

Craft professions  
Know the skills  
that pay the bills

Made in the USA  
How you can  
make an impact

The skills gap  
What it really means  
for Americans

**MEDIA  
PLANET**

# EMPLOYING AMERICA



## EMPOWERING AMERICA'S TRADESMEN

**Mike Rowe, TV Host of Discovery Channel's  
*Dirty Jobs*, tackles his dirtiest job of all — closing the skilled  
labor gap and getting America back to work.**

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# CHALLENGES

There appears to be a surplus of jobs waiting to be filled and not enough people trained to fill them. Yet our employment rate continues to hover around 7.7 percent, and America's jobless are becoming increasingly frustrated and scared. **Meet what has become known as "the skills gap."**

## Reinvigorating the trades

**D**irty Jobs is not really a show about dirt. It's a show about people, and over the years I've learned a lot from people that wake up clean and go home dirty. I have learned for instance, that a single fire ant can bite you multiple times, especially in places where a man does not wish to be bitten. I've learned that widths are more hazardous than heights, and that short cuts lead to long delays. I've also learned that a good plumber is now more expensive than a good shrink, and a lot harder to find.

This whole Skills Gap thing is real, and it's getting bigger every day. In Alabama, half the skilled workforce is north of fifty, and retiring fast. For every four workers that leave, only one enters to replace them. And according to a 60 Minutes story last month, there are now three million skilled jobs that American companies simply cannot fill. Three million. What's up with that?

### Finding solutions

I'm not qualified to offer a solution. I'm just a TV Host. On cable. But I can tell you that my biggest revela-

tion on Dirty Jobs was seeing firsthand the degree to which our country has become disconnected from skilled labor. Again and again, in all 50 states, I've heard the same thing from hundreds of workers. They all talk of a "disconnect" between the work they do, and the society that benefits from it. I think maybe they're on to something.

Consider what we reward in our culture today. Dancing with the Stars is still the number one show on television. The Four Hour Work Week is still a national bestseller. Vocational training classes have evaporated from our high schools, and careers that don't require a 4-year degree are now considered "alternative." We have actively discouraged an entire generation of students from working with their hands, and turned a whole category of viable careers into "vocational consolation prizes." I hate to sound like a scold, but really, is it any wonder that our kids aren't lining up to learn a useful skill?

### Closing the gap

The Skills Gap is not a mystery; it's a reflection of what we value. And if we're serious about closing the gap, we need to reconnect with that part of our workforce. We need to rein-



**Mike Rowe**  
Creator/Host, Dirty Jobs;  
CEO, mikeroweWORKS

vigorate the trades. We need to confront the stigmas and stereotypes associated with skilled labor, and let go of this absurd belief that a four-year degree is the only viable way to acquire useful knowledge.

Twelve million unemployed Americans is a scary thing. But three million available jobs that can't be filled...well, that's really scary. Because that means we're not dealing with a lack of opportunity. We're dealing with a lack of desire.

### Share my concern

Skilled labor needs a PR campaign. A big one. Because closing The Skills Gap is not about creating jobs. The jobs are already there. It's about us preserving our infrastructure, expanding our manufacturing base, enhancing our ability to compete globally, and bolstering our national security. If you share my addiction to paved roads, affordable energy, cheap food, and indoor plumbing, you should also share my concern.

Because this whole Skills Gap thing is real. And the first step is a doozy.

**MIKE ROWE**

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### WE RECOMMEND



**President Bill Clinton**  
on getting America back to work

PAGE 4

## MEDIA PLANET

EMPLOYING AMERICA,  
1ST EDITION, MARCH 2013

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**Distributed within:**  
USA Today, March 2013  
This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve USA Today or its Editorial Departments.

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**Question 1:**  
Why should someone consider a career in the skilled trades?

**Tradesmen are the** backbone of our great nation; they keep America running strong. They put a roof over our heads, make sure our lights stay on, keep our water flowing, and so much more. Stable, well-paying jobs are plentiful for skilled tradesmen as the nation's recovery boosts construction starts, remodeling and repair.

**Being a skilled** craft professional provides limitless opportunity to build a rewarding future in one of the largest industries in the world. This industry allows an individual to begin as a craft professional and advance to supervision, management and even company owner. The opportunities are bound only by an individual's ambition and motivation.

**Skilled Trades is** where "it" all comes together. A skilled trades person brings to life what Science, Technology, Engineering and Math shows us is possible. Using critical hands-on experience and knowledge, skilled trades literally builds the world around us. From our homes to highly advanced construction equipment. Building, Troubleshooting, Repairing, and Maintaining for the future.

**Put simply, skilled** trade careers offer big opportunity and big salaries. If you want to be in a field that is in demand, where the starting pay is better than most post-college salaries and the prospect for growth is great, learn a skill. That said, most of us are looking for more than a paycheck. We want a career that's rewarding and meaningful. What could be more meaningful than building the cities of the future or constructing the infrastructure that keeps America running?

**Question 2:**  
What is your industry doing to help close the skilled labor gap?

**Frankly, our industry** is not doing enough. So, IRWIN Tools initiated National Tradesmen Day on the 3rd Friday of every September to celebrate America's real working hands. We hope that National Tradesmen Day will help our country develop a better appreciation for skilled tradesmen, leading to more people considering promising careers in skilled trades.

**As the shortage** of skilled workers becomes more pronounced, owners and contractors continue to elevate their commitment to supporting and implementing sustainable workforce development programs. Industry and education engagement is on the rise delivering successful training programs at both the secondary and post-secondary levels that offer industry-recognized and portable credentials.

**In direct response** to customer needs, Caterpillar and our dealers created a network of educational partnerships at local training programs granting Associates Degrees in Applied Science at 21 locations in 10 countries. This global program, known as ThinkBIG, focuses on developing advanced dealer technician graduates by utilizing highly integrated learning and work internship rotations.

**Go Build America** was created specifically to address America's growing skilled labor gap with a focus on industrial and commercial construction. Endorsed by the Construction Users Roundtable, Go Build partners with states for localized, integrated recruiting programs aimed at inspiring the next generation of tradesmen to step up and build America.

**Question 3:**  
What is one message you would like to get across for those looking to choose the right career path?

**As tradesmen retire,** jobs in the skilled trades will be plentiful since there's only one qualified person available for every three who retire. There are tremendous entrepreneurial and business ownership opportunities for aspiring tradesmen. IRWIN hopes people —especially young people — will consider career opportunities in the skilled trades, and explore education through local community colleges.

**Obtaining skills through** education and training, especially when tied to industry needs, is essential in preparing for the many career opportunities available. Career and Technical Education offers a pathway to a rewarding future with the same opportunities for success and achievement as pursuing a university degree. Unfortunately, not enough young people or their parents are aware of these opportunities.

**As a global** company, we need skills that stretch across many disciplines. Jobs in technical and skilled trade fields offer a rewarding career in terms of salary and job satisfaction. Whether you spend your career as a skilled trade person or use it as a stepping-stone to other opportunities, the choice is yours.

**It's tough for** young people to think about the long-term impact of their career choice. My advice would be to think about your earning and growth potential over the span of your career. As a skilled tradesman, you'll start earning money faster and be eligible for promotion earlier than in most careers. That means more earnings over the span of your career and ultimately more financial security for your family.

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IN SKILLED  
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AND A GOOD  
PAYCHECK TOO

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# MEET THE UNSUNG HERO OF YOUR MORNING COMMUTE.



Did you drive on a road today? Sure you did. To an office building? Probably. Well, without people in the skilled trades, none of it would have been possible. We're running out of skilled tradespeople, and believe it or not, that's going to affect us all.

Caterpillar and Cat® dealers are proud to help find, train and employ America's talented skilled workforce. If you support skilled workers, or want to be one yourself, view a video message from Mike Rowe at [iSupportSkills.com](http://iSupportSkills.com).



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INSPIRATION



DON'T MISS!



