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Center for America
CFA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose programs bring people face to face with issues that affect the future quality of life, economic prosperity and freedom in America.

CFA offers a wide range of learning programs and knowledge resources about ways people can get involved to help solve America’s problems.

To become a sponsor or funder of the 10 By 20 Pledge for America, please contact Karen Kaplowitz, VP, at 888-890-4240 or kkaplowitz@newellis.com

Tax deductible financial contributions for the 10 By 20 Campaign can be made by credit card through the CFA website. Checks should be made out to “Center for America” and mailed to:

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The Skills Crisis Facing America

The acute and worsening shortage of skilled workers threatens a cascading collapse of major segments of American industry and our economy – an “Industrial Tsunami” – in the coming six to ten years.

Executives and business owners in virtually every industry are acutely aware of this and readily admit they don’t know how they will fill necessary positions. Many say privately that their companies may have to close because they are so short of trained workers.

- The average age of skilled workers in many trades is 54 to 56 years old and soon this senior group will retire leaving a gap that will not be filled by new entrants.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 25% of the working population will reach retirement age by 2012, resulting in a potential shortage of nearly 10 million skilled workers.

Ironically, these skill shortages are occurring at a time of dramatically high unemployment. This heightens the price our country is paying for having dismantled so many in-school vocational training programs during the last few decades.

The current shortage already sharply reduces the growth of the U.S. gross domestic product contributing to our overall economic problem.

- Our country’s infrastructure is falling apart right before our eyes. Municipal water systems are failing and more bridges are unsafe to cross. Yet, the nationwide shortfall of more than 500,000 welders is already causing repair projects to be delayed or cancelled.

We are not keeping up with the demand for people with skills to build, maintain and repair heavy construction equipment, like cranes, which must be built in the U.S.

- Finding the skilled workers to build cranes is a major hurdle. Once a crane is built, the next major hurdle is to find skilled operators. Then, the next is to find skilled workers to maintain and repair the cranes. This problem already affects virtually every industrial enterprise in the U.S.

Manufacturing is the bedrock of American freedom. National security problems arise because the ongoing demand for U.S.-manufactured military parts – from boots to bullets – requires domestic manufacturing operations. Even now, critical manufacturing has been moved off-shore as a stop-gap measure.

Thus, America is facing a tragedy of epic proportion that will cause suffering for generations to come and from which we may never recover if we lose our manufacturing edge to other countries. The pervasive impact of this crisis has the potential to turn America into a second-rate economy.
Did You Know?

- According to a May 2011 survey by Manpower Group among 40,000 employers globally, skilled trades workers as a group rank number one in the U.S. and 13 other countries as to the “difficulty of filling jobs due to the lack of talent”.

- At the height of the recession, 32% of manufacturers reported that they had jobs going unfilled because they could not find workers with the right skills, according to the National Association of Manufacturers.

- 2.7 million manufacturing employees are 55 years of age or older and likely to leave the labor force over the next 10 years. (NAM) This does not include skilled workers in other sectors, such as those in the utility and trucking sectors.

- By 2018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, those 55 and older will number some 40 million and comprise nearly a quarter of the total U.S. labor force. The retirement of this age group over the ensuing decade has the potential to cripple U.S. industry unless those fewer entering the workforce have advanced skills along with science, technology and mathematics attainment.

- A 2011 survey by The Nielson Company among executives from 103 large U.S. manufacturing firms found that on average, the shortage of skilled workers will cost each company $63 million over the next five years, some as much as $100 million. These costs include training and recruiting, followed by problems caused by lower quality and resulting decreases in customer satisfaction.

- In 2010, China had 19.8% of global factory output, compared with 19.4% for the U.S., making China the world leader in manufacturing, according to IHS Global Insight. However, labor productivity in the U.S. is three times that of China. The U.S. lead in productivity can be maintained only by ensuring that a skilled labor shortage is avoided.

- “Industry experts are predicting a shortage of 150,000, 300,000, 500,000 or more [truck] drivers by [2012],” according to Heavy Trucking Magazine. Roughly one quarter of the 637,000 aerospace workers in the U.S. could be eligible for retirement this year, according to the Aerospace Industries Association.
What You Can Do in Your Community to Support Expanded Training for Skilled American Jobs

How many ways you can help!

