

SEAA Member Buckner Companies Hosts Steel Day



On October 4, 2013 Buckner's spacious, high-ceilinged home office was flooded with over 150 visitors who came to experience Steel Day. Steel Day is an annual event sponsored by the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC) to celebrate the contributions of the structural steel industry to sustainable building in America. This year Buckner Companies, based in Graham, NC, hosted its 5th Steel Day event with the aim of reaching out to students, teachers, customers, engineers, fellow businesses and community stakeholders to showcase the accomplishments and vision of the industry.

Student turnout was at an all-time high for this year's Steel Day, with over 100 high-school and university students from 6 different schools in attendance. "We are excited to bring fresh, young minds into this industry and company," emphasized Doug Williams, Buckner's CEO and President, in his opening address. "As iron work grows and changes we need to have hardworking,

creative people who are looking towards the future working in this company." The day's activities included a tour of the office, presentations by the Buckner team on various aspects of the company's operations, a crane demonstration, a home-cooked lunch, and special sessions led by AISC and the NC Department of Labor.

The presentations highlighted the excitement and accessibility of steel work and allowed the students, many of whom visited from technical schools and career classes, to understand how their skills and interests might fit into the industry. "Are you creative and good at problem-solving, math and physics?" asked Jim Jatho, Buckner Heavy Lift's lift planner, "Then you might be able to do what I do as a lift planner. It's incredibly rewarding to see how all your plans and hard work are executed on the job site." Mark Goodwillie, Buckner's director of training, shared about Buckner's certified apprenticeship program, which allows young workers to be paired with mentors and move up through the ranks of responsibility and experience over a period of 3 to 5 years. "We have recognized that nationwide our construction workforce is aging out and not enough is being done to attract and train young people who may want to enter our industry," said Eddie Williams, the Chairman of Buckner's Board. "Steel Day provided us with the opportunity to give young people a glance at what we do and inform them of the many job

The SEAA ENews Newsletter



401 E. 4th St., Suite 204
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

336-294-8880

www.sea.net

opportunities in steel. Buckner is committed to a full-scale Apprenticeship and Craft Training program.”

Added Williams, “Steel Day provided us with the opportunity to give young people a glance at what we do and inform them of the many job opportunities in steel.”



Lunch served as an opportunity for networking with Buckner staff and the numerous professionals from the steel industry who attended, as well as a chance to experience the company’s culture through food made by the staff and their families. Out on the yard, amidst dozens of red and yellow crane booms, trucks and other machinery, Steel Day visitors had the chance to observe and participate in a crane demonstration. Buckner’s mechanics and crane operators had assembled a Manitowoc 777 crawler crane and lifted a 50,000-pound motor for the on-looking crowd. Interested students had the opportunity to experience the crane operator’s point of view by sitting up in the crane and learning the major controls.

As students loaded into their buses and company representatives packed up their brochures and briefcases, there was a tangible energy in the air. Throughout the day, many speakers had voiced the sentiment that it’s exciting to drive by and see something you had a part in building, something that may be around longer than you. But not everything you build is visible. Steel Day 2013 built excitement, interest, knowledge and personal connections that will contribute to a more robust, sustainable and innovative industry, and as the office emptied out last Friday afternoon, nothing looked visibly different than it had before, but you could feel what had been built that day.