

I would like to report on both the welding training that we provide to our Ironworker instructors and the welding certification program here in the Apprenticeship and Training Department. First I would like to report that this summer's instructor training program in San Diego was again a huge success. We had a total of 140 Ironworker coordinators and instructors enrolled in the welding curriculum learning everything from SMAW, FCAW, and oxy-acetylene torch use to plasma gouging and TIG welding. The vendors who help us year after year always make sure that the Ironworkers are trained using the latest technology and equipment. Our thanks for the continued support from Lincoln Electric, Miller Electric, ESAB, Smith Equipment, and Harris Calorific. Without their help and generosity our training program wouldn't be what it is today. We also had 26 Ironworker instructors enrolled in this year's CWI course and we would like to congratulate each of them for taking on this challenging course and the exam that follows.

The Ironworkers Welding Certification Program has undergone some major changes and improvements that will make it run much more effectively and we are very excited. First of all we have changed the way the welder's certification cards are being processed. We had a new software program developed and installed that your training facility can access from their computer. With it the welding certification program is now internet based allowing access from any laptop or pc that has internet capabilities. This will permit the welding coordinator/instructor to log on, enter all necessary information for the welder qualification test, and then simply push a button sending the test record to our office in a matter of minutes as opposed to days or weeks. The weld test record will already have the Certified Welding Inspector's signature and stamp attached electronically thus allowing us to process the paper work, print the certification card, and drop it into the mail directly to each Ironworker. This has cut the turn-around time needed for each welder to receive their card by 75%.

This new electronic format has also allowed us to make some exciting changes for our employers. Our signatory contractors can log onto the system and verify a participating welder's qualification test and continuity (welding record) from the computer in their office or on the jobsite. By means of a user guide the contractors who hire our services can now access the welding records of each participating Ironworker with a read-only password. The employer or their representative can **only** view the records and cannot view a member's social security number or change any part of the welder's record. This method of verification we feel can expedite the hiring process for our members. It will also allow the contractor to view the qualification test for each process and have the welder's past welding record at hand if continuity becomes a question by an inspector or anyone else connected with the project.

Other big news affecting the welding program begins on September 1st. That's when IMPACT will begin paying for all of the welder's certification processed through our office. This motion was voted on and unanimously passed by the Board of Trustees at their last meeting in July. When an Ironworker takes a welder qualification test at one of the Ironworkers Apprentice Training Centers accredited through the National Ironworkers Certification Program and the certification card is issued by the National Training Fund office the \$25 fee that is usually an out-of-pocket expense by the member will now be covered by IMPACT. In addition as long as you keep renewing your certification card(s) each calendar year without letting them expire, the \$10 renewal fee will be taken care of as well. This will reflect in a direct cost savings to each one of our participating members. It will allow each Ironworker to gain the certifications necessary to man the welding jobs available to us across the country. Please note: if you let your card expire and have to re-test you will then be responsible for paying the fee to re-test.

There are many opportunities for Ironworkers to weld on jobsites using processes other than stick or SMAW. FCAW or wire welding is one of these processes. It's being used by many of our employers and allows a much higher deposition rate than using traditional welding electrodes which saves time and money. Another opportunity that Ironworkers in some areas are taking advantage of is GTAW or TIG welding. This process is often used to weld ornamental non-ferrous materials such as architectural hand rail, stainless steel, and several different piping procedures as well. It's time that we step forward and learn how to weld using different processes and take advantage of these opportunities that are available to our trade. If you have any questions regarding weld training, certification, or accreditation for your training facility please contact General Organizer Ed Abbott here in the Apprenticeship & Training Department.