



Meet Aaron Benike

President, Benike Construction

SE MN Workforce Development Board Member since 2015



I understand that you are the President of Benike Construction. Why did you decide on a career in the construction industry and who/what influenced you to decide on this career choice?

I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be working in construction. As a young kid, maybe around the age of four, I remember going around to job sites with my dad and as I got older it always seemed fun.

My dad really had an impact and influence on my path into the construction industry. Like a lot of other people, when you see what your parents and other family members do, it is natural to want to do the same thing.

Do you offer apprenticeships/scholarship opportunities? What does that consist of?

At Benike Construction, we offer five different career pathways that include apprenticeships. They are carpenters, laborers, operators, cement finishers, and brick layers. Each craft has their own apprenticeship program.

We don't offer scholarships but we do belong and contribute to organizations that do. A few of those are Rochester Area Builders, Associated General Contractors of MN (AGC of MN), and National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)

Our internship program is something we are really proud of. We offer internships during the summer months that offer project management experience. During the internship students are exposed both the office and field environments.

What are some of the different types of construction workers you or others may be looking for?

We are looking for craft workers who have a trade. The term construction worker is too vague for the skill level we are looking for. In the field, we are looking for carpenters, laborers, operators, brick layers and cement finishers. In the office we have a few different career pathways. We have project managers, estimators, and other business functions such as accounting, marketing, and safety management.

What type of duties/tasks do construction workers perform in your organization?

If you look at the big picture, we work with all different construction trades and design professionals to build an entire building. This ranges from preconstruction services, construction management, to the actual construction of a building.

What are common/average wages for construction careers in this area? How much can someone make?

The construction industry allows craft workers and office personnel to earn a good wage. A Journeyman Carpenter's wage including the benefits package is \$49.61 and their take home wage is 28.81. A Laborer's wage including their benefits package is \$42.51 and their take home wage is \$24.62.

Job outlook/employment trends: What do you predict in terms of the demand for construction workers now/in the future?

We currently have a high demand for craft workers. One of the root causes of the demand is the retirement of experienced craft workers. This demand will continue into the years ahead. One of the great things about union construction is that our employees are earning a good wage and a pension that allows them to retire at a reasonable age. Right now, we have a lot of people that are at or near the age they can retire. They are experienced and hard to replace.

What advice do you have for someone who's thinking about a construction career?

If I was a high school student or young adult and had an interest in building things, I would try to get a job in construction this summer to start learning things and see if building things is something you want to be a part of.

For people that are farther along in their professional life but no construction experience, I would talk to WDI to see if they could participate in the industry exposure program for the carpenters and laborers.

For people who are currently working in the construction industry but are not receiving the training they need to progress in their career, I would contact the Construction Partnership and talk to Jim Kelly.