

Construct Tomorrow Held on the Iron Range

By Heath Boe, Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training

The very first **Iron Range Construct Tomorrow** event was held on October 19th, 2016 at the Range Regional Civic Center in Eveleth, MN. Construct Tomorrow is a hands-on event for high school students to introduce them to the skilled trades. Trade unions from the skilled trades bring various activities that allow the students to experience the work the skilled trades do, as well as interact with skilled trades' representatives. This interaction helps the students visualize themselves doing this type of work as a career. It also naturally encourages dialog about all aspects of this type of career; what training or schooling is required, how much does the job pay, and what is a typical day for that occupation. 14 different trade unions participated [Laborers, Iron Workers, Low Voltage Electricians, Painters, Sheet Metal Worker, Electricians, Insulators, Plumbers, Carpenters, Operating Engineers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, & Floor Coverers], along with 3 technical schools [Mesabi Range College, Hibbing Community College, Itasca Community College] from the region. **18** high schools brought over **400** students to the event!



After the event students were asked to rate the event and also if they would recommend it to other students who didn't attend. The average rating was **7.92** (on a 1 to 10 scale), and **96%** of the students would recommend others attend. They were also asked if they were interested in a career in the skilled trades both before they came to this event, and after they attended the event. **20%** of the students stated they were not interested before, but now, after seeing the trades and trying it out, they were now interested. This is incredibly important as the main objective of this event is to increase awareness about the potential careers in the skilled trades. The last question we asked the students was, "**Do you have any suggestions for improving this event?**" Here are some of their responses:

"It was very fun and I learned many things I didn't know."

"to elaborate on how many fields these skills could be used on. And it would be nice if they could show more examples that their skills from their careers can be used for."

"No, I think every part of it was perfect. Everyone there explained things well and were very helpful and outgoing."

"None, it was fun just not what I would want to pick for a career."

"I really enjoyed the simulations, and the hands on activities."

The teachers and guidance counselors were also asked a series of questions, and their feedback was also overwhelmingly positive. They rated the event even higher at a **9.19** (on a 1 to 10 scale), and **90%** recommended this should be a yearly event!

