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## **BAC Local 3 holds Apprentice Contest for tile setting, bricklaying and restoration/waterproofing**

August 13, 2008 - Construction Design & Engineering

The International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Local 3 MA, ME, & NH recently held their annual Apprentice Contest at the BAC Local 3 Training Center. Three separate masonry craft contests were held simultaneously. Thirty five competitors from the various masonry crafts, all apprentice members of BAC Local 3, competed in the bricklaying, tile-setting and masonry restoration/waterproofing contests. These apprentices are working in various stages of their apprenticeship throughout the area.

The bricklaying contestants were required to build a brick and block cavity wall. The brickwork included two external corners, a soldier course of brick at the base of the wall, a stack bond orientation at the end of the wall and a rowlock cap to finish the top of the wall. The contestants' walls were judged for level, plumb and overall accuracy.

The tile-setting contest had the apprentice tile setters preparing a wall to accept ceramic tile. They then installed a combination of 4 1/4" x 4 1/4" ceramic tiles in various colors with a band of tile cut in a diamond shape. After completion of the wall, the apprentices were required to build a mud pan that included a 1/2" pitch to the drain using 2"x 2" mosaic tile on a mud floor. The mosaic tile had to be cut precisely to fit around the circular drain. The judges rated the contestants on overall layout, alignment, proper pitch as well as the precision of any cut tile.

The restoration contest required the apprentices to compete using a multitude of skills. The contestants worked on a mock-up where they were required to point existing brickwork, replace flashing and brick over lintels, patch stone, and caulk around windows.

These contests are held each year to spotlight and reward the hard work and training that the apprentices are exposed to during their apprenticeship with the BAC. All the apprentices are currently working under the supervision of expert journeymen masons until the end of their apprenticeship. Upon successful completion of the program, the apprentices will advance to become union journeymen craftworkers in the various masonry crafts.

The IMI/BAC Apprenticeship program offers wonderful career opportunities to people who appreciate working with their hands. Although the work is difficult, it is very rewarding as the apprentices take great pride in their skills. The apprenticeship program starts with a 10-week pre-job training course and also requires 5,000 hours of on the job training under the watchful eyes of veteran journeymen masons. The 5,000 hours generally takes a period of 3 to 4 years to complete. Apprentices are also required to attend classes one night a week from September to May throughout their apprenticeship. As they advance in the program, all apprentices are required to pass competency tests at various times before proceeding to the next level.

The IMI/BAC's arduous training required of all apprentices to become union journeymen masonry craftworkers assures architects, contractors and owners that quality masonry craftsmanship is alive

and thriving in New England.

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