

# Southwest News

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[smartswgcr.org](http://smartswgcr.org)



## APPRENTICESHIP

Investing in our future





Southwest News

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SMART SWGCRC Headquarters

7551 Callaghan Rd., Ste. 320  
San Antonio, TX 78229  
Phone: 210.202.3221  
E-mail: [office@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:office@smart-swgcrc.org)  
Web: [smartswgcrc.org](http://smartswgcrc.org)



**Our mission** is to equip the next generation of sheet metal workers with a combination of skills and technology from the past, present, and future to ensure a secure future for members and employers alike.

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President's Report

By Bill Kenyon

Apprenticeship programs in the sheet metal workers industry play a crucial role in shaping the future of our skilled trade. These programs offer a structured path for aspiring sheet metal workers to gain hands-on experience while learning essential skills.

A significant aspect of our programs is the collaboration between apprenticeship schools and industry employers, ensuring that the curriculum aligns with current industry standards and practices.

Many of our apprenticeship schools across the country offer specialized training for sheet metal workers. These institutions provide a comprehensive curriculum that covers vital topics such as blueprint reading, metal fabrication, welding techniques, and safety protocols. The blend of classroom instruction and practical, on-the-job training allows apprentices to develop a deep understanding of our trade.

Our apprenticeship schools, along with local unions and our industry partners, provide apprentices with access to experienced mentors. This relationship not only enhances the learning experience, but also helps our students build valuable networks within the industry. As apprentices progress through our programs, they often receive additional certifications that can enhance their employability and advancement opportunities.

Apprenticeship programs are essential for addressing the skilled labor shortage in the sheet metal industry. By investing in education and training, apprenticeship schools help cultivate a new generation of skilled workers who are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the industry. In addition to technical skills, apprenticeships instill a strong work ethic and professional responsibility.



Financial Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By Edward "Eddie" Gonzalez

The foundation of any organization must be strong if it hopes to thrive for another 137 years. Our apprenticeship program is exactly that, a foundation where we train and develop the future of our trade through classroom instruction, hands-on shop work, and on-the-job training. This training typically takes place in the evenings after a full day's work or, in some areas, on Saturdays.

This year, we conducted contract negotiations throughout SWGCRC's jurisdiction, with a primary focus on increasing apprentice wage percentages and, in some areas, introducing an additional tool allowance benefit. As a result of these negotiations, we also secured increased contributions to local training center funds.

These additional resources allow us to continue offering state-of-the-art facilities and top-tier equipment to the men and women referred to our sheet metal contractor partners.

Apprenticeship programs in the sheet metal workers industry are vital for the individuals entering the trade and the industry as a whole. Our apprenticeship schools play a pivotal role in this process, providing education, mentorship, and opportunities that empower apprentices to succeed in their careers. As our industry continues to evolve, these programs will remain key in fostering a skilled workforce.

Benefit Resources  
(Local 68 members ONLY)

8441 Gulf Freeway, Ste. 304  
Houston, TX 77017  
281.500.4404  
[ssatpa.com/member-services/group-page/ttph](http://ssatpa.com/member-services/group-page/ttph)



SMOHIT Helpline:

Available 24/7 at  
**877-884-6227**  
to members and their families  
throughout the United States  
and Canada.  
Free, confidential, voluntary.

When to call?

Call for just about anything  
that gets in the way of you  
being your best self.  
**911** for all medical emergencies  
**988** Suicide and Crisis Lifeline



Be 4 All

[smart-union.org/our-priorities/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/be4all](http://smart-union.org/our-priorities/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/be4all)

Member  
resources

Resources to help you grow your skills  
and navigate your career.

Southern Benefits  
(Locals 54, 67, & 214  
members ONLY)

P.O. Box 1449  
Goodlettsville, TN 37072  
615.859.0131  
[southernbenefit.com](http://southernbenefit.com)

Local 214  
Local Pension Fund  
(Baton Rouge members ONLY)

225.927.3930

SMART National  
Pension Fund

3180 Fairview Park Dr., Ste. 400  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
703.739.7000  
800.231.4622  
[smwnpf.org](http://smwnpf.org)

SASMI Trust Fund

3180 Fairview Park Dr., Ste. 150  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
800.858.0354 / 703.739.7250  
[office@sasmi.org](mailto:office@sasmi.org)  
[sasmi.org](http://sasmi.org)

Job Bank

[smart-union.org/job-bank](http://smart-union.org/job-bank)



A Local 214 apprentice welds their Industrial project.



# Local 54 Houston & Sabine Area Sheet Metal Training Center



Chris Romo  
Houston Area

Located in Waller and Orange, Texas, the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center holds a Platinum accreditation level and offers nine instructors, led by Training Director Chris Romo. The HASMTC is affiliated with—and funded through—Houston and Sabine Community Colleges. The center offers a four-year program, and currently enrolls 90 apprentices who attend classes two nights per week, with classes starting at 5:30 p.m. The apprentices log 224 hours per year in training. Journeyman update classes, a.k.a. Continuing Education Units, are offered from February to April. The HASMTC is housed in a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility, which was completed only three years ago. Its latest equipment addition is a plasma table, which was installed last semester. The center is considering adding a laser welder in the future. The Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee meets on the last Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m. Here's a look at our Houston and Sabine area instructional staff:

## Chris Romo Training Director, Instructor

Chris Romo has been teaching the trade for seven years. His current class load includes Math I and II, and First Aid/CPR/AED. His special skills include engineering and business. Chris has been a SMART member for seven years. In his downtime he enjoys watching sports, traveling, and reading. You can reach Chris at 713.869.5843 or [chromo@smart54jtc.org](mailto:chromo@smart54jtc.org).

