



North Carolina

Masonry

News

September 2024

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The Newsletter of the North Carolina Masonry Contractors Association



SkillsUSA National 2024

North Carolina brought home a Gold Medal from the National SkillsUSA Conference held in Atlanta in June. Mason Ridenhour of East Rowan High School won in high school/secondary division. His instructor is David Payne. This year's contest featured 46 contestants from across the country. In order to compete at the National SkillsUSA masonry contest, you must first win your state contest. This year's numbers at the National contest rivaled the pre-COVID numbers. The National SkillsUSA masonry contest will be held in Atlanta through June 2030. Not only did NC have a student to win, but NC also had many masonry contractor volunteers that took time away from their busy schedules and traveled down to Atlanta to help make this event possible for the students across the country. Special thanks to Manning Masonry, Huntley Brothers, McGee Brothers, Pyramid Masonry and Jollay Masonry for volunteering their time!



In This Issue:

- Page 1 SkillsUSA National Recap
- Page 2 Newsletter Sponsor
- Page 3 New CMP, CME, Instructor Training
- Page 4 Award for Gates Construction
- Page 5 Golf Tournament Gold Sponsors
- Page 6 Message from the President
- Page 7 Distinguished & Leadership Members
- Page 8 Obituaries
- Page 9 Certification & State Fair
- Page 10 Dates to Remember
- Page 11 Safety Truths and Untruths
- Page 12-14 Chapter News
- Page 14 New Members
- Page 15 Eastern Chapter Fishing Tournament Entry Form
- Pages 18-24 Golden Anniversary Celebration Series - August



This issue sponsored by:



OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON IS UPON US!

Important dates:

Individual Coverage Open Enrollment Period

- Open enrollment period runs from November 1 through January 15
 - Enroll by December 15 for coverage that starts January 1
 - Enroll by January 15 for coverage that starts February 1

Medicare Annual Enrollment Period

- Medicare's annual enrollment period is **October 15 - December 7** for coverage that starts January 1.

Group Health

Are you getting the most out of your benefit package?

Contact us to make certain you are up to speed on your options:

ACA plans

Level Funded plans (now available to groups with 12 eligible employees)

Self-Funded Plans

Captive Solutions

Pete Schantz

Kathy Young

www.mountcastleinsurance.com

336-249-4951

Congratulations!

The following individuals received their CMP:

Franklin Adams - Adams/an Oldcastle Co.
Rolando Benitez - Brodie Contractors
Cesar Gamez - Carolina Masonry Unlimited
Tod Schob - Concept Masonry
Clint Sommer - Gates Construction
Matt Spencer - Griffin Masonry
Tony Kanavel - JB Overman
Tyler Koonce - JB Overman
Bruce Waite - Jollay Masonry
Dormain Nixon - Manning Masonry
German Ruiz - Manning Masonry
Shane Collins - Old North State Masonry
Oscar Gonzales - Old North State Masonry
Juan Landaverde - Pyramid Masonry Contractors
Roger Jarrell - Southeastern Contracting
Jose Martinez - Vega Construction Co.
Brandon Goins - Wemco Contracting
Coy Montgomery - Wemco Contracting



The following individuals received their CME:

Greg Booth - MH Masonry
Melvin Hinton - MH Masonry
Drew Burton - Pinnacle Masonry
Socorro Vega - Vega Construction Co. Inc.



**JB Overman received their Company Certification for a
Certified Masonry Contractor**



Hands On Day for Masonry Instructors

On July 15, masonry instructors spent a day gaining continuing education from representatives from the masonry industry. NC SkillsUSA, NCMAC/SCMA, Adams/Oldcastle, Tucker Kirby, Laticrete, General Shale, NCDPI and CFI Foam all provided an opportunity for hands-on demonstrations. The instructors were hosted at McGee Brothers Company's Greensboro location. The event was cohosted by NCMCA and Adams/Oldcastle. Over twenty instructors participated in the event coordinated by NCMCA's Ryan Shaver.



At the MCAA Annual Mid-Year Meeting in Park City, Utah, Gates Construction was presented the 2024 MCAA First Place Safety Advantage Award for over 100,000 hours without accident. The award was presented by Federated Insurance. Pictured left to right: Dick Dentinger (MCAA), Bob Gates and Mike Cook (Gates Construction), and Patrick Christopher (Federated Insurance).

NCMCA State Golf Tournament **Thursday, September 26 at Millcreek Golf Club**

The Golf Committee members have been hard at work planning the annual fall NCMCA golf tournament. The tournament is the major funding source for the NCMCA Sigmon Memorial Scholarship awards at NC State University College of Design, Appalachian State University and newly added East Carolina University. THIS YEAR'S TOURNAMENT SOLD OUT IN 24 HOURS! We look forward to seeing you then!

Thank you to our sponsors!!!!

