

**STATE AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER FITTER
APPRENTICESHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 29, 2015
UA Local 183 Training Center
Pewaukee, WI

Draft Minutes

Members Present	Organization
Beil, Michael	Sprinkler Fitters Local 183
Carlson, Sherry	Design Build Fire Protection
Driebel, Dan	Sprinkler Fitters Local 669
Gall, Corey (Co-Chair)	Sprinkler Fitters Local 183
Klug, Kevin	Dave Jones Inc.
Radke, Eric	Gruneau Fire Protection
Sferra, Steve (Co-Chair)	United Fire Protection

Members Absent	Organization
Cannon, Robert	Sprinkler Fitters Local 669
Hintz, Greg	K. Kranski & Sons, Inc.
Hext, Rick	Ahern Fire Protection
Kraft, Ron	Sprinkler Fitters Local 183

Consultants & Guests	Organization
Belanger, Wayne	Associated Builders & Contractors
Johnson, Joshua	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Smith, Owen	Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards
Triscari, Nick	Milwaukee Area Technical College

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Steve Sferra, Committee Co-chair, in conformity with Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.
2. A sign-in sheet was circulated to record those in attendance.
3. The committee reviewed its current roster. Members provided minor revisions to their contact information.

4. Old Business

a. Review the follow-up items from the previous meeting.

i. The committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting as written.

ii. Guest Presentation on "Architecture & Construction Youth Apprenticeship"

Darla Burton with DWD Youth Apprenticeship presented the purpose, general structure and requirements for youth apprenticeship, as well as the specific requirements and content of the Architecture & Construction youth apprenticeship.

The Architecture & Construction program has five focus areas, each of which is a major trade: Carpentry, Electrical, Masonry, Mechanical/HVAC, and Plumbing/Sprinkler Fitting. The committee noted and agreed with the specific competencies for Sprinkler Fitting. In addition, the first 12 of the 16 competencies in each area are general construction competencies, such as safety. So, graduates of the program are strong applicants to all construction trades. The Bureau noted that this is pertinent to the committee because the local committees may receive applications from youth apprenticeship graduates in the other focus areas.

The committee expressed strong interest in the program. They spoke about location connections with youth efforts through MATC and Local 400. The training director is very interested in participating with youth apprenticeship. Although the trade requires a license, Local 183 could simulate portions of the work in the training center.

The committee asked whether youth apprentice graduates could be accelerated up the rank list. The Bureau replied that no parties can bypass application requirements or the application process. The committee asked what options are available to youth apprentices to continue in the trade. The Bureau replied many youth apprentices receive offers for continued employment from their sponsor, although employment opportunities are always at the discretion of the employer. Employers with a collective bargaining agreement in place would have to have a "student learner" or "helper" classification in place to hire a youth apprentice.

The Bureau and Youth Apprenticeship staff supplied contact information for statewide and regional YA coordinators.

iii. Discuss additional proposed recommendations to applicant testing procedures.

This fall, the Bureau recommended three modifications to applicant assessment procedures to all state construction committees except Roofers and Electricians (Construction). Each state committee will discuss the following with its local committees, and bring input for discussion and action to the 2016 spring meeting:

- i) use the ACT test as the assessment of choice;
- ii) continue using current assessment (ex. Accuplacer) until most applicants have ACT scores;
- iii) establish statewide, uniform minimum scores for the ACT and Accuplacer, and the length of time in which scores are valid (ex. three years).

The Bureau clarified that the recommendations apply to both ABC committees and joint apprenticeship committees. Furthermore, a statewide, uniform minimum score would be mandatory for all local committees, i.e. no local committee could use a higher minimum score.

The committee asked how uniform scores would we compare with the other parts of the assessment. The Bureau answered that the uniform scores apply only to the ACT and Accuplacer; the scores do not apply to mechanical or spatial testing. Nick Triscari commented that many mechanical trades have discontinued using mechanical and spatial testing because the testing is old and inaccurate.

The committee expressed support for uniform statewide minimum scores, and will discuss the letter with local committees before the next meeting.

b. How is the Veterans in Piping program proceeding?

The committee replied that the program is going well. Necessary changes that have come up have been made as they occur. The biggest challenge for the sponsors is the paperwork. The biggest challenge for the apprentice graduates is finding a job. The item does not need to be included on future agendas.

c. Apprenticeship Completion Award Program

Owen reminded the committee that ACAP is an example of current unprecedented state support for registered apprenticeship. The program was conceived by the state legislature and passed into law by Governor Walker in 2014, and it was recently renewed through June 30, 2017. No other changes were made. The eligibility requirements and maximum awards are the same.

The committee did not have questions or comments.

d. WI Apprenticeship Summit

Owen reminded the committee that the Summit is an example of current unprecedented state and national support for registered apprenticeship. The increased interest in registered apprenticeship by industries and organizations largely unfamiliar with the model may drive policy changes that would not be helpful to current sponsors or the program as a whole. Therefore, to position itself ahead of potential changes, the Bureau convened 40 thought-leaders of apprenticeship in Wisconsin to listen to the latest research on workforce development and create an action plan of enhancements to Wisconsin apprenticeship.