## Elva Rodriguez Administrative Assistant

Elva Rodriguez has served as administrative assistant for 15 years. In her



Elva Rodriguez  
Houston Area



Ken Krustchinsky Sr.  
Houston Area

free time, she enjoys gardening, working out and exercising, dancing, and crocheting. Elva can be reached at 713.869.5843 or [erodriguez@smart54jtc.org](mailto:erodriguez@smart54jtc.org).

## Ken Krustchinsky Sr. Instructor, Houston Area

Ken Krustchinsky has taught the trade for 33 years. He instructs welding, drafting, layout, plans and specs, AC/REF, industrial, architectural, SMACNA, hoisting and rigging, soldering, and PVC welding. Not surprisingly, he specializes in industrial welding. Ken holds a B.A. in Labor Education, and has held a CWI for 29 years and OSHA certification for 30 years. He has his First Aid/CPR/AED/Infant/Child card, holds



Don Viningre  
Houston Area



Ed Shelton  
Houston Area

various welding certifications, plus hoisting and rigging. Ken has 20 years as a sheet metal superintendent, 24 years as a welding superintendent, spent nine years on the LU 54 executive board, and was an all funds trustee and business agent before retiring. He's been a SMART member for 57 years. He enjoys metalworking, fishing, hunting, and mentoring.

## Don Viningre Instructor, HASMTC

Don Viningre has taught the trade for 27 years. He teaches TAB apprentice, journeyman all levels, and certification

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Dustin Ivy  
Houston Area



Joseph Klotz  
Houston Area



Trey Berryman  
Sabine Area



Charlie Riley  
Sabine Area



Tony DeMary  
Sabine Area

SCI, where he's worked for six years. He's been a SMART member for 10 years. In his free time, Dustin enjoys hiking, woodworking, working out, karaoke, and listening to audio books.

## Joseph Klotz Instructor, HASMTC

Joseph Klotz teaches plans and specs at the Houston area location. He has worked in all aspects of HVAC. His days are spent as an estimator with Gowan, where he's been for 25 years. He's been a SMART member for nine years. Joseph lists farming (corn, cattle) and music as his hobbies.

## Trey Berryman Instructor, Sabine Area

Trey Berryman has been teaching the trade for five years. His current focus is welding instruction, with an emphasis on industrial sheet metal welding. Berryman's employer was CWI; he was with the company for 24 years. He's retired, now, after 41 years as a SMART member. His hobbies include fishing and farming.

## Charlie Riley Instructor, Sabine Area

Charlie Riley has been teaching the trade

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## LU 54, from p. 4

preparatory classes; HVAC Fire Life Safety Levels 1 and 2, and Supervisor, both levels; HVAC Service Theory and Laboratory; HVAC Fire Life Safety pilot classes at TAB conferences and local unions; and classes for several SMACNA contractors and fire officials. Don has numerous special skills, including sheet metal journeyman; HVAC systems installation and service; TAB of environmental systems, including technician and supervisor; HVAC Fire Life Safety supervisor, technician and theory for both disciplines Damper Testing and Repair and Smoke Control Systems Testing and Repair, including Stair Pressurization Systems. He also was one of the original creators of the HVAC Fire Life Safety Program for SMWIA ITI and NEMI programs. He holds numerous certifications, including a B.A. in Labor History and Labor Studies; HVAC Contractors License Class A Unlimited, with Commercial Refrigeration and Process Heating and Cooling endorsements; certified Professional Retired NEBB in Air and Hydronics; TABB International certification Board of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association; TABB supervisor and technician in Air and Hydronics (retired); HVAC Fire Life Safety Level One, Level Two Certified Supervisor and Technician (retired); and he's ITI-certified as TAB and Service Instructor. Before retiring, Don spent 47 years with Gowan Sheet Metal and Mechanical Services Inc. He's been a SMART member for 58 years. He's been an apprentice, a TAB Technician, a foreman, a general foreman, a superintendent, a project manager, and an operations manager. As a combat veteran, Don spends much of his spare time contributing to veterans organizations.

## Ed Shelton Instructor, HASMTC

Ed Shelton has taught the trade for 30 years. He instructs AutoCAD and Basic



A welding class at the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center.



A duct-fabrication class at the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center.



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for 17 years. At the Sabine-area JATC, he teaches the 2nd-year, 3rd-year, and 4th-year classes apprentice classes. His special skills include sheet metal pattern drafting. Riley's hobbies include watching his grandkids' sports, guns, bikes.

**Tony DeMary**  
*Instructor, Sabine Area*

Tony DeMary has taught the trade for 17 years. He teaches 1st-year and 2nd-year apprentice classes.



Derek Long, Local 54 apprentice contest competitor.



A sheet metal layout class at the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center.



An AutoCAD computer class at the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center.



Another layout class at the Houston Area Sheet Metal Training Center.