**President Bill Clinton**  
Founder of the William J. Clinton Foundation  
PHOTO: ROBERT ALSWAG

sense of self-worth as useful, independent, free people. I earned my first money mowing lawns when I was twelve. At thirteen I worked in a small grocery store and set up a used comic book stand on the side. By the time I finished high school, I'd made a little money doing seven other things. By the end of law school, seven more. Over the last four decades, nine more, not counting my foundation and other philanthropic work. Most of these early jobs didn't last long. I didn't like them all. But I learned something in every job—about the work, dealing with people, and giving employers and customers their money's worth.

**"...no matter who you are or where you're from, if you work hard and play by the rules, you'll have the freedom and opportunity to pursue your own dreams..."**

I came of age believing that, no matter what happened, I would always be able to support myself. It became a crucial part of my identity and drove me to spend a good portion of my adult life trying to give other people the chance to do the same thing. It's heartbreaking to see so many people trapped in a web of enforced idleness, deep debt, and gnawing self-doubt. We have to change that. And we can.

*This excerpt from Back To Work by Bill Clinton is reprinted with permission by Knopf.*

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Back to work

I wrote this book because I love my country and I'm concerned about our future. As I often said when I first ran for President in 1992, America at its core is an idea—the idea that no matter who you are or where you're from, if you work hard and play by the rules, you'll have the freedom and opportunity to pursue your own dreams and leave your kids a country where they can chase theirs.

That idea no long seems achievable to the more than 15 million people who are unemployed or working part-time who need full-time jobs to support themselves and their families. And it must seem downright unreal to the growing number of men and women who've been out of work for more than six months and can't even get interviews for job openings, as if they're somehow to blame for becoming casualties of the worst recession since the Depression.

Work is about more than making a living, as vital as that is. It's fundamental to human dignity, to our

# MANUFACTURING IN AMERICA

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If every American were to spend just **\$64 a year** on products made in the USA... *(\$5.33/month) (\$1.33/week) (\$0.18/day)*

**200,000 new jobs would be created.**



More than 80% of U.S. consumers stated that they are willing to pay more for products labeled "Made in USA" than for those labeled "Made in China."

Source: BCG Perspectives



Manufacturing supports an estimated 17.2 million jobs in the U.S.—about one in six private sector jobs. Nearly 12 million Americans (or 9 percent of the workforce) are employed directly in manufacturing.

National Association of Manufacturers

85% of U.S. and 82% of Chinese said that they "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement that they "feel better about" the quality of items labeled "Made in USA."

BCG Perspectives



A majority of Americans believe that American-Made goods are better quality than products made in...

Mexico (83%), India (82%) and China (78%)

Harris Poll

**J**osh Miller can tell you it's no easy feat to live a life built solely on American-made products, because the documentary filmmaker recently spent a month traveling the country doing just that. Not surprisingly, he soon discovered that phoning home on an American-made gadget was impossible, but "Made in the USA: The 30 Day Journey" developed into something more than a frustrating quest to buy local.

"We initially focused on what I could and couldn't do, but the film evolved into a story about the American dream and what we can do to change the course of this country," says Miller.

**Consumer preferences and power**

There is certainly consumer demand for American-made products, as evidenced by a new Consumer Reports National Research Center survey that found, given a choice between identical products made in the U.S. or

abroad, 78 percent of Americans would prefer to buy the American product.

It's a phenomenon Margarita Mendoza has seen firsthand as founder of Made in America Movement, a non-profit advocating for American-made manufacturers, and she's hopeful the statistics do not amount to a passing fad.

"Consumers should be concerned about buying American-made, not just because the products are safer and of higher quality, but because doing so creates jobs and minimizes our carbon footprint," says Mendoza. "We need to educate ourselves and children about this so it becomes a cultural lifestyle, and not a trend."

Michael Araten, CEO of American-made toy manufacturer K'Nex, says his primary customer began showing increased interest in locally produced products around 2006 when safety scares prompted "moms to care more about standards the U.S. has in place."

Even big box stores have noticed consumer demand for

American-made goods. In January, Walmart announced it would increase sourcing of U.S.-made products by \$50 billion over the next decade. It's an amount Mendoza says is a "drop in the bucket" for the retail giant, but also "a step that is good for the country."