2024 GOLF TOURNAMENT GOLD SPONSORS



- Gold Sponsors**
- Adams, an Oldcastle Company
 - Blum Masonry
 - Brixment/Lehigh
 - Brodie Contractors
 - CFI Foam, Inc.
 - Colony/New South
 - Concept Masonry Inc.
 - CrewTracks
 - Custom Brick & Supply Company
 - EZ Scaffold
 - Fay Block
 - General Shale
 - H & E Equipment
 - Holcim
 - Johnson Concrete
 - Palmetto Brick
 - P & D Architectural Precast Inc.
 - Roanoke Cement Company
 - Southeastern Contracting
 - Stabila
 - Stone Creek Masonry
 - TNT Equipment
 - Triangle Brick
 - Trisure, an Alera Group Co.
 - Tucker Kirby
 - Wire Bond

ADAMS



Silver Sponsors

- Manning Masonry
- Carolina Masonry Unlimited
- GE Masonry

Hole Sponsors

- EZ Manufacturing
- General Shale
- Pinnacle Masonry
- McArt Masonry
- Whitman Masonry
- Chandler Concrete
- Adams, an Oldcastle Company

Closest to the Pin Sponsor

- L & D Investments

Drink Cart Sponsors

- Eastwest Products
- Blum Masonry
- Lynn Ladder

Longest Drive Sponsor

- Pine Hall Brick

Straightest Drive Sponsor

- Belden Brick

CliffsNotes® A Message from President, Cliff McGee

Hi everyone! As we are moving into a new quarter, I wanted to share some updates and changes that have been unfolding over the last few months. Whether you're new to the world of masonry or a long-time member, there are a lot of exciting things happening. After searching high and low (literally), we are thrilled to announce that we have finally hired our new Office Administrator, Brandy Shaver. Brandy has been helping us for the last 5 months on a part time basis and will officially start this new role on September 3. We are so excited to have her as a full-time member of our team! I also want to thank our personnel committee for all of their hard work during this process. On the topic of hiring, the association has created a new position, the Masonry Promotion and Outreach Coordinator. It has been posted in the Membership Broadcast Group and we have started receiving calls and resumes. Again, thank you to our personnel committee for the work you do as we are looking forward to finding the perfect candidate to enhance our team. We also have exciting news regarding our Check Off Program. Ryan Shaver has been working hard to get an acceptable contract in place to start putting funds back into the masonry industry. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in this process. We appreciate your dedication and efforts for this program. Lastly, don't forget to mark your calendars for Masonry Ed Day on October 3rd and the 70th Annual State Fair Brick Competition on October 21st. We hope you all can attend these events as they are a great way to engage and give back to this industry. Thank you all for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events



Congratulations to David Jollay (Jollay Masonry), Larry Vacala (Restore Masonry), and James T. Ham (retired Masonry Instructor, Kinston, NC) for being inducted into the 2024 MCAA Masonry Hall of Fame.



NCMCA Convention

March 27-29, 2025

Mark Your Calendar!

Distinguished Members

In 2006, The Board of Directors offered member firms the opportunity to support the Association with a new category of NCMCA membership. “Leadership” members are firms that voluntarily pay double the standard membership fee each year. “Distinguished” members are firms that voluntarily pay double dues and also maintain membership in the Masonry Contractors Association of America (MCAA) each year. For information about how your company can step up to Leadership or Distinguished NCMCA Membership, contact our office 704-436-8850.

Please welcome our new and existing Distinguished*/Leadership Members!!

Alera Group/TriSure Corporation
Brodie Contractors*
Carolina Masonry & Concrete*
Carolina Masonry Unlimited, Inc.*
Cherokee Masonry*
Custom Brick & Supply Company
Edgar Boettcher Mason Contractor Inc.*
Gates Construction*
General Shale*
Griffin Masonry, Inc.
Huntley Brothers Company*
JB Overman Masonry*
Jollay Masonry Contractors*
Joyner Masonry Works*

Kirby Construction Services
Manning Masonry*
McGee Brothers Company*
Michael J. Rogers Masonry Inc.*
Mountcastle Insurance
Pinnacle Masonry*
Roanoke Cement
Rush Masonry Management*
SPEC Mix*
Stone Creek Masonry Inc.
Taylor Thompson Masonry Inc.
TNT Equipment Company*
Whitman Masonry*





In Memory



JOHNNY 'MACKIE' WHITMAN

Johnny 'Mackie' Mac Whitman 80, of 49 Massey Rd., passed away peacefully on Monday, June 17, 2024 at SECU Hospice House in Smithfield, NC. Mackie was born June 10, 1944 in Johnston County to the late John M. Whitman and Agnes Messer. He was an avid fisherman in his down time, loved to listen to Rush Limbaugh and was passionate about Nascar and stock car racing. Mackie leaves behind to carry on his memory his wife: Debra Hobbs Whitman of the home; children: Connie Whitman (Alicia) of Benson, Richard Whitman (Gayle) of Erwin, Jeanna Whitman of Newton Grove, and Dedra Rhodes of Newton Grove; 10 grandchildren and 1 on the way; and 5 great-grandchildren. Memorials be made to the National Kidney Foundation or foundation of your choice.

SARAH KEEHNE MARSH



Sarah Keehne Marsh, born on July 6, 1961, in Richmond, VA, passed away at the age of 63 on August 15, 2024 in Charlotte, NC. The Keehne family moved to Roanoke, VA when Sarah was two years old and she was raised in Roanoke, graduating from Patrick Henry High School in 1979 before graduating from Virginia Tech in 1983. Sarah moved to Charlotte in 1983 to teach at Independence HS where she taught marketing, fashion merchandising and helped to develop the curriculum for a travel and tourism program for the NC Public School System. After 21 years at Independence she moved into a Career Technical Coordinator role at Myers Park where she remained for 10 years before retirement.

