

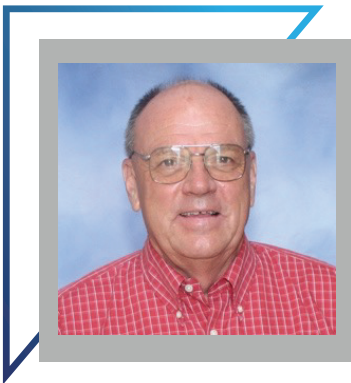


TRADES ACADEMY

Building Skills For A Lifetime

SUCCESS STORY Guam Contractors Association

Guam Contractors Association creates the GCA Trades Academy to enhance the skills of the local Guam construction workforce



“That was a big investment ... I’ve got to give credit to the GCA board and the three companies. They saw the wisdom in doing this (creating the GCA Trades Academy) ... Otherwise we were never going to have a good training program.”

— Bill Beery, GCA Trades Academy Board of Trustees

BUILDING GUAM TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW. The Guam Contractors Association (GCA), founded in 1959, represents about 500 member contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers, equipment lessors and other businesses related to the construction industry on Guam. GCA is a non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting quality workmanship and safety in all aspects of the industry. The association also hosts workforce development events including Construction Warriors, Pizza, Pop and Power Tools, and Careers in Construction Week in October to encourage local youth to consider a career in the construction industry.

A SHORTAGE OF SKILLED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS IN GUAM. In the early 2000s, there was a shortage of skilled local workers in Guam. The need for skilled locals was evident, but the GCA apprenticeship program faced challenges scheduling classes and causing difficulties in sustaining the program. The construction industry needed flexibility, including classes offered in the evenings and weekends.

“For many years Guam suffered from lack of a skilled workforce in trade areas of plumbing, electrical, HVAC, carpentry and other construction and service trades.

In the early 2000s, there was a shortage of skilled local workers in Guam ... The construction industry needed flexibility and classes to be offered in the evenings and weekends after work hours.

Guam’s trade educational opportunities were few and lacked some attributes much needed to grow and foster Guam’s workforce,” said Monty McDowell, founding trustee, GCA Trades Academy Board of Trustees.

The GCA Trades Academy was established to provide a nationally recognized industry skills training center (credentialed by NCCER), support U.S. Department of Labor recognized apprenticeship training programs, and to support the skilled labor needs of construction contractors and related industries doing business on Guam. It strives to improve skills and empower the region’s workforce. Classes are open to the public and to all abilities.

THE NEED

GCA required an apprenticeship program that was flexible enough to meet the specific demands of the construction industry.

THE SUCCESS

More than 5,000 people have been trained and more than 50,000 training modules completed.

"We're going to have to do this ourselves"

In 2006, John Robertson and Bill Beery, directors of the GCA board, recognized the need for a sustainable training program.

"We wanted a significant number of well qualified [local] tradesmen available," said John Robertson, founding chairman, GCA Trades Academy Board of Trustees.

"I said, 'We're going to have to do it ourselves,'" remarked Beery.

GCA decided to develop the GCA Trades Academy. Three GCA member companies, AmOrient, Watts Constructors, and Perez Bros., each contributed \$10,000. GCA provided \$200,000 for two years to incubate the GCA Trades Academy until it was able to stand on its own. GCA created a Board of Trustees, hired Bert Johnston to lead the initiative with James Martinez, GCA president. The approach shifted from traditional apprenticeship to modular craft training, making it more accessible and flexible for participants. The GCA Trades Academy was incorporated in September 2006, as a separate 501(c)3 entity, and held its first classes in October 2006 during Careers in Construction week.

THE FOUNDERS

GCA helped start the GCA Trades Academy with a two year investment of \$200,000. Three companies contributed \$10,000 each



THE FOUNDING BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John Robertson, chairman
Greg Perez, vice chairman Monty McDowell, treasurer
Bill Beery, secretary Graeme Ridley, member

A big, successful investment in the future

"I've got to give credit to the GCA board and the three companies. That was a big investment," said Beery "They saw the wisdom of doing this. Otherwise, we were never going to have a good training program."

Deciding to invest in the Trades Academy proved successful. More than 5,000 participants have been trained and more than 50,000 NCCER module completions recorded on students' transcripts. The GCA Trades Academy offers training in carpentry, plumbing, electrical, safety, and project management.

The GCA Trades Academy has designed training programs for private sector companies and the Government of Guam including Department of Education, Environmental Protection Administration, Department of Public Works, Department of Labor, and Department of Corrections. Class offerings were



The new GCA Trades Academy's Tiyan Training Facility, opened June 30, 2021. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration granted \$3.8 million out of a total budget of \$4.75 million to purchase and renovate two buildings. The completed new facility consists of 29,000 square-feet of multipurpose rooms, offices, and open-air shop space. The balance was a Bank of Guam loan.

expanded to include certification programs in soil erosion and sediment control, crane operation and concrete.

Get Skilled. Build Something. Be Proud.

Ready to improve your skills? Contact the GCA Trades Academy at 671-647-4842 to improve your skills or to create a training program for your workforce.

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