



May 28, 2020

For Immediate Release

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Associations Collaborate to Fill Education-to-Industry Pipeline

The Montana Contractors Association, MCA Education Foundation and the Montana Equipment Dealers Association have developed a joint action plan and strategy, **Build Montana**, to address the immediate and long-term workforce challenges of the construction industry. **Build Montana** is a strategy to create a bridge between workforce and industry, and to increase the pipeline of people entering the construction industry.

“Interest and awareness of the strong career paths available in the industry is at a point where many young people are either unaware or discouraged from a construction trade career path,” said MCA President Bob Warren (Schellinger Construction). “In order to change these perceptions and misunderstandings, it will require industry to actively engage with schools, teachers, administrators, parents and their communities.”

This program is being created as the result of several factors that have impacted hiring and workforce sourcing in the construction industry over the past few decades. In addition, the events surrounding COVID-19 resulted in construction being declared an essential service, and thereby creates opportunities for adults who want to change careers.

“We intend to aggressively build awareness among Montana youth about rewarding careers in the construction industry, focusing on Montana youth, families, teachers and school administrators,” said Adam Gilbertson, MEDA President (RDO Equipment Co.). “We will also focus on onsite internships that give high school students real-life exposure to careers. Finally, we want to fill the pipeline to Montana’s 2- and 4-year technical degree programs.”

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Build Montana has developed an implementation strategy which includes:

1. Contract with an individual or firm to build relationships with students, teachers and administrators. The individual will create partnerships between local contractors and dealers to engage with schools and represent the industry at school-based events, teacher, administrator and school board association meetings. The MCA is actively seeking a highly qualified individual or organization with whom to contract. Details can be found here: <https://www.mtagc.org/lets-build-mt.html>
2. Implement a marketing campaign which includes a new web site, social media campaign, podcasts, and promotional material.

The MCA and MEDA have committed to a \$225,000 campaign over the next 18 months. The MCA's Education Foundation, a charitable organization, will serve as the fiduciary agent, making contributions to Build Montana deductible as a contribution. The expected launch for all components is July 1.

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