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ICB/TABB Conference May 2-8 a success

Annual conference saw large turnout of sheet metal, air conditioning professionals

SAN JOSE, Calif. – “Meeting the needs of engineers and building owners” and “easy solutions to NFPA standards” were the buzzwords at the 2010 ICB/TABB Conference, held May 2-8 in San Jose, California.

More than 100 attendees rubbed elbows with experts from the sheet metal and air conditioning industry while participating in seminars and workshops designed to educate them on the benefits of becoming certified ICB/TABB professionals in today’s challenging marketplace. Some of the most popular classes included HVAC (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) Fire Life Safety Level 1 and 2 Technician; HVAC Fire Life Safety Level 1 Supervisor; Fume Hood Performance Testing Technician; and Building Commissioning Technician.

“This was by far the most successful ICB/TABB conference,” said John Hamilton, chief operating officer for ICB/TABB. “It’s because we met the industry’s needs. For example, workers and contractors have been letting us know they need a certification to help them meet NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) standards. The Fire Life Safety certification does just that. Now they have a place and a certifying body to enter that market and get that type of work done.”

Hamilton also said it was nice to see so many contractors represented. “They understand the value, especially in this economy. I’m getting a lot of feedback and it’s very positive. This was truly an educational conference.”

One of the biggest topics involved stairwell pressurization, an issue that is often overlooked according to Hamilton. In case of fire in commercial buildings, fans kick in to blow fresh air into the stairwells. If there’s not enough pressure, not all of the hazardous smoke gets cleared away. Too much pressure and people trying to exit the building can’t open the escape doors. That’s why it’s essential that the system is properly balanced to meet NFPA standards. Proper balancing can prevent a potentially-disastrous situation.

Chuck Holt, ICB/TABB’s director of research and education, said that the introductory fume hood class was one of the best-attended of the conference. Fume hoods are ventilation devices designed to limit exposure to hazardous fumes, vapors or dust. “The industry has been waiting for this certification for a long time,” Holt said. “They know this is a promising market. We are now working on developing a process for every technician to go through an actual ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers) 110 performance test, the quantitative evaluation process for fume containment. Those who pass the exam and satisfactorily perform the test will receive certification.”

The ICB/TABB conference also featured an awards ceremony. Casey Wilson-Williams received recognition for taking top honors in the International Sheet Metal Apprentice Competition in the TAB (Testing, Adjusting, Balancing) category. Wilson-Williams represents Sheet Metal Local #66 out of Tacoma, Wash. Mary Coffey of Williamstown, N.J. became the eighth person and first woman inducted into the ICB/TABB Hall of Fame. She was honored for more than 25 years in the industry as a technician, supervisor, instructor and one of the first women in the U.S. to open her own ICB/TABB-certified firm.

ICB/TABB is the first certification program to synchronize all components of the complex HVAC industry. It is also the first program to gain ANSI (American National Standards Institute) accreditation for certification in the testing, adjusting and balancing industry.

For more information, call 703-739-7100 or visit www.icbcertified.org or www.tabbcertified.org.

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