

U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Employment and Training
Washington, D.C. 20210



DATE: AUGUST 23, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT
BOARD CHAIRS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT
BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
BUSINESS RELATIONS GROUP STATE LIAISONS
REGIONAL BAT DIRECTORS

FROM: EMILY STOVER DEROCCO

SUBJECT: SKILLED TRADES INITIATIVE

Over the past several months, Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao and I have met with leaders from the construction industry and labor unions representing the commercial, residential and transportation sectors of the industry, and we have also met workers while touring training centers, at skill competitions and apprenticeship graduations. These opportunities have provided a forum to learn more about the industry, the workforce, and the impact the men and women of the skilled trades are having on the national economy and in local communities across the country.

Here are some facts about the industry: construction now employs over 6.9 million workers; there will be nearly 1 million new jobs created in the industry by 2012 – an increase of 15% - and more jobs will continue to open up as the men and women of the Baby Boom generation retire. With a gross domestic product of over \$480 billion last year, construction is one of our nation's vital industries. Despite this good news, industry leaders have informed us of serious challenges they are facing in recruiting and retaining new workers.

To help meet this particular challenge, you and I as leaders of the public workforce investment system have an opportunity to establish new partnerships with industry, labor and educators to help connect job seekers to employment and training opportunities that are available in construction. We are doing that on a national level through the "*Skills to Build America's Future Initiative*," which is designed to build national awareness about the opportunities that a career in construction and design/construction management has to offer. A new web-site, www.careervoyages.gov, will house all information related to the initiative, including information on how to connect with local industry and labor organizations and One Stop Career Centers.

Secretary Chao and I invite you to join us as partners in this important initiative. You can start by taking

five simple actions:

1. Make a link to www.careervoyages.gov available on computer banks at One Stop Career Centers.
2. Display information and products related to the Skills to Build America's Future Initiative that we will be distributing to you.
3. Establish relationships with representatives from construction industry sponsored apprenticeship and training programs, associations, labor unions and companies.
4. Provide information about construction industry training and apprenticeship programs to people who come into your offices in response to learning about the Skills to Build America's Future Initiative.
5. Participate in any state-wide or industry-led "Skilled Trades Appreciation Day/Week," activities.

We will be highlighting this important Initiative on **Monday, September 6, -- Labor Day – 2004** at the PNC Park in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at "Skilled Trades Day," where the Pirates will be playing the Milwaukee Brewers. Throughout the game, the Initiative and the web-site, www.careervoyages.gov will be promoted at the game and in the media. We anticipate that this will begin to drive job seekers and employers to their local One Stop Career Center to learn how they can connect with job training and employment opportunities, as well as new pools of workers.

A further description of the initiative and more information on how you can participate is attached. We will keep you informed of all upcoming events and activities, especially any that will be occurring in your region of the country.

Please e-mail any questions or requests for additional information to skillstobuild@dol.gov. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you on this exciting initiative.

Sincerely,



Emily Stover DeRocco
Assistant Secretary of Labor

Enclosures