

JUNE 2025



Building Strong Communities Newsletter

Aligning stakeholders to provide industry-driven, apprenticeship-readiness pathways into union construction careers.

Building Strong Communities Graduation

On May 2nd, 110 graduates of the Building Strong Communities program embarked on their lifelong careers in construction, marking a historic milestone as our largest class to date. This milestone is even more remarkable as we proudly celebrate a record number of women graduates, 35 women, reinforcing the program's commitment to diversity and inclusion in the skilled trades.



Women Building Success

We are thrilled to celebrate Natalie Pilrain, a 2024 graduate of the Building Strong Communities program and proud member of IUOE Local 49, who received an *Honorable Mention for Apprentice of the Year* at the Women Building Success Awards Ceremony on Thursday, June 5.

Natalie has consistently demonstrated dedication and skill in her trade, earning the respect of her peers and mentors alike. As a standout apprentice, she has shown an exceptional work ethic, commitment to learning, and a passion for paving the way for future tradeswomen. Her recognition at the event underscores her impact and the bright future she has in the skilled trades.

Hosted by the Women Building Success organization, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the event recognized Minnesota's top tradeswomen who are shaping a stronger, more inclusive future in the industry.

Congratulations to all the outstanding honorees:

Apprentice of the Year:

Michaela Oelkers (Ironworkers)

Honorable Mentions:

- Cadra Hebert (IBEW 110)
- Desteny Rowan (Sheet Metal)
- **Natalie Pilrain (Local 49)**
- Amelia Swartout (IBEW 292)





Helmets to HardHats



ATTENTION SERVICE MEMBERS:

You served your country, now help build it.

Helmets to Hardhats connects military members with fulfilling, family-sustaining, middle-class careers in the construction industry via gold-standard, earn-while-you-learn Registered Apprenticeship programs. We connect participants with employers as well as educate them on how to use their G.I. Bill benefits to supplement their income while completing their training.

We're proud and honored to be our military heroes' gateway to meaningful, long-lasting, well-paying careers in the construction trades through world-class apprenticeship education programs. Visit www.helmetstohardhats.org to begin your journey today.

RibFest Save the Date

3RD ANNUAL

SEPT 13, 2025 RIBFEST

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT VETERANS, MILITARY & FAMILIES

National Guard-Veteran Readiness Center
4800 Hawthorne Ave., St. Armand, MO, 64512

Become a sponsor today!

Main Stage | Beer Tent | Kid Zone | Career Fair | Signature, Platinum, Gold, Silver & Bronze Sponsorships Available

Register your team today!

Chicken Thighs | St. Louis Style Ribs | Cash Prizes | Grand Champion | Rib Champion | Chicken Champion | People's Choice Limited to 40 teams

www.YellowRibbonRibFest.org

SNAPSHOT OF 2024

Thank you to all our partners who made RibFest 2024 a SUCCESS!

Main Stage Sponsors

LUIGI'S PIZZERIA

Local Sponsors

ST. LOUIS BRUERY

Sponsoring Sponsors

Ullico

Segal

McGowan

Electronic Sponsors

PMMA

Harriet

Harriet

- 60+ Sponsors
- 500+ Attendees
- Career Fair
- 26 Teams

- Celebrity Judges
- Flyovers
- Live Music
- Kids' Activities

Funds raised benefited family events and support to military families

Advocating for the Future

Workforce Bill Seeks to Expand Access to Skilled Trades Training



During a recent hearing, Rick Martagon, executive director of BSC, testified in the Senate House Committee, highlighting the program's success in connecting participants with hands-on training, OSHA-10 certification, and career advocates. The initiative has already helped individuals like Natalie Pilrain, Keelan Newman, and Dorlisa Squires, all first-year apprentices secure stable, well-paying jobs in construction.

Women in Construction Week

For Women in Construction Week, March 2-8, we spotlighted extraordinary women making their mark in the construction industry. Amber, Natalie, Dorlisa, and Nicole embody innovation, leadership, and dedication. They're not just building structures; they're laying the foundation for a brighter, more inclusive future. Let's celebrate their achievements, amplify their voices, and inspire generations to come!

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION WEEK



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“Thank you” to our BSC Supporters!



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