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MCA awards \$8,000 in grants to middle/high schools to support industrial arts programs

The Montana Contractors' Association (MCA) recently awarded industrial arts programs at eight Montana schools \$1,000 MCA Construction Trade Awareness grants to help raise awareness of construction as a career among their students.

Recipients include: Belt High School, Dodson Public School, East Middle School (Great Falls), Helena High School, Hellgate High School (Missoula), North Middle School (Great Falls), Terry High School, and Whitehall High School.

"The construction industry on the national level is experiencing an extreme workforce shortage, and Montana is no exception," said Cary Hegreberg, executive director of the MCA. "We hope that by helping industrial arts programs in Montana schools, more students will recognize that construction jobs are a desirable option for their future. Careers in construction should be a first choice, not a fallback."

The MCA's Workforce Development Committee members evaluated the applications based on whether the applicants had partnered with MCA member companies for their event/project; whether the event/program coordinates with Construction Week (Oct. 1-5); the number of students/community members that will be reached by events/programs; and creativity.

Projects range from building park benches and tables for the city park in Belt, to the Helena High School American Welding Society Club's annual "Weld-Off" competition.

For more information about the Montana Contractors' Association, visit www.mtagc.org.