Sarah's warmth and generosity touched many lives. Along with countless students, she was actively involved with charitable activities, often volunteering through Christ Lutheran Church where she was a member since 1998. She would do anything to help a family member, friend, or neighbor in need. She loved to travel anywhere where there was adventure. Her favorite destinations were Ocean Isle Beach, Marco Island and Hawaii where she and Bill spent their honeymoon and 20th anniversary. Sarah found joy in the thrills of life from riding roller coasters to hosting her nephews and nieces during the summers with trips to Carowinds and the pool among those favorite activities. She is survived by her husband of over 37 years, Bill and her son Alex, who she adored. Memorials may be made to the SPCA of Greater Charlotte, an organization close to her heart where she and Bill rescued their beloved dogs, Rizzo and Hokie.

MATTHEW LITTLEJOHN MCKNIGHT



Mr. Matthew Littlejohn McKnight, 50, passed away Friday, August 23, 2024, at his home in Mocksville. He was born on April 21, 1974 to Vonn "Peewee" and Glenda McKnight in Rutherfordton County. Matthew was a former masonry teacher at Davie County Schools. Prior to that he was a self-employed general contractor. He was a member of Mocksville Masonic Lodge #134 AF&AM. His father and grandfather were both Masons and past masters of their respective lodges. Matthew loved his children, family, camping, fishing, and many other outdoor activities. Matt has touched many lives throughout his years in education. He was a member of the Masonry Instructors of America, as well as a Skills USA Leader.

Matthew was preceded in death by a daughter, Shelby Leigh McKnight; and his paternal and maternal grandparents. In addition to his parents, survivors include his wife of 13 years, Angelia "Angie" McKnight; his daughters, Haley, Kasey, and Matty Ann McKnight; his stepchildren, Emilee Dishman and Zachary Spry; his siblings, Michael (Sarah) McKnight, Yvon (Wes) Holcomb, and Mark (Marsha) McKnight. Memorials can be made out to Davie County High School, Memo: Masonry Program/Matthew McKnight. Donations can be sent to 180 War Eagle Drive Mocksville, NC 27028



Certification Classes

The eleventh series of NCMCA classes is nearing an end. On August 21, Doug Burton and attorney Thomas Davis instructed Module 8 “Advanced Bidding Workshop.” Over 75 participants representing 25 companies were in attendance.

More than 30 of the participants completed their certification classes and will be reviewed by the NCMCA Certification Program Board of Governors. Once the board approves the applicants, they will be approved as a CME (Certified Masonry Executive) or CMP (Certified Masonry Professional). Congratulations to each of these individuals for their accomplishment and for doing their part to help keep the NC masonry industry among the best anywhere. Bob Dusin and Mark Hinderliter team will be instructing Modules 9 & 10 on September 17 and 18 for anyone interested in their CME.



NC State Fair Contest in October

The 70th Annual Masonry Apprenticeship Contest will be Monday, October 21 at the NC Fairgrounds in Raleigh.

Calvin Brodie is again chairing the Annual State Fair Masonry Apprentice Skills Contest. If you would like to contribute to this contest, we are seeking donations to help buy tool prizes and monetary prizes that each apprentice will receive.

**If you would like to donate, please send payments to:
NCMCA PO Box 308, Mt. Pleasant, NC 28124.**

**Thank you so much for your continued support,
and if you have any questions, please call.**

Ryan Shaver





Dates to Remember



Remember to check the calendar on the NCMCA website for the latest dates, times, and locations for all events!

September 17 & 18 - Modules 9 & 10 Certification Classes

September 26 - 34th Annual NCMCA Golf Tournament

**October 3 - 8th Annual Masonry Education Day/SPECMIX
Bricklayer 500 Qualifier**

October 17 - 6R Certification Class

October 21 - 70th Annual Apprentice State Fair Contest

October 31 - Annual In-Person Board Meeting

November 21 - NCMCA/Metrolina Apprentice Recognition Night

December 4 - Series 12 Module 1 Certification Class

January 17-19, 2025 - Murdell Golf

**January 21 to 23 - World of Concrete/MCAA Convention
Las Vegas, NV**

**March 27 to 29 - NCMCA 2025 Annual Convention
Grove Park Inn, Asheville, NC**





Bill Parsons
Senior Safety Consultant
Corporate Safety Services



SAFETY TRUTHS...AND UNTRUTHS

Let's Be Honest about Worker Safety

Of the 1069 US construction workers who were killed on the job in 2022...100% expected to go home at the end of the workday. One hundred percent were covered by federal, state, local and/or company safety and health rule...yet they died.

Following OSHA standards will keep your workers safe. Not true.

Wouldn't that be just wonderful. No written rules can prevent workers from being injured...prevention takes actions.

OSHA standards are the minimum requirements. True, OSHA standards are meant to be the starting point in occupational safety. They are merely a jumping off point to build a safety and health program. Many consensus standards, state, local and manufacturer regulations/guidance afford greater levels of protection. This is likely true. For example, the Army Corps of Engineer standards exceed the requirements of OSHA standards. A trained worker will perform as trained...not always, not even likely. As any owner or foreman knows, you can train a worker, but you can't always be sure they will comply with that training.

