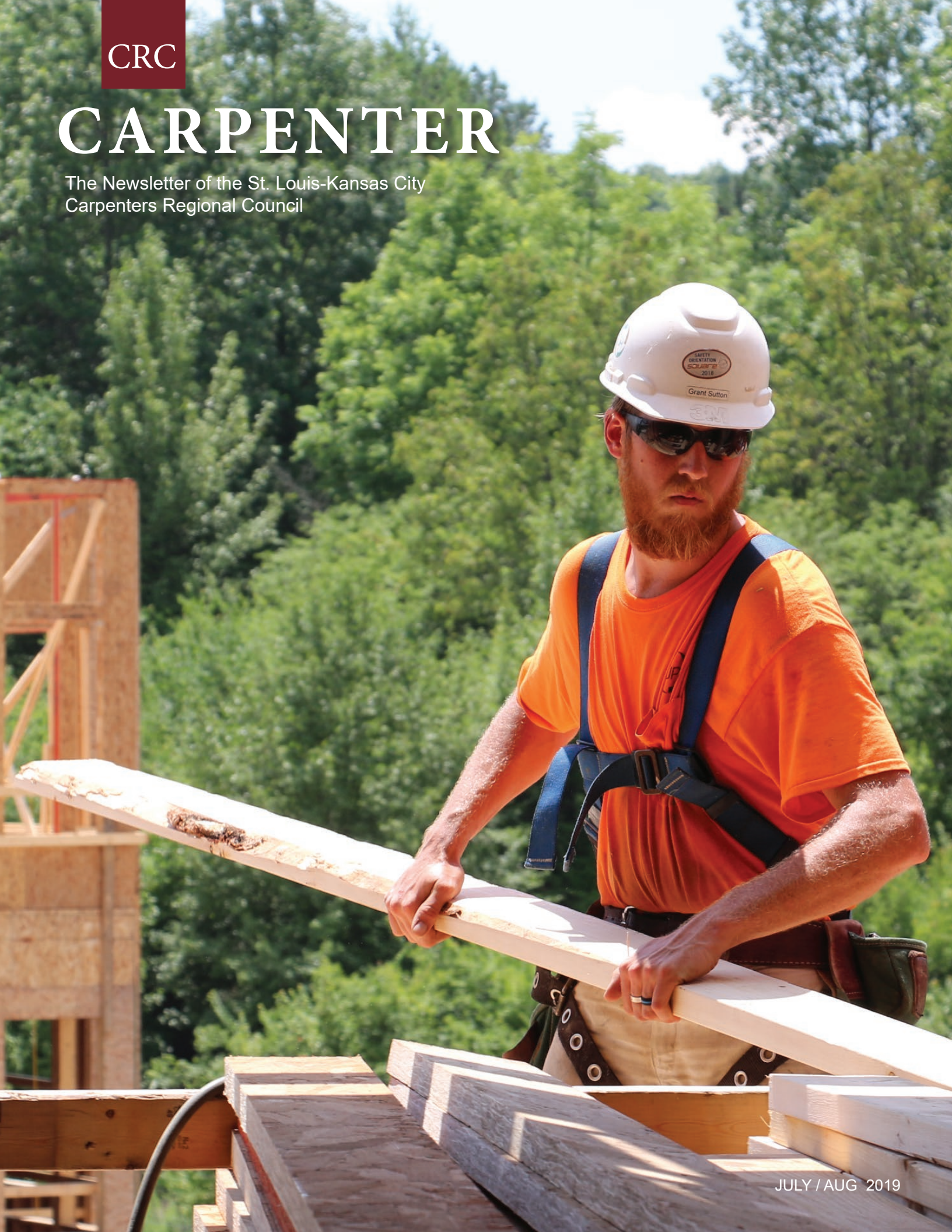


CRC

# CARPENTER

The Newsletter of the St. Louis-Kansas City  
Carpenters Regional Council



JULY / AUG 2019



# Al Bond, Jr.

## Executive Secretary-Treasurer



*Al Bond*



Information is the key to keeping our union strong. It's important that all members know what is happening within the Carpenters, both locally and nationally.

When all of us are up to speed, we can better fight off threats (like "right to work"), respond when action is needed and perhaps most important of all, promote the benefits of union membership and spread the word about our excellent pay, benefits and community service.

