

Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Washington
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Washington Pipes Money into ‘Mechanical Project Manager Performance Training’

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, February 27, 2006.-- At a time when construction is booming and specialty project managers are in short supply and high demand, the Mechanical Contractors Association of Western Washington (MCAWW) has made a strong commitment to provide expanded and accelerated training services to help its members bring project managers up to speed. This commitment was recently ratified with a vote by the Association Executive Board of Directors and its Executive Vice President, Brian Garvey, to approve a sizeable budget presented by the MCAWW Board of Education for the year 2006.



CMPM 1 students during a Coordination/Integration activity

MCA of Western Washington first began considering specialized training for its members in 1996, at which time the association formed a task force to develop a curriculum for a training program that focused on the unique aspects of mechanical project management. The task force brought FMI on board, to assist with surveying member firms and formulating the curriculum for a project manager training program. The result was a three-tier Certified Mechanical Project Manager (CMPM) program for entry-, career-, and senior-level mechanical project managers. Each level



Jenny Landers of HUB International Northwest, LLC answers a student's question about bonding & insurance

consists of approximately 10 modules and is taught over a period of 6-12 months. Topics focus on hot issues for mechanical project managers, including leadership & communication skills, scheduling, labor relations, safety, contract terms, and insurance & risk management amongst others. Jerry Bush, President of University Mechanical Contractors, Inc. has sent more than two dozen project managers through the programs over the past five years. He notes that *“The CMPM programs provide condensed training in many skilled areas related to mechanical contracting. This augments our internal training and expedites the traditional way of acquiring knowledge on the job, where it could take years for a project manager to be exposed to all skills.”* Applicants must meet a set of criteria in order to enroll in a program, and must attend at least 80% of the sessions in order to graduate. Classes are scheduled in the afternoons in order to accommodate working project managers’ schedules. Most importantly, the programs are subsidized to a great degree, allowing member firms to enjoy high quality programs at a low additional cost.



MCA educational programs provide a unique and non-threatening opportunity for students to practice performance objectives.

Since the inception of the CMPM program, the MCAWW Board of Education has been working hard to develop additional programs to fill other needs. In 2005, the Board hired a Technical Services Director to oversee the consistency and quality of the training programs, as well as to develop curricula for additional programs. With the hiring of Ed Kommers, P.E., the association gained not only an experienced educator



The HVAC Technical Program allows project managers to better interface with design professionals

(Kommers is involved with the development and instruction of the Building Mechanical Systems portion of the Construction Management program at the University of Washington), it also benefited from his 25+ years of experience as a Sr. Project Manager

and Principal in the mechanical contracting industry. As a result, the Board of Education has been able to greatly expand its objectives.

“Whereas in the past, the association has offered one or two programs per year, the slate is full for 2006,” remarks Brian Acton, Chair of the MCAWW Board of Education and President of BMWC Constructors. The Board plans to offer all three levels of the CMPM program in 2006, as well as a Technical Training Series and a Construction Law Series. The Technical series will focus on providing sufficient HVAC and Plumbing design skills to help non-technical project managers better understand systems and interface with field hands and design professionals. The Construction Law series will be taught by Arne Hedeem and Bryan Caditz of Hedeem & Caditz, a law firm specializing in construction law, and will focus on fundamentals of construction law for principals and project managers of mechanical contracting firms. Also offered will be a ½-day Marketing seminar taught by David Allen of McKinstry Co. in April, as well as two seminars taught by nationally-recognized professor John Koontz in May (*‘Effective Project Documentation for Project Managers’* and *‘Essential Management Skills for Project Foremen’*).

According to Ed Kommers, *“Our primary focus is to identify our members’ needs and translate these needs into specific performance objectives that our students can immediately apply to their work.”* While classes consist of some lecture, Kommers ensures that the emphasis is on workshop activities to aid learning transfer. With the help of the Board of Education, he hand-picks instructors from the industry with first-hand experience and knowledge to teach MCAWW programs. As of 2006, all MCAWW instructors will be certified via “Train the Trainer” workshops.

The MCAWW Board of Education consists of nine members, each of whom plays an integral role in the success of the programs: Brian Acton (Chair), President of BMWC Constructors; Maria Boyer, Construction Manager, University Mechanical Contractors; Bob Frey, Vice President of Service Sales, McKinstry Co.; Ken Hoving, General Manager, ACCO Engineered Systems; Stacy Johnson, Vice President Operations,

Auburn Mechanical; Brad Magruder, President, Automated Controls; Rick Schnarr, Sales Manager, Trane Company; Matt Thibeau, Sr. Project Manager, MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions, and Jeff White, Project Manager/General Manager, Holmberg Company. *“The pace is definitely intense, but the Board works very efficiently. The workload is evenly distributed, so that we are not overwhelmed with combining Board activities with our daily jobs,”* says Stacy Johnson, Vice President of Operations for Auburn Mechanical, who has been a Board member since 1998. *“It is so rewarding to be a part of this process, which in turn raises the watermark for our entire industry.”* The Board of Education meets on a monthly basis and holds an annual strategic planning retreat. Robin Cowper, Director of Member Services notes that *“Amongst some of the major goals for the coming year, the Board plans to utilize e-learning and podcast recordings to reach project managers at remote sites and to sync critical performance objectives with real-time, on the job learning.”*



*l-r: MCA Board of Education Members
Ken Hoving , Matt Thibeau,
Brad Magruder, Brian Acton,
Stacy Johnson and Ed Kommers*

The MCA Board of Education will continue to pay close attention to member feedback in order to continue shaping the 10-year outlook for the programs. *“After all,”* states Brian Garvey, Executive Vice President of MCA of Western Washington, *“it’s all about serving our members.”*

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The purpose of the Mechanical Contractors Association is to represent the mechanical contracting industry and to act as its spokesman in dealing with the public, government, other associations in the construction industry, manufacturers, and labor, as well as to provide for its members educational facilities for improving their contracting knowledge and technical capabilities.

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