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Second Annual Girls in Trades Conference and Career Fair well attended

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Dorchester, MA According to the Massachusetts Girls in Trades, the Second Annual Girls in Trades Conference and Career Fair was attended by over 350 students and 50 educators from 22 high schools. The conference and career fair was held on March 2 at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 103. Attending students were young women enrolled in construction-related programs at career and technical high schools across the state.

“The young women who attended the conference are better informed and more prepared to pursue careers in union construction trades. Their teachers are better positioned to guide students to these high-skill, high-wage careers. Connections with union construction apprenticeship programs and careers, once limited to very few high schools, are now available to every career and technical high school in the Commonwealth,” said Maryanne Ham, an administrator at Minuteman High School and board member of the Massachusetts Girls in Trades.

Among the speakers at the event were John Dumas, business manager of IBEW Local 103; Brian Doherty, general agent of the Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan Boston District; Twanya Lawson, a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 4 and current machine operator at the Wynn Boston Harbor construction site; and Tonye Hayden-Berry, a member of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen Local 3.

Students and educators learned about career pathways in the union construction trades and met with working tradeswomen and union representatives.

Doherty said only 2% of the construction jobs in the United States are currently held by women, but “Massachusetts is a cut above,” with 7.5% of its construction jobs currently being held by women, with a goal of 20% by the year 2020.

In the opening session, Lawson urged the female students to think big and to keep striving for more. “There’s no limits with me,” she said describing how she had learned to operate all kinds of heavy equipment, ranging from small bobcats to large tower cranes.

Massachusetts Girls in Trades was established to encourage young women to pursue high-wage, high-demand careers in the construction trades. The group was founded in December of 2015 by representatives from Wynn Boston Harbor, Minuteman High School, the New England Regional Council of Carpenters, Sheet Metal Workers Local 17, Building Pathways, the Massachusetts

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and SkillsUSA Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Girls in Trades board currently includes representatives from developers and contractors including Wynn Boston Harbor, Suffolk Construction, Skanska USA Building; Turner Construction, Liberty Construction Services, and Gilbane Building Company; union groups such as IBEW Local 103, Local 103 Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee of Greater Boston, the Massachusetts Building Trades Council, Boston Metropolitan District Building Trades Council, New England Regional Council of Carpenters, Building Trades Training Directors Association of Massachusetts, and the Boston Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association; organizations such as the Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Program and the Policy Group on Tradeswomen's Issues; the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Massachusetts Department of Transportation Office of Diversity and Civil Rights; SkillsUSA Massachusetts; Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA) CTE Directors Group; Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce, Inc.; University of Massachusetts Building Authority; U.S. Department of Labor/Women's Bureau; the newly formed Equity in the Trades Student Leadership Council; and career and technical high schools including Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Southeastern Regional Vocational-Technical High School, and Minuteman High School.

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