This fall, the first action item began. The Bureau convened a consortium of employers that will develop employer-to-employer outreach material on registered apprenticeship. The consortium's first step is to conduct a statewide survey on the use and perceptions of registered apprenticeship among

sponsors and non-sponsors alike, across all sectors of the economy. The survey will gather the perceived strengths and weaknesses of registered apprenticeship from three audiences: employers who currently use registered apprenticeship; employers who used registered apprenticeship in the last five years; and employers who have never used registered apprenticeship. The consortium will use the data to develop new, targeted outreach materials.

A general discussion followed on the perceived strengths and weaknesses of registered apprenticeship. Committee members agreed that the most significant strength of registered apprenticeship is the quality of training and that employers who no longer use apprenticeship or have never used apprenticeship likely perceive it as too costly.

e. American Apprenticeship Grants (WAGE\$)

Owen reminded the committee that the strongest example of unprecedented national support for registered apprenticeship are the \$100 million worth of competitive American Apprenticeship Grants recently awarded by the U.S. Dept. of Labor. Owen reported that the Bureau's application, "Wisconsin Apprenticeship Growth and Enhancement Strategy," or simply "WAGE\$," was approved, and the Bureau will receive the maximum grant award of \$5 million.

The American Apprenticeship Grants have three purposes: launch apprenticeship models in new high-growth fields; align apprenticeship to pathways for further learning and career advancement; and scale apprenticeship models that work. Accordingly, WAGE\$ will develop apprenticeship programs in health care and information technology; develop curriculum for youth apprenticeship and guidelines for pre-apprenticeship readiness programs to align them with registered apprenticeships; and expand a few existing programs in advanced manufacturing to additional technical colleges.

A general discussion followed. The committee asked whether WAGE\$ will benefit existing apprenticeship programs in construction. Owen reiterated that WAGE\$ will not be used to upgrade existing apprenticeship programs with new curriculum or new equipment. Rather, the grant will support readiness programs that will produce more qualified applicants to existing apprenticeship programs in the future.

f. Other

No additional topics were brought forward.

5. New Business

a. Discuss the duties of the state committee.

Owen reported that the Bureau is reviewing the duties with all state committees this year for several reasons: to orient the many new members across the 19 committees; to reiterate to experienced members the invaluable role of state committees to the Bureau; and to clarify that committees advise the Bureau on *all aspects* of the apprenticeship program, including policies, on-the-job learning and paid related instruction. Owen noted that the committee is performing at a high level. The committee did not have any questions or comments.

b. New publications are available from the WI Advisory Council

Owen distributed two new publications from the WI Advisory Council and discussed their purpose.

First, the Council developed "A Guide to Successful Interviewing for the Skilled Trades" in response to feedback from many employers and sponsors across economic sectors that many applicants and apprentices need to improve their job search and interviewing skills. The guide provides comprehensive tips on the entire process, from researching the employer to learning from rejection. Some content addresses the importance of punctuality, grooming, and sobriety, which may seem to be common sense to many stakeholders, but nonetheless are overlooked by many applicants and apprentices. The publication is intended for wide distribution. Local committees and employers are encouraged to request copies from the Bureau.

Second, the Council developed "Guidelines for WI Pre-Apprenticeship Readiness Programs" to ensure readiness programs throughout the state are directly linked to registered apprenticeship sponsors. Many programs exist currently, but many lack curriculum directly related to registered apprenticeship occupations and/or lack direct ties to registered apprenticeship sponsors. Consequently, the graduates are ill-prepared to find and work a registered apprenticeship. For example, a director of one such program expressed concern that the graduates were not finding registered apprenticeship opportunities. When asked if the graduates had applied to a local committee, the director did not know what a local committee was.

In addition, the number of readiness programs will likely increase due to the popularity of apprenticeship among employers and the mandate in the revised federal workforce law, the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act, that workforce development boards must have a registered apprenticeship sponsor as a member. The Council anticipated that many programs would apply for federal workforce funding that comes through the boards, so the Bureau will work with the boards to ensure that programs that apply for federal funding have met the guidelines. By meeting the guidelines, the program can receive a "seal of approval" from the Advisory Council.

A general discussion followed. The committee shared anecdotes on common mistakes applicants make during the interview process. Applicants are often so nervous that they avoid making eye contact, mumble and provide short answers. Guests asked for examples of pre-apprenticeship readiness programs besides the most notable, Big Step and Operation Fresh Start. Owen replied that he will research several lesser-known examples.

c. BAS personnel update

Tim Ziffer is the new Apprenticeship Training Representative for the Racine/Kenosha area. He replaces Sandy Martin, who had accepted a position with DWD Job Service.

d. Other

No additional topics were brought forth.

6. WTCS Update

A written update on WTCS activities is available on the state committee website.

7. Review the program participants.

Program participants included 55 apprentices and 17 employers with a contract active or unassigned on October 22, 2015. Within the past five years, the apprentice total has ranged from 47

to 59 and the employer total has ranged from 16-19.

Dan Driebel reported that Local 669, which registers its apprentices federally, has 69 apprentices.

8. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 10:00 a.m. at Local 183 in Menomonee Falls.
9. The committee adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Follow-up Items

- i. *The Bureau will email links to the YA website, YA coordinator contact information, and YA interactive map to the committee.*
- ii. *The Bureau will research a more expansive version of the ACT-Accuplacer crosswalk.*

*Submitted by Joshua Johnson and Owen Smith,
Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards*