



THE PIPELINE

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The business of being a business agent

“We have to be good listeners.”

– Tim Fandel, on being a Local 12 business agent
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“The takeaway message is that if you need help, it’s available”

– Brian Doherty on safety stand downs
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“I restarted the business because of my dad. I want to make him proud.”

– Hilliard Baker, Jr.
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DO YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT A BUSINESS AGENT DOES? THINK AGAIN.

Sure, the business agents at Local 12 conduct the union’s business. It’s right in their title. They represent the interests of Local 12’s members and get involved with responsibilities such as negotiating collective bargaining agreements, advocating for members’ rights, interacting with affiliated contractors, and recruiting new members. But the position is much more than that.

“The job of business agent doesn’t come with a handbook,” says Harry Brett, Local 12’s business manager. A former business agent for many years, he says that nothing can prepare people elected to the position for the wildly diverse nature of the work that they will encounter. There is no such thing as a typical day. And the best-laid plans can get waylaid in an instant.

The union’s three business agents, Tim Fandel, Barry Keady, and Jim Vaughan, all agree with Brett’s assessment. The longstanding Local 12 members thought they had a handle on the role when they ran for the job. Then they became business agents.

The personal along with the professional

The goal, Vaughan says, is to help members be successful. That means keeping them employed, ensuring their safety on the job, advocating for good wages and benefits, and doing everything else possible to help members with their careers. But success can also mean helping members with their personal lives. Vaughan wasn’t ready for that.



Local 12 business agents Jim Vaughan, Tim Fandel, and Barry Keady.

“As a business agent, you see members from many perspectives,” he says. They sometimes confide in the agents, look for a shoulder on which to lean, and seek help for problems they encounter. “People may think of me as a hardened guy,” notes Vaughan. “But I’ve gone into my car and cried sometimes after hearing members’ stories. We have to be there to support them, and that’s not always easy.”

Pulling out a stack of Mass cards and a Jewish skullcap from his overstuffed drawer, Vaughan says, “In the four years I’ve been doing this, that’s how many wakes and funerals I’ve been to.” The huge pile deftly illustrates one of the more difficult aspects of the job. Because of whom they represent and their significance, Vaughan says he can’t bear to throw out the remembrances.

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Training center expands

Local 12’s Training Center recently opened an annex with a large shop and classroom. Read more on page 5.

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Building trades stand down for recovery



Union building trades workers at The Hub on Causeway construction site listened to a speaker at a safety stand down.

Normally, The Hub on Causeway, a 1.9 million-square-foot mixed-use project that is being built adjacent to the TD Garden in Boston, is a hubbub of activity. But on a recent, crisp, fall day, the job site was eerily quiet. That's because the project's hundreds of building trades workers were participating in a safety stand down. The program tackled issues of addiction head on and offered resources, support, and messages of hope.

On a makeshift stage erected at the site, a series of speakers addressed the crowd of Local 12

plumbers and members of other trade unions. They discussed ways that the opioid crisis, alcoholism, and other forms of substance abuse have made it difficult—and sometimes life threatening—for people across all walks of life, including those in the construction industry. Some of the speakers candidly shared their own stories of addiction, and emphasized that they were able to find help thanks to the support of the union community and the benefits their unions provide. They encouraged others in need to seek similar help.

“Addiction leaves a wake of destruction and despair,” says Brian Doherty, secretary treasurer and general agent of the Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District, one of the forces behind the stand down. “We are going to do everything we can to combat it.” Additional partners helping to organize and support the event are the Building Trades Employers Association, Local 12, and other building trades unions.

“The takeaway message is that if you need help, it’s available,” Doherty added. “We’re here to support you every step of the way.”

In their effort to combat addiction, the unionized building trades banded together and decided to present a series of stand downs, which started a couple of years ago. Job sites in the Seaport, Harvard University,

and elsewhere have also hosted events. They enable unions to proactively reach out to their members where they are. GBPCA contractors and other subcontractors, general contractors, and project owners support the stand downs by allowing the events to take place while workers are on the job.

