

PCA Holds First Plumbing Service Seminar in Detroit

The Plumbing Contractors of America (PCA) held its first Plumbing Service Seminar on September 13–14 in Detroit, MI. Sponsored by the MCA of Detroit, the seminar was held at Detroit’s new state of the art Plumbing Industry Training Center.

Arnold “Woody” Woodall, MSCA’s Education Committee chairman and director of business development for W.E. Bowers, Inc. in Beltsville, MD, led the seminar. Woody spoke to contractors on how to optimize and start a plumbing service business.

The seminar began with an introduction to the basics of service and personnel training. Attendees learned what it takes to expand a small service operation into a large, profitable one. The most important goal when you are getting started is finding a service manager that can do it all—sell, market, manage and promote. In terms of personnel, Woody stressed, “You need someone with a service attitude, someone that wants to be in front of the customer.”

After reviewing some of the training that the UA is doing, the seminar shifted to operations and how to target specific market segments. Methods for obtaining commercial service contracts

were reviewed as were ways to develop residential plumbing business. To expand into each of these markets, capital investments need to be made. For residential, additional capital is required to advertise and promote your business in local areas. Attendees shared some of the more successful methods they have used to promote their businesses. Marketing tactics ranged from Internet to print advertising, but all had a common theme—advertise where the customers are.

In the afternoon, customer service and pricing strategies were explained. The positives and negatives of different methods of service pricing were discussed, including flat rates and time and materials. The exact determination of a company’s overhead is critical in determining the pricing strategy. Without getting an accurate picture of their overhead, even busy companies might not be very profitable.

The program wrapped up with an update on green building, an emerging trend in plumbing service. Water efficient fixtures and tankless water heaters are the easiest ways to achieve green building standards and many commercial and residential settings are getting retrofitted with systems that conserve more water and energy. ♦

Women in HVACR Conference Offers Education and Inspiration

Women and men from around the country and throughout the industry attended the third Women in HVACR (WHVACR) Conference on September 12–13 in Baltimore, MD. The conference kicked off with a networking reception allowing participants time to catch up with old friends and make some new ones.

MCAA Communications Director and WHVACR President Adrienne Breedlove kicked off the day-long conference with a



Ed Blum (second from left, with MCAA member company A.O. Reed & Co.) addressed the non-technical side of the business with a session on HVAC 101: All You’ve Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask.

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President's Letter



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Reporter

MCAA Reporter showcases educational offerings, services, and products available from MCAA and its subsidiaries—the Mechanical Service Contractors of America, the Plumbing Contractors of America, and the National Certified Pipe Welding Bureau—to empower our industry to create a better future. *MCAA Reporter* is published monthly except in February and August.

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At MCAA: Making the Future Better, One Student at a Time

Last month I had the pleasure of addressing students, faculty advisors, contractors and affiliated association executives as they embarked on the very full program designed for the 2006 Student Chapter Summit in Atlanta. This gathering is, without a doubt, one of MCAA's most energetic meetings and it's one that I always leave with a feeling of optimism and pride.

The optimism stems from the fact that—in an industry in which contractors often wonder where they will find suitable candidates to replace them in leadership and management positions in the future—the students who attend the Summit are not only suitable, but exemplary. They learn from industry professionals and from each other, displaying not only enthusiasm, but a keen interest in what roles they want to play and how they can use the Summit experience to move from school to the “real” world.

My feeling of pride comes from the fact that MCAA has been able to attract such a high caliber of student through an evolving career development initiative in which the Student Chapter Summit is but one aspect. Almost everyone who has attended an MCAA convention over the past several years is familiar with the always-exciting finals of the Student Chapter Competition, but many of you are not that familiar with the internships made possible through grants from the Mechanical Contracting Education & Research Foundation (MCERF) and administered by members of MCAA's Career Development Committee. These internships, in many cases, provide students with their first real experience with construction work. A recent letter from one student who served his summer 2006 internship with Shannon's, Inc. (International Falls, MN) shows just what this opportunity can mean. In a letter thanking Shannon's president, University of Minnesota student Joshua Kostiuk concludes the letter's first paragraph with this sentence: “The experience I gained from working here for the last nearly four months is incomparable to anything I could have hoped for or imagined.”