As part of our ongoing effort to improve member communication, I'm pleased to announce we'll be publishing two more editions of the *CRC Carpenter* each year. Our magazine, which we launched more than 20 years ago, remains the most popular way members stay up to date on Council activities. From Waterloo to Wichita, our carpenters, business reps, executive team and staff work hard to improve skills, increase market share and build communities big and small.

In the following pages, you'll learn more about the work we're doing to attract high school students to carpentry through our Career Connections program. We're also celebrating the 50th anniversary of the St. Louis Pension. A recent national survey found nearly a quarter of Americans don't think they'll ever afford retirement. The health and longevity of our Pension, with the addition of our annuity this year, proves yet again what a benefit it is to be a union carpenter when so many won't be able to retire with dignity. We're also shining a light on contractors and members in each issue.

We're continuing to fight bad public policy and raise our collective voice for working families. We're helping open the door to more women and minorities to a career in the skilled trades. We continue to evolve with the times to ensure we bring value to our contractors and invest more than ever in making us the best trained tradespeople in our industry. This is a union you can be proud of.

Thanks for being part of our union family, and I hope you enjoy our now bi-monthly *CRC Carpenter*.



STLKCCRC

*The CRC Carpenter  
is a publication  
of the Carpenters  
Communications  
Department*

info@carpdc.org

# IN THE NEWS

## ① PAYROLL FRAUD

Corrupt construction firms steal work away from law-abiding employers. It's done through a practice commonly called misclassification, also called "construction industry tax fraud." Data coming in from national and state studies show fraud is giving irresponsible employers a **30%** or more advantage in labor costs. Fraud in construction is more common than in other industries because of competitiveness, the temporary nature of the work and the multiple layers of contractors and subcontractors. Visit: [StopTaxFraud.net](http://StopTaxFraud.net)



## ② WELLNESS CENTER

The regional council is set for a September opening of its new member wellness center, offering a pharmacy, lab services and even eye exams. Expecting high service volume, plans have already been announced for construction on another health care facility for members in the Kansas City area.

## ③ NATIONAL RTW

Kentucky Senator Rand Paul has introduced a bill to establish a "right to work" law across the United States. It's the second part of a two-pronged approach by conservative lawmakers, which has included getting more state legislatures to pass their own RTW laws. The most recent major battle on that front took place in Missouri in 2018, where citizens voted to undo a "right to work" law signed by Gov. Eric Greitens. Attempts at a national law have failed in the past, but President Donald Trump reportedly has said that he would sign Paul's bill if it reaches his desk.



## ④ MORE SISTERS

The number of women getting into the construction industry spiked in 2018. Last year saw a nearly 18% jump, much of it attributed to increased efforts by labor unions (like our innovative Building Union Diversity program) to actively recruit more women and minorities into the skilled trades.



Dell Hoffmeister

MAKING

A CONNECTION

"I wound up  
absolutely  
loving it."

Created by the Carpenters International Training Fund, this popular program is used in schools across North America to introduce students to the craft and trade of carpentry.



As school budgets get tighter and tighter each year, technical education is often cut from curriculum. Thanks to the hard work of the St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council, however, reintroducing carpentry education in high schools is being made possible through our Career Connections curriculum.

Salem High School in central Missouri debuted the curriculum and an all-new carpentry program for the 2018-19 school year has already seen overwhelmingly positive results.

Last year, the Salem School District implemented the program using Career Connections as a foundation. The program is designed to be two years long, with an internship with a union contractor during the summer in between. Ultimately, the goal is for students to have a job lined up upon graduating high school.

The interest from Salem students was staggering. Administrators expected 10 to 15 in the first year, but 25 enrolled. More than 70 students have expressed interest in the program for next year. "I always tell students, whether you stay in this trade or not, it's something that can benefit you later," Salem's carpentry instructor AJ Tinker said. "It doesn't



AJ Tinker

matter if it's construction or automotive—if you can learn a trade, it will help you. It can definitely make you money but it also makes you a smarter consumer."

Students begin with the very basics: terminology, tools, OSHA and safety. Under Tinker's guidance, students get hands-on experience in the school's shop before the class takes on real-life clients to perform work. Some of the first contract jobs students took on included a two-car garage where students performed all the work: framing, hanging trusses, building decking, roofing, installing windows and doors, running electric and hanging siding. Students are graded not only on the quality of their work, but also on the precision of their plans and materials ordering. Clients pay for materials and a small fee that helps fund the carpentry program.

