



For Immediate Release

## **UA 400 Pipe Trades and Mechanical Contractors Association of Wisconsin Hosts 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Women in the Pipe Trades Open House**

**Kaukauna, WI (March 14, 2024)** — UA 400 Pipe Trades and the [Mechanical Contractors Association](#) (MCA) hosted its Women in the Pipe Trades Open House on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at the UA 400 Training Center in Kaukauna, Wisconsin in conjunction with Women in Construction Week. The event featured a one-hour panel discussion with four women working in the industry followed by a question-and-answer session. The panelists included Krista Ebbens Tahlman, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary – Executive Vice President of HR at [Ahern](#), Laura Ceja, Training and Outreach Representative with the [United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices in the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry](#); Sherri Peeters, Safety Manager for [EGI Mechanical Inc.](#), Grace Tollar, UA 400 member and second-year plumbing apprentice at [Bassett Mechanical](#). Doug Dokey, UA 400 Business Manager served as the moderator and Jeff Gaecke, Executive Vice President of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Wisconsin welcomed the guests. The panelists shared their experiences and offered advice for women considering a career in the pipe trades. More than 100 guests toured the training facility, viewed training demonstrations by UA 400 tradeswomen and met with UA 400 signatory contractors. Each guest received a pink T-shirt to commemorate the event.

“Local 400, like the rest of the country, is experiencing a worker shortage,” said UA 400 Business Manager Doug Dokey. “Getting women into a trade that has been traditionally a male-dominated workforce only makes sense since women make up 51 percent of the area’s population. Plus, with advances in technology this is a career that women can excel in.”

UA 400 has experienced rapid growth in the numbers of women members from eight women in 2021 to 28 women in February 2024. Aspiring UA 400 tradeswomen must complete a rigorous five-year apprenticeship that is fully paid to hone their technical proficiencies. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), women working in construction numbered 10.9 percent of the entire U.S. workforce in 2022. While women in the U.S. earn on average 82.9 percent of what men make, the gender pay gap is significantly smaller in construction occupations, with women earning on average 95.5 of what men make.

UA 400 signatory contractors at the event, representing the Mechanical Contractors Association (MCA), included [Tweet/Garot Mechanical](#), [Hurckman Mechanical Industries, Inc.](#), Bassett Mechanical, [Team Industries Inc.](#), [AZCO](#) and [JF Ahern Company](#). Businesses that provided door prizes included [Miller Welders](#), Fleet Farm, Kwik Trip, Club Car Wash, Midwest Workwear, Redwing Shoes, Anthem, Scheels, Cabelas, and Ferguson.

“Besides the incredible training you receive at no cost, a career in the pipe trades provides you with a wage and benefits package that allows you to do the things you enjoy outside of work,” said Krista Ebbens Tahlman, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary at Ahern. “The wages and benefits offered are very competitive. They can help you support yourself and your family and realize your non-work goals, whether that be home ownership, enjoying hobbies, travel, or other things.”

UA 400 apprenticeships provide classroom instruction with UA Certified Instructors and on-the-job training with a UA 400 signatory contractor alongside experienced UA journey workers and apprentices. Once an apprentice has completed her apprenticeship and becomes a journeyworker, the education and training doesn't stop. Continuing education opportunities are available to all UA members through specialized training and certification programs.

For more information on paid apprenticeships in plumbing HVAC-R, fabrication and steamfitting, contact [UA 400 Pipe Trades](#).

#### **About UA Local 400 Pipe Trades**

The UA 400 Pipe Trades, headquartered in Kaukauna, Wisconsin with an office in Fond du Lac, is comprised of approximately 2,500 members serving eighteen counties in Northeast Wisconsin. The organization is affiliated with the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of Plumbers and Pipefitters with an estimated 375,000 membership throughout the United States and Canada. The group's mission is to be the preferred choice for industries, employers and workers specializing in plumbing, pipefitting, HVACR service and fabrication as well as training for its members and qualified manpower to their 105 signatory contractors. The UA 400 takes pride in their partnerships and contributions to serve local communities with organizations such as Cerebral Palsy Telethon, Special Olympics, Rebuilding Together, Heat's On Project, Harbor House Domestic Abuse Program, Freedom House and Salvation Army. To keep up with the latest news and learn more about UA 400, visit <http://www.ua400.org> follow us on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

#### **For Media Inquiries Contact:**

Deb Fiebig  
920.257.8226  
[fiebig.deb@gmail.com](mailto:fiebig.deb@gmail.com)



**Photo Caption (L to R):** Jeff Gaecke, Executive Vice President of the Mechanical Contractors Association; Krista Ebbens Tahlman, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary/Executive Vice President of HR at Ahern; Grace Tollar, UA 400 member and second-year plumbing apprentice at Bassett Mechanical; Sherri Peeters, Safety Manager at EGI Mechanical Inc; and Doug Dokey, Business Manager at UA 400 Pipe Trades.