In a paper that Joshua submitted about his internship, he emphasizes two elements of the construction experience—“the work and the workers”—that impressed him for unique reasons. About the work, he said: “...one valuable thing I learned...is that nothing will go according to plan; something unforeseen will always arise on the jobsite...” Although not all contractors would find this attribute valuable, it obviously kept this student interested and challenged and it's certainly something with which we'd all agree.

Another positive element we sometimes neglect to mention is the shared feeling of accomplishment that's experienced on the jobsite. As Joshua said, “Construction life is hard and ever changing...; the only true consistency is the work and those who will be shoulder to shoulder with you when this work is being completed.” He talked about the fact that workers representing many trades are working side by side...on the jobsite and, “It is as though the entire workforce is one team, working toward one goal—completion.”

These words—and Joshua's other observations—don't just sum up one intern's experience. When I read them, they reminded me why I got into this industry in the first place and why—despite the constant challenges of our work—I can't think of anything I'd rather do. The fact that an MCAA internship made it possible for this young man to find his own devotion to our work is truly a source of great satisfaction.

WOMEN IN HVACR

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report on the association's activities over the last year. She then introduced *Contracting Business* magazine's 2006 Woman of the Year, Kathy McCauley, from MCAA member company McCauley Mechanical Construction, Inc., in Bridgeview, IL. Kathy spoke during breakfast about her career in the industry, encouraging participants to become involved in industry organizations like WHVACR in order to further their education.

Education sessions covered a variety of topics and included plenty of time for participant interaction. Vicki LaPlant (Vital Learning Experiences Enterprises, Pottsville, TX) began with her session on Managing Change. Through interactive exercises, she demonstrated how even the smallest change can snowball, affecting many people along the way, and why it's so important to communicate change to each individual involved.

Breakout sessions offered participants two very different looks at the industry. Ed Blum (with MCAA member company A.O. Reed & Co., San Diego, CA)



Women in HVACR President Adrienne Breedlove kicked off the day with a report on the association's activities over the last year.

addressed the non-technical side of the business with a session on HVAC 101: All You've Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask. He explained the business in layman's terms for those with non-technical backgrounds to give them a better understanding of the industry in which they work. In her session "Save Lives & Dollars: Why You Should Make Safety Training a Priority for Your Company," WHVACR Past President

Valerie Stakes (Multilingual Training Solutions, Cleveland Heights, OH) explained how safety impacts the bottom line and sparked a lively discussion.

The luncheon keynote speech by Ruth King, WHVACR's first president and founder of HVACChannel.tv, Norcross, GA offered anecdotes illustrating The Ugly Truth about Small Business (also the title of King's recent book) and 15 strategies for dealing with these challenges.

During her session on Pinnacle to Significance, Sharon McGee, a consultant based in Austin, TX, talked about mapping out a strategy for what to do once you've reached the pinnacle of your career. She encouraged participants to continue to learn, and to give back to the industry and the community.

The afternoon's final speaker was Barbara Keil (KEIL Heating and Air Conditioning, Riverdale, NJ), a third-generation HVAC business owner who shared how her family's vision, hard work, and determination has led her company to nearly a century of success. Her session included a lively discussion as participants raised a number of issues and shared stories about how they've dealt with similar circumstances.

A Peer Group Networking Session rounded out the day's offerings. Moderated by WHVACR Board members, this session offered participants time to continue discussions from earlier sessions, share thoughts, and network.

Founded in 2003, Women in HVACR has grown to more than 230 members from all facets of the industry, including commercial and residential contracting, manufacturing, supply houses, consultants, trainers, students, associations, and publishing. MCAA is among the organization's many supporters. For more information on Women in HVACR, visit www.womeninhvacr.org. ♦



Kathy McCauley, from MCAA member company McCauley Mechanical Construction, Inc., offered insights into her career and what made her *Contracting Business* magazine's 2006 Woman of the Year.

MCAA PAC Update



MCAA PAC Update

Dear Fellow Members:

It's my pleasure to file this latest MCAA PAC Update. The 2006 fundraising is going well. Below is a list of our most recent contributors, virtually all of whom have accepted the MCAA PAC-building responsibility for ongoing support to build a long-term presence in public policy debates in your Nation's Capital.

Legislatively it was a good year. One enactment alone makes a very good year, especially when it's a major overhaul of the multiemployer pension plan laws—and your industry comes out well. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 won't cure all the ills of all our plans nationwide—workforce demographics and market share issues don't have legislative solutions—but the bill will help our plans better help themselves in challenging markets. Our targeted legislative conference last Spring, with the fly-in targeted only at the pension bill, was very effective. And I can assure you from personal experience that your carefully targeted PAC contributions helped get us an audience in the reform debate.

Next year, immigration reform will be back up. We will need work to make sure the bill doesn't unfairly burden fair employers, and that the guest worker aspects of the measure don't undermine industry standards. On procurement issues, we are still working to get Congress to bar reverse auctions on federal projects. Also, efforts to close the yawning tax gap by withholding payments on federally funded projects beginning in 2011 is an idea whose time we hope will not come. Holding payments does not promote successful project completion—tax avoidance by independent contractors can better be addressed by tighter worker classification criteria, payment reporting and withholding, and stricter qualification criteria for tax complaint businesses. We will continue work to extend the tax incentives for public project energy-efficient commercial buildings. And there will be more and unanticipated issues as well.

Go to www.mcaa.org/private/pac and click on the PAC logo on the right side of the page to fill out the MCAA PAC Prior Authorization brochure to begin the solicitation process. With your participation, we can continue to represent your business interests well in Washington, DC. Also, mark your calendars now for the 2007 edition of the Campaign for Quality Construction Legislative Conference May 1-3, 2007.



Lonnie Coleman
Chairman, MCAA Government Affairs Committee

Recent MCAA PAC Contributors

Dave Seitz, MCA of Wisconsin
Thomas Young, T.G. Young Contracting
Tom Williams, Aberly Group

Bill Erickson, C.J. Erickson
Gary Fowler, MCA of Georgia
Robert Reaves, R.M. Thornton

New STARs Bring Total to Sixty-Eight

MSCA has added eight new STARs to its ranks, for a new total of 68 MSCA member companies that have qualified as MSCA STARs. The newest STARs are:

- S. A. Comunale Co., Inc., Barberton, OH
- The Fagan Company (an EMCOR Company), Kansas City, KS
- Goyette Mechanical Co., Flint, MI
- Linc Mechanical, Woburn, MA
- RECCO, Woburn, MA
- Temperature Engineering Corp., Sterling Heights, MI
- Total Maintenance, Inc., Bettendorf, IA
- Wolin & Associates, West Des Moines, IA

These companies, and the others that have qualified as MSCA STARs since last year's MSCA Annual Educational Conference were honored and presented with personalized crystal STAR awards during the opening session of this year's conference held in Charleston, SC, earlier this month.

All MSCA STAR contractors have proven that they are experienced service contractors, employ the best trained and most qualified workforce including UA STAR certified technicians, maintain a superior safety record, offer outstanding customer service, and focus on continuing education and training for all employees.

As MSCA STARs, these companies receive a comprehensive marketing kit that provides them with everything they need to market their STAR status. The manual includes information on how to effectively market the MSCA STAR brand, as well as print advertising, direct marketing, and public relations. The kit also includes two CDs with all of the graphics and collateral materials needed to customize the materials.

MSCA STARs also receive a bi-monthly e-newsletter, *MSCA STAR Galaxy*, which

includes stories, marketing tips, and useful information. Last month, MSCA STAR contractors participated in the second webinar, a live, interactive computer-based presentation. Andres Echenique, managing director of MRA Pump, delivered a presentation on how contractors can incorporate interactive marketing techniques into their MSCA STAR marketing programs. The new MSCA STAR website (www.msca-star.org) provides contractors, customers, MSCA STARs, and the public with information on the program. The website is easy to navigate and offers separate sections for contractors and customers. An interactive map allows users to easily locate an MSCA STAR contractor anywhere in the country.

Visit the MSCA STAR website at www.msca-star.org to learn more.

Service Contractors Benefit from New Publications

Two new publications of interest to service contractors have recently been released. The *Model NFPA 70E Electrical Safety Program for Service* was designed especially for mechanical service contractors whose technicians perform work on HVAC units that are pushing 480 volts or less. Based on information from NFPA 70E – 2004, this model program will help you develop an electrical safety program that is specific to your company's needs.

The *Electrical Safety Guidelines for Mechanical Service (Based on NFPA 70E – 2004) Safety Training Kit* also provides important information for mechanical service workers who troubleshoot energized HVAC units. The kit will help you educate your workers about arc flash and electrical shock hazards, safe work practices, protective measures and personal protective equipment.

For more information about these publications, or to place an order call 301-990-2200 or visit www.mcaa.org/store.

Plan Now for 2007 Education and Training

As a mechanical service contractor, you need tailored business and management education and training that is directly relevant to your business. MSCA is dedicated to providing the focused educational materials you need to compete today and tomorrow. Following are the dates and locations for MSCA's popular programs. Program details and registration information can be found at www.mcaa.org/education/msca.

Selling Skills Training Program

January 15 – 17 Scottsdale, AZ

Managing Service Projects

January 24 Ft. Lauderdale, FL

May 15 Ann Arbor, MI

Dispatchers Training Program

February 6 – 7 Dallas, TX

April 24 – 25 Hartford, CT

Service Managers Training Program

March 19 – 22 Scottsdale, AZ

November 12 – 15 Scottsdale, AZ

Evaluating the Financial Performance of Your Service Operation

March 29 San Francisco, CA

September 20 Chicago, IL

September 24 Philadelphia, PA

22nd Annual Educational Conference

October 14 – 17 Colorado Springs, CO

MSCA also offers a Service Seminar Series. This series of seminars offered on the local level offers a wide variety of informative educational seminars for service contractors. Program formats are for two-day, one-day, and four-hour seminars. Seminars are led by experienced instructors who have worked with MSCA and are familiar with the challenges of the service industry and its needs. To determine whether any of these seminars have been scheduled in your area, contact your local association or Sobeida Orantes at 800-556-3653 or saorantes@mcaa.org. ♦

Internship Gives Student a Different Learning Experience

Joshua Kostiuk, a student at the University of Minnesota, had no idea what was in store for him when he accepted the summer internship with Shannon's, Inc. (International Falls, MN) this summer, but the four-month job proved to be "incomparable to anything I could have hoped for or imagined." (Shannon's was also one of 37 recipients of a Student Internship Grant from the Mechanical Contracting Education and Research Foundation (MCERF)).

Kostiuk started his internship with no field experience in the construction industry, a situation that his father advised should be rectified. "My father always told me that if I was going to work in the construction industry as either an architect or construction manager, I needed to have field experience above all else." He went on, "After working with Shannon's this summer, I now understand why he told me this."

Shannon's approach to internships may just be a model for other companies to follow. Kostiuk agrees. "The way my internship was administered was perfect. I was given three weeks in the office to analyze the job I was going to be working on; reading the documents, looking over the prints, and learning about the other contractors on the jobsite. All these tools prepared me for what I was going to encounter."

And, he encountered it all while on the jobsite. "If there was one valuable thing that I learned during this summer it was that nothing will go according to plan. Something unforeseen will always arise on the jobsite; whether it be a labor shortage, workers quitting, late shipments, wrong materials or in some cases, no materials being delivered and, in some extreme circumstances, a strike or two."

Kostiuk was particularly moved by the trades crewmen he worked with and came to know. "I was once told that if I were going to be in charge of a construction project, I needed the respect of my workers; they are the heart of any construction company." He went on, "There is a fine line between being someone's boss and being someone's friend, and with the opportunity I was given this summer, I think I realized where that fine line was; maybe a little hazy and unclear at times, but you have to learn to balance them." And then, "To sit there and listen to all the jobs they have worked on over the years, their experiences together, sitting down for dinner at night with all of them, for weeks, months, even years on end, a bond truly grows between these men. Construction life is hard and ever changing, on the road every day, different jobs, layoffs; the only true consistency is the work, and those who will be

shoulder to shoulder with you when this work is completed."

In the end, Kostiuk came away from his internship with far more than a paycheck and a hardhat. He gained a new understanding of the construction business, thanks to the generosity and patience of Shannon's management and project crew. "After work my first day, eight of us sat down for dinner at a restaurant. Our head foreman looked at me and asked how much I was paying for school a year. After I told him, he started laughing and said, 'You will learn more sitting her for 20 minutes than you ever would in a classroom'... I never imagined how close to the truth he really was."

"To understand construction, you have to work construction," said Kostiuk. "I would not trade my time in the field and my time spent with my fellow co-workers for any amount of education I could have received in the classroom." And, his final word, "Above all else, I was able to break in my first pair of work boots."

Shannon's made a difference in Joshua Kostiuk's life in just four short months. Do you know a promising student whose life you'd like to change? Consider hiring a student intern next summer, and start your search now. Check MCAA's Careers website (www.mcaa.org/careers) for a list of student chapters and contacts. Watch for announcements about MCERF's 2007 Student Internship Grants in early January 2007. For more information, contact Ann Mattheis at amattheis@mcaa.org. ♦



Internships Change Lives...and You Can Help!

If you would like to change the life of a promising student, consider hiring one as an intern at your company next summer. Start your search now by contacting your local student chapter (a list is available at www.mcaa.org/careers) and watch for details of the grant program that will help cover a portion of the intern's salary.

Speaking of Safety

Model Hexavalent Chromium Program

MCAA's new *Model Hexavalent Chromium Program* is enclosed in this month's membership mailing. The model program was developed by the Safety and Health Committee in response to OSHA's Hexavalent Chromium Standard, which becomes effective for larger employers in November. Hexavalent Chromium is a heavy metal present in stainless steel. Fumes from welding and torch cutting on stainless steel can cause lung cancer if inhaled in significant concentrations. Although the standard doesn't require employers to establish written hexavalent chromium programs, many owners, construction managers and general contractors are requiring them. Effective dates are:

- For employers with 20 or more employees (except engineering control requirements) – November 27, 2006;

- For employers with fewer than 20 employees (except engineering control requirements) – May 30, 2007;
- Engineering control requirements for all employers – May 31, 2010.

Addressing Hexavalent Chromium

MCAA is in the process of collecting air monitoring data covering hexavalent chromium exposure in the mechanical construction industry. MCAA believes that the data may allow mechanical construction companies to use a combination of historical and objective data in lieu of costly air monitoring on every project. OSHA's Hexavalent Chromium Standard allows employers to use a combination of historical and objective data instead of air monitoring provided that the previous air monitoring methods used to establish the data are within an accuracy range of 25 percent and produce confidence levels of 95 percent for the concentrations of hexavalent chromium above OSHA's estab-

lished Action Level. MCAA believes the data would apply only to buildings or structures that are under construction, but it would likely exclude high purity welding procedures under tight enclosures. However, companies with well-ventilated pre-fabrication shops could establish their own combinations of historical and objective data to potentially forgo regular air monitoring requirements.

The Safety and Health Committee will evaluate the collected data to determine whether exposure levels are consistently low enough to justify the use of combination data, and whether it meets the requirements of the standard. If the committee determines that more air monitoring data is needed, it will likely recommend to MCAA that it conduct the monitoring early in 2007. If your company has conducted air monitoring for hexavalent chromium and would be willing to share it with MCAA, please contact Pete Chaney at pchaney@mcaa.org or 800-556-3653.

OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard Updated

OSHA recently added Assigned Protection Factors (APF) to its respiratory protection standard. APFs are numbers assigned to the different classes of respirators. They indicate a level of protection that the respirators provide to their users. A respirator's APF, along with the contaminant's established exposure limit, are used to determine a Maximum Use Concentration (MUC). If the workplace contaminant exposure level exceeds the MUC, the employer knows to choose a respirator with a higher protection factor. To determine the MUC, multiply the respirator's APF (see table below) by the contaminant's exposure limit. Exposure limits for each specific substance can be found in 29 CFR 1910 or 29 CFR 1926. For a copy of the respiratory protection standard, or to access the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), go to www.osha.gov. ♦