"It saves the customer money, and it helps sustain the program," Tinker said.



Carpenters Outreach Coordinator RJ Catizon and Business Representative Shane Anselm were instrumental in helping Salem implement Career Connections and they praise the school's leadership for such a successful start. "Salem has a big dream for a small town," Catizon said. "They're the epitome of what a school can and should be when it comes to their carpentry program. They're achieving because they've created such a positive vibe around the program."

Tinker, who previously taught Career Connections at Rolla Technical Institute, also had his students participate in the SkillsUSA carpentry competition, where standout student Dell Hoffmeister won districts, state and qualified for the national competition in Louisville, Kentucky. "Dell is one of those rare students who wants to be involved in everything. Skills come to him easily and he's helpful to other students. He just seems to know what the project is supposed to look like," Tinker said.



Hoffmeister's love of working with his hands started at a young age. "When I was young, my aunt and uncle owned a construction business and I always wanted to help them," he said. "I saw the opportunity in it and thought it would be something I'd like, but I wound up absolutely loving it." In addition to competing at nationals this summer, Hoffmeister interned with TJ Wies Contracting where he's worked on job sites throughout mid-Missouri.

**Career Connections includes training in what employers value most: goal setting, positive attitude, punctuality, teamwork, and taking initiative.**

Thanks to the strong foundation provided by the Career Connections curriculum, quality instruction and strong community support, dozens of students at Salem High School are getting the chance to learn hands-on what a great career carpentry can be.

We hope the program continues to grow, and we hope to see many of these students join our union ranks after graduation.





## Protecting our **FUTURE**

# Pension Plan Hits

## *MILESTONE*

On May 1, the Carpenters Pension Trust Fund of St. Louis (St. Louis Pension Plan) celebrated its 50th Anniversary. It was then that the Board of Trustees made a bold commitment to provide a healthy retirement plan for its members. However, it didn't come easily and long-timers may recall a time when the thought of establishing our own pension benefit was just a dream.

Retired Local 92 (nee Local 1739) member, Don Brussel, Sr., was working with his tools when the St. Louis Pension Plan was approved and became effective in May of 1969. He became a business agent in 1972, and later worked in the Council's Jurisdictional Office and served the union as Leonard Terbrock's assistant until he retired in 1993.

Brussel says he remembers feeling that a pension for Council members was long overdue. For years prior to its implementation, there was grumbling among members to start a pension but it took until '69 to come to fruition.

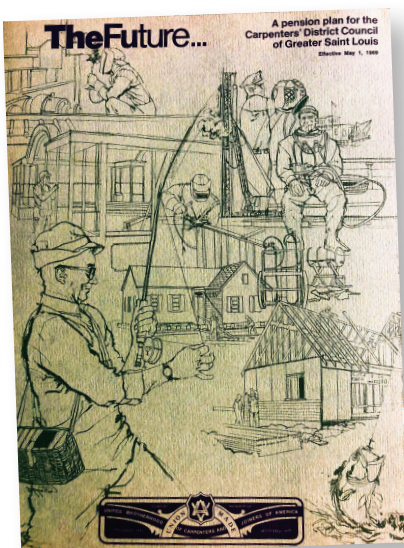
Employer contributions to the St. Louis Pension Plan (and Vacation Plan) began on May 1 of that year with the introduction of the Council's new Stamp Program, the forerunner of today's Estamps. Benefits were purchased weekly as part of the Total Family Security Program, which the Council sought for providing good wages for members to care for their families, excellent health and welfare protection to ensure illness did not destroy financial security, and - with the new pension plan - a benefit to help take care of tomorrow's needs in the years during retirement.

And that it does!

Many members do not consider the positive impact the pension benefits they are earning today will have on their lives until they draw closer to retirement. For most working people, investment in a 401K or alternative pension requires personally

driven retirement planning with no guarantee of a "normal" retirement date. With no member contributions, defined pension benefits grow based solely on hours worked, employer contributions based on those hours worked

### *A Bold New Plan*



**MAY, 1969:** The original booklet outlining our new pension plan for members. Discussions about starting a plan had dragged on for years without much progress.



and market investments. The Carpenters pension plan is so strong that some members can even draw on their benefits as early as age 55, a rare perk and exceptional benefit to our members.