Look for resources and links on the CFA website.

**Young People and Parents**
- Enroll in after-school programs or summer camps that focus on skills-building projects
- Attend events sponsored by skills training centers to find programs that are exciting

**High School and Parents**
- Talk with guidance counselors about careers in the skilled trades and technical fields
- Visit local manufacturing companies to learn about their jobs, training and factories
- Learn about what skills training programs are offered by community colleges, nonprofit organizations and visit the most interesting ones

**Teachers and Guidance Counselors**
- Invite speakers from manufacturers to talk about their companies and jobs
- Organize field trips for teachers and students to visit manufacturers

**School System Administrators**
- Work with local business and existing nonprofit training centers to expand cooperative training opportunities for students
- Consider how to support manufacturing skills and technical curricula in your schools

**Retirees**
- Volunteer to teach your skills to others or help with community outreach activities

**Business Managers, Owners**
- Invite local student and youth groups to tour your facilities and talk about the benefits of careers in manufacturing and technical trades
- Consider whether you can offer apprenticeships in collaboration with local training programs
- Consider whether several businesses can work together to support and sponsor local training programs
- Encourage employees to volunteer as faculty for nonprofit or public school training programs

**Unions**
- Encourage members to sign-up for additional training to help them transition to better jobs
- Work with local companies to help support and sponsor local training programs

**Foundations**
- Develop “seed money” grants to help startup training programs or fund special outreach

Continues next page ...
• Seek out programs that to bring school drop-outs back into school and skills training

• Seek out special projects that will give training program students a real-life experience, such as rehabbing a house or building a boat

**State Officials**

• Reassess the adequacy of state policies and support for nonprofit and public school training programs in light of future skilled worker needs

• Support and promote effective public-private training partnerships as role models

**Media**

• Consider coverage on companies seeking and training skilled workers

• Consider series coverage on the range of local tinkering and training programs for various age groups and workers in transition

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**One Community Leadership Model: Bradley Tech in Milwaukee**

John Ratzenberger visited with the students and faculty of the Lynde & Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School. Its mission is to deliver a quality, comprehensive four-year academic and technical education that enables students to deliver life-long learning skills and apply their talents on a well-defined Trade and Technology career path.

Bradley Tech is guided by a commission of community and business leaders that specifically unites Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee Public Schools and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. The commissioners ensure the school provides high quality educational experiences consistent with the needs of the world of work in trades and technology.

The school offers specialized curriculum and experiences to prepare students in the areas of technology and trades for the 21st century, helping them compete in our global society. The school requires 26 credits for graduation. A shop certificate honors students who complete the expected 10 credits in the technology and trade program with outstanding performance.

Bradley Tech has four small learning communities: Communications Academy (sponsored by AT&T), Construction Academy (sponsored by PieperPower), Design Academy (sponsored by Harley-Davidson), and Engineering Processes Academy (sponsored by Rockwell Automation). Students apply to an academy upon entry.

The staff meets often to enhance curriculum, improve instructional approaches, and discuss student performance. Interventions to assist students are explored for those who may need an extra boost. Each of these small learning communities has an Instruction Administrator, an Intervention Administrator, and a community of teachers who will stay in place as their students move through the high school grades.

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www.BradleyTech.org
Fellow Americans,

While producing the 97 episodes of “John Ratzenberger’s Made in America” for the Travel Channel, I learned from dozens of factory owners that one of their biggest problems is how to stay in business when so few young Americans are capable of, or interested in, working with their hands.

The upcoming retirement in a few years of millions of skilled workers, whose expertise in building things is not being passed along to younger generations, threatens the collapse of our manufacturing economy and with it, our middle class. Many companies already face serious worker shortages.

Looking ahead, it is clear that America cannot maintain a successful economy without rebuilding the skilled workforce. This means that we must reintroduce our young people to the joys of building things with their hands and to sustainable careers in the skilled trades. This is why I’m working with the Center for America in support of the 10 By 20 Pledge for America Campaign.

We need young people to experience the wonders of tinkering and building things. We need to restore industrial arts programs during and after school hours. We need to educate guidance counselors about opportunities in the skilled trades for high paying and rewarding jobs. We need to educate parents that not every young person needs to go to college. We need to get the media to stop demonizing “blue collar workers” in television programs and movies.

In support of our 10 By 20 Pledge Campaign and the educational resources on our campaign website, I’ll be speaking out through radio and television interviews, op-ed articles, and speeches around the country.

I hope you will contribute financially and through your leadership to this campaign. I would enjoy learning about the local and national vocational programs for young people your company supports, and to have your ideas and suggestions as well.

Regards,

John
When did “blue collar” become a dirty word in America? Right about the same time America gave up its position as the world’s producer and instead became the world’s most conspicuous consumer.

That’s not to bash free enterprise; we need to purchase and consume. But this cultural shift has created an “industrial tsunami” that threatens our free enterprise system.

America faces a crisis of epic proportions. The U.S. Department of Labor forecasts that by 2012, there will be a shortfall of nearly 3 million skilled worker positions in America. The average age of skilled workers in many trades is 54-56 years old, and as this veteran group retires, there are not enough trained workers to replace them. Today’s shortage sharply reduces the growth of U.S. gross domestic product — certainly not a help in the current economy.

As I’ve traveled the nation and met with business owners, I hear the same story. Employers are desperate for skilled workers to fill essential jobs. Many say privately that their companies may have to close or move operations to another country because of this shortage — despite the offer of good pay and benefits. We’re experiencing the loss of the once-vaunted production edge that America enjoyed.

A few examples bring this to light. Our country’s infrastructure requires major upgrades and repairs. Municipal water and sewer systems are failing, and many bridges and overpasses are unsafe. Yet, the nationwide shortfall of 500,000 welders is causing huge delays or cancellations for funded repair projects.

Heavy construction equipment, such as cranes, must be built in America to meet the demand. Finding the skilled workers to build cranes is a major hurdle. Once built, a crane requires skilled operators, as well as skilled repair and maintenance workers to keep the cranes operating. This scenario is typical of virtually every industrial enterprise in the nation.

From aviation to energy, the skilled worker gaps are enormous. This has dangerous implications for our national security. To maintain the world’s most sophisticated military, we must produce systems, parts and hardware in America. Without domestic manufacturing operations, critical component work has been moved offshore as a stopgap measure.

Negative media images of skilled workers — what I call “essential workers” — pervade our culture. Educators, employers and community leaders are slowly becoming engaged in efforts to counter this dangerous trend that glamorizes “celebrity” and “corporate” living at the expense of skilled trades that offer a good living to those who choose to work with their hands and minds.
Truth is, high-profile athletes and entertainers are nonessential. If all the celebrities like me disappeared overnight, it would be sad, but the world would continue with little disruption. But if plumbers, electricians, welders, carpenters, lathe operators, truck drivers and other “essentials” disappeared, our country would grind to a halt.

By encouraging skilled trades and people working with their hands, we are also fostering the kind of innovation that leads to a “better mousetrap.” Before becoming an actor, I worked as a carpenter and always tinkered with better ways to do things. I started Eco Pak Industries, a company that developed and manufactured packaging alternatives made from biodegradable and nontoxic recycled paper as an alternative to Styrofoam “peanuts” and plastic bubble wrap. In the mid-’90s, I sold the company, and it’s now grown to five manufacturing plants providing the product worldwide.

We must mobilize the public to restore the dignity of essential skilled workers. We must restore industrial arts programs in American schools to provide opportunities for young people in greater numbers to build careers building the things Americans need.

The good news is that there are successful national and local initiatives working to address this crisis. One of my recent visits was to Bradley Tech, a Milwaukee-based high school that has four academies, each mentored by a sponsor company.

Bradley Tech provides hands-on education that encourages skilled trades. Reaching the next generation of young people, with much-needed programs like this, is the key to a sustainable Great American Recovery.

The lens through which I view the world is simple: The manual arts always take precedence over the fine arts. Remember, someone had to build the ceiling before Michelangelo could go to work.
America Needs Jobs Now! And 10 Million Skilled Workers by 2020!

At the height of the recession, 32% of manufacturers reported they had jobs going unfilled because they could not find workers with the right skills!

10 By 20 Pledge for America
“We can believe in ourselves again!”

America’s #1 issue – JOