Total Station, I'm reminded each year why I love teaching. Watching JATC instructors light up with curiosity, ask thoughtful questions, and gain confidence with this technology makes this one week my favorite of the year."*

This year marked the highest number of VIPs in attendance serving in all levels of leadership at their locals. From future instructors to training coordinators and organizers, we couldn't be more proud of their career progression.

This year also marked a milestone for another VIP graduate, Tanya Peddy, UA Local 100 and Robotic Total Station Master Instructor, who reflected on her journey:

*"As a graduate of the UA's Veterans in Piping program, teaching my first class as a Master Instructor was a full-circle moment. Working with instructors from across the U.S. and Canada, we dove into the possibilities that construction technology — specifically robotic total stations — brings to our trade. It's inspiring to see the UA investing so deeply in training programs that open doors for members, just as the VIP program did for me."*



While some attended ITP for the very first time, others, like VIP graduate Dave Lee, celebrated the completion of the Instructor Training Program. Lee graduated from the very first VIP welding class at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in 2013 and is now a Superintendent at UA Local 537.

We also had our first two VIP graduates; Michael Parker and William Price earn associate degrees. VIP graduate Michael Parker, UA Local 296 Training Director, expressed his appreciation for the mentorship that has led him to a successful career in the UA:

*"Earning my associate degree through Washtenaw Community College at the 2025 Instructor Training Program marks a proud milestone in my educational journey with the United Association—a path that began a decade ago with the Veterans in Piping program in 2015. This achievement is not mine alone; it is the result of unwavering support, encouragement, and opportunity."*



*"First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my wife, Shannon Parker, whose belief in me and constant support made every step possible. My Business Manager, Mark Hosick, saw my potential from the beginning and continues to inspire me to grow every day. I am also profoundly thankful for the leadership and guidance of Mike Hazard and Nicole Jeup. The Veterans in Piping program opened doors I never imagined, and without it, I truly don't know where I would be today."*

*"This degree is a testament to the power of perseverance, community, and the belief others place in us. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey—I share this accomplishment with all of you."*



Another highlight of ITP every year is the UA block party. The camaraderie and excitement felt on Main Street in Ann Arbor are truly incredible. We were blessed to share the stage with nearly every VIP instructor—the boots on the ground from every VIP program location and the starting source of mentorship for all the VIP graduates we are so proud of. A special shout-out to Camp Pendleton VIP welding instructors Jason Culkin and David Ramirez, as well as Fort Campbell VIP welding Instructor Chris Johnson, on their hard-earned accomplishment in graduating from the Instructor Training program this year!

We were also honored to have Corporal Tim Lang represent Semper Fi and America's Fund and share his gratitude for the support he has been a recipient of. This year, we are proud to announce that the UA has raised a total of \$108,958, which was matched by UA General Secretary-Treasurer Derrick Kualapai, resulting in a grand total donation of \$217,916 to the Fund. On behalf of all Semper Fi recipients, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude from the bottom of our hearts for your support of this incredible organization. Your generosity does not go unnoticed and impacts not only the service members, but their entire families as well!



ITP this year was much more than an intense week of training and instruction—it was about connection. For VIP in particular, ITP was a chance to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with fellow instructors, proving once again that the UA is more than a union—it's a family committed to lifting one another up. ■

## TRAINING CENTER'S TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

*Submitted by Bruce Dantley, UA Training Specialist*

Technology equipment upgrades, i.e., (desktop computers, software, hardware, malware, iPads, whiteboard digital projectors) are critical to a training center's viability. Instructors are using more advanced technology and online resources to train their members. Seventy percent of United Association active members, including millennials, Generation X, Y, and Z, find lecture-based instruction and interactive training methods to be very successful.