“Let’s face it,” Brussel said. “Carpenters don’t really have to worry about the health of their pension when planning for retirement. It’s just there.”

The St. Louis Pension Plan is a secure retirement plan that few others can match. It has thrived since its inception 50 years ago. In fact, the St. Louis Plan was always over 100% funded until the economic challenges of 2001 and 2008. However, the St. Louis Pension Plan weathered the storms well. Under a new 2007 federal pension law and resulting “zone” classification, the Plan has remained in the healthy “Green Zone,” the healthiest measurement of pension plans. Green Zone plans are pension plans that remain above 80% funded. (By comparison, if a plan falls below 80% funded it is considered “endangered”, or a “Yellow Zone” plan. A plan that falls below 65% funded is considered in “critical status”, or a “Red Zone” plan.)

The recession that hit our nation hard between 2007 and 2012 was truly a depression for the construction industry. The Council and its pension plans were hit hard as well, with lingering effects. Nationwide, money was tight, contractors weren’t building, Man Hours dropped and many members couldn’t find work. The number of active members earning pension service in the St. Louis Plan dropped from 13,693 in 2009 to an all-time low of 8,207 active members in 2016. At the same time, members drawing on their pensions rose from 6,233 to 8,509.

Today, Man Hours are on the rise again, up from a low of 17,866,316 in 2014 to 23,760,694 in 2018. Challenges remain, but having grown to over \$2.5 billion dollars in size, the St. Louis Pension Plan is preparing for the next 50 years of retirement benefits to its members.

An avid pension plan supporter, Brussel has been drawing his pension benefit for nearly 26 years. He attests that his pension has “definitely” provided for him through his retirement years. But he also remembers a time when a year’s worth of union work would add just \$12 to his projected monthly payout, a far cry from the benefits earned today.

“The pension plan has come a long way,” he said. “By and large, you have to learn to crawl before you can walk. It’s a great plan and I don’t know how anyone could find fault in it.”

EST Al Bond believes the Council’s diligence in growing the plan will pay dividends for countless future carpenters.

“We’re fortunate to have such a healthy pension plan, especially when a quarter of Americans feel they’ll never be able to afford retirement,” Bond said. “I have no doubt both the St. Louis and Kansas City pension plans will celebrate 100 year anniversaries, and our members will be able to reap the rewards of retirement for generations to come.”

## IN MEMORIAM

	Local
Gary Barton (44)	
Clyde Borcharding (81)	1839
Jesse Boure (70)	
Robert Brandt (89)	1839
James Branscum (75)	
Clifford Burnett (89)	1310
Kenneth Camp (87)	1310
John Catalano (55)	97
Roy Davis (63)	32
Danny Denson (64)	
James Elfrink (71)	1839
George Evans (80)	1596
David Fester (56)	32
Gary Foerster (57)	
Kenneth Gust (82)	
Donald Hadley (81)	2298
Earl Hart (78)	97
Larry Hayes (76)	1839
James Hill (83)	
John Joseph (68)	
George Kreher (88)	662
Freddie Lane (84)	
Lambert Laramie (71)	32
James McCabe, Jr. (88)	1596
Wendell Menke (64)	1839
Eugene Milzark (96)	1596
Allan Moore (86)	1008
James Murray (61)	2298
Jeffrey Nettles (56)	
Hien Nguyen (61)	32
Richard Niehaus (82)	97
Bruce O’Donnell (62)	1310
Alphons Olliges (84)	664
Perry Parker (88)	1596
Robert Partney (64)	
Harld Reiss (84)	92
Richard Schneider (77)	97
Randy Shelton (66)	1596
Leroy Sieve (71)	1839
Donald Sterling (75)	1839
Paul Stohl (57)	97
Vernie Taylor (93)	97
Roger Thompson (81)	
Earl Trenholm (74)	1596
Kenneth Vail (78)	607
Eugene Wetzel (88)	97
Harry Whitman (85)	32
Thomas Worley (75)	97



*“Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living.”*



# A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

At 93, Tony Gischer of Local 662 looks back on a life serving his country - and his union.



In his southern Illinois home, Tony Gischer proudly displays the photos and commendations that document his long life. Through the decades, the boy from East St. Louis joined the military ("I didn't want to get drafted, so I joined the Navy instead.") got married, had three kids and built a successful career in carpentry.