Enforcement hasn't changed...demand that workers work safely.

This is likely the least effective approach. Fear is a short term motivator often alienating individual or groups.

If an employee has been trained OSHA cannot issue a citation. Not true. While training may support a defensive position (known as willful misconduct) it will not, necessarily, prevent a citation. The scope of training must be adequate (established work rules in place to prevent injury or illness). True. Training must adequately communicate rules. Take steps to discover violations (must include regular inspections). Rules must be enforced. Documentation must be maintained

Safety is First, well, we know this isn't always true. Supervisors, from time to time, will put safety above production.

OSHA compliance officers and safety professionals know more about keeping your workers safe than you do...not even close. Workers know more about the work being performed than safety professionals. Safety professionals should serve as advisors but not viewed as the ultimate authority for all things safe...teamwork. Subcontractors will follow the rules of the General Contractor...not necessarily true. In some cases the subcontractor knows more about worker safety than the contractor.

Personal protective equipment will keep workers safe...not true. Eliminate the hazard/exposure...physically remove the hazard. Replace the equipment or process creating the hazard. Isolate people from hazard or hazard from the people. Change the way people work. Lastly, PPE.

All reported workplace injuries occur on the job, not true. Many injuries occur at places other than the workplace and end up being reported on the job. All on the job injuries will be reported? Unlikely. Fear of reprisal. Senior leadership may take action for reporting injuries. Coworkers may condemn for getting the crew in trouble. Fear of losing job.

More money spent on safety will create a safer worker, and fewer OSHA violations, maybe or maybe not. Throwing money at the problem won't necessarily solve the problem but it may help to get safety moving in the right direction.

I don't have to worry about worker safety when they are not on the job. Not true. Claims can come to the job causing loss of productivity and morale.

Safety problems belong to the safety professional. Not true. Safety problems rest with the workers, the foremen, and company management. The safety professional is an advisor/facilitator. Working safely and getting safety help is too expensive. It's cheaper to pay the claims and OSHA fines. Not true. Good safety support helping you prevent one injury or one citation can more than pay for itself. Safety training is only really needed when you hire a new employee. Not true. Safety training is an ongoing process.

Changing to a culture of safety can be done quickly... Maybe/maybe not

Building a strong safety culture requires top-down, bottom-up support and peer-to-peer...this is one area where peer pressure is a positive influence.

The ultimate truth in safety: Nobody can protect the worker as well as the worker can protect him/herself. Train, enforce, equip to do the job safely and afford support throughout each and every job...EVERYBODY WINS.





Raleigh Chapter

On June 3rd, the Raleigh Chapter held a social event at Sports & Social at Fenton in Cary. Special thanks to our social sponsors – Tucker-Kirby, General Shale, & Roanoke Cement. Our August 5th meeting was at Cantina 18 in Raleigh. There were 45+ attendees. Probably a record but I will defer to my elders on that one. Jason Robinson with United Rentals gave a presentation on the United Academy safety platform and how it can keep track of training/certification records. Retired Secretary Donnie Howard was in attendance and was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his 16+ years of service to our chapter and association. Thanks to our out-of-town Association Officers Cliff McGee, Tim Manning, & Ryan Shaver for attending. Special thanks to the social sponsors of the meeting – Oldcastle Adams, White Cap, & Summit Materials. We will meet again on September 9th at Cantina 18. For our program we will have a building skin consultant discussing masonry wall systems. October 7th will be our annual steak dinner at Old Milburnie Fishing Club hosted by Custom Brick & Supply. Our November 4th meeting is in the works, but we are planning to host one final debate between Trump & Harris for the Presidential Election the following day. Stay tuned.

Metrolina Chapter

On August 15th, the Metrolina Chapter had a meeting. Mike Doane opened the meeting and discussed the NCMCA Metrolina Chapter Annual Golf Tournament. The Chapter selected Emerald Lake Golf Club for the fall tournament. Cliff McGee was in attendance and he discussed hiring a new Admin for the chapter in a MPOC position. We will be looking for recommendations from the market on who would be a good fit for this position. Matt Hartsell from Gates Construction, Bruce and Savier from Lynn Ladder, and Mike Prince from McGee Brothers, all talked about the advantages, production, and safety benefits of Mast Climber Scaffolding.

Western Chapter

The Western Chapter met Tuesday, August 15th. There wasn't any business to discuss, but a great time of fellowship was had by all that attended.

Land of the Sky Chapter News WORX Project



The Land of Sky Chapter participated in the WORX Project Summer Event. This event was for High School and Middle School Students from Buncombe County Schools and Asheville City Schools to teach students about the trade jobs.

Their masonry presentation was scheduled every Thursday (once a week) for four weeks (July 11, 18, 25 and Aug 1).

Local masons Donnie Caldwell and Robbie Davis (our new masonry instructor for AC Reynolds High School!!!) and volunteers from Adams Oldcastle took turns working these four days.

The WORX Project is a local nonprofit that helps middle and high school students explore job paths. “Our mission is pretty simple - we're giving middle and high school students in Western North Carolina a chance to learn outside the typical classroom. Instead of just sticking to textbooks, we're focused on hands-on learning, exploring interesting job paths, and diving into exciting activities.”

