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MCAEF Awards Help Grow Student Interest in the Industry

The MCA's Education Foundation promotes careers in construction to schools through their Construction Trades Awareness Awards program. These \$1,500 grants are awarded to middle schools and high schools across the state for projects and activities aimed at further trades education. Typically, the MCA asks that schools involve a local MCA member when using the funds, and promote their projects during Construction Week, which is held the first week of October each year.

Michelle Cohens of Sletten Construction in Great Falls is President of the MCA's Education Foundation Board. "Each year, we are excited to be able to provide some funds to schools looking to partner with us," said Cohens. "The goal is to be able to do what we can to help CTE teachers provide a solid base of learning when it comes to construction and trades education."

In 2024, the MCA Education Foundation awarded fifteen financial awards totaling \$22,500 to Montana schools and districts. Schools earning Construction Trades Awareness Grants were:

- Belt Public School – using the funds to help purchase a laser engraver and tool chests for the school's shop classrooms.
- Broadview School FFA – funds will be used for purchasing welding equipment and a metal lathe to expand the metal shop stations.
- Cut Bank Schools – the school will be expanding its construction trades curriculum.
- East Helena High School – money will be spent to host an invitational welding competition with schools from across Montana.
- Fairfield High School – will be taking the Building Trades classrooms on field trips to Great Falls and Belgrade to see MCA member projects.
- Florence Carlton High School – the school will be getting students from the metal shop welding certifications and purchasing new shop equipment.
- Hellgate High School (Missoula) – will be taking students on MCA member field trip visits, as well as hosting workshops at the school led by MCA members.
- Manhattan High School – funds will be used to purchase construction shop equipment including ladders, nail guns, saws, and PPE equipment.
- Clean Energy Workforce Coalition (Missoula) – working on creating a woman-focused Apprenticeship Readiness Program to build skilled tradeswomen.
- Paris Gibson Education Center (Great Falls) – will be purchasing a laser level to teach construction students site layout and prep work.

- Sentinel High School (Missoula) – the school is building a state-of-the-art welding and fabrication shop; funds will help purchase equipment.
- Shelby Public Schools – students in the mechanical systems class will be constructing a shop storage shed, complete with wiring.
- Three Forks Schools – students in the construction class will be building an outdoor cooking space and greenhouse for the school’s culinary program.
- Truth Trades and Technology, Whitefish – teaching students to become trades instructors; funds used to help students get teaching endorsements and OSHA training cards.
- Whitefish High School – funds will be used to start a SkillsUSA chapter, where students will focus on woodworking, welding, and fabrication.

The Montana Contractors Association, a chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), is a trade organization representing commercial, industrial and public works construction firms. Our Mission is simple: Working together, we advocate for quality contractors, people, and projects by providing value and opportunity for our members. Learn more at www.mtagc.org.

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