**Committed companies**

While American-made is a small component of some businesses, it's a fundamental tenet for others. B.J. Nickol, co-founder of All American Clothing Company, says it's the principle his company was founded upon, because manufacturing and buying American-made products "keeps the skills, jobs and tax base necessary to support our communities."

Nickol says it's proven to be a successful strategy, as well. "We've seen double digit growth in three years, and we'll probably double up on jobs this year."

It can be cost-effective, too, and Araten says when they moved manufacturing to America, they eliminated "hid-

den costs in the supply chain like shipping, double man-agement and time."

And, like Nickol, he says being American-made has become a key differentiator for their products, in part because, "people are realizing that choosing to buy American helps their community."

**Future success**

While acknowledging that global trade is absolutely necessary, Miller says his "Made in the USA" experience suggests the American dream may rely on ensuring the nation "is strong enough to take care of our own." In his opinion, that means bringing business back inside U.S. borders.

"Manufacturing has been our country's lifeblood. The decisions we make today will determine our future; we need to reenergize and put Americans back to work."

JILL SMITS

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QUESTION & ANSWER



**Mike Rowe**  
Creator/Host, Dirty Jobs;  
CEO, mikeroweWORKS  
PHOTO: MICHAEL SEGAL

**What's the biggest misconception around today's understanding of blue collar work?**

First, we've got to get passed the color of collars. Blue and white collar work are not opposites - they're two sides of the same coin. The gap between blue and white collar is the same gap into which three million good jobs have fallen. That's really what the skills gap is - a giant hole that we dug with our perceptions of what it means to have a "good job."

**You've said we need to look at unemployment numbers differently. What do you mean?**

I mean that 12 million unemployed people doesn't necessarily mean 12 million too few jobs. It could just as easily mean 12 million too many employees. Not too many people - too many people trained to think like employees. Fostering entrepreneurship is no less important than "Creating Jobs."

**You've bristled at the suggestion that you are a spokesman for "blue collar workers?" Why?**

Because no one asked me to speak on their behalf. I support the trades because my life has been made immeasurably better by tradesmen. Truth is, blue collar workers don't need spokesmen, they need fans. They need a few hundred million Americans to see them for what they are - a critical part of our workforce that makes civilized life possible for the rest of us.

**What's next? Is there a Dirty Jobs follow up?**

Dirty Jobs mattered because it offered up a new set of role models in the age of So You Think You Can Dance. I'd like to do that again by profiling more people who combine passion and entrepreneurship with a willingness to work their butts off. I call them Yankee Rebels - the industriousness of the North combined with the independence of the South. Sound like a show?

**What can we do to empower the next generation of tradesmen?**

We need to address the stigma that has developed over time and get kids and their parents reacquainted with the value and importance of skilled trades. We started mikeroweWORKS to give hard work a PR campaign and the MRW Foundation to provide scholarships to people that need help to explore a career in the trades.

**Is a college education worth it?**

Great topic. Bad question. Education is like fitness. Both are important. However, an expensive gym membership is not the only way to get fit and an expensive four-year degree is not the only way to get smart.

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NEWS



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600,000

Current number of high-skilled manufacturing jobs that will remain unfilled due to a lack of skilled labor.

Source: Go Build Alabama

Hiring for our Heroes

What could have been a blow to the U.S. manufacturing industry has turned into a perfect confluence of events. With the impending retirement of a large generation of workers and steady growth in manufacturing, the large pool of veterans transitioning from the armed forces to the workforce is just the solution.

Looking for work

The Manufacturing Institute recently reported 600,000 high-skilled manufacturing jobs are currently open in the U.S. largely due to a lack of skilled labor. And in the next four years one million veterans are expected to leave the armed forces and will be looking for work.

Employing patriotism

"Veterans present a huge untapped resource for the U.S. economy and for companies like GE," said Kris Urbauer, program manager of Veterans Initiatives at GE. "Beyond technical training, veterans take initiative, have the ability to focus on the mission, show up on time, have faced adversity and understand how to take instruction."