He recently added another keepsake to his collection of mementos: a rare 75-year pin for membership in the Carpenters union.



"I wanted to be a doctor at first. I took courses in physics and chemistry and I studied Latin," he said. But with his father and three uncles working as professional carpenters, Gischer was eventually convinced that his true talents and passion would be found in following in the family's footsteps.

He still remembers his starting wage in the 1940s: \$1.05 an hour.

"I didn't get rich, but I did well for myself. I can drive all over and put my hands on work that I did —bridges, houses, subdivisions, commercial businesses. I've had a lot of experience. And in those days we learned everything connected to carpentry. Trim work, cabinet work, millwrighting, we did it all."

The skills Gischer learned proved profitable. He never had to hire someone to do repairs around the house, and he got so good at carpentry that he started buying inexpensive properties, fixing them up and selling them for a nice return.

A long career will inevitably see many changes, and construction has been no exception. Gischer cites the proliferation of power tools in the 1950s as the biggest change he witnessed during his time on the job. "When we got power tools, the guys didn't want to use them. They said the speed is going to ruin carpenter work, but look at all we can do with them now."

After more than 40 years, Gischer hung up his tools and retired in 1990. He credits the union's outstanding benefits for helping him to care for his ailing wife in the last years of her life and allowing him to live comfortably in a gratifying retirement that has lasted close to 30 years.

"It's been very good to me. It was hard work but I loved it. I still love it."







*Started in 2008, International Builders & Consultants performs work throughout the Kansas City area with a staff of 75. Helmed by Brandy McCombs, IBC has the unique distinction of being a woman owned company in the traditionally male-dominated construction industry.*



## CONTRACTOR SPOTLIGHT

### **This year your company split into IBC Carpentry and IBC Traffic. Why the switch?**

I wanted to get into highway striping, traffic control, road construction and that kind of stuff. I thought to myself, what if 2008 comes again and the market tanks and we're only doing interior finishing? Nobody is going to survive that downturn again, so where else could I possibly make money? To create another revenue stream, I diversified and started that division.

### **You don't do residential?**

No, I want to stay in commercial. The end users are very different and in residential carpentry they tend to be a little too picky and more difficult to please.

### **How large is your company footprint?**

I try to stay in the Kansas City area because it's really hard to manage things from far away. But we are doing some small jobs right now in Florida, Arkansas and Kansas, and we might be doing some work shortly in Denver.

### **What does the Kansas City construction market look like right now?**

I don't see it slowing down. I didn't think I would be saying that a while ago, which is good but it's also bad because everyone is scrambling to find good workers, especially in the skilled trades like carpentry. You've got to have people who know what they're doing but it's getting harder and harder. I see Kansas City having a large amount of growth.

### **Have you run into any difficulties being a woman working in what is largely a man's business ?**

I'm not going to lie, it was a little rocky in the beginning. I'm a woman coming into their territory and they don't know me from Adam – or Eve as it were. But really, I don't feel that I've been treated any differently. I'm sure there were some jobs I got because I'm a woman-owned company, but I don't like people using that as a crutch. We made our reputation by having good workers. When my competitors could not complete a project they called me and we bailed them out. Our reputation in the local construction business outweighs being a woman-owned company.

**“Everyone is scrambling to find good workers, especially in the skilled trades like carpentry.”**

### **Describe your relationship with the Carpenters.**

I didn't have the qualifications to train the help that I needed, and the Carpenters put them through that training for me. Our relationship has grown over the years. Rocky Kloth, Joe Hudson and all the other guys, I like them and they like me. They're always around and willing to help so that all of us can succeed together.

## Congrats New Grads

### Belleville Carpenters

James Alvarez  
Jacob Bechtold  
Brent Blacharczyk  
Matthew Cook  
Connor Duckworth  
Alec Haberer  
Tyler Slaten  
Steven Tate

### Kansas City Carpenters

Chad Abbott  
Richard Baker  
Hunter Burgess  
Ryan Cannon  
Christopher Cook  
Dominic Davie  
Darren Davis  
Logan Dixon  
Tyler Heckman  
Abraham Hull  
Colby Kramer  
Brent Lewis  
Nathan Livengood  
Juan Marron  
Bryan Parker  
Joseph Schaller  
Nathan Setzer  
Leland Stewart  
Dale Thomas  
Nathan Yaghoubian