Among the speakers at The Hub event was Paul Greeley, director of the Carpenters Employee Assistance Program. He talked about the many resources available to those in need and promised that there would be “no stigma” for people to “get the help you need and deserve.”

Doherty echoes that sentiment and adds that the outreach campaign isn’t about being punitive.



Jay Frasier

“It’s supportive and compassionate. We want folks to get back on their feet and get back to work.”

Help is available not only for union members, but for their family and loved ones, the presenters noted. They also said that members should reach out to coworkers that are struggling with addiction and advocate getting them help.

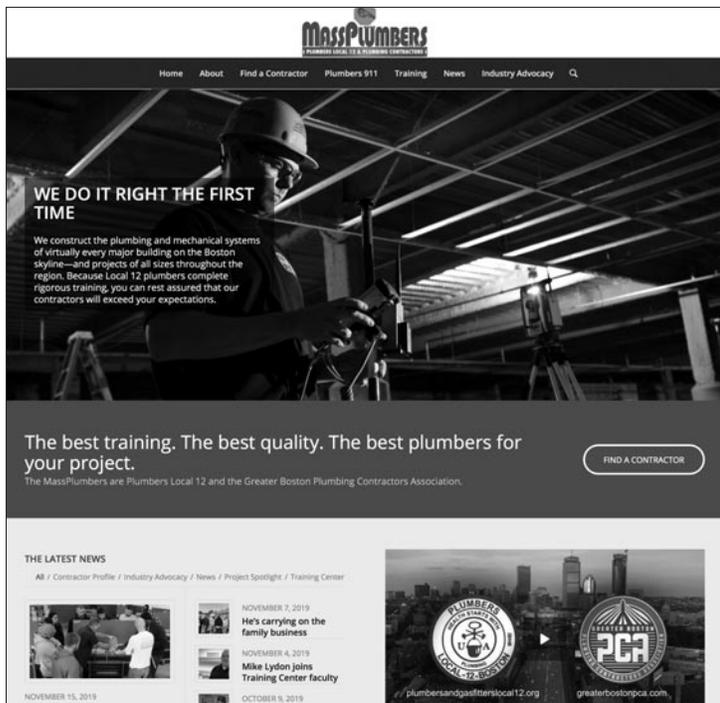
Some might resist help. “I’m a rough, tough construction worker. I can handle this myself,” says Tim Fandel, Local 12 business agent, about the attitude that some union members might have when faced

with addiction. The reality, he says, is that people can’t go it alone and need assistance. Thankfully, the building trades unions have many resources in place. Local 12, for example, hosts a weekly sobriety meeting at its union hall.

“Nobody grows up wanting to be a drug addict,” said Jay Frasier, IBEW Local 103 business agent, at the stand down. He revealed the substance abuse demons that he wrestled years earlier and said that he was grateful to his union friends for helping to face them. “We protect each other,” Frasier added. “We’re family. We’ve got each other’s backs.”

“Addiction leaves a wake of destruction and despair. We are going to do everything we can to combat it.”

—BRIAN DOHERTY



The MassPlumbers.com Web site, which represents both Plumbers Local 12 and the Greater Boston PCA, recently got a major makeover.

Hilliard Baker carries on the family business

“I THOUGHT MY SUMMERS WERE TERRIBLE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID,” SAYS HILLIARD BAKER, JR. “BECAUSE I HAD TO GO TO WORK.”

His school vacations were largely spent toiling alongside his father, Hilliard Baker, Sr., on jobs for his dad’s shop, HB Plumbing and Heating. When he was eight years old, Baker remembers that he and his brothers went with their father to a school under construction in Pembroke. The family arrived in a Winnebago camper that his dad parked on the job site.

“That’s where we slept until the job was finished,” Baker says with a grin. He recalls working into the night under lights powered by his dad’s generator. That’s the way the hungry, old-school plumber rolled, he adds. While the young Baker’s summers may not have been as care-free as he would have liked, he learned a lot about hard work and perseverance from the example his dad set.

“It was great father-son bonding time,” remembers Baker. Maybe his summers weren’t so bad after all.

