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NECA Boston/IBEW 103's JATC largest and most diverse in history

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Dorchester, MA NECA Boston Chapter and IBEW Local 103 reported that the 2019 first-year Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) of Greater Boston apprenticeship class is the largest, most diverse in the program's history. The incoming class is comprised of 409 apprentices and includes 362 men, 47 women, 155 minorities and 30 U.S. military veterans. The apprentices started their in-depth training on September 9th.

"NECA Boston, IBEW Local 103, and the JATC are proud to be at the forefront of electrical training and we are very enthusiastic to have an incoming apprenticeship class that has an influx of bright young men and women from diverse backgrounds who are committed to building outstanding careers in electrical and system technician construction," said Glenn Kingsbury, executive manager of NECA Boston Chapter.

In total, 1,393 apprentices are currently registered in the JATC Greater Boston training program – 1,262 are in the five-year Electrical Construction Program; and 131 apprentices are in the five-year Telecommunications Systems Technician Program. During the course of the training, apprentices undergo 10,000 hours of on-the-job training with experienced journeypersons or systems technicians, as well as 1,000 hours of intensive classroom instruction conducted by fully-qualified and certified trainers before graduating as fully-licensed journeymen and women or licensed systems technicians.

The Greater Boston JATC, created and co-sponsored by NECA Boston Chapter and IBEW Local 103, is recognized as among the highest-rated and most prestigious apprenticeship training programs in the country. Classes are conducted in the JATC's state-of-the-art headquarters and teaching facilities at 194 and 170 Freeport St. in Dorchester, on the IBEW Local 103 campus.

"Local 103, NECA Boston, and the JATC have collectively made a concerted effort to perform outreach to community groups to attract and retain qualified men and women to our program and the outstanding career opportunities the electrical industry can provide," said Chris Sherlock, training director of the JATC of Greater Boston. "Concurrently, we also regularly engage developers, general contractors, and community leaders to work together in placing our skilled tradespeople on the projects in communities in which they live and work."

“Having exceptional apprenticeship training is our priority,” said Lou Antonellis, business manager at Local 103. “It’s very important to keep Local 103 electricians and technicians on the cutting-edge of technological advances in our industry and our JATC staff does a fantastic job ensuring this is the case year in and year out. It’s equally important to have great diversity in our apprenticeship program. Today, Local 103 is proud to have more women, more people of color, and more Boston residents in our apprenticeship program than ever before.”

Apprentices are trained in specialty labs and shops, which simulate settings found in the field. The labs include high-voltage, primary and emergency power, electrical distribution, industrial controls, access and CCTV security systems shops and many others. The JATC facility also includes a ground-mounted solar array and wind turbine on which apprentices receive hands-on training in renewable energy installations. These facilities provide power back to the electrical grid and power to both JATC buildings.

Commenting on the focus on new technology, Sherlock said, “There’s been emphasis on renewable energy education the last decade and the JATC curriculum provides our apprentices and members with comprehensive training on solar, wind and fuel cell technologies.” In 2020, a 66kw battery storage system will be installed on the JATC campus and will store energy produced at night for use during the day. Training on this renewable technology will follow shortly thereafter.

Safety is at the heart of the electrical union’s training program, and the JATC of Greater Boston has a fully-outfitted Safety Training room where apprentices receive comprehensive training in all electrical safety standards employed in the workplace as mandated by OSHA and presented in NFPA 70E – Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace. Topics include arc flash, personal protective equipment (PPE), hazard evaluation, lockout and tagout procedures, fall protection, risk assessment, and many others.

“NECA Boston and IBEW Local 103 have a continuing commitment to develop the next generation of the most qualified, best trained electrical construction professionals who will be working on our region’s state-of-the-art facilities, renovating our historic buildings, and rebuilding our infrastructure,” said Kingsbury.