Their website is: [ABOUT | Worx Project](#)



Eastern Chapter

The Eastern Chapter met August 13 at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. We had Mark Lowdermilk, an architect from the Wilmington area, do a round table discussion, in which over 35 people attended. Our next event will be our second annual Eastern Chapter Fall Fishing Tournament on October 4 - 6. See the following page for how to register.

New Members

Corporate Safety Services

Kirkpatrick Sales, Inc.

Ruiz Masonry, Inc.

Hahn Construction LLC



NCMCA

EASTERN CHAPTER FALL FISHING TOURNAMENT

October 4TH – 6TH
Hatteras, NC

Schedule of events:

*FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

- 4:00 PM: Check-In at Breakwater Inn
- 6:00 PM: Calcutta Sign Up / Social at Breakwater Restaurant
- 7:00 PM: Dinner at Breakwater Restaurant

*SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5TH

- 7:00 AM: Lines In
- 3:00 PM: Weigh in at Odens Dock
- 6:00 PM: Dinner and Awards will be held at the Breakwater Inn
- Dinner to be provided by Summit and Oldcastle

*SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6TH

- Check out

Details/Costs:

- \$750 per person (based on double occupancy)
- \$880 per person (single occupancy)
- \$200 discount if you provide your own fishing vessel (please coordinate)
- Rooms will be provided at the Breakwater Inn
- Fishing charters have been arranged by Traditions Fishing Charters
- Only mason contractor sponsored boats are eligible for the coveted Hatteras Cup
- PLEASE BRING CASH FOR THE CALCUTTA**
- 4 guests per Vessel

To reserve your spot please return registration to mistyj@manningmasonryinc.net

Invoices will be sent at the conclusion of the tournament

Payment can be made to "NCMCA Eastern Chapter"

PO BOX 308

MT. PLEASANT, NORTH CAROLINA 28124

Company / Team: _____

Fishing Participates: Member 1: _____

Fishing Participates: Member 2: _____

Fishing Participates: Member 3: _____

Fishing Participates: Member 4: _____

Individual (TO BE PLACED ON A FISHING TEAM): _____

**NORTH
CAROLINA**



LAY IT ALL ON THE LINE!

OCTOBER 3RD, AT 10:45 AM

BEN KETCHIE PARK, 16745 OLD BEATTY FORD RD, GOLD HILL, NC

CONTACT PATRICK O'TOOLE AT 216-513-9502



SEE THE **SKILL, SPEED,**
& STAMINA, OF THE BEST!



REGISTRATION OPENS SOON Journeymen Masons, win your Regional Series event, and you're on the "ROAD TO LAS VEGAS" to compete in the 23rd Annual SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500® World Championship, for a shot at \$125,000 in cash & prizes including a Kubota RTV-X1130 UTV and a Essik Pro12 mixer!

COME CHECK IT OUT! The SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500 Regional Series competitions are the masonry industry's most exciting, celebrated event highlighting the passion and pride that define the makings of a great mason: **SKILL, SPEED, and STAMINA!** Recognized as the "Super Bowl of Masonry," the thrill and energy of these intense competitions is what drives masons to win a spot on the roster of the 2025 SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500 World Championship contest in Las Vegas at the World of Concrete show!

**MASONRY
 EDUCATION DAY**

8:00 AM - LEARN FROM THE PROS! During Masonry Education Day students and apprentices will visit "Learning Sessions" set up by product producers and suppliers to experience live demonstrations on the masonry industry's most innovative equipment and tools used on jobsites.



JR. SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500®

10:00 AM - THE NORTH CAROLINA JR. BRICKLAYER 500® IS BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MASONRY CRAFTSMEN & WOMEN! The SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500® is no longer all about seasoned vets. Now high school and apprentice students can get in on the action and test their skills against their peers. The competitors are challenged by a 20-minute clock and a 9'- 4" starter wall to showcase their workmanship and determination to compete for cash and prizes while proving they'll soon be ready to claim the title of "World's Best Bricklayer."

REGISTRATION OPENS SOON!

SPONSORS OF THE SPEC MIX BRICKLAYER 500®



NCMCA Golden Anniversary Celebration Series - August 2024

Competition Masonry!

From when he was the masonry instructor at Mount Pleasant High School, NCMCA's Ryan Shaver recalls the school's 2012 graduation ceremony. "In her speech as Student Council President, Aurelia Edwards made this analogy about Mt. Pleasant; 'You know you're from Mt. Pleasant when the tires on your truck cost more than your truck and when the number one sport is Masonry!'"

Anyone who is familiar with Mount Pleasant High School will appreciate Aurelia's sentiment. The school is unsurpassed in winning masonry contests and championships including twelve national gold medals for masonry. But even though Mount Pleasant's masonry program is exceptional, competition masonry in North Carolina is not unique to only Cabarrus County, where Mount Pleasant High's sister school, Central Cabarrus High, can also boast of a large trove of national masonry medals. Competition masonry is a tradition all across the state. North Carolina is known around the country for participation, quality, and the intensity of our masonry contests. Several states are making progress, but right now, no one else comes close. And it's not just at the high school level.