The elder Baker retired and closed his plumbing shop in 1993, the same year that Baker, Jr. started college at Alabama State. While he was pursuing his studies, Baker’s dad signed his son up for a plumbing apprentice course without telling him.

That meant Baker didn’t get much of a break during college either. Over the summer and between semesters, he would come home to the Boston area and continue his apprentice work and studies.

After college, Baker worked at a few different jobs until returning to plumbing about seven years ago. While working for a non-union shop, he learned

about Local 12 and became a member. He finished his apprentice training at the union’s center.

Two years ago, Baker got his master plumber’s license. On the same day, he called Local 12’s business manager, Harry Brett, and told him that he planned to start his own business.

“I promised Harry that I’d become a Local 12 shop,” Baker says. “The union has done a lot for me, and I want to be loyal to them.”

When it came time to come up with a name for his company, there was only one choice: HB Plumbing and Heating.

“I restarted the business because of my dad,” Baker explains with tears welling up in his eyes. Baker, Sr. is now 91 years old and in poor health. “It meant a lot to him. This is for my pops. I want to make him proud. It is still his company in spirit as far as I’m concerned.”

The resurrected HB Plumbing has worked on a couple of laundromats. The shop was also part of Local 12’s crew that responded to the natural gas disaster in the Merrimack Valley. But most of the shop’s work has focused on residential construction projects, such as Olmsted Green in Dorchester.

A mixed-income rental development, the project is bringing 100 two- and three-bedroom townhouses to the community. HB Plumbing is working on 11 of Olmsted Green’s buildings. Baker also has a crew working on the redevelopment of the Whittier Street apartment complex in Roxbury.

HB Plumbing is able to do the jobs as a union shop because Local 12 recently established a residential division and negotiated a lower rate for the specialized work. That enables contractors to work with Local 12 plumbers on residential projects such as the construction of mid-rise, wood-frame apartment buildings.



Hilliard Baker (fourth from the left) and some of his crew at Olmsted Green, a mixed-income rental development under construction in Dorchester.

The affiliation has been a plus for Baker. “When owners and general contractors hear that I’m with Local 12, they know that I’ll have the manpower to take on the job,” he says. It’s not just a question of the quantity of available workers, but also the quality. “We’re always ahead of schedule,” Baker notes. “The Local 12 mechanics are great.”

As for the future, Baker says that he’d like to explore other areas of the industry, including larger commercial work as well as industrial plumbing at sites such as power plants. Local 12’s Brett says the sky is the limit for the enterprising contractor. “Hilliard is doing everything the right way. I can’t say enough about him.”

Baker would like to grow his company—not only for himself and his family, but also for the community.

“It means a lot to me to give people opportunities,” he says, adding that he would like to steer students from voc-tech programs into Local 12. He especially hopes to help inner city kids and people of color along the path.

“They may have great talent,” Baker says. “But they need an opportunity.” After all, not every child can get on-the-job training while spending the summer in a Winnebago with his pops.



Duggan does it again

Once again, GBPCA contractor E.M. Duggan of Canton has been named one of the top places to work in the region by *The Boston Globe*. The newspaper bases its findings on employee satisfaction.

The mechanical contractor moved up a couple of places in the rankings from last year’s list and is identified as the fourth best place to work among large employers for 2019.

“We are honored and grateful to all of our employees,” says Len Monfredo, Duggan’s executive vice president. “This award is a true reflection of them.”

Apprentice draws on her past experience



Kerri Reppucci

THIRD-YEAR LOCAL 12 APPRENTICE KERRI REPPUCCI TOOK AN INTERESTING JOURNEY INTO THE INDUSTRY.

For nine years she was a mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP) coordinator and developed blueprints for commercial construction projects. Now Reppucci is on crews doing the kind of plumbing that she once designed. Her background gives her a unique perspective among apprentices.

Unlike many people who find their way to Local 12, Reppucci didn't know anybody who was a plumber or worked in other construction trades, nor was she exposed to or had any inclination to join the industry as she was growing up. She knew the owner of EHK Adjorlolo & Associates, a building information modeling

(BIM) services company based in Norwood, who hired her soon after she graduated high school and trained her in all aspects of virtual design and construction.

