



The Flynn Center, One Year Later

The vision for the BAC/IMI international training center was to have a central campus for meeting all the training and educational needs of the union masonry industry. In just one year, that ambitious goal is a vibrant reality, at the John J. Flynn BAC/IMI International Training Center.

From apprentices to architects, instructors to contractors, The Flynn Center has something for everyone. "Their recognition of what BAC and IMI have to offer is revitalizing the industry," says BAC President and IMI Co-Chair John J. Flynn.

Even before its official opening in September 2007, The Flynn Center showed its range by hosting [Masonry Camp](#), the educational program for young architects and masons to learn collaboration and craftsmanship. "It's a great way to bridge the gap between designers and builders," says 2008 camper Scott Allvord from Local 5 PA.

BAC apprentices got a thrilling exposure to their new center at the [International Apprentices Contest](#) last September. Another generation will get their chance to compete in September 2009.



Hundreds of BAC and IMI instructors experienced the new facility during the [Instructor Certification Program](#) held last October and this September. The program that sharpens professional and technical skills "was overwhelming at first," says 2008 graduate Stephen Flickinger from ADCNJ, but "it really helped me right away when I went back." It also has a ripple effect, notes Local 9 MI training director Howard Hipes, a 2008 graduate. "You are laying the foundation for future instructors, too."

BAC employers get their professional education at The Flynn Center through [Contractor College](#). A March session included new topics such as Building Information Modeling and Sustainable Design, plus a chance to see pre-job training in action. "IMI keeps us up-to-date," says Michael Schmerbeck, Vice President of Speranza Brickwork, Inc. A fall session will cover codes, computers and more.



[Continuing Education](#) is a constant at the center, which goes well beyond apprentice training. BAC locals increase their journey-level members' marketability with specialized cross-training in classes not available locally. In addition to sending apprentices for brick, tile, terrazzo and stone, Local 9 PA used the center to prepare its members for a major refractory job on the horizon. Local 1 CT tile members ramped up their



mud skills for commercial work in a special class that they found “above and beyond our expectations.”

A central campus gives BAC locals an efficient way to keep members up on critical **safety and health** training and certification, by sending instructors for train-the-trainer classes. When Las Vegas experienced an alarming fatality rate on one mega-project, IMI and Local 13 NV instructors got

certified at The Flynn Center to teach the OSHA courses, which enabled them to quickly train members on the jobsite, in both English and Spanish. Having a similar class for MSHA “saved us a lot of time and money,” says 9 MI’s Hipes. “It’s much more efficient to come here.”



The center’s capacity for both classroom and hands-on instruction has earned it the nickname of **Masonry University** among other professions, including architects, engineers, contractors and construction managers. In April, the center hosted a special program for young Turner Construction project managers, who attended technical seminars and tried their hands at bricklaying and tuckpointing. The IMI approach, which upped their appreciation of masonry and the union masonry professionals, “is an efficient way to cut years off of the learning curve,” says Turner Construction Vice President Dennis A. Delisle. “IMI should be the model by which all others are compared.” A similar program in June co-sponsored by the Brick Industry Association enlightened Washington D.C. architects and engineers.

*This September brings another Flynn Center innovation: the **New Products Expo**, offering all IMI audiences - designers, contractors and craftworkers - a glimpse into the future, along with strategies for capturing new opportunities. The event will be covered in the October e-newsletter.*

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