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Construction Students Tackle USCC Challenge

It was hot and humid with temperatures climbing into the high eighties, but that did not dampen the first ever United States Construction Challenge (USCC) event at Palmetto High School (PHS). Over 60 high-spirited students took their places for the inaugural event designed by Manatee County construction technology teachers to challenge students, increase interest in the building trades, and foster personal growth.

The PHS Construction Design Academy, led by construction technology teachers Jim Kapper and Bob Lounds, recently hosted the daylong event. Working alongside Kapper and Lounds were fellow construction technology teachers Ray Weiland from Southeast High School (SEHS), Jeff Sharp from Manatee High School (MHS), Barry King from Manatee Technical Institute (MTI), and Alan Anderson, vice president of the Home Builders Association (HBA) Manatee-Sarasota as well as the Manatee County School District Future Builders of America (FBA) sponsor. Together the team worked tirelessly to make the day a huge success.

The event challenged students with three different skill levels of competition. Tech Level 1 students competed in a total of ten events that included written testing in *Safety; Construction Math; Blueprint Reading; Accurate Measurement; and Hand Tool and Fastener Identification*. They also showcased their skills in hands-on timed events that included *Cutting Stock to Length with a Handsaw; Driving and Pulling Nails; Constructing a Corner; and Hole Placement and Drilling*.

Tech Level 2 students competed in five events that included a written test in *OSHA Safety*, as well as *Identification of Framing Components; Power Tools; and Materials, Fasteners, and Adhesives*. The hands-on portion of their test consisted of constructing a full size tool box in less than 30 minutes.

The Tech Team Challenge was for the most advanced students and involved a timed, three-person event. Each team constructed a four-foot square floor and framed two walls, one with a door opening and one with a window opening. Each team had two and a half hours to complete this task.

When the sawdust settled and hammers stopped ringing, students enjoyed lunch provided by Zirkelbach Construction. Next they proceeded to the auditorium for the awards ceremony and fabulous giveaways generously provided by Home Depot.

Tech Level 1 trophy winners were Sean Barrett, MHS—1st place; Lucas Fath, SEHS—2nd place; and Andres Ramirez, SEHS—3rd place.

Tech Level 2 trophy winners included Kaleb Clark, PHS—1st place; Sam Tibbetts, MHS—2nd place; and Matthew Cook, MHS—3rd place.

Earning a first-place win for the Tech Team Challenge were MTI's dual enrolled students Gus Brown, Caleb Skorski, and Matt Goodell. Second-place winners were SEHS's Bryan Butts, Phillip Dwinells, and Dwayne White; and third-place winners were PHS's Ryan Bell, Nick Hernandez, and Casey Kent.

Congratulations to the USCC competitors, and a hearty thank you to the judges who gave their time and to the sponsors for their generosity, including HBA Manatee Sarasota, FBA, Zirkelbach Construction, Home Depot, Construction Technology Careers (CTC), and the Manatee County School District Adult, Career, and Technical Education (ACT) Department.

JOBS



USCC: The first annual competitive event showcasing area students' construction technology knowledge and skills.



FBA: A nonprofit workforce development and student leadership program of the Florida Home Builders Foundation, the charitable arm of the Florida Home Builders Association.



CTC: A unique and growing partnership among the area construction industry, the School Boards of Manatee and Sarasota Counties, and the Suncoast Workforce Board that promotes a construction technology career program path.



HBA: A professional trade organization comprised of local builders and associated businesses involved in the home-building industry



USCC students take their places for the competition.



Tech Level 2 toolbox builders hard at work.



Tech Team Challenge contenders enjoy their success.

PARENT CORNER

- ✓ Discussion starter: Every student learns differently. Some students learn better visually (reading, seeing an image, etc.), some audibly (reading aloud, for example), and some by hands-on touch. Often a combination of these styles works best. Construction technology students gain many opportunities for hands-on learning. How does your child learn best?
- ✓ Talk to your student about careers in the construction trades, and what it takes to succeed in our current economic climate. Workers with a higher level of skills will stand out among the competition.
- ✓ "This has been really fun. This is hands-on experience for what you need to do. Constructing the corner was the coolest event." Damon, Manatee High School student and participant in the U.S. Construction Challenge. For more information about the construction technology program at PHS, contact PHS Career Advisor Millie Torres at (941) 723-4848, ext. 2141.

FCAT reading comprehension QUESTION

★ What written challenges were faced by Tech Level 1 students?

Safety; Construction Math; Blueprint Reading; Accurate Measurement; and Hand Tool and Fastener Identification.

What's on the WEB?

- www.hbamanatee-sarasota.org
- www.constructiontechnologycareers.org
- www.futurebuildersofamerica.org



EdVantage Strategic Objective #3: Each student will continually participate in the democratic process.



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