The learning curve was steep, but Reppucci became proficient as an MEP coordinator and developed drawings using computer-aided design (CAD). She simultaneously learned about plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and fire protection systems as well as the overall building trades industry. "In time, I ran coordination meetings," Reppucci says. She recalls sitting across the table from GBPCA contractors such as E. M. Duggan and Valante Mechanical.

While she enjoyed the work, Reppucci says she eventually wanted to change careers and began thinking about being on the other side of the construction industry. An avid equestrian and an active, outdoorsy person, she sometimes found it a struggle to sit behind a computer and be

confined to an office. "When I went to job sites, I loved being out there," recalls Reppucci.

Interestingly, it was her boss who helped steer her away from his company. He would often talk to Reppucci about her personal five-year plan and encouraged her to envision where she saw herself. She realized she wanted to explore a career in the construction trades.

Coincidentally, Reppucci met a plumber who discovered the MEP coordination work she did and asked her if she ever thought about getting into the field.

When she expressed interest, he offered her a part-time position working for him on Saturdays. For about a year, Reppucci learned the basics of plumbing on residential service jobs.

"I liked it from the start," she says. Reppucci decided to actively pursue becoming a full-time plumber. "It was scary to switch careers. But I knew I had to pull the trigger."

She applied to Local 12, but didn't initially get in. The plumber with whom she had

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Governor Joins PCA at New Office Open House

The Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association hosted an open house in honor of its new office located in Braintree. Governor Charlie Baker was the guest of honor for the event.

The Governor expressed his support for the work that has been and continues to be done by Plumbers Union Local 12 and the plumbing contractors to keep the Commonwealth safe and clean. Baker spoke with admiration regarding the tireless work of plumbers following the aftermath of the Merrimack Valley gas dis-

aster and the ongoing work being done to ensure that Massachusetts continues to uphold the highest standards in the industry.

The evening was a chance for experts across the plumbing industry to meet and engage in productive dialogue with the top executive in the state. Among the important issues addressed during the evening were the Paid Family Medical Leave Act. The PCA also used the occasion to share info about the state's plumbing code with the Governor.



Governor Charlie Baker addresses the guests gathered at the GBPCA's open house event.

New annex with large shop opens at Training Center



Apprentices work at one of the modular workstations in the training center's new shop.

To support its growing apprentice program, Local 12 reclaimed a building on its property and converted it into a classroom and shop. The expansion, which opened in September, allows the local's training center to accommodate more apprentices. At 3,000 square feet, the annex's shop is considerably larger than

the existing ones in the main building. It gives instructors and apprentices a sizeable, flexible space in which to teach and develop skills.

Using a modular system, the shop features a variety of workstations that are mounted on wheels and can easily be moved as needed into or out of the space

Mike Lydon joins Training Center faculty

When Mike Lydon was about twelve years old, he began accompanying his father, who was a welding teacher, to work on Saturdays at the Local 12 Training Center. Many decades later, Lydon is following in his dad's footsteps.

With the region's construction industry booming and demand growing for union plumbers, Local 12's Training Center has been expanding. To accommodate an enrollment that has surged to more than 300 apprentices, the center brought Lydon on in August as its fourth instructor.

His father was instrumental in sending Lydon on the long journey that eventually landed him back at the Training Center. In addition to teaching apprentices the art and science of welding, Jim Lydon, Sr. was a Local 12

plumber and served as a business agent for the union in the 1990s. Mike says that his dad was nurturing and supportive and didn't so much push him into the trade as gently persuade him.

After going through the apprentice program, himself, Lydon went to work for GBPCA contractor J.C. Cannistraro. He worked his way up to foreman and remained with the company for 20 years.

Lydon would follow happenings at the Training Center and developed friendships with many of its instructors. "In the back of my mind, I always thought becoming an instructor might be something to pursue," he says. But he followed other paths. For example, Lydon has been the plumbing inspector in the town of Abington for the past 25 years.

In 2006, he joined his brother,

or rearranged depending on the topic being covered and the number of apprentices in the class. There is also a large electronic whiteboard that the instructors can use.