"Veterans have skills and experience that can prove to be vital to any business," said Tricia Pride-more, executive director of Georgia Governor Nathan Deal's Office of Workforce Development. "They know how to work in a structured environment, have experience in leadership roles, and tend to be very loyal to an organization."

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**Question:** If college is not for you, do you still have options for success?

**Answer:** Yes. Good ones, too.

# Unseen workforce, unknown opportunities

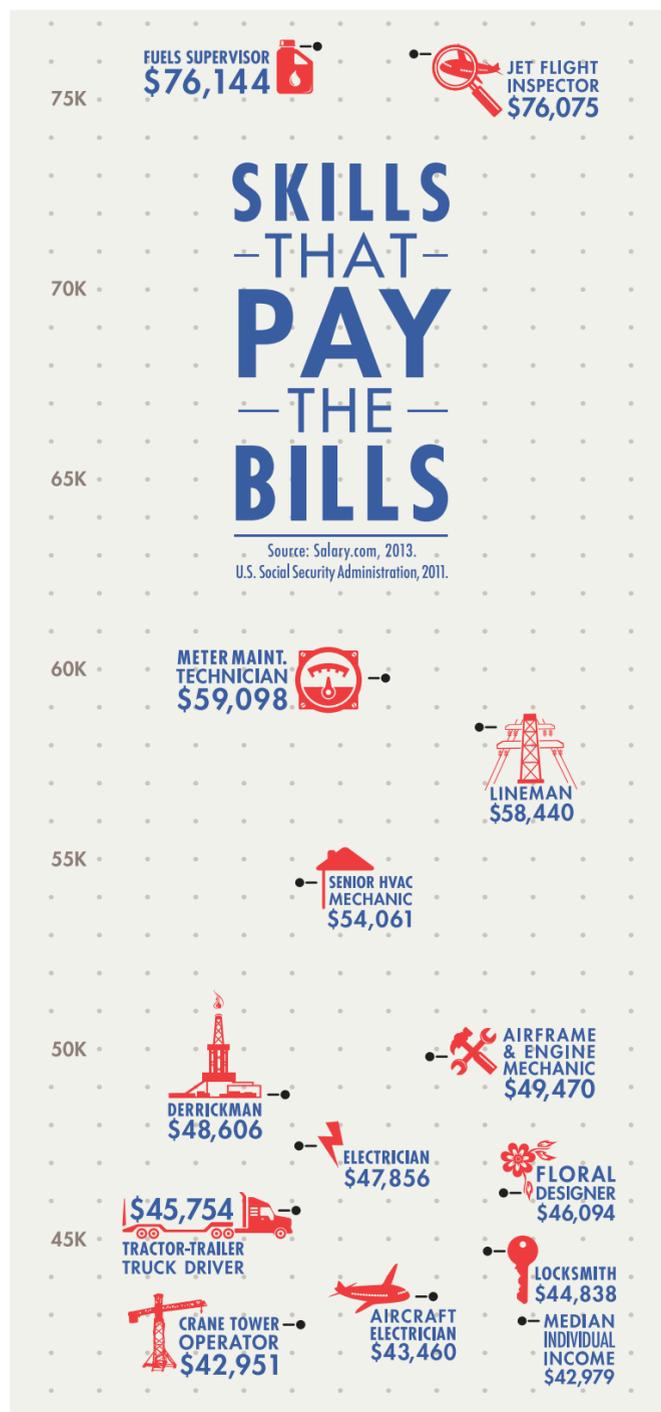
**Education is essential. But college is not the only place to get it.**

Our culture has been steeped in the message that a four-year degree is the best—maybe even the only—route to success. "This is simply not true," says Don Whyte, president of National Center for Construction Education and Research. There are plenty of opportunities for people who have the right skills and training. "Craft professionals require no less education than engineers or architects," says Whyte. "The difference is what kind of education and where they get it. The words "Craft professionals" are key here. The jobs Whyte is talking about are by no means unskilled labor jobs, but rather trades that require a particular skill set and dedication to a craft.

Paychecks

A college education may bring more prestige, but it does not always bring more opportunity or money. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, over half of bachelor's degree holders under age 25 were either unemployed or working at jobs that did not require degrees. "This is not totally due to the economy," explains Curt Weber, Vice President, IRWIN Tools. "People are not graduating with the right skill sets for good careers." According to recent surveys of hiring trends, more than 33 percent of employers have unfilled job openings because they can't find applicants with the skills necessary for the jobs. These are good-paying jobs, too. A report by Harvard Business School found that 27 percent of trained skilled professionals earn more than the average bachelor's degree recipient.

Nor does a college degree guarantee satisfaction. Boyd Worsham, Vice President of Haskell Construction, recruits high school students



for career opportunities with his company. Many of the students he mentors are interested in careers in the trades because they want to "be out doing something with their hands, making something that will last," he explains. Not all skilled jobs involve building and maintaining the infrastructure, however. Rudy Smith wanted to be a chef from the time he was a five years old. After high school, he attended the Culinary Arts Institute and is now a corporate chef for Unilever.

These jobs also offer opportunity for advancement. Worsham, for example, was recruited out of high school, began work as a carpenter for Haskell, and is now Vice President of the company.

OVER 50%

Number of graduates with a bachelor's degree under the age of 25 who are unemployed or in a job that doesn't require a degree.

Source: Go Build Alabama

Image problems

One reason for the gap between talent and opportunity in the trades is that skilled professionals have an image problem. Too many years of telling students, teachers, and parents that college was the only route to success has skewed more than our economy. "Somewhere along the way, we got away from appreciation and respect for skilled professionals," says Nick Pinchuk, CEO of Snap-on. "But", he says, "without these people vehicles don't roll, oil doesn't flow, planes don't fly, cities don't grow, freedom doesn't ring."

AVERY HURT  
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**Question:** When a generation of skilled workers retires, who will take over?

**Answer:** No one—unless we rapidly teach and train a new generation.

# Who will take over for retiring baby boomers?

The gap

The average skilled worker is 56 years old. By 2030, 79 million people will have retired while only 41 million new workers will enter the workforce. Most vacated jobs will require training and expertise our young people are not getting. Few high schools still teach industrial arts and few students are aware of the many excellent job opportunities available to those with the proper skills and education. It's a little-known problem, but organizations like SkillsUSA are out to change that.

Not your father's career

SkillsUSA, a non-profit partnership of the students, teachers, and industry leaders,

helps students prepare for careers in the trades or technical and skilled service fields—jobs in fields from computer-assisted drafting, carpentry, or machining to medical technology or culinary arts. "There are lots of really cool jobs out there," says Joseph Pietrantonio, vice president at Air Products, "but they require a core skill coupled with twenty-first century employability skills, such as the ability to work in teams, computer literacy, and good communications skills."

"What you learn in technical schools," says Nick Pinchuk, CEO of Snap-on, "focuses on particular aspects of the career you are preparing for, but also

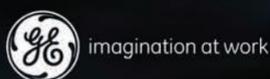
includes transferable skills as well, such as using computers and wielding complicated technical instruments."

"We are not promoting anything different [from other educational tracks]," says Don Whyte, president of National Center for Construction Education and Research, a SkillsUSA partner. "Many executives and business owners started in the crafts." With its national conference, championships, and mentoring programs, SkillsUSA gets students on the road to success—and hopefully to closing the job gap.

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Get Skills to Work is a new coalition developed by GE, in partnership with manufacturers, educators and digital leaders, to help veterans and employers translate military skills into advanced manufacturing careers.

Learn more at: [GetSkillstoWork.org](http://GetSkillstoWork.org)



Jenna Dolan GE Aviation, T700 Navy & Marine Corps Program Manager



GETSKILLSTOWORK

SOURCE: iStockphoto.com

# HERE'S TO **REAL** WORKING AMERICA'S **REAL** HANDS



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[www.nationaltradesmenday.com](http://www.nationaltradesmenday.com)



***“Fields like construction and manufacturing will provide nearly 8 million job openings, 2.7 million of which will require a post-secondary credential.”***

—“Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century;” Harvard Graduate School of Education; February, 2011.

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