The ability to produce skilled craft personnel through innovation, augmented reality scenarios, and training apps is all-important. Computer upgrades with new software applications ensure digital connectivity with ITF Testing Administrators in Annapolis. All ITF testing is computer-based generated, ATR, CFC/ EPA 608,



Crane Signaling, Industrial Rigging, Medical Gas, and Instrumentation. Training Directors should commit to continuous innovation, maximizing the use of powerful computer software, and establishing clear goals and purposes for their apprentices. ■

## THE UA LEADS THE WAY FOR HEAVY INDUSTRIAL WELDING TRAINING

*Submitted by Justin Forni, UA Training Specialist*

Brothers and Sisters of the UA,

First, I want to recognize and congratulate all the ITP-2025 Instructors and Coordinators who graduated this year. When you walk across the stage to be recognized for all your hard work and dedication, it is a true feeling of pride and achievement you will never forget.

Second, I am very excited to give you an update on what is going on within the UA Welding Training Department. You may recall that my last newsletter was to introduce a brand-new course:

### 8091 Advanced GMAW Chrome Alloy Heavy Wall Welding

- The reason for this new course is to support the expansion of baseload power generation. The UA and signatory contractors have been involved in multiple power plant projects for many years.
- Specific training on Alloys such as P-91, P-92. We will see new alloys coming to this industry with the addition of Hydrogen Fuel to meet low-carbon emission standards.
- This course will focus on Induction Heating, Heavy Wall End Preparation, Heavy Wall Welding with GMAW, Post-Weld Heat Treatment, and Phased Array Non-Destructive Examination.

In July, we launched a pilot program in Denver, Colorado, to introduce this new training initiative and prepare for nationwide regional training. There were 14 participants from 10 different local unions who were instrumental in building this course to fit the power plant industry. This type of high-quality welding training has never been offered on a



regional level. Here are a few important reasons why this type of training is so valuable to the United Association.

1. The UA can lead the way in the new power generation infrastructure for the the USA. We have the training center infrastructure to meet this demand; we are second to none!
2. To ensure that Local Union Training Centers are prepared to meet this high demand.
3. To build a new generation of GMAW Chrome “Hot Welders” will give us strength and authority in the most critical phase of power generation welding.
4. This type of training has already proven that the United Association can join with contractors, end-users, and power plant ownership to make a plan and execute a successful project for all.



As we enter the calm before the storm, we have choices to make to prepare for the best possible outcome. This is the time to make the right choice and make sure the UA, local unions, training centers, and members are on a clear path to success. We have the opportunity to grow market share, gain manhours, and offer union membership as a better way of life for anyone.

I would like to give a special thank you to Training Specialist Bob Derby and the UA Welding Committee for all the hard work

to build and execute this class: Paul Fitzgerald - LU 354, Daniel Hatter - LU 10, Pete Larou - LU 597, Josh Reagan - LU 440, Nathan Schneider - LU 671, and CJ Schultz - LU 30.

I wish you all a blessed Fall season, and thank you for all you do to represent UA Training!

In solidarity,  
Justin Forni  
UA Training Specialist



## 2026 REGIONAL PLUMBING COURSES

*Submitted by Joe Fernandez, Jr. UA Training Specialist*

There's no mistaking that the annual Instructor Training Program (ITP) is not only the highlight for the Education and Training Department but also arguably the best event the UA offers. With nearly 2,500 registered attendees, the 2025 ITP did not disappoint.

From the ITF side, we begin planning and working toward the following year's ITP well before the current ITP event begins. Each year, ITP seems to get bigger and better, and it's our job to provide updates to our current courses and constantly create new courses to offer so we can keep up with our ever-changing industry and demands.

That's where we are running into a problem. With ITP continuing to grow each year, our classes are at capacity. I guess you can say that this is a good problem to have, but if we are continuing to grow, and we need to continue introducing new courses, then it is our responsibility to offer additional classes during our regional training.

In 2026, we will be adding seven regional plumbing courses to the catalog. Some courses are offered due to high demand at ITP, enabling those who were unable to participate to take them as a regional class. We will have three new pilot courses. The 2026 regional catalog will be released later this year with the exact dates, but these are the plumbing classes that will be offered.

### Existing Courses:

- 4006 Methods in Teaching Backflow Prevention (Certification)
- 4009 Methods in Teaching Plumbing Service, Repair, and Maintenance
- 4100 Customer Service for the UA Craftsperson
- 4110 Water Treatment for the Residential/Light Commercial Service Technician

### New Pilot Courses:

- Service Management II
- Pipe Rehabilitation/Point Repair/CIPP
- New Business Development

**Service Management II** –This is a continuation of course #2016, Introduction to Service Management. This course will concentrate further on the day-to-day operations of the service manager and delve more into the business aspect.

