

Volts & Views

... from the inside

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST
AND DATES TO ADD TO YOUR
2024 CALENDARS!

- MARCH 11-14, 2024
Midwestern Region
Conference,
The Atlantis Paradise
Island in The Bahamas
- APRIL 15-17, 2024
NECA EMERGE
MGM Grand,
Las Vegas, NV
- JULY 18-21, 2024
Dakotas Chapter NECA
Annual Membership
Meeting, Alexandria, MN
- SEPT. 28-OCT. 1, 2024
NECA National Convention
San Diego, CA

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IN THE NEWS...

Boosting the Apprentice Pipeline: Internships, Scholarships and More Come Into Play

By Susan DeGrane,
February Safety Leader

With baby boomers retiring by the thousands, finding enough qualified workers presents a constant challenge. Electric Supply Co. Inc. of Sioux Falls, S.D., has developed several strategies to keep up with demand for skilled workers.



Electric Supply Co. Inc. foreman Caleb Chedester, left, instructs Jaylen Kemp, a third-year apprentice.

Finding Qualified Workers

Electric Supply has made itself a familiar presence at career fairs held by technical

colleges and area high schools. It also gets the word out about employment opportunities through social media, industry partner referrals and word-of-mouth. In addition, it works with industrial arts programs at local high schools to set students up with paid summer internships.

"This summer, we had four high schoolers working in our prefab shop," said Matt Jarding, vice president of operations for Electric Supply. "Working in the prefab shop exposes those individuals to basic materials and methods."

Last summer, other high school students learned to dig trenches to install PVC. Some worked with an electrician preparing to pull wire.

Electric Supply also participates in different scholarship programs offering scholarships applicable toward earning an electrician associate degree from Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls.

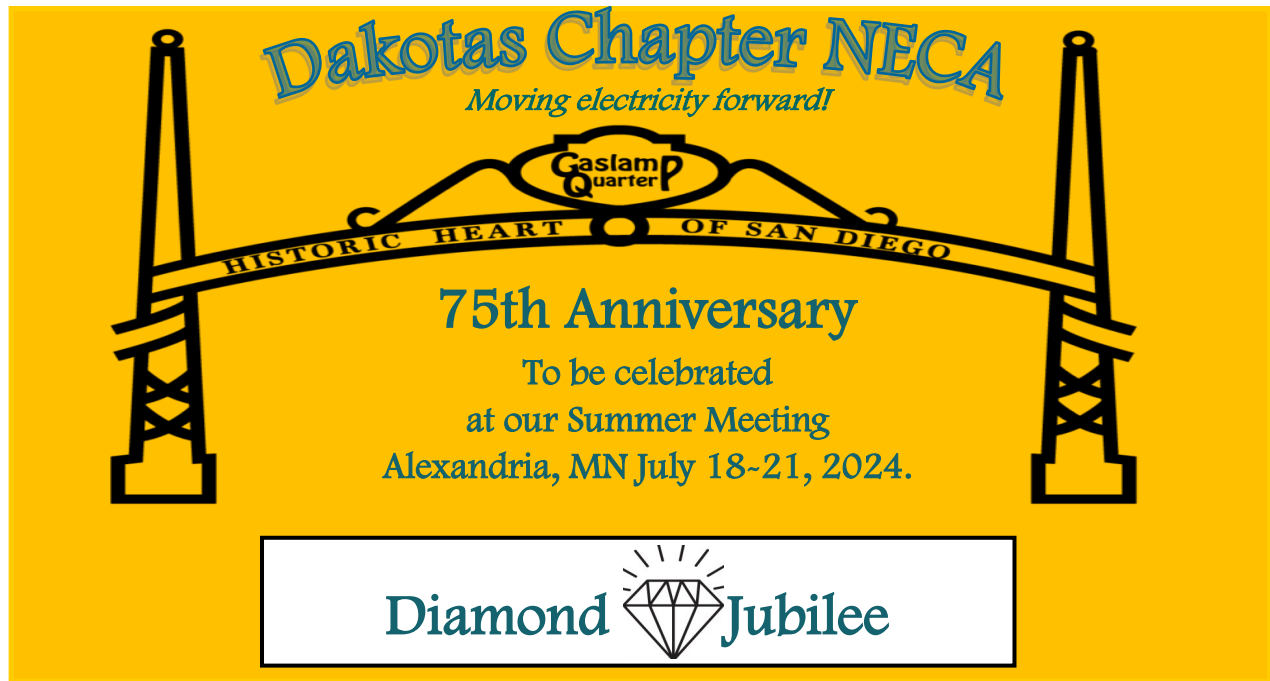
"Some of the scholarships are for a full ride," Jarding said. "After recipients complete their associate degree, we sponsor them as third-year inside wire apprentices."

Jaylen Kemp completed his two-year electrician degree at Southeast Technical College, then entered the Dakotas Area Electrical Apprenticeship program. He now works full-time as a third-year apprentice for Electric Supply.

Beyond these recruitment efforts, the company also direct-hires employees through a NECA-IBEW agreed-to unindentured worker memorandum.

(Boosting the Apprentice Pipeline:
continued on page 3)

SAVE THE DATE!



2024 Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting

Come and join the Dakotas Chapter this summer as we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee: 75 years as a NECA chapter! We will have special entertainment, and all the other activities to keep you engaged and educated.

The Board of Directors has decided again this year to pay room expenses for each NECA Member contractor to send a representative to the 2024 Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting. This year's meeting is set for **July 18-21, 2024** at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, MN.

Take advantage of a weekend getaway with your family to enjoy Arrowwood Resort, take in some educational opportunities, golf, socializing with other NECA contractors, and fun group activities!

We have a lot of fun and excitement in store again this year! Join us for another memorable Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting!



Larson Electric Celebrates 50 Years



Casey Flammang (left) accepts a recognition plaque from Ed Christian, Dakotas Chapter Executive Director recognizing Larson Electric's 50-year NECA membership. Larson Electric was recognized for a half century of loyal support and dedicated service to this association and its many contributions to the Electrical Contracting Industry. Not pictured, Bruce Krebsbach, co-owner of Larson Electric.

Boosting the Apprenticeship Pipeline: (from page 1)

"We're fortunate in our market," Jarding said. "We've had leadership from IBEW and NECA that saw we needed new ways of getting people in. We've been able to direct-hire for some time now, through an unindentured worker classification agreement."

That flexibility has helped other electrical contractors in South Dakota fortify their workforces while generating greater market share, Jarding said.

"For all direct-hire, entry-level positions, we make sure new hires get the chance to see if they enjoy working in the field," he said. "If they like the work and we see promise, then we invest in their training."

Low-voltage Work

Some hires end up pursuing low-voltage/telecommunications work. A lead technician with BICSI certification and five years on the job can earn pay equal to a journeyman. In 1990, an Electric Supply client asked if the company could do telecommunications installations.

"There wasn't anyone doing that type of work at the time," Jarding said. "That's basically what started the telecom training program for Local 426."

Since then, low-voltage/telecom work has come to include network and cable, fire alarm, paging, patient monitoring, security, camera systems, campus-wide distribution of fiber networks and more.

About six years ago, Tyler Bialas came on board as director of low-voltage systems for Electric Supply. Back then, about 4%–6% of the company's work was low-voltage. Now it's 15%, and the company works as a subcontractor doing this work for other contractors, Jarding said.

"At any given time, we have 10–15 employees working on low-voltage jobs," Bialas said. "The apprenticeship program is three years with the Dakotas' Electrical Apprenticeship. We supplement that with hands-on training and manufacturer certifications, which usually involves computer presentations, but occasionally a manufacturer will send a trainer."

Low-voltage products come with warranties, so the manufacturers sometimes inspect work to make sure it's done correctly.

"It's all taken very seriously," Bialas said.

Electric Supply provides OSHA 10 safety training for all new hires. It also pays for low-voltage apprentices to earn BICSI certification at an authorized training facility in Des Moines, Iowa. To qualify for BICSI training, applicants must have 2–3 years of on-the-job experience. Electric Supply has four BICSI-certified techs who lead its low-voltage teams.

Career Fairs



Damon Dykstra and Ben DeLay—both graduates of Mitchell Tech—and current employees of Electric Construction Company in Sioux Falls, SD talk to students during the career fair at Mitchell Technical College in Mitchell, SD.

New Dakotas Chapter Member

Dakotas Chapter NECA is pleased to announce that we have two new NECA members. The Dakotas Chapter has 42 member companies.

Advanced Electrical Systems, LLC
Mike Himmerick, Owner
West Fargo, ND



Voyager Electrical Services, LLC
Justin Modin, Owner
Bismarck, ND



DIRECTOR'S Corner

With Ed Christian, Executive Director, Dakotas Chapter NECA

Greetings,

Easy travel made for an efficient Milwaukee Electric Tool/ Acme December Holiday tour with Pete Carlson, and we were able to visit with most of our NECA member contractor owners. We thank you for taking the time to share with us what the future may look like as we moved into 2024. Curt Kasper will be communicating the upcoming tech school recruiting events as we move into March. We encourage you to attend with Curt so you can recruit your future workforce and with all the tools available it will make it easier for you to offer employment.

Please sign-in to necanet.org and get info on upcoming events, as well as staying current on the e-mailing lists of items that will assist you and your business. The Board of Directors at their December 7, 2023, meeting did approve stipends for members in good standing for attending the following events:

Women in NECA/Future Leaders
M.E.T Innovation Conference
Midwest Regional Conference
NECA Safety Professional Conference
NECA National Convention
NECA Labor Relations Conference
Emerge Conference

The Board also approved stipends for online or in person attendance at any Continuing Education program offered through NECA's National Learning Center. Please let us know if you have any questions when registering for an event. A new NECA EmERGE Conference was announced and will be held April 15-17, 2024 in Las Vegas, NV.

It will include Business Development, Service and Maintenance, Emerging Opportunities, Green Energy Initiative, and Low-voltage Systems Integration. Registration is available at necanet.org.

Save the date for your Annual Summer meeting which will be held at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, MN July 18-21, 2024. We will have the Board of Directors meeting on Thursday July 20th and the Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, July 22nd. We appreciate our Affiliate Partner members who have supported our Annual Summer Membership event and look forward to them joining us in July. Congratulations to Darla Dybwad on her 10 years with the Dakotas Chapter NECA. We appreciate all she does on behalf of the members and in support of the Chapter office.

Best Regards,

Ed Christian



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JATC Apprentice Graduations

Watch your email for the 5th year class of the Dakotas Electrical JATC for graduation dates and locations:

The following are the number of graduates in each location:

- ◆ Fargo: 6
- ◆ Grand Forks: 5
- ◆ Williston: 13
- ◆ Sioux Falls: 25
- ◆ Minot: 37
- ◆ Bismarck: 5



May 10th - 1426 Graduation; Fargo Hilton Garden Inn 6-9 pm

May 11th - 714 Graduation; Minot Clarion Hotel 6-9 pm

May 17th - 426 Graduation; Sioux Falls Clubhouse 6-9 pm

National NECA Recognition



National NECA presented the Dakotas Chapter with an award for outstanding involvement as a member of the Political Leadership Council this year. Keep up the good work with your NECAPAC donations!

