

CDA Supports Tomorrow's Tradesmen through Education and Skills Competition

While school is out for most teachers and students, every summer, project managers for the Copper Development Association head back to the classroom to teach the newest copper-related applications to instructors of the United Association of Journeyman and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA).

The Instructor Training Program (ITP) draws close to 2,000 of the top craftsmen in their field and is held annually in conjunction with the International Apprenticeship Competition, a contest in which apprentices from all over the United States and Canada vie for first place in the five different disciplines — HVAC, pipe fitting, plumbing, sprinkler fitting and welding.

To actively support trade-related continuing education initiatives and a little healthy competition between colleagues, with member companies donating copper tubes and fittings and project managers judging copper-related sections of competitions, CDA sponsors many teaching and skills programs year-round including:

- **The SkillsUSA Championships:** Each summer, the nation's best career and technical students compete at the Championships in more than 91 different trade, technical, and leadership categories. Contests begin locally and continue through the state and national levels. Since 1996, CDA has provided copper materials and served as a judge in the plumbing division for both state and national levels.
- **The Plumbing Apprentice Contest:** Held in conjunction with the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association (PHCC) annual convention, CDA has underwritten the competition, sponsored the apprenticeship dinner for competitors and their families and donated all the copper and copper alloy materials for the event since 1997.
- **The Associated Builders & Contractors National Craft Championships:** Since 2001, CDA has sponsored, supplied copper materials and served as a judge for this intense two-day event where young men and women compete in one of 14 competitions, representing 13 trades.

Dale Powell, a master plumber and project manager for CDA, has been involved with all of the competitions over the years, and continues to teach courses during the ITP, which he began working on in 1990.

“If we can get apprentices acquainted with our materials early on and effectively demonstrate that it installs easily and comfortably, they’ll feel much better using copper, a quality product, over a lesser alternative,” Powell said. “If they know there’s a group of knowledgeable professionals who can provide them with technical service and assist them with their plumbing needs, it’s a win-win situation for the copper industry.”

This year at ITP, CDA introduced a 20-hour course, Copper Piping Systems, Advanced Installations, Specialized Design and Safe Operation. The program offers training for properly installing copper systems for water distribution, HVAC and refrigeration, medical gas, fuel gas, sanitary drainage, fire protection and many other applications.

“UA instructors share the valuable information learned in class with the apprentices back at their local unions,” Powell said. “We want to ensure that tomorrow’s workforce remains current in all the latest technologies, techniques and products in order to be successful in their trade.”

For more information about CDA, please visit www.copper.org.