**Pipe Rehabilitation/Point Repair/CIPP** – This course introduces beginners to trenchless point repair solutions, providing a foundational understanding and extensive hands-on experience. Students will explore the principles of point repair, types of available systems, and installation techniques. Emphasis is placed on real-world application, safety, and failure prevention.

**New Business Development** – This will be a train-the-trainer course that will help local unions and guide members on how to enter the business sector and become a signatory contractor.

Once the dates and locations for the regional courses are official, I encourage you to contact the ITF registrar's office and secure a spot. In the past, classes have filled quickly. ■

## DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT

*Submitted by Bob Derby, UA Training Specialist*

As ITP 2025 has come and gone with record numbers, continuous improvement comes to mind. Continuous improvement is a result of innovations and changes that are inevitable in our industry. Identifying and embracing the innovations and adapting to change is how ITP continues to improve an event that is already established as excellent.



Although advancing through innovative changes is essential, some things remain steadfast, such as the dedication and commitment of UA members. The ITF staff works year after year searching for ways to remain on the cutting edge of technology and train to the most current industry demands. This work is accomplished by many rank-and-file UA members who commit to be Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and instructors. Improving UA training programs is complicated because we lead the way and are considered the industry standard for the building trades. No other organization is as dedicated to training as the UA. At the international level during ITP, or at local training centers throughout the UA, the standard for excellence is considered a basic expectation.

Why do you suppose that is? It is because we promote production, safety, and efficiency on jobsites that use UA labor. We must all continue to remain dedicated to the reputation that UA labor has earned.

Being a Piping Professional in the United Association provides many opportunities within the industry. Some opportunities to advance become available to UA members because someone else advanced before them. Often, we hear that someone has big shoes to fill as they

accept an opportunity. I find this comment interesting. The intent is to honor the efforts of those who have paved the way before us while reminding us that accepting the position comes with great expectations. However, we are all uniquely created with our own shoes to fill. We are fortunately blessed to have footprints left by our predecessors to step our shoes in as we walk the established trails that were created before us. This is called mentorship.

As leaders we are called to identify and train our replacements. Always seeking the next group of dedicated and motivated people that will commit to taking the UA to the next level of excellence is the beginning of mentorship. Cultivating a successful environment for all UA members is something that we can all strive for, regardless of what level we are at in our career path. From a brand new apprentice to the General President of the United Association, we all share the obligation to promote the membership to its highest abilities.

Dedication and Commitment is a choice. May we all continue to realize the effects of dedicated and committed members of the UA. It is the passion for the work we do and our vested interest in one another that will continue to be a driving force as we lead the building trades as the greatest labor organization.

Lace up your work boots. Keep walking on the established trails and blaze forward to continuous improvement through dedication and commitment. **The UA leads the way!** ■

## NEW UAOLR RESOURCES

*Submitted by Lauren Friedman, Instructional Technology Coordinator*

The following resources have been added to the UAOLR in 2025:

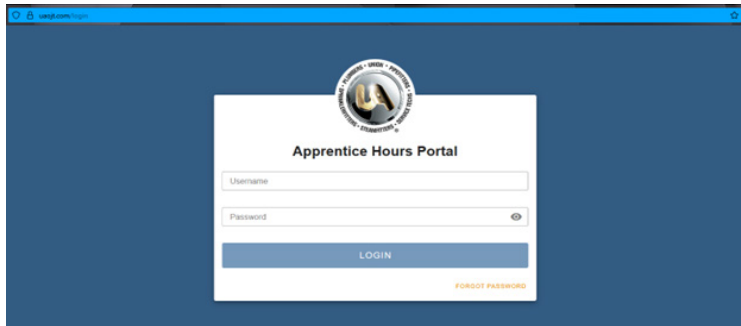
- UA Canvas Learning Management System
  - Contains information and assistance for both instructors and students on using Canvas in the classroom.
- Backflow Prevention, 4th Edition
  - Updated from 3rd Edition
- Medical Gas 2024 Code
  - Legacy codes also available
- NFPA Codes & Standards
  - A collaboration with NFPA that makes NFPALink available to all UA members with an OLR account, as well as information about how to join NFPA and get involved with committees.
- Rigging (2nd edition)
- Signaling
- Valve Repair

### Apprentice Work Hours:

The ITF is proud to announce the launch of our new Apprentice Work Hours site, [uajt.com](http://uajt.com)!

You can log in to the OJT (On-Job Training) portal using your UAOLR credentials now.

Your training center can use the Work Hours portal to track apprentice hours on the job—no more paper books every month! You can set which tasks your apprentices are able to report having done, and a due date. The apprentices then log in and report their work—from their phone, from their car, or anywhere else with a wireless signal.



If you want to learn more about the OJT, please contact Lauren Friedman at [lfriedman@uanet.org](mailto:lfriedman@uanet.org).

We have also developed a fully customizable evaluation system: Set up your questions and the recurring time period, and your apprentice will be responsible for providing their supervisor's email. Once they enter the contact, the supervisor will receive a one-time-use link, allowing them to evaluate your apprentice. ■



### Future Instructor Program

*Submitted by Rob Vilches, UA Training Specialist*

Four years ago, former Assistant Training Director, now Director of UA Education and Training, Raymond Boyd, had a vision to let apprentices participate in the Instructor Training Program (ITP). Director Boyd stated that he wanted “to give them a better understanding and appreciation of the educational opportunities that are provided.” This idea gave birth to the Future Instructor Program (FIP) in which 123 apprentices attended the first class.

Of course, the program has done so much more than give the apprentices a taste of UA education on a national stage. It has opened their eyes to just how big the UA is. Every year, several apprentices make statements about the program: “I had no idea the UA did this,” “I have a new respect for the UA,” and so on. More importantly, it has shown our younger members that they are valued from the top down. It is easy to get stuck in our daily bubbles back home. To attend an event such as ITP breaks that bubble and offers a bigger picture of what the UA is and what this organization is capable of. Director of Education and Training Raymond Boyd stated, “It gives them a better understanding of the organization that they belong to. It allows them to see that the United Association does not exist without their participation. They are the future of this great organization!”

Throughout the week, the apprentices attend the FIP in the mornings and then attend the UA 1001 course. It amazes me the number of people who wish to get in front of our younger members. Aside from the ITF and WCC staff, we offer several high-



energy speakers every day who review the history of the partnership between the UA and Washtenaw Community College (WCC). President of West Chester Mechanical, Mark Rogers, shares his journey from apprentice to signatory contractor, and explains the true cost of a man-hour. The founder and CEO of Leadership Surge, Alex Willis, explains the power of a diverse mind and how to interact with different personalities in the workplace and also in their personal lives. Pipe PALS and Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas present on mental health and the great things the UA is doing to help our brothers, sisters, and their families. The ITF training staff offers a panel discussion, where

we share our five-year outlook of the industry and what it means for training and the workplace. The apprentices get to ask the training staff questions and share what they are seeing on the jobsites.



Our General President, Mark McManus takes the stage and shares what is going on throughout the UA. Mark also gives the apprentices an opportunity to ask him questions. Let me tell you, these apprentices are not shy. No question was off limits, and they had some great ones to throw at him.

This year, 2025, marked the 4th year this program. In the first

three years, UA locals have sent a total of 372 apprentices to ITP. Of the 372, 115 have returned to ITP to take courses as instructors for their locals. "We feel that we are meeting the mark with a third of the apprentices returning as instructors," stated Director of Education and Training Raymond Boyd.

We ran into a brother at the block party who had attended the Future Instructor Program in 2024, Training Coordinator Mike Taylor, Local 146. You read that right. Brother Taylor, just one year out of his apprenticeship, is now the TC for Local 146. I had the opportunity to speak to Mike about his journey. He was already interested in teaching when he topped out, and after he attended the FIP in 2024, it was solidified. He went back home and started to teach classes. He taught Basic Refrigeration, Use and Care of Tools, and subbed a few times for the Start, Test, and Balance course.

*"When we hear the stories of the younger generation getting the opportunity to attend ITP to further their education, and how they are becoming leaders at the local level, it makes a huge difference."*

Director of Education and Training  
Raymond Boyd

The local's apprenticeship has experienced substantial growth, increasing by more than double. This put a strain on the Training Director, James Klien. The 146 JATC agreed to open a new position for a TC. Brother Taylor initially did not apply for the position. It wasn't until one of their members encouraged him to take the next step that he applied. Brother

Klien stated, "Brother Taylor stood out, and even though his experience was light in the Training Department, his personality and motivation made the decision to select Mike a no-brainer."

The FIP is not just a box the UA is trying to check. It is a program that offers an opportunity for our younger members to not only know they are part of a bigger picture, but also to step up and become something bigger than themselves. I will end with a quote from a previous FIP attendee.

*"Some of your biggest rewards are on the opposite side of your biggest fears"*

Training Coordinator, Local 146,  
Mike Taylor

For more information on the FIP, please reach out to Training Specialist Robert Vilches at [rvilches@uanet.org](mailto:rvilches@uanet.org). ■

## Fire Protection: Past, Present, and Future

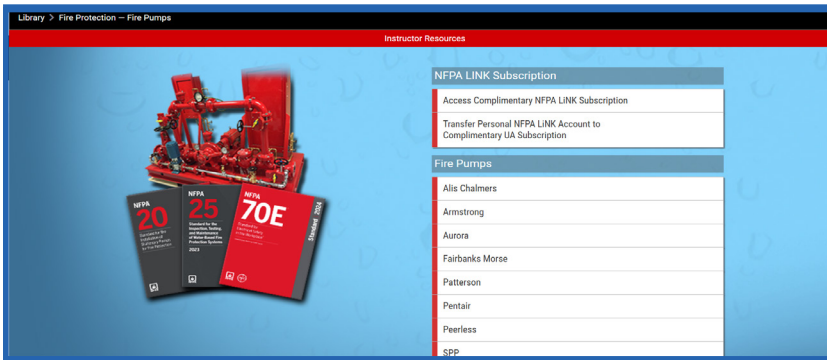
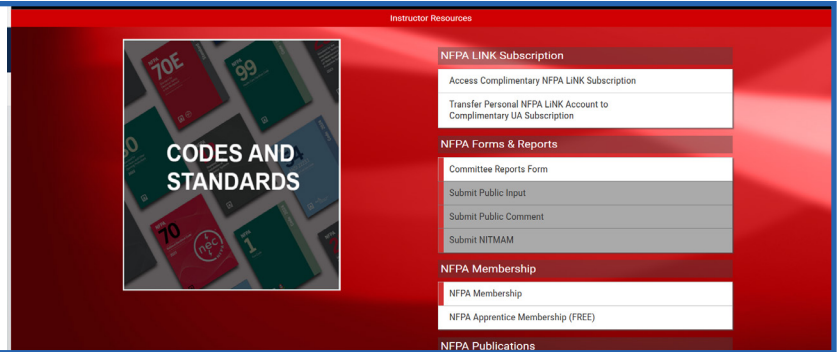
*Submitted by Ken Schneider, UA Training Specialist*

Once upon a time, there was one class at ITP dedicated to the Fire Protection industry. Today, we have more than 20 classes, several of which are rotating classes for both the Regional Training and Instructor Training Program. I have been blessed to have attended so many ITPs, and even more so as a UA-ITF Training Specialist. The one goal that I had when I came on board was to leave it better than when I found it. I believe we have accomplished that; however, this wasn't done by me alone. So many people have helped build what the Fire Protection training is now, and I tip my hat to those who helped create so many new classes and all of the valuable training we offer for UA locals with Fire Protection in their jurisdiction. Below, I have listed other improvements in Fire Protection training.

### Fire Protection on the OLR

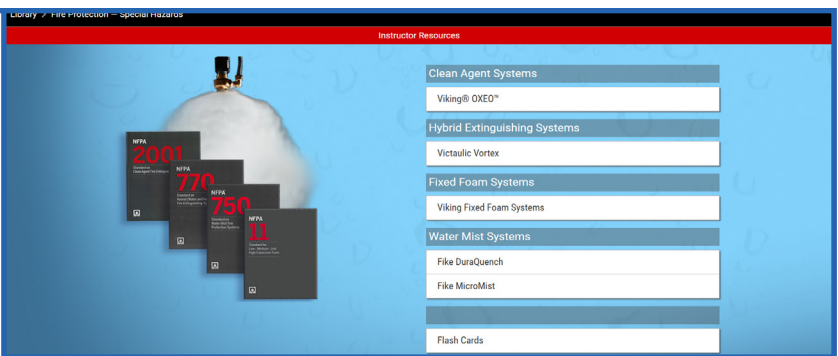
We have been updating and adding to the Fire Protection on the Online Learning Resource (OLR). Currently, we have Fire Protection Fire Pumps and Fire Protection Special Hazards. Joe Franks, UA Local 542, Pittsburgh, PA; Jason Thompson, UA Local 853, Ontario, Canada; and Derek Miles, UA Local 483, San Francisco, CA, a recently appointed UA-ITF Training Specialist, teamed up to complete the following topics:

- NFPA Codes and Standards
  - Complimentary NFPA LiNK Subscription
  - Fire Protection Codes Overview
  - NFPA Code Development Process
    - Apply for an NFPA Technical Committee – GET INVOLVED!



- Fire Protection - Fire Pumps
  - Fire Pumps
  - Drivers
  - Controllers
  - Fire Pump Inspection and Maintenance
  - Fire Pump Flow Testing
  - Assessments
  - Flash Cards
  - Online Resources

- Fire Protection - Special Hazards
  - Clean Agent Systems
  - Hybrid Fire Extinguishment
  - Fixed Foam Systems
  - Water Mist Systems
  - Assessments
  - Flash Cards



### Passing the Torch on Fire Protection

This year was my 25th Instructor Training Program, which I attended at Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, MI. Every year, I have seen improvements in training, training content, and the passion of those who come to train and learn. At the end of the day, those who teach, learn, and those who come to learn teach. The networking at ITP is second to none. We need to continue to share information, education, and training; this makes us all better!

I am proud of all the assistance to improve training for the Fire Protection Industry by the Instructors, Training Directors, and Business Managers who have supported these changes, and I look forward to what's next for both myself and, more importantly, the UA Education and Training Department. The future has never looked so bright, and the occupational paths forward are so many! Derek Miles will carry this torch forward. Since ITP, I have been focused on training my replacement, something we should all consider and prepare for, as the future is closer than you think. This is not my final farewell, but just the beginning of closing this chapter in Fire Protection!

Stay safe, Brothers and Sisters!  
Fraternally, Ken Schneider ■



### 2026 ITP Schedule

Please note that the classes will be full days.

#### Wednesday, August 5th

Registration Day, Faculty Meeting, New Student Meeting

#### Thursday, August 6th

Classes Begin, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

#### Friday, August 7th

Classes 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

#### Saturday, August 8th

Classes 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

#### Sunday, August 9th

Classes 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM  
Graduation 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

#### Monday, August 10th

Classes 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM  
Program Ends

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT STAFF

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**  
**SUZANNE ELLIS**

### CERTIFICATION/REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT

**CARRIE KING**  
CERTIFICATIONS MANAGER/REGISTRAR  
**KRISTYN IVEY**  
CERTIFICATIONS  
**TYLER MASENGALE**  
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR  
**ANGIE STERLING,**  
CERTIFICATIONS  
**KIVA STRASSER,**  
RECRUITMENT/REGISTRATION  
**AGATHA WOLYN,**  
CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

**ITF COMPTROLLER**  
**MATTHEW ROBERTSON**

**ITF FINANCE DEPARTMENT**  
**HELEN HOLMBOE**  
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**TRACY WEBSTER**

**INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY  
COORDINATOR**  
**LAUREN FRIEDMAN**

**MEETING & EVENTS PLANNER**  
**CINDY WILLIAMS**

**VIP PROGRAM**  
**NICOLE JEUP,**  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
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