## Local 67 San Antonio Area Sheet Metal Training Center



Doug John  
San Antonio



Stephanie Mills  
San Antonio



Cesar Carreon  
San Antonio



George Plane  
San Antonio



Chris Vrana  
San Antonio



Ralph Vera III  
San Antonio

The San Antonio Area is home to the primary for Sheet Metal Workers Local 67 JATC, while the Austin Area serves as a secondary training center. With its Platinum accreditation level, the JATC has 11 instructors and is an AWS Accredited Test Facility.

The center has a total of 78 apprentices enrolled in the program:

- 1st Year: 28 apprentices
- 2nd Year: 24 apprentices
- 3rd Year: 16 apprentices
- 4th Year: 10 apprentices

Apprentices are required to complete four years of classroom-related training, totaling 800 hours. This includes 200 hours per year of evening classes held from September through May, with five classes scheduled per month from 5 to 9:15 p.m., plus 7,200 hours of on-the-job training with a signatory contractor.

The JATC is affiliated with Excelsior College through the National College Credit Recommendation Service. Funding comes via a wage allocation as outlined in its CBA between members and signatory employer contractors. Those funds are paid directly to the LU 67 JATC Trust Fund, and are designated for member training.

The center offers journeyperson update classes.

The JATC boasts the latest equipment, including a new laser welder, a Trimble Robotic Total Station, a software update for its AUTODESK 2025, and a mobile training/recruitment lab. The JATC also is developing a new training center, which is slated to include a computer lab, a TAB lab, a service lab, a welding lab, a fire and life safety lab, and a state-of-the-art laser cutting system.

Planned projects for the current facility in order to prepare it for sale are:

- Sealing tilt wall separations
- Obtaining a price estimate for roof repairs

Cleaning the front windows and side window covers

The current JATC members are Mark Garcia, SWGCRC; and Ben Christian (M&M Metal). A third seat is currently vacant.

The San Antonio JATC holds meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month, beginning at 2 p.m.

**Doug John**  
*Training Director, San Antonio*

Doug John has been teaching the trade for 35 years. He teaches 4th Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

Doug has a range of special skills, including ITI Instructor Development, ITI Welding Supervisor, ITI Test Supervisor, ITI Advanced Welding Technologies, OSHA 500A, OSHA 510A, OSHA 502, ITI TotalTrack for Administrators, ITI Bias and Belonging for Coordinators, ITI TotalTrack for Instructors, ITI Coordinator Continuing Professional Instruction, ITI Distance Learning Resources for Instructors, ITI Grinding and Polishing, Trimble XR10 HoloLens Training, and ITI Ventilation Verification/IAQ Instructor Resource Workshop.

He is a Certified Welding Educator and a Certified Welding Inspector.

Doug has been a SMART member for 43 years. In his free time, he enjoys spending family time with his wife, sons, and dogs; hunting; fishing; camping; boating; and grilling.

Doug can be reached at 210.349.3350 (office), 210.284.8166 (cell), and djohn@smart67jtc.org.

**Stephanie Mills**  
*Administrative Assistant, San Antonio*

For the past 18 years, Stephanie Mills has built a remarkable career in the construction

industry.

Her journey began at Mueller & Wilson, Inc., where she started as the front desk receptionist. "Over 13 years, I gained invaluable experience, advancing into various roles within the Accounting Department and as a Service Department dispatcher."

Stephanie's expertise and dedication eventually led to her current position, where she recently celebrated her five-year anniversary. In this role, she blends her passion for financial and accounting tasks with her administrative skills, contributing to every aspect of the apprenticeship program.

"Working alongside our Training Coordinator, Doug John, I thrive on the daily learning opportunities and enjoy collaborating on innovative ideas to enhance the apprenticeship experience for students and contractors," says Stephanie. "I am committed to supporting the students who enter the sheet metal trade, and advocating for their contributions to the construction industry."

Stephanie can be reached at 210.349.3350 and smills@smart67jtc.org.

**Cesar Carreon**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Cesar Carreon has been teaching the trade for 10 years. He teaches 2nd Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

Cesar's special skills include III Instructor Development, ITI Total Station for Instructors, III Advanced Instructor Development 201-301, OSHA 503, OSHA 502, OSHA 501 B, OSHA 511, ITI Reading Plans and Specs - Curriculum Overview, Trimble XR10 HoloLens Training, III Distance Learning Resources for Instructors, Revit/ Autodesk Fabrication CADmep, Inventor/ Fusion 360/ 3D Printing, Rigging Instructor Training, and Total Station/

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Fredrick Shelley  
San Antonio

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Scanner/BIM 360 Instructor Training. He also holds an OSHA Instructor certification.

Cesar has been a SMART member for 20 years. He is a lead detailer with Dynamic Systems Inc., where he has been employed for 12 years.

He enjoys woodworking in his down time.

**George Plane**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

George Plane has taught the trade for 11 years. He teaches 3rd Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

George's special skills include ITI Instructor Development, ITI TotalTrack for Instructors, AutoCAD/Fabrication Instructor Training, Revit/Navisworks Instructor Training, Distance Learning Resources for Instructors, and ITI Welding Instructor Training.



A 4th year JATC class from Local 67.



Tyler Walker  
San Antonio



Raymond Gomez  
San Antonio



Anita Friesel  
San Antonio

He has been a SMART member for 19 years.

George is a project coordinator with the VDC Group at Dynamic Systems Inc., where he has worked for 12 years.

When he's not hard at work, George enjoys camping, fishing, and helping others.

**Chris Vrana**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Chris Vrana has taught the trade for 20 years. He teaches 1st Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

His special skills include ITI Instructor Development, Trimble XR10 HoloLens, AutoCAD, and ITI Total Track for Instructors. He holds an AutoCAD Instructor certification.

Chris has been a SMART member for 30 years. For the past 31 years, he has worked for Mueller and Wilson, where he currently serves as a lead estimator and project

manager. His hobbies include golf and hunting.

**Ralph Vera III**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Ralph Vera has taught the trade for five years. He teaches the 1st Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

His special skills include ITI Instructor Development, Trimble XR10 HoloLens, ITI Distance Learning Resources for Instructors, AutoCad/ Fabrication, ITI TotalTrack for Instructors, and ITI Basic Service Technician Instructor Training.

He is a certified EPA 608 Universal Technician.

Ralph has been a SMART member for 12 years. For the past seven years, he has worked as a lead virtual designer for Brandt.

His hobbies include baseball and the outdoors.

**Fredrick Shelley**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Fredrick Shelley has taught the trade for two years. He teaches 2nd Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes.

His special skills include ITI Instructor Development, and he is certified for the all-terrain forklift, industrial forklift, scissor lift, boom lift, and scaffolding.

Fredrick has been a SMART member for 13 years. He has worked for Brandt for the past 12 years, where he currently serves as a general foreman.

For hobbies, Fredrick pursues, fantasy football and fishing. He also enjoys hanging out with his grandson.

**Tyler Walker**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Tyler Walker has been teaching the trade for one year. He teaches 3rd Year Apprentice and Member Upgrade classes. His special skills include ITI Instructor Development, and he holds an OSHA 30 certification.

Tyler has been a SMART member for 12 years. For the past six years, he has worked for M&M Metals, where he currently serves as an estimator/project manager.

In his downtime, Tyler enjoys going to the gym, grilling, and playing sports with his kids.

**Raymond Gomez**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Raymond Gomez has taught the trade for three years. He teaches 4th Year Apprentice

See LU 67 JATC, p. 9

LU 67 JATC, from p. 8

and Member Upgrade classes.

His special skills include ITI Instructor Development, ITI Welding Instructor Training, ITI Laser Welder, ITI TAB Learning 101, Training in CPR and First Aid, and 30 hours of OSHA training.

His certifications include D9.1 for welding sheet metal, D1.1 FCAW for welding structural steel, and LSO (Laser Safety Officer) for the laser welder at the San Antonio facility.

Raymond has been a SMART member for 10 years. For the past two years, he has worked as a journeyperson at Dynamic Systems Inc.

Raymond's hobbies include spending time with family, traveling, barbecuing, swimming, river tubing, kayaking, playing video games, and watching movies.

**Anita Friesel**  
*Instructor, San Antonio*

Anita Friesel has taught the trade for six years. She teaches Member Upgrade classes.

Her special skills include ITI Instructor Development, ITI Fire Life Safety Level 1 and Level 2 Instructor, ITI Direct Digital Controls for Instructors, ITI TAB Teachers and Teaching, ITI ICRA Instructor Training,

NAFA Certified Technician, OSHA 500A, OSHA 510A, and OSHA No. 502. She holds certifications for Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST), OSHA Authorized Construction Trainer, HSI Level 1 Instructor, and Excavation Competent Person Safety Training.

Anita has been a SMART member for 21 years. For the past 6.5 years, she has served as a senior safety manager at Brandt.

Her hobbies include hiking, fishing, kayaking, and loteria night with family. ✨

**Local 67 Austin Area Sheet Metal Training Center**



Roman Perez Jr.  
Austin Area



Krista Blackford  
Austin Area



Dennis Messex II  
Austin Area



Tony Flores  
Austin Area/San Antonio



Fernando Guerrero  
Austin Area



Jonathan Nunez  
Austin Area

The Sheet Metal Workers Local 67 Austin Area JATC holds a Platinum accreditation level. It offers a four-year program and teaches 105 apprentices, who usually attend one night per week, although some classes are held two nights per week. Classes typically run from 5 to 9 p.m. Journeyperson update classes are offered during the summer months, as needed or required.

The JATC has no college affiliation; rather, its funding source is Johnson City Independent School District. It also receives funding via an employer contribution of 71 cents for each hour a member works in the Austin Area CBA.

Fifty-two first-year apprentices are split into two classes, A and B. Class A attends classes primarily on Mondays and a secondary class on Wednesdays. Class B attends classes primarily on Thursdays and a secondary night on Tuesdays.

Second-year apprentices attend classes on Tuesdays, with a secondary night on Wednesdays.

Third-year apprentices attend classes primarily on Wednesdays, with a secondary night on Tuesdays.

Fourth-year apprentices attend classes primarily on Thursdays, with a secondary

night on Mondays.

The secondary night for all apprentices varies from week to week. All apprentices are required to have 200 class hours per year; the JATC schedules 50 four-hour class nights per year.

The training center aims to have its state-of-the-art IPG laser welder up and running this year inside its custom-built enclosure. The welding lab also has been upgraded with new Miller Dynasty welding machines and a 4x8 Flextur welding table. It also added a 5-foot, 10-gauge power roll and a power roller that can roll round and square tube, pipe from 3/4 inch to 2 inches, angle iron, and channel the easy and hard way. It also has upgraded its computer lab with 16 new work stations and brand-new computers and computer systems, delivering PCs that can handle the workload. Apprentices are using Revit these days, which is a more widely used version of AutoCAD.

Other improvements to the facility include remodeled bathrooms, updated welding booths, and new security cameras throughout the building, as well as an auto-locking front door. Further improvements include asphalt in the parking lot, new exterior paint, new flooring in the offices,

painted flooring in the breakroom and hallways, and new interior paint in the offices and classrooms.

JATC members include James L. May, SWGCRC; Leroy T. Sensat, Young and Pratt; Aaron Scott, TCS Mechanical-Austin; Adam Roche, DSI; Scott Rostro, DSI; and Daniel Anderson.

Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 5 p.m. Every other month, a second meeting is held on the second Thursday at 2 p.m.

Here's a look at this JATC's staff:

**Roman Perez Jr.**  
*Training Director, Instructor*

Roman Perez has taught the trade for 17 years. He teaches 1st Year Apprentice, 3rd Year Apprentice, and 4th Year Apprentice classes.

His special skills include AutoDesk Certified Instructor, American Welding Society Certified Welding Inspector, Authorized OSHA Outreach Trainer-CFR1910, General Industry and CFR1926-Construction OSHA 10 and 30, Project

See LU 67 JATC, p. 12





**Local 67:** From left, Regional Manager James May Jr., San Antonio Training Director Doug John, San Antonio Apprentice Ethan Gonzales, Austin Apprentice Cooper Ross, Austin Apprentice Rebecca Green, Austin Training Director Roman Perez, Instructor Dennis Messex II, Organizer Ralph Gomez.



Apprentice Contest instructions



**Local 68:** From left, Apprentices Davis Dempsey, Jason Waters, and Jason Delgado; Training Director Jay Huckabee, Regional Manager Curtis Cantrell, Instructor Michael Johnson, Organizer Yadriel Carrasquillo.



Getting down to business.



From left, Organizer Rafael Rivas, Regional Manager Armando Aguirre, apprentices Derek Long and Michael Cherry, Instructor Ken Krustchinsky, Training Director Chris Romo, apprentice Justin Woods.



Congratulations to Local 67 apprentice Cooper Ross, this year's Screw-off Champion.



**The Champion**



**Local 214:** From left, Regional Manager Jay Parrish, Baton Rouge Apprentices Colton Foster and Cade Lalonde, New Orleans Apprentice Zane Prejean, Instructor Jesse Sibley, Council Organizer Brian Waymire, Training Director Tony Bergeron, Instructor Phillip Hicks, Organizer Rodney Vergo.



LU 67 JATC, from p. 9

Management, and Estimating.

Roman has been a SMART member for 31 years. He has been the director of training at Sheet Metal Workers Local 67 for three years.

His hobbies include saltwater fishing, camping, and community service.

Roman can be reached at 512.389.2338 (office), 512.954.5215 (cell), and roman@biggerbettersmarter.org.

### **Krista Blackford** **Administrative Assistant, Austin Area**

Krista Blackford's career in the industry started three years ago. In 2019 her husband retired from the U.S. Army, leading the couple to move to Texas.

"While I am new to the construction industry, I am not new to the trades world," says Krista. "I spent my early years as an ASE Certified Mechanic for Ford and Chevy."

The skills and knowledge Krista gained from the trades world enabled her to become the office manager for the Sheet Metal Workers Local 67 JATC in Austin. As the office manager, she combines her expertise and dedication in customer service with her administrative skills.

"I am passionate about working with and helping guide the students who come into the Sheet Metal trade," says Krista. "I thrive on developing new and efficient ideas to help make a positive impact for the students, as well as the contractors. I enjoy watching the apprentices grow in their skills and succeed in this trade."

While not working at the office, you can find Krista in the seat of her Harley Road Glide cruising the open roads; working on one of her many project cars, including a 1953 Buick Special; behind the lens of her camera; playing video games; or snuggling with her five dogs. In February she and her husband celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary.

Krista can be reached at 512.389.2338 or krista@biggerbettersmarter.org.

### **Dennis Messex II** **Instructor, Austin Area**

Dennis comes from an extremely long line of sheet metal workers. His grandfather got into the trade in 1950. From there, brothers and cousins also joined.

Dennis has taught the trade for 26 years. He teaches 1st Year apprentice, OSHA 10, OSHA 30, and EM385 classes, and he holds an OSHA Instructor certification.

He has been a SMART member for 31 years. For the past 18 years, he has been a sheet metal general superintendent for The Brandt Companies.

Dennis pushes his apprentice students to push themselves to perform at the highest level of which they are capable.

"If you ever settle for mediocre, that's where you'll stop growing," he tells them. "Every morning I wake up and raise that bar 6 inches higher, then try to reach it. The windshield is the largest thing on our vehicle; that's because we see life coming at us. Our rearview windows are the smallest, because that's behind us. Our past doesn't matter. When we allow our past to come into our present, the turmoil comes."

In his free time, Dennis enjoys hunting, fishing, and the great outdoors.

### **Tony Flores** **Instructor, Austin Area/San Antonio**

Tony Flores has taught the trade for two years. He teaches TAB and Member Upgrade classes.

His certifications include TABB Technician, TABB Supervisor, TABB Contractor, Fume Hood Performance Testing Technician, and TABB Instructor Training 101 and 102.

Tony has been a SMART member for 19 years. He is the owner/president of Precision

Air Balance, where he has been for 2.5 years.

Golf is his No. 1 hobby.

### **Fernando Guerrero** **Instructor, Austin Area**

Fernando Guerrero has been teaching the trade for one year. He teaches 1st Year Apprentice classes.

His special skills include welding and clean rooms. He holds certifications in Basics, Skytrack, Boom lift, and rigger.

Fernando has been a SMART member for 18 years. For the past 16 months, he has worked as a sheet metal field foreman at Brandt Mech./Southland Ind.

### **Jonathan Nunez** **Instructor, Austin Area**

Jonathan Nunez has taught the trade for one year. He teaches 2nd Year Apprentice and 3rd Year Apprentice classes.

He has been a SMART member for a decade. For the past year, he has worked as a general foreman at the Samsung Austin Semiconductor Division of Texas Critical Systems.

His hobbies include fishing, hunting, and anything else outdoors. \*



Local 67 JATC instructor Chris Vrana teaches at the San Antonio facility.

## Local 68 Dallas/Ft. Worth & Wichita Falls Area Sheet Metal Training Centers



Jay Huckabee  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area



Stephanie Corbett  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area



Michael Johnson  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area



Kayl Powers  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area



Chad Lyles  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area



H. Lee Brown III  
Dallas/Fort Worth Area

The Local 68 Dallas/Fort Worth Sheet Metal JATC is heading toward a Platinum accreditation level in 2025. The facility's 11 instructors teach 130 apprentices, who attend two nights per week for four hours each night. The four-year program includes journeyman upgrade classes in person and online.

Recent equipment purchases at the center include a Trimble Total Scan and a virtual welder; the JATC plans to add a laser welder and a 3D printer soon. The facility also recently purchased a new air compressor and new air lines, plus remodeled its welding shop. An update to the CAD lab is planned for summer 2025.

JATC members include Tanner Chester, Management, Probity Metal Products; Charles Fisher, Management, Brandt; Rod Pettes, Management, Dynamic Systems Inc.; Curtis Cantrell, Labor, Local 68 Business Manager; Kevin Richison, Labor, Brandt; and Jay Huckabee, Labor, DFW Sheet Metal JATC.

Quarterly JATC meetings start at 11 a.m.

### **Jay Huckabee** **Training Director, Instructor** **Dallas/Fort Worth, Wichita Falls**

Jay Huckabee has taught the trade for 10 years. He teaches 1st Year Math and Layout to all Wichita Falls students.

His special skills include communication skills, teamwork, mechanical aptitude, blueprint reading and interpretation, layout proficiency, math skills (geometry, algebra, trigonometry) master carpenter, welding/fabrication skills, Autodesk, problem-solving, leadership, attention to detail, safety (OSHA 30) reading comprehension, critical thinking, and personnel management (he spent 15 years as a superintendent).

Jay's certifications include Welding, OSHA 30, Instructor Training, and Bias and Belonging Trainer.

Jay has been a SMART member for 20

years. He has been the director of training/apprentice coordinator for the Dallas/Fort Worth Sheet Metal JATC for five years.

His hobbies include fishing and woodworking.

Jay can be reached at 817.267.3379 (office), 817.908.2498 (cell), and jhuckabee@dfwsheetmetaljtc.org.

### **Stephanie Corbett** **Administrative Assistant,** **Dallas/Fort Worth**

Stephanie Corbett serves as the administrative assistant for the Dallas/Fort Worth Sheet Metal JATC. She came to the position two years ago from work as a concierge at the Dallas Executive Airport.

Stephanie finds her work at the JATC rewarding and fulfilling. "I enjoy seeing our members grow in their positions as they develop their craft," she says.

Stephanie's hobbies include hunting and hanging out with her kids and dog.

Stephanie can be reached at 817.267.3379 or scorbett@dfwsheetmetaljtc.org.

### **Kayl Powers** **Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth**

Kayl Powers has been teaching the trade for one year. He teaches Sheet Metal Trade Math and Principles of Layout classes.

He holds certifications in OSHA 30, as well as multiple welding certifications, plus telehandler, boom lift, scissor lift, and forklift. His special skills include communication, leadership, Stratus, AutoDesk, Plangrid, Bluebeam, Layout, MIG Welding, Tig Welding, soldering, and quality control.

Kayl has been a SMART member for 5 years. For the past 3 years, he has worked as a foreman for Dynamic Systems Inc.

His hobbies include riding motorcycle, camping, attending concerts, racing, cornhole, and shuffle board.

### **Michael Johnson** **Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth**

Michael Johnson has taught the trade for seven years. He teaches welding classes.

Michael has been a SMART member for 31 years. For the past six years, he has worked for Probity Metal Products LLC as a journeyman.

### **Chad Lyles** **Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth**

Chad Lyles has been teaching the trade for five months, working full-time at the Dallas/Fort Worth Sheet Metal JATC. He teaches 2nd Year and Architectural Layout classes. He holds Welding and OSHA 30 certifications.

Chad's special skills include a B.A. in History, math (geometry, algebra, trigonometry), science (physics, chemistry), attention to detail, communication skills, critical thinking, reading comprehension, writing proficiency, safety (OSHA30), technical drawing, and teamwork.

Chad has been a SMART member for six years. His hobbies include reading and billiards.

### **H. Lee Brown III** **Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth**

Lee Brown has taught the trade for 16 years. He teaches 1st Year, 3rd Year, 4th Year, and AutoCAD. His certifications include Instructor Development 101, 102, and 103.

Lee has been a SMART member for 37 years. For the past 21 years, he has been with The Brandt Companies, where he currently works as a foreman for Dallas Construction.

Lee enjoys fishing and camping when he's not at work.

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Curtis Cantrell Dallas/Fort Worth    Tanner Chester Dallas/Fort Worth    Antwan Thompson Dallas/Fort Worth    Nicholas Horn Dallas/Fort Worth    Wade Wallace Wichita Falls    Morgan Ross Wichita Falls

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**Curtis Cantrell**  
*Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth*

Curtis Cantrell has taught the trade for five years. He teaches 1st Year, 2nd Year, and 3rd Year classes. His special skills include communication skills, teamwork, blueprint reading and interpretation, layout proficiency, problem solving, leadership, attention to detail, critical thinking, and personnel management. He spent eight years as a general foreman. His certifications include Instructor Training and Organizer 1. Curtis has been a SMART member for 23 years. He has been the regional manager for Local 68 JATC for six months. In his free time, Curtis enjoys fishing, family, and video games.

**Tanner Chester**  
*Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth*

Tanner Chester has taught the trade for 11 years. He teaches 1st Year Core, 2nd Year Welding, 3rd Year Welding, 4th Year Welding, and 3rd Year CAD. He holds CWI AWS QC1 certification. Tanner has been a SMART member for 24 years. For the past nine years, he has worked at Probit Metal Products LLC as a general manager. His hobbies include fishing, hunting, camping, and kayaking.

**Antwan Thompson**  
*Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth*

Antwan Thompson has taught the trade for three years. He teaches 1st Year, 2nd Year, 3rd Year, and 4th Year classes. He holds certifications in Supervisor Training, and Instructor Development 101 and 102. For 16 years, Antwan has been a SMART member and a shop foreman at Dynamic Systems Inc.

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An AutoCAD class at the LU 68 JATC.



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**Nicholas Horn**  
*Instructor, Dallas/Fort Worth*

Nicholas Horn has been teaching the trade for one year. He teaches 1st Year and Member Upgrade classes, and is pursuing his Instructor Development certification. Nicholas has been a SMART member for 15 years, and recently joined IWR as a journeyman. In his spare time, Nicholas enjoys gaming.

**Wade Wallace**  
*Instructor, Wichita Falls*

Wade Wallace has taught the trade for 20 years. He is the primary part-time instructor

at the Wichita Falls branch of the Local 68 JATC. He holds certifications for TABB Technician, Fire Life Safety I and II, Basic Instructor training through ITI, and CADD Detailing. Wade has been a SMART member for 32 years. He is currently employed as a manager for F. G. Haggerty. His hobbies include teaching after hours, gardening, caring for house plants, wrangling German Shepherds, and computer gaming.

**Morgan Ross**  
*Instructor, Wichita Falls*

Morgan Ross has taught the trade for two years. He teaches 1st Year classes and

holds a welding certification. His special skills include supervisor training, foreman training, a Revit course, and OSHA 30. Morgan has been a SMART member for 11 years. Four months ago, he joined Denali Construction Services as a foreman. Motorcycles and guns occupy Morgan's free time. \*



A welding class at the LU 68 Dallas/Fort Worth JATC.





**Top:** A welding class at the LU 68 Dallas/Fort Worth JATC.

**Above:** Jason Delgado, Local 68 apprentice contest competitor.

**Above right:** Shearing metal at the LU 68 Dallas/Fort Worth JATC.

**Right:** A class in progress at the LU 68 Dallas/Fort Worth JATC.

## Local 214 Baton Rouge, New Orleans & Shreveport Area Sheet Metal Training Centers



**Tony Bergeron**  
Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport



**Terri Neff**  
Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport



**Jesse Sibley**  
Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport



**Philip Hicks**  
Baton Rouge



**Charlie Rodgers**  
Shreveport

Local 214 has JATC facilities in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Shreveport. All three are coordinated by Tony Bergeron—who also serves as an instructor—with administrative assistance from Terri Neff and Rebecca Barker.

### Baton Rouge JATC

The Baton Rouge JATC holds a Bronze accreditation level through Louisiana Workforce Commission and is an accredited CWI testing facility. It currently instructs 35 apprentices via 8-hour classes on Saturdays, totaling 90 hours per semester for the four-year program.

The facility is affiliated with Baton Rouge Community College.

Recent infrastructure purchases include a plasma table.

Trustees for the Baton Rouge JATC include Co-chair Jay Parrish, Jude Lalonde, and Ben Coughlan (Labor); and Co-chair Robbie Chatelain, Cribbs Roofing and Sheet Metal Inc., and Michael Vaughan, Vaughan Roofing and Sheet Metal (contractors). The trustees meet quarterly at 11 a.m.

### New Orleans JATC

The New Orleans JATC holds a Bronze accreditation level via Louisiana Workforce Commission. It currently instructs eight apprentices via 8-hour classes on Saturdays, totaling 90 hours per semester for the four-year program. The facility is affiliated with Baton Rouge Community College.

Recent infrastructure purchases include a plasma table.

Trustees for the New Orleans JATC include Co-chair Jay Parrish and Steve Pasnewski (Labor); and Co-chair Jason Smith, Jollys and Sheet Metal Inc.; Melissa Carollo, Carollo Metal Work Works; and Danny Monaghan, Dynamic Metal Works (contractors).

### Shreveport JATC

The Shreveport JATC holds a Bronze accreditation level through Louisiana Workforce Commission and is an accredited CWI testing facility. It currently instructs 20 apprentices via 8-hour classes on Saturdays and 3-hour classes on Mondays and Tuesdays, totaling 90 hours per semester for the four-year program.

The facility is affiliated with Baton Rouge Community College.

Trustees for the Shreveport JATC include Co-chair Jay Parrish, Garland Carr, and Cory Stephens (Labor); and Co-chair George Taylor, Fitzgerald Sheet Metal; Danny Simon, Hamm Mechanical; and Chris Scarlet, Quality Sheet Metal.

### Tony Bergeron Training Director, Instructor Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport

Tony Bergeron has taught the trade for 20 years. He teaches Core, Architectural, and OSHA 10 classes. He has held the training director position for Local 214 JATC for eight years.

Tony has been a SMART member for 25 years.

In his spare time, Tony enjoys camping and technology.

Tony can be reached at 817.267.9213 (office), 817.773.2779 (cell), and local214jadc@gmail.com.

### Terri Neff JATC Administrator

Terri Neff is a 24-year veteran with Local 214, currently providing administrative services for the JATC while also handling the Local's pension administration.

In her spare time, she enjoys cooking for others, assisting with Vacation Bible School,

reading, and watching TV.

Terri can be reached at 225.927.3930 and local214jadc@gmail.com.

### Jesse Sibley Instructor, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Shreveport

Jesse Sibley has taught the trade for 11 years. He teaches Industrial and Welding classes.

He holds CWI, EPA, and OSHA 30 certifications.

Jesse has been a SMART member for 19 years. He has worked as a welding supervisor/instructor for the Baton Rouge JATC for seven years, and also instructs at the New Orleans and Shreveport centers.

During his downtime, Jesse enjoys playing with his kids, reading, nature, and chainsaws.

### Philip Hicks Instructor, Baton Rouge

Philip Hicks has taught the trade for four years. He teaches Architectural Sheet Metal classes.

His special skills include drafting/detailing and 3D modeling.

Philip has been a SMART member for 13 years. For the past 10 years he has worked for Ascension Roofing and Fabrication, where he is a drafter and estimator.

For fun, Philip enjoys hunting, fishing, and skateboarding.

### Charlie Rodgers Instructor, Shreveport

With nearly 30 years in the trade, Charlie Rodgers brings a wealth of knowledge and hands-on experience as a seasoned sheet metal worker. While he's well-versed in all

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aspects of the craft, Charlie's true specialty lies in architectural sheet metal. For the past decade, Charlie has served as a dedicated instructor, driven by the belief that a strong Local starts with a strong apprenticeship program. His involvement in the SMART MAP program and his patient, approachable teaching style make him an invaluable asset to the training center and a trusted mentor to apprentices. Charlie is currently employed with DMR as a foreman. ✱



**Top left:** Kade Lalonde, Local 214 apprentice contest competitor.

**Top right:** Teacher's Assistant Devan Brady reviews standing seam roof panel installation with apprentices during an architectural sheet metal class at the LU 214 Baton Rouge JATC.

**Above:** Zane Prejean, Local 214 apprentice contest competitor.

**Right:** Apprentices figure stretch out in the industrial class.



Apprentices figure stretch out in the industrial class at the LU 214 Baton Rouge JATC.

**We would like to thank our Industry Partners, Milwaukee & Dewalt, for their generous donations and for supporting our apprenticeship programs. Please support them for all your tool needs. Thanks again!**







**SOUTHWEST GULF COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL**

7551 Callaghan Rd., Ste. 320  
San Antonio, TX 78229

**Southwest Gulf Coast Regional Council**

7551 Callaghan Rd., Ste. 320, San Antonio, TX 78229

Phone: 210.202.3221

President: Bill Kenyon | [bkenyon@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:bkenyon@smart-swgcrc.org)

Financial Secretary-Treasurer: Edward Gonzalez | [egonzalez@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:egonzalez@smart-swgcrc.org)

**Local 54 – Houston, TX**

20213 Binford Rd.

Waller, TX 77484

713.864.4594

Regional Manager: Armando Aguirre

[aaguirre@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:aaguirre@smart-swgcrc.org)

**Local 68 – Dallas/Fort Worth, TX**

1020 S. Industrial Blvd.

Euless, TX 76040

817.267.9213

Regional Manager: Curtis Cantrell

[cantrell@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:cantrell@smart-swgcrc.org)

**Local 67 – San Antonio, TX**

11 Burwood Ln.

San Antonio, TX 78216

210.349.6584

Regional Manager: James May Jr.

[jmay@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:jmay@smart-swgcrc.org)

**Local 214 – Baton Rouge, LA**

2041 Beaumont Dr.

Baton Rouge, LA 70806

225.927.4066

Regional Manager: James Parrish

[jparrish@smart-swgcrc.org](mailto:jparrish@smart-swgcrc.org)