In 2009, retiring Mount Pleasant High School Masonry Instructor Doug Drye was recognized with a plaque from the masonry industry and a reception with all his past national masonry champions present. Top row, left to right: Chad Smith, 1998; Jared Gandy, 2009 NC Skills; Doug Drye; Ryan Shaver, new Mt. Pleasant masonry instructor and 1993 National Champion; Corey Honeycutt, 2009 NC Skills Masonry I - 1st place; Frank Paul, 1998; Heath Drye, 2006; and Josh Kimrey, 2006. Bottom row, left to right: Ben Petrea, 2000; Pete Cieslak, BIA-SE; Cody Alward, 2003 and 2004; Brant Bost, 1996; Shann Womble, 1990; Tim Kidd, masonry instructor, West Stanly High School, 2009 "Douglas Drye Best Masonry Program" award; Paul LaVene, Carolinas Concrete Masonry Association; and Sam McGee, McGee Brothers Company. Doug Drye is the country's most successful masonry instructor based on total National SkillsUSA competition wins.



The North Carolina State Fair Masonry Apprentice Skills Contest in Raleigh has been an annual event ever since Rex Girton won the first one in 1955. Ryan Shaver won the contest as a seventeen-year-old apprentice with C.M. Allmon Masonry in 1992. He's among the many young men (and just "men" so far) who've won the Fair Contest and who have hailed from every corner of the state. More than fifty different masonry firms, including McGee Brothers Company, presently holding the record for the most company apprentice winners at the fair, have entered winners. For most of its history, the contest was sponsored and conducted by the North Carolina Department of Labor. Later, by the NC Department of Commerce. In recent years, ApprenticeshipNC, a division of the North Carolina Community College System, has managed the contest. The contest is hosted by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture who provides the venue and prize money that supplements generous tool prizes made possible by NCMCA member companies and chapters.



Left to right, NC Commissioner of Labor Harry Payne and NC Commissioner Jim Graham help celebrate Jeff Scott's victory at the 2000 North Carolina State Fair's Annual Masonry Apprentice Skills Contest.



Several Past Fair Contest Champions were in attendance at the 2018 North Carolina State Fair Masonry Apprentice Skills Contest. Left to right, Chaz Tomberlin, 2015; Haran McGee, 2013; Lane Mullis, 2014; Ryan Shaver, 1992; James Mangrum, Jr., 1977; and Zackery McGee, 2016.



In recent years, responsibility for securing materials, setup, judging, and cleanup has fallen on NCMCA. Calvin Brodie has chaired the Fair Contest for at least thirty years assisted by vice-chairman and contest master of ceremonies Doug Burton. Both are NCMCA past presidents. Doug says, "We are 'year seventy' with the fair contest this year. We claim it's the longest running contest in the country. No one has disputed that claim, so we'll run with it.

Calvin Brodie has been involved with the contest since it's inception. Maybe not quite that long, but close to it. "I became involved in 1986 and continue to this day."

"We have been in two different locations (at the fair grounds) and for many years competed with the pig races but we have prevailed. Strong industry support from providing materials and manpower to judging and cleanup. Forty apprentices competing in a three-hour contest requires a decent amount of logistics.

"Brodie Contractors, Pinnacle Masonry, and Whitman Masonry for the past twenty-five years have provided most of that support. Ryan Shaver in his previous role as NCMCA's Workforce Development & Training Coordinator has taken the contest to another level and handles most of the logistical duties along with the previously mentioned contractors for equipment and manpower support.

"The event at the state fair every year draws a lot of industry support but there is added public awareness as fair attendees walk by our tent and see our activities. A great day for masonry."

Perhaps not one of the longest-running contests but certainly among the most intense and prestigious, is the annual spring NCMCA Samuel A. McGee Memorial Masonry Apprentice Skills Contest, a competition for NCMCA member-firm working apprentices with less than 6,000 hours and/or three years of apprenticeship. At stake is the coveted "David R. Sigmon Award" for top score. The superior level of talent combined with the short duration of time allotted to build the featured project, two hours versus the usual three hours, make this among the toughest apprentice competitions in the nation. The records of the first competitions are apparently incomplete so the year of the first contest and the names of all the earliest winners are not confirmed. The first recorded winner is Cameron Mullins from Brookshire Masonry in 1982.



Colson Childers of Griffin Masonry won the NCMCA 2023 Samuel A. McGee Memorial Masonry Skills Contest hosted by EastWest Products in Kinston.

Among the earliest winners is NCMCA Past President and Mason Contractors Association of America (MCAA) Vice Chairman Kent Huntley, then an apprentice with McGee Brothers Company. Kent says, "The day I turned seventeen (November 8, 1986), I competed in what is now known as the Sam McGee Memorial Contest. Thankfully, I was able to win which started my passion to help others be able to compete, and to use competitions like this one to recruit young people into our industry. Obviously, winning the contest didn't really change my status as a mason, but it was an amazing opportunity to see how I could stack up with other masons at my level from across the State. In attending the Sam McGee Contest each year, I am always reminded by the current winner of how old I must be, to have my name on the plaque from 1986! Now, thirty-eight years later, I am one of the old guys!" In his "old age," Kent regularly serves as "Head Judge" for various masonry competitions.