The classroom, which also includes a whiteboard, allows instructors to present lessons in a traditional educational setting. "Then we can walk students next door into the shop and put what they've learned in the classroom into practice," says Rick Carter, the Training Center's director.

Carter says that in addition to the apprentice classes, the annex will be used for journeymen service classes at night. Because of the shop's flexibility and size, "everyone will have plenty of elbow room to build projects," he adds. "It's important that everybody gets on the tools and gets the attention they deserve. With the new and existing spaces, we could have three different shop classes running simultaneously if need be."

After touring the annex, Patrick O'Toole, VP at GBPCA contractor American Plumbing & Heating and a member of Local 12's Apprentice Committee, said that he was impressed with the size and scope of the space. "The shop's modules will enable apprentices to get hands-on training in various aspects of the trade such as piping, finish installation, and rigging," he notes. "We want to be sure that our students continue to get the best training available."

Joseph O'Leary, senior estimator for GBPCA contractor TG Gallagher, also serves on the Apprentice Committee and says that he was pleased to see hybrid HVAC systems in the new shop. "Our members now have the ability to be qualified and licensed in the installation of energy-efficient heat pumps and associated systems," says O'Leary. "This will expand our expertise."

With the additional space afforded by the new shop, Local 12 developed a water heater lab in one of the training center's original shops. It includes Bradford White units on which students can train. The manufacturer partnered with Local 12 to provide the water heaters. "We've grown our service work a lot," says Harry Brett, Local 12's business manager. "Now we will be able to do service training."

With over 350 apprentices enrolled in the training center, the program has grown more than 60% over the last twelve years. "We needed to expand the program," Carter says, noting that the center hired an additional instructor (see the article on this page about Mike Lydon) as well as built the new classroom and shop.

Construction throughout the region remains strong. As a re-

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Mike Lydon

Jim Lydon, Jr., to form The Lydon Companies. Jim had already established Lydon Millwright Services, and Mike came on board to expand the business and develop a mechanical services division. He says his father was thrilled to see his sons working together and to see the union-affiliated company working with Local 12.

As with many businesses, the
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Business agents wear construction hats—and many other hats

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Some of the funerals have been related to alcoholism and addiction, insidious diseases that affect a wide swath of people. Before he became a business agent, Vaughan says that he didn't have much experience with sobriety issues. "I was naïve in some ways," he notes. To learn more, he did research and went to some AA and Al-Anon meetings to observe. Vaughan helped start a sobriety group at Local 12, which now meets regularly and is one of the many ways that the union offers support to members facing addiction problems.

"We are a support organization for our members," Brett says, noting that among the many hats that business agents wear, they sometimes have to act as social workers and psychologists. "Members may have a hiccup along the road. We help direct them to resources. We look out for each other."

"We have to be good listeners," adds Fandel. He says that brotherhood and sisterhood is a central feature of Local 12 and has to start with the union's leadership. Business agents need to have a lot of patience and compassion. Members may deal with issues such as divorce, illness, and other tragedies. "It's a part of life," Fandel says. "We don't necessarily have the answers. Often, members just want someone to

listen to them and empathize with them."

Local 12-sponsored social events, which the business agents help organize, also enable the union to promote brotherhood and sisterhood bonds. Among the events members and their families can enjoy are skiing at Loon Mountain, golfing in the spring, riding roller coasters at Canobie Lake Park, and picking apples at Honey Pot Hill in Stow. The events are enormously popular and demonstrate the camaraderie that members seek. When Vaughan helped launch the apple picking event four years ago, 376 people participated. The numbers doubled in the second year, topped 1,000 last year, and reached 1,400 this fall.

Supporting the community in unexpected ways

First and foremost, business agents represent Local 12 members. But they sometimes end up helping a wide array of other people—even plumbers working for open shop contractors.

Keady, who has been a business agent for seven years, says that he sometimes fields requests from plumbers who are not members of Local 12. They reach out because they have nobody to represent them and don't know where else to turn. He recalls assisting an apprentice who worked for a non-union contractor that wouldn't sign off on his hours and cheated

him. "It's unlawful, and it shouldn't be tolerated," Keady says.