Assigned Protection Factors⁵ Table

Type of Respirator ^{1,2}	Quarter Mask	Half Mask	Full Facepiece	Helmet/Hood	Loose-Fitting Facepiece
1. Air-Purifying Respirator	5	10 ³	50	—	—
2. Powered Air-Purifying Respirator (PAPR)	—	50	1,000	25/1,000 ⁴	25
3. Supplied-Air Respirator (SAR) or Airline Respirator					
• Demand mode	—	10	50	—	—
• Continuous flow mode	—	50	1,000	25/1,000 ⁴	25
• Pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode	—	50	1,000	—	—
4. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)					
• Demand mode	—	10	50	50	—
• Pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode (e.g., open/closed circuit)	—	—	10,000	10,000	—

¹ Employers may select respirators assigned for use in higher workplace concentrations of a hazardous substance for use at lower concentrations of that substance, or when required respirator use is independent of concentration. ² The assigned protection factors in Table 1 are only effective when the employer implements a continuing, effective respirator program as required by this section (29 CFR 1910.134), including training, fit testing, maintenance, and use requirements. ³ This APF category includes filtering facepieces, and half masks with elastomeric facepieces. ⁴ The employer must have evidence provided by the respirator manufacturer that testing of these respirators demonstrates performance at a level of protection of 1,000 or greater to receive an APF of 1,000. This level of performance can best be demonstrated by performing a WPF or SWPF study or equivalent testing. Absent such testing, all other PAPRs and SARs with helmets/hoods are to be treated as loose-fitting facepiece respirators, and receive an APF of 25. ⁵ These APFs do not apply to respirators used solely for escape. For escape respirators used in association with specific substances covered by 29 CFR 1910 subpart Z, employers must refer to the appropriate substance-specific standards in that subpart. Escape respirators for other IDLH atmospheres are specified by 29 CFR 1910.134 (d)(2)(ii).

John Barrasso To Be Honored During Construction Industry "Good Scout" Award Luncheon



MCA of Connecticut Executive Vice President John Barrasso will be honored at the 2006 Construction Industry "Good Scout" Award Luncheon on

November 3 in Plantsville, CT. The event will bring together companies and individuals in the construction industry from all over Connecticut to help the more than 25,000 scouts and explorers who participate in both urban and traditional scouting programs.

Tweet/Garot Mechanical Receives Commendation for Workforce Development

MCAA member Tweet/Garot Mechanical, Inc. (Green Bay, WI) was honored on September 13 with a visit from Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development



State Senator Dave Hansen, Secretary Gassman, Tweet/Garot President Tim Howald, and Mayor Jim Schmitt at the presentation of the certificate.

Secretary Roberta Gassman, who presented them with a Certificate of Commendation, signed by Governor Jim Doyle, commending and congratulating Tweet/Garot as "an active and supportive participant in the Wisconsin registered apprenticeship program for doing their part to help create a workforce that will meet the demand of the state's labor force well into the future." Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt, Senator Dave Hansen, and representatives from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College's Apprenticeship Program were also in attendance. ♦

MCAA CALENDAR

OCTOBER

22-26
IPM, Class 40, Week 1
Austin, TX

30-November 1
UA/MCAA Joint Labor Relations Conference
Chicago, IL

NOVEMBER

5-10
Advanced Leadership Institute, Week 2
Babson College
Wellesley, MA

6-10
MSCA Service Managers Training Program
Scottsdale, AZ

29-December 1
Industry Improvement Funds Conference
Longboat Key, FL

2007 JANUARY

14-18
IPM, Class, 40, Week 2
Austin, TX

15-17
MSCA Selling Skills Training Program
Scottsdale, AZ

24
MSCA Managing Service Projects
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

FEBRUARY

6-7
MSCA Dispatchers Professional Development Program
Dallas, TX

25-March 1
MCAA Annual Convention
Orlando, FL

MARCH

19-22
MSCA Service Managers Training Program
Scottsdale, AZ

29
MSCA Evaluating the Financial Performance of Your Service Operation
San Francisco, CA

APRIL

15-18
NCPWB Technical Committee Annual Meeting
Napa Valley, CA

22-26
IPM, Class 41, Week 1
Austin, TX

April 24-25
MSCA Dispatchers Professional Development Program
Hartford, CT

MAY

1-3
Campaign for Quality Construction Legislative Conference
Washington, DC

For more information on these events, contact Linda Fiedler at 800-556-3653.