

Fall Leadership Conference

NUCA's Annual Event Highlights the Importance

Members from across the country gathered in Denver for NUCA's Fall Leadership Conference (FLC). The FLC primarily focused on workforce development and making highly-skilled vo-tech programs a priority in the nation's high schools again.

Keynote Speaker Joe Shaw, principal of Colorado-based Warren Tech High School — arguably the best vo-tech high school in the country — shared information about the school's brand-new pre-apprentice construction trades track, including utility construction. The biggest hurdle, he said, is overcoming resistance from school superintendents and administrators, funding and parents who believe four-year college is the only successful career path option for their children.

Following his presentation, Shaw opened the floor for a lively 45-minute question and answer session primarily focused on the most important things members can do to help bring serious skilled trade programs back into the public school system. At the conclusion of Shaw's presentation, past-chairman Ron Nunes presented a donation to Warren Tech, which Shaw indicated will go toward continued development of its pre-apprentice construction program.

The following day, Warren Tech administrators took attendees on personal tours of the school, allowing members to see students working on the wide range of impressive tech programs housed on the school's main campus.



Joe Shaw, principal of Colorado-based Warren Tech High School, noted that high school kids are sophisticated in their learning, and we must step up and convince institutions that tech schools offer a rigorous curriculum and viable career paths or continue to lose exceptional kids to four-year colleges. It starts at the top — exposing school districts to successful programs, talking about business and student needs for programs like this, as well as bringing the industry to the table and demanding that schools consider these programs.

Talks Workforce Development of Educating Future Industry Leaders



The FLC's Welcome Reception at the Wynkoop Brewery gave attendees the chance to relax and reconnect after arriving in Denver. The event was sponsored by NUCA's Top Level Sponsors: CNA, Caterpillar, HD Supply Waterworks, John Deere, Komatsu, National Trench Safety, United Rentals, Case, Dexter + Chaney, Ditch Witch, Ferguson, McLaughlin, Rain for Rent and Wacker Neuson.



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The FLC also offered plenty of networking opportunities. Executive Roundtables mostly focused on how members are finding workers and the incentives companies use to bring in and keep millennials. The Welcome Reception, Happy Hour and National Partners' Dinner offered networking opportunities for all and gave partners exclusive access to key members and decision makers.