Likewise, members of the public contact Local 12 when they need guidance and support. "Sometimes homeowners call us, and they don't have heat or hot water because some unscrupulous plumber stiffed them," says Keady. The alleged plumber may be unlicensed and doing illegal work. The business agent has helped direct homeowners to the state plumbing board and provided other resources so that they could resolve their problems.

Local 12 members may come to business agents seeking help not for themselves, but for their family. For example, a member that has a child with a rare disease reached out. Because they know their way around the State House and have expertise in the legislative process, the business agents are advocating for a bill that would require insurance to cover the child's medical treatment.

It's not just family members. Business agents often spearhead efforts to help the community at large. A member approached Keady to see if Local 12 could help support Trauma Spa, a charitable organization in Dorchester that supports women who have lost loved ones to violence. "I grabbed some apprentices, and we were able to install a sink and fix some other plumbing problems at their facility," he says.

Among many other outreach efforts, business agents also help organize blood drives for Children's Hospital at the union hall, coordinate work for veterans who can't afford to hire a plumber, and collect toys during the holidays for St. Mary's Home, a residential program in Dorchester for pregnant and parenting teens in need. Local 12 also installed a bathroom to support St. Mary's.

Job 1: Get jobs

The primary focus for business agents, according to Brett, is job creation. They are always on the

"The job of business agent doesn't come with a handbook."

—HARRY BRETT

lookout—at town meetings, in their daily travels, in conversations they overhear—for projects in development. They also rely on members to act as their eyes and ears and to let them know when they hear about a potential project or see a construction fence pop up or a pile of dirt moved in the field.

Once they discover projects, business agents let Local 12's affiliated contractors know about them so they can submit bids and secure work for members. "Things are going great now in the construction industry," Brett says, referring to the regional boom that has kept members at virtually full employment. "But we know it's cyclical. That's why we never stop drumming up business. We want to keep everyone working."

Fandel, who has been around plumbing and Local 12 his whole life and whose family ties to the industry reach back many generations, says that when he was younger, he thought all jobs were union. "That's all I knew. As a business agent, I quickly came to realize that it's a stack of cards. If we are not out promoting, being proactive, branding, chasing work, nobody else will do it. It could all come tumbling down."

That's why Fandel, Keady, and Vaughan remain vigilant and focused on jobs. That is, when they are not picking apples, collecting toys for needy kids, being there for members who are going through difficult times, or the countless other things they do as business agents.



Harry Brett (L), Local12 business manager, presents contractors participating in the Plumbers 911 service program with Milwaukee Tool drain cleaning machines. By expanding their capabilities, the contractors can use the equipment to help train apprentices in the work.

Local 12 members attend Tradeswomen Build Nations conference

North American Building Trades Unions (NABTU) presented its ninth annual Tradeswomen Build Nations conference in October, and seven Local 12 members, led by training center instructor Kim Garside, participated in the three-day conference. The largest gathering of union tradeswomen in the world, the event presented speakers and workshops that covered topics such as apprenticeship, recruitment, mentoring other women, mental and physical health, safety, getting involved in union leadership, balancing family and work, and financial planning.

“It’s like a pep rally for women in the trades,” is how Local 12 apprentice Kerri Reppucci described the event. “It was great for me to see so many women in the industry.”

Mirroring the rapid rise of women joining the ranks of Local 12 as well as construction trades in the region and across North America, the Tradeswomen Build Nations conference has been growing dramatically. Garside says that in the three years she has been going to the event, it has nearly doubled in attendance from year to year. The 2019 conference had close to 4,000 women representing all of the union trades, including electrical workers, carpenters, and bricklayers, along with plumbers and gasfitters. The United Association (UA), Local 12’s parent organization, had 400 members alone from the U.S. and Canada.

Among the workshops Reppucci attended was one about preventing and addressing sexual harassment and another about understanding and protecting retirement benefits.

“It can be intimidating as a woman to get into the trades,” the third-year apprentice says, adding that the information she was able to learn at the event was helpful. Reppucci notes that the camaraderie and solidarity she

experienced at the conference was equally empowering.

