

Gov. Rick Snyder: New campaign to highlight skilled trade opportunities for students

Initiative includes partnership with Mike Rowe and Under the Radar to reach students and parents

MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich. May 27, 2015 – Skilled trade jobs represent about one-third of Michigan’s employment base, with more than 8,300 jobs currently available. A new campaign announced today at the Mackinac Policy Conference will aim to promote opportunities in skilled trades to students and help close a growing talent gap.

Through a partnership between the [Michigan Economic Development Corporation](#), [Michigan’s Talent Investment Agency](#), [Mike Rowe](#), TV host and founder of mikeroweWORKS, and Tom Daldin, host of [Under the Radar Michigan](#), 11 videos will be created to address common misconceptions and perceptions about skilled trades, highlight opportunities and inspire K -12 students in Michigan as they begin to think about careers.

In partnership with Mike Rowe, six videos will be produced to engage middle and high school students, showing them opportunities within the following industries:

- Tool & Die
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Construction
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Welding

"Closing the skills gap is not about creating opportunity. It’s about making sure that people understand all of the opportunities that currently exist, said Mike Rowe. “Michigan is doing the right thing by getting the word out, and mikeroweWorks is honored to help.”

In partnership with Tom Daldin and Under the Radar Michigan, five videos geared toward K-5 students will be produced. These videos will inspire children as they think about what they want to do when they grow up by highlighting employees and jobs in the following industries:

- Food, agriculture and natural resources
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Design and art
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and information technology

Attracting future talent and addressing perceptions is crucial as employers will continue to actively seek skilled talent to fill the projected 6,700 skilled trade job openings each year through 2022.

“Industries and employers that rely on skilled trade talent are facing a talent gap,” Snyder said. “This campaign strengthens our efforts to make Michigan the national leader in developing the talent employers are looking for, while providing our students with secure careers and high-paying jobs in growing and innovative industries in Michigan.”

Skilled trade jobs typically require education beyond high school, along with on-the-job training, but not a four-year degree. This includes jobs in health care (lab technicians, dental hygienists), maintenance and repair, public safety, manufacturing (machine operators, welders), and carpentry, plumbing and electrical work.

“Skilled trade workers have some of the most important jobs in America. They are people who built the foundation of this country and who continue to move it forward through their skills,” said Ramsey Villarreal, a senior at Cheboygan Area High School and participant in the welding and CAD programs through Cheboygan’s Career and Tech Ed program (CTE). “Educating students about these opportunities, like Cheboygan High School does, is very important and this campaign will help students explore and consider skilled trades as a career option, just like I was able to.”

In October, Snyder announced a \$50 million grant program to provide funding that enables Michigan community colleges to purchase equipment required for educational programs in high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand occupations, the largest investment of its kind in the country.

The campaign, along with the grant program that will help community colleges boost skilled trades instruction investment, furthers Snyder’s efforts to close a talent gap and meet a demand for good-paying jobs.

“For the state’s major employers, the talent shortage is real, especially for many skilled trades and technical jobs,” said Doug Rothwell, president and CEO, Business Leaders for Michigan. “We applaud efforts to give students more exposure to all their career options, and encourage all students to get as much education and training as they can. Jobs requiring long-term job training and 2-year and 4-year degrees are growing twice as fast for those requiring a high school diploma or less.”

The videos are housed at www.mitalent.org/skilled-trades/ along with information for parents, students and educators about how to find more information and hands-on experience with these careers.

“The skilled trades are a great pathway to meaningful, rewarding careers with room for advancement,” said Stephanie Comai, director of the Michigan Talent Investment Agency. “As the demand for people with technical skills continues to surge, we want students of all ages to be aware of their career options. We’re excited about this campaign and will continue to enhance it with additional resources so that students, parents and educators have the information they need regarding opportunities available in today’s skilled trades.”

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