### Kansas City Millwrights

Roger Allen  
Christopher Bybee  
Justin Gentry  
Steven Hill  
Christian Kaullen  
Austin Nickell

### St. Louis Cabinet Makers

Logan Albers  
Richard Albers  
Andrew Ingold

### St. Louis Floorlayers

Jonathan Bequette  
Jacob Jungewaelter  
Thomas Pride IV  
Drew Shaffer

### St. Louis Millwrights

Jacob Bauer

### St. Louis Carpenters

Anthony Benskin  
Daniel Beul  
Chase Blomberg  
Russell Boys  
Noah Bradley  
Zachary Brakefield  
Lee Callahan  
James Calvin  
Ethan Calvin  
Rosario Catarinicchia  
William Chaney IV  
Patrick Dougherty  
Brandon Farmer  
Ryan Fellhauer  
Kistrophe Free  
Dominic Gildehaus  
Nicholas Harper  
Jeremy Hill  
James Hoffmeyer  
Glenn Hogancamp  
Michael Johnson  
Samuel Katzung  
Terry Kim, Jr.  
Austin Koenig  
Andrew Kroupa  
Adam Lang  
Graham Leslie  
Kenneth Lomax  
Zachary McCauley  
Cody McKee  
Kody Meyer  
Ryan Myers  
Kevin Nichols  
Clayton Peterson  
Timothy Plume  
Cody Ritzel  
Paul Scheffler  
Timothy Schneider  
David Schultz  
Mitchell Schwoeppe  
Adam Sitzler  
Clayton Steins  
Stephen Tune  
Austin Twellman  
Kevin Usery  
Richard Vazquez  
Danty Vogel  
Austin Walker  
James Watkins  
Bryan Whitby, Jr.  
Douglas Williams  
Brenden Witte  
Alex Wunderlich

*Training school schedules can now be found online at [carpdc.org](http://carpdc.org).  
Go to the “Members” tab and click on “Training.”*

## Welcome New Contractors

B & R Modular    Bailey Consulting INC    Bott Mechanical Co. INC    Bridging Families to Communi-  
ties and Beyond    Cowling Garbo Concrete LLC    Pro Expo Exhibits LLC    Sports Surfacing INC





“  
**IN MY  
WORDS**  
”

**Caitlyn**  
Cowley-O'Donnell

Local 97

I've been in the apprenticeship program for a little over two years. Before I worked carpentry, I went to school for psychology but quickly realized my degree wasn't worth the money I had spent on it when I entered the work force.

I liked physical labor jobs, really wanted to learn how to build a house, and liked working with my hands.

**I took a chance, joined the apprenticeship and have never looked back.**

If anyone had told me five years ago that I would be working my dream job building and remodeling homes, I would have never believed them. I had no experience, but the Carpenters Union is set up to build successful carpenters.

My days are never the same or monotonous, and I'm always being challenged. Our wages and benefits are just the icing on the cake for me.

**CARPENTERS HEALTH FAIRS 2019**

**BE YOUR OWN  
SUPERHERO!**

MEANWHILE IN A CITY NEARBY...  
**SAVE THE DATE!**

**WELLBEING  
NOW!**

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**KANSAS CITY HEALTH FAIR**  
SATURDAY, 9/21  
8A - 12P  
FOLLOWED BY KC LOCAL PICNIC 12P - 3P

**MAMMOGRAM VAN EVENTS**

KC	FRIDAY, 11/22	MAMMOGRAM SCHEDULING
STL	TUESDAY, 9/24	KC 816.444.9989
STL	SATURDAY, 9/28	STL 800.600.3606

**St. Louis Health Fair**  
SATURDAY, 9/28  
8A - 12P  
INCLUDES WELLNESS CENTER TOURS

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DAY AT THE  
BALLPARK**

**ROYALS vs ORIOLES**  
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\$34 Tickets • Call: (816) 960-8128

**CARDS vs GIANTS**  
MONDAY  
SEPT. 2 @ 1:15

**\$30 Left Field Loge Tickets Include:**

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- Complimentary Beer & Soda
- Souvenir Cup

[Cardinals.com/Carpenters](http://Cardinals.com/Carpenters)

**St. Louis-Kansas City Carpenters Regional Council**  
**1401 Hampton Ave.**  
**St. Louis, MO 63139**