Garside especially enjoyed a presentation about how local unions can build and nurture women’s committees. The instructor has chaired a Local 12 group comprised of women members for a few years and says that she was able to bring back some great ideas for the group.

Both of the women have seen the industry evolve firsthand. “It’s a different dynamic today,” says Garside, noting that women were few and far between when she began her career. “More support and resources are available for women today, which is a great thing.”

Reppucci, who began working as a CAD designer 12 years ago, recalls that she rarely saw women in the trades back then. “Now, it’s a different story,” she says. “Yes, it can be rough and taxing on your body. But women should not be afraid.”

The Tradeswomen Build Nations attendees had opportunities to break out and gather with other members of their trade. The UA presented a luncheon for its members. Garside says the organization has done a great job promoting the event and encouraging locals to send their members to the conference.

As evidenced by the growth and success of the conference, what was once a non-traditional career path for women is becoming more conventional. Does Reppucci have any advice for women considering getting into the industry? “Go for it!” she says. “If it’s for you, you’ll do really well.”



About 400 United Association members joined some 3,300 other women at the conference.

Reppucci draws on her past

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been working on Saturdays offered her an apprenticeship position and she took it, although Reppucci says that she didn’t give up on her dream to get into the union. She knew the pay would be better as well as the benefits such as health insurance and a pension. She also knew that Local 12-affiliated contractors did the type of large-scale projects on which she wanted to work.

In 2018, Reppucci reapplied and was accepted into Local 12. She has been working for American Plumbing and Heating on projects such as a new Children’s Hospital building and the expansion of TD Garden’s concourse.

“When I first started, it was so exciting,” she enthuses. “It was almost surreal. I would ask myself, ‘Is this happening?’”

Reppucci says her many years as an MEP coordinator have been serving her well. Her ability to look at drawings and know exactly what they mean has helped her on the job. At the same time, she adds, she is learning a different side of plumbing that she couldn’t get in an office.

“Pipe is much easier to manipulate in your hands than in a drawing,” Reppucci notes.

She is currently on the American crew at the mixed-use development known as Parcel K in Boston’s Seaport district. The

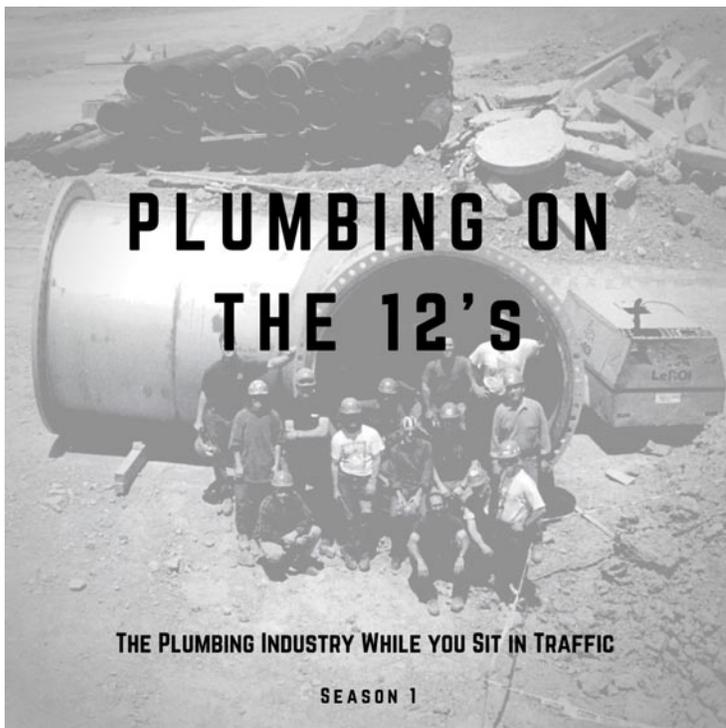
500,000-square-foot project includes a 12-story residential building with 304 apartments and a 12-story Hyatt Place hotel with 294 rooms. Parcel K will also include an underground parking garage, office space, and ground-level retail shops and restaurants. Reppucci is working on the hotel side of the project.