The NC State Fair Contest and the McGee Memorial Contest now serve as the qualifiers for North Carolina's entrants in the MCAA's Annual Masonry Apprentice Skills Competition held each year at the MCAA Annual Convention, most recently as part of "Masonry Madness Day" at the Las Vegas "World of Concrete." The MCAA contest had been held for several years before NCMCA finally entered a contestant, 2003 McGee Contest winner Matthew Botts of Masonry Unlimited of Cherryville. Matthew won! Since Matthew's 2004 third year division win at Las Vegas, North Carolina contestants are always "in the hunt" and considered among the favorites. NCMCA contestants have consistently either won or placed in most every MCAA Apprentice Skills Challenge. In fact, North Carolina contestants have had at least one First Place finish in one of the three divisions for every consecutive year since 2014 with multiple division winners on several occasions. Congratulations to Cade Huntley of Huntley Brothers Company for his 2024 win. For a complete list of MCAA Skills Challenge winners:

<https://masoncontractors.azurewebsites.net/Competition/CompetitionWinners>

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In the fall of 2018, the NCMCA Metrolina Chapter hosted Greater Charlotte area masonry students and apprentices that achieved success in masonry competitions across the country in 2017 and 2018. Pictured, bottom left to right, Grant Helms, First Place Winner at the 2018 NC State Fair Masonry Apprenticeship Contest; Rex Huntley, Third Place Winner in the NCMCA 2018 Annual Samuel A. McGee Apprenticeship Skills Contest; Ashton White, 2018 National SkillsUSA Post-Secondary Masonry Champion; Jamison "JK" Huntley, winner of the 2018 David R Sigmon First Place Award at the Sam McGee Contest and 2018 First Place Winner, First Year Division at the



Mason Contractors Association (MCAA) of America Skills Challenge at Las Vegas; Mason Saunders, 2018 National SkillsUSA Secondary Masonry Champion; and Kelby Thornton, who earned the right to represent masonry on the USA WorldSkills team when they compete in Russia in 2019. Back, left to right, Ashton White's masonry instructor Rodney Harrington, West Rowan High School; Metrolina Chapter President Brandon Hartsell; NCMCA's Ryan Shaver; Zack McGee, Fourth Place Finisher in the 2018 Sam McGee Contest; special guest Jeff Buczkiewicz, MCAA Chairman and CEO; Cody Alward, Mason Saunders' masonry instructor, Mount Pleasant High School; Danks Burton, NCMCA Training and Apprenticeship Committee Chair; and NCMCA President Kent Huntley, whose firm, Huntley Brothers Company, took home the "David R. Sigmon Award" traveling plaque for the third year in a row with Huntley Brother's apprentice JK Huntley's 2018 Sam McGee Contest win.

Among the largest masonry contests in the nation is the Annual North Carolina SkillsUSA State Masonry Championship Competition. Traditionally, a hundred or more masonry students from high schools across the state compete in the event that has been held at various locations across the state including Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Winston-Salem and Hickory, but in most recent years, has been held at the Greensboro Coliseum. Conducting the contest is a huge undertaking for the masonry industry. NCMCA is now the lead organization for planning and coordinating with the NC Masonry Instructors Association for the contest, and then executing the springtime event. NCMCA's Ryan Shaver is a past contestant. He won the North Carolina title in 1993.

As he tells it, that led to bigger things. "While in high school, I found myself in a class that would forever change my life and set me on a career path that would prove to be the best for me; "Masonry". I had an instructor that gave us everything we needed to succeed while in high school but being young, I would not realize this until I got in the real world. Doug Drye poured a ton of masonry skills into me and challenged me daily to be better than the day before.

"The first contest that Mr. Drye entered me in was in Fletcher, NC in a horse arena where I had to dig down to firm ground to start my project. Unknown to me, but Mr. Drye put me in that contest knowing I was not ready but he did it for a purpose. When the contest came to an end, I did not finish my project and I was pretty upset when I came off the arena. He looked at me and said, 'How'd you do?' I answered him and said, 'I did terrible. I didn't finish my project.' Mr. Drye responded and said, 'Will that ever happen again?' I said 'NO!' What he did that day was light a fire under me that is still burning today!

"That summer was the turning point in my masonry venture. Mr. Drye got me a job with a small masonry contractor in the area and I had a great time working that summer. I got a ton of experience and it set me up for my senior year. When school started in August, I was excited to show Mr. Drye how much I had improved and learned over the summer! In October, he registered me in the State Apprenticeship contest at the NC State Fair in Raleigh. "When we arrived that morning, I remember seeing grown men with full beards and some were holding children. I asked Mr. Drye, 'Are they competing?'" He said focus on what you have learned and do your very best.

“I built the project that was given to us and finished in the allotted time. When the award ceremony was underway, I was nervous and anxious to see how I did. I am seventeen-years-old! When NC Commissioner of Agriculture Mr. Jim Graham called out my name for First Place, I was extremely excited. I was the First Place Champion in a contest that in 2024, we will be celebrating its seventieth year at the State Fair!

“In April 1993, we were back competing, this time in Greensboro in what is now called the SkillsUSA State Masonry Contest, which was VICA, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America back then. I won the 1993 State Contest! My Mt. Pleasant High School teammates, Jason Harwood and Van Lambert, finished third and fifth place. We went First, Third, and Fifth in the state competition! My Greensboro win earned me a spot to compete in the VICA National Masonry Championship in Louisville, KY that year. I went on to win the Nationals in June of 1993.

“Fast forward twenty-plus years later and I became the masonry instructor at Mt. Pleasant High School when Mr. Drye retired. I tried to instill the same motivation that was put in me through the program to get the students excited about making masonry their career choice when they graduated.

“The fire that my instructor lit under me is still happening in programs across the state today! Our Instructors work to excite our youth and show them a trade that can create a lifelong career and be beneficial for them and their families. Masonry contests across the state are much more than just the one person that finishes first! It is a tool that encourages a student to take it to the next level like was done for me years ago.”

A fourth generation mason from a masonry family, Kent Huntley says, “I have been extremely fortunate to be able to help SkillsUSA North Carolina for the last twenty years or so, and help SkillsUSA to put these competitions on. It is very encouraging to see the youth today compete and experience the same things I was able to do.

“North Carolina has a strong tradition in hosting and producing national winners at the SkillsUSA level, and fares very well competing in the annual MCAA Masonry Apprentice Skills Challenge. Our industry has done a wonderful job of supporting these events, to make it possible for recruitment, excellent careers, for new apprentices, which makes our whole industry stronger! The competitions have continued to become better each year, and it is amazing the support, monetarily and with volunteers, by our industry, which makes this possible! NCMCA has been very instrumental in making these events exciting and keeping each of us involved!”

The annual North Carolina SkillsUSA Masonry Championship has been remarkable in producing National Champions like Ryan. Indeed, the 2024 National Championship was recently won by East Rowan High School’s Mason Ridenhour. Since 1969, North Carolina Masonry State Champions have gone on to win 40 National Masonry Championships for a total medal count of 58 counting Silver and Bronze. No other state comes close. Ryan Shaver’s high school masonry instructor, Doug Drye, retired with the most National Gold Medal wins of any masonry instructor and was inducted into the MCAA Masonry Hall of Fame in 2020. It’s a lot of pressure on the competing North Carolina students. It’s understood that by being from North Carolina, they have a “target” painted on their back.

Besides the major competitions, regional and local student masonry contests take place all around the state and have become successful enough to attract local and state dignitaries to the events. Everyone has a good time but no one doubts the seriousness of the student contestants and their instructors.



Leland Eckard and the Western Carolina Chapter took responsibility for setup and cleanup for the 2001 North Carolina VICA State Conference Masonry Contest in Hickory. (It was "VICA" until 2004 when the name changed to "SkillsUSA.")



Gary Young arrived in a limousine wearing a white tuxedo for the NCMCA's 1988 Journeyman Masonry Competition in Raleigh.

Years ago, NCMCA regularly conducted Journeymen Masonry Competitions. The last one in 1997 at Clemmons was won by Russell Huntley of McGee Brothers Company, with Jerry Eckard of Master Masonry claiming the "Over-Sixty" category win. It was a good show and featured a live radio broadcast, but the journeymen were no less serious about winning than the apprentices and students. Maybe it's time to put "braggin' rights" to the test again with another journeyman contest.

North Carolina holds another masonry superlative: In 1996, twenty-one-year-old Travis McGee of McGee Brothers Company entered into the Guinness Book of World Records for laying 1494 brick in one hour on a Habitat for Humanity house project in Texas.

Laying lots of brick quickly has earned several North Carolina masons recognition and big prizes. Garrett Hood, Tyke Mangum, and Matt Cash each have won the Las Vegas National SpecMix Bricklayer 500 contest for the most brick laid "properly" in one hour. Garrett Hood won the championship twice (2008 and 2010) and won "Top Craftsman" for the "most sellable wall" in 2015. Here's a link to a WFAE-FM radio story from 2009 when McGee Brother Company masons won the Bricklayer 500 for two years in a row. (Then they won again in 2010...)

It all comes around. Ryan Shaver is now co-chairman of the National SkillsUSA masonry competition event and is nationally sought-after as an expert on masonry contests and workforce development. He says, "Thankfully North Carolina has many opportunities statewide for masonry contest for our youth! The industry support in North Carolina for these contests is unmatched anywhere in the United States! My story is an example of the impact can be made to a young person that can change their path for a lifetime."

Now retired from the masonry industry, Lynn Nash says, "Because I was in the Carolinas, I'll bet I've photographed more young people building masonry contest panels than anyone else in the world."

Competition Masonry in North Carolina: Like nowhere else on Earth!

The winners of the September 1987 NCMCA Journeyman Contest in Clemmons were, left to right, Danny Bowman, fourth place; Red McAdams, second place; Russell Huntley, first place; Jerry Eckard, "Over-Sixty" winner (ninth place overall); Ronnie Atkinson, third place; and Darrell Henshaw, fifth place





Oldcastle/Adams Products Company hosted the 2024 Samuel A. McGee Memorial at Waynesville. Left to right, NCMCA Secretary/Treasurer Mike Rogers; Annayeli Dionisio, fourth place, Fred Mason's Masonry; Cade Huntley, second place, Huntley Brothers Company; Alec Huntley, first place and the David R. Sigmon Award, Huntley Brothers Company; Everado Gonzales, third place, Brodie Contractors; O'Connor Leonard, fifth place, Gates Construction Company; NCMCA Land of the Sky Chapter President Micah Rogers; and NCMCA President Cliff McGee. Photograph by C.E. Moser.