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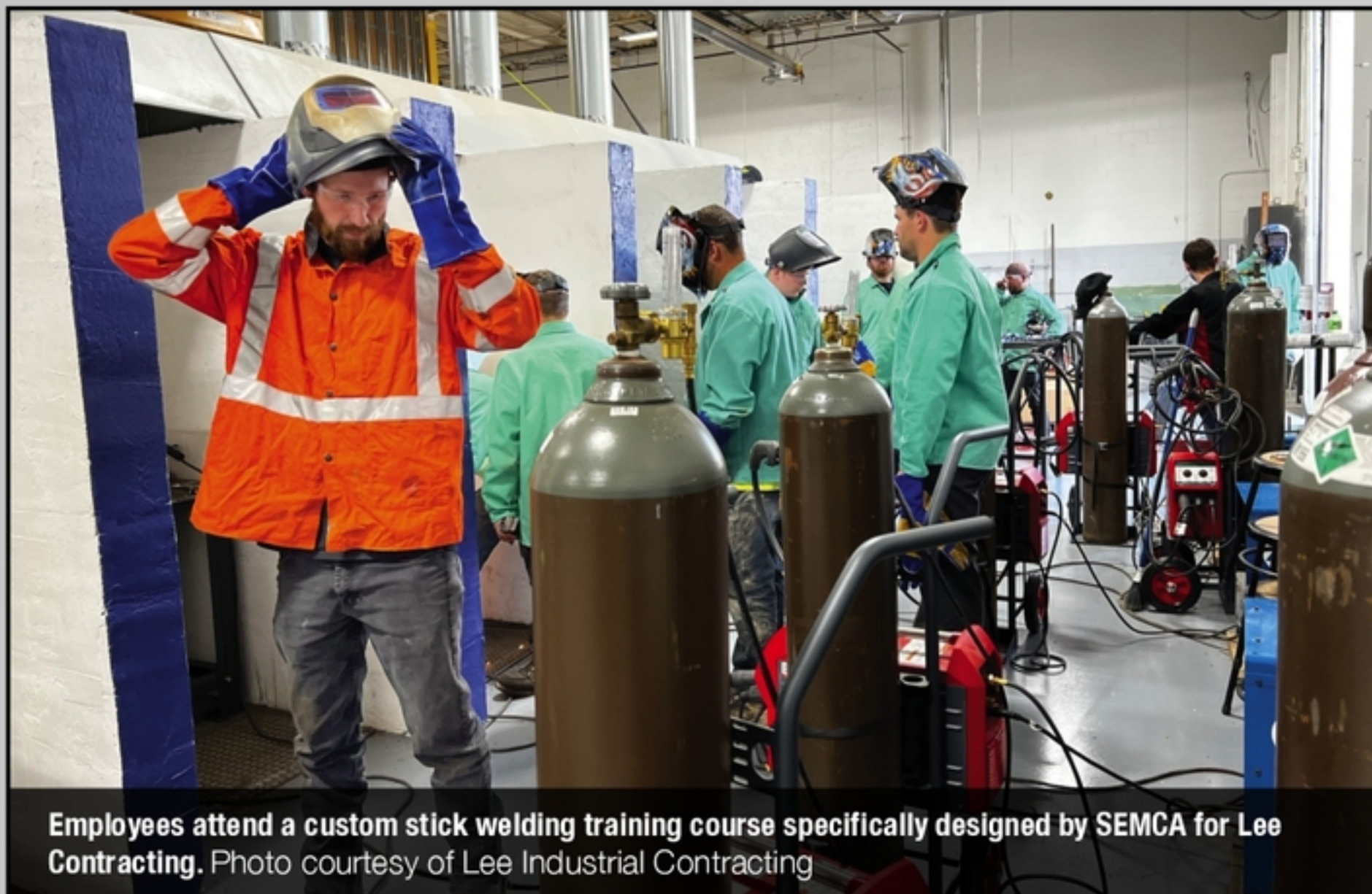
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Lee Contracting's Apprenticeship Program Partners with Schools to Encourage Skills in HVAC, Electrical, and More

By Alexis Seeley

Lee Industrial Contracting, an employee-owned heavy industrial contractor with headquarters in Pontiac, offers an apprenticeship program for all ages and experience levels to encourage people to join the construction industry.

Lee Industrial's apprenticeship program currently boasts 42 apprentices across the four U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship programs: electrical, HVAC installation, HVAC service, and pipefitting. These programs allow private companies to partner with community colleges and trade schools across Michigan. HVAC and pipefitting classroom instruction is taught at Macomb Community College and electrical instruction takes place at Southeast Michigan Construction Academy (SEMCA). In West Michigan, the apprentices attend Grand Rapids Community College.



Employees attend a custom stick welding training course specifically designed by SEMCA for Lee Contracting. Photo courtesy of Lee Industrial Contracting

"I joined the apprenticeship program because it's a great opportunity to advance my career and learn as much as I can about my trade. The classes I've taken so far have helped me understand some of the more scientific and technical aspects of my trade," HVAC apprentice Joshua Reppuhn said. "I've learned how to fabricate ductwork and braze copper. I've also learned the components of a refrigeration system and I'm currently enrolled in a welding class. I think programs like this are a great opportunity for apprentices. It shows how employers are willing to invest in their employees and help advance their careers." Reppuhn has been part of the HVAC apprenticeship program for one year and a Lee Contracting employee for more than three years.

Not only are the classes taught at community colleges, the schools work with companies like Lee Contracting to ensure the curriculums provided meet company requirements. Lee regularly reviews training content and communicates with the schools to ensure that the classroom training aligns with the needs of their clientele. Andy Barnum is the Director of Training at Lee Contracting and a Board Trustee for the Southeast Michigan Construction Academy (SEMCA). This position allows him to help drive the school's direction and connect with others in the industry.

"We are fortunate to have the opportunity to help so many people grow. It is truly an honor to assist these individuals in enriching their lives so that they may use this experience to reach their life goals," Barnum explained. "As some of our newest employee-owners, they are essential in safeguarding the future of our organization. They ensure we continue to deliver the high-quality results that are synonymous with our reputation in the industry."


Lee Contracting covers the costs for tuition and related books/materials, and program participants repay a minimal portion via payroll deductions to encourage program engagement. The company works with the MichiganWorks! office in Oakland County to help apprentices identify and utilize available government funds to offset some of the



Photo courtesy of Lee Industrial Contracting

Skills Gap grant funding, which awards up to (an additional) \$1,000 per person. Lee looks to secure even more grant funding for its apprentices in 2024.

“I have been in the apprenticeship for just shy of two years now, and I can say it is an outstanding opportunity,” said Matthew Pascoe, a pipefitting apprentice at Lee Contracting. He has been part of the pipefitting apprenticeship program for almost two years and a Lee Contracting employee for two years. “Both inside and out of the classroom, it has been a wave of new information for me, from fitting all kinds of pipe and welding, to learning proper code and strategies,” Pascoe explained. “It has been a true learning experience. Employers who offer opportunities like this to their employees show a desire to create skilled workers and a drive for quality on their job sites.”

Founded in 1989 by Ed Lee, Lee Industrial Contracting is a turn-key heavy industrial contractor that handles projects in the automotive, energy, heavy industry, and aerospace sectors. 

costs associated with both on-the-job training (OJT) and classroom training or related technical instruction (RTI).

In fact, Lee Contracting’s apprenticeship program has received \$3,500 per apprentice from the GoingPro

Grant Fund since 2022. The goal of the GoingPro Grant Fund is “to elevate the perception of professional trades and showcase the opportunities in a variety of rewarding careers.” This year, Lee Contracting also received Closing the



First Aid, CPR, AED

Every job site is required to have someone certified in first aid. Are you in compliance? This course teaches the principles of basic life support for adults. The course details hands-only CPR, first aid, choking in adults, signs, and symptoms of heart attack and stroke, and treatment for shock. It explains how AEDs work, and why they are a critical part of emergency cardiac care. Certification is valid for a period of two years. (1 session)

March 19, 2024
8:00 am - 12:00pm

\$125/Member
\$150/Guest



AIA Contract Forms

It is absolutely vital for a contractor to choose an unbiased contract that apportions risks and responsibilities in a fair and balanced manner. The A201™-2007, General Conditions of the Contract for Construction is the keystone document in a majority of projects that set forth a contractor’s roles and responsibilities on a construction project. The A201 is incorporated by reference into other contract documents with owners, architects and subcontractors and puts a contractor on solid legal footing with the owner of a project by balancing risks and responsibilities equitably. This seminar will instruct those who negotiate and manage the use of AIA contracts, including design-build, construction management, and subcontract agreements.

March 20, 2024
8:30am - 12:00pm

\$157/Member
\$204/Guest