Before she came to Local 12, Reppucci had taken classes for open-shop apprentices. She says that the union’s training center, which emphasizes hands-on opportunities in its shops, is a completely different experience. Whereas before, she mostly sat at a desk and read along as teachers lectured, now she is putting theory into practice.

“We’re doing things that help me really understand plumbing,” says Reppucci. “I’m a tactile learner. I need to do it to understand it. The instructors are great.”

When she gets older, Reppucci says that she may want to return to MEP coordination. But for now she is thrilled to be learning a trade that she loves. She looks forward to a long career and says that she is bullish on the plumbing industry.

“People will always need water, sinks, toilets, and heat,” explains Reppucci. “The trade won’t go away.”



GBPCA produces a podcast for the plumbing industry

There is one thing that everyone has while sitting in traffic: time, and a lot of it. As plumbing professionals endure more and more traffic, the GBPCA recognized an opportunity to fill the void with something productive. Since podcasts have become an increasingly popular form of media, especially for drivers stuck behind the wheel, the organization decided to produce its own show.

“We think it’s a great way to reach those who would be interested in filling their commute time with insightful business studies, engaging interviews, and news from around the industry,” says Jeremy Ryan, GBPCA’s executive director.

Called “Plumbing on the 12’s,” the podcast puts a fresh spin on

the daily traffic report. Ryan co-hosts the show with the organization’s director of public affairs, Andrew DeAngelo. It covers topics such as business studies, substance abuse recovery and wellness, and new technologies. Ryan says that he will be inviting prominent figures in the plumbing and building trades industry to stop by as guests and give their perspectives on a variety of topics. The podcast’s first episode covers cost transparency and its potential use to drive business.

Information about the podcast, including direct links to the episodes, is available on the organization’s GreaterBostonPCA.com Web site. You could also subscribe by searching on iTunes for “Plumbing on the 12s.”



Local 12 Training Center’s new annex includes a classroom.

Lydon joins Training Center

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Great Recession threw a curveball at The Lydon Companies, and the shop eventually closed. Mike went back to work as a foreman for J.C. Cannistraro in 2014. While there, he led teams working on projects for Boston Medical Center and Massachusetts General Hospital. He also became the company’s apprentice coordinator. In that capacity, Lydon worked closely with Local 12’s Training Center as a liaison representing the apprentices working on all of the large contractor’s many projects.

“I’ve always enjoyed working with apprentices,” Lydon says. “The position was a natural for me.”

When the Training Center put out the call for a new instructor earlier this year, Lydon seized the opportunity. He initially taught classes in financial literacy for first-year apprentices and water supply for the third-year group. Lydon says that shifting gears in his career and tackling the role of a teacher has been enjoyable and rewarding, but also challenging.

“I have great respect for the other instructors at the center,” he notes. “It’s a lot of work.”

Lydon says that there are plenty of resources on which he can draw, such as United Association guidelines and materials, as he maps out his classes. But, he adds, instructors are given plenty of leeway to add their own input and personality as they develop and present their daily lesson plans. Lydon is getting used to incorporating technology such as electronic whiteboards, online content, and PowerPoint presentations to his classes. The goal, he says, is to keep the material fresh and engaging for apprentices. He also tries to make the classes as interactive as possible.

“Mike is rising to the challenge,” says Rick Carter, the Training Center’s director. “He is a great addition to our team and brings a wealth of real-world,

hands-on experience to his classes.”

For the second session, Lydon is teaching a class about hot water to fourth-year apprentices. A second class, “Standard of Excellence,” is geared to the first-year group. Among the topics covered are the history of the labor movement and the history and evolution of Local 12.

“I’m learning myself,” Lydon says, as he dives into the material and prepares his classes. He finds the union story especially fascinating. “I love the work.”

Training Center annex

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sult, small- to mid-sized shops have been growing, and large contractors have been getting bigger. Also, new contractors have been signing on with Local 12.

“We are the feeder system for the local,” Carter adds. “And there is high demand for apprentices.”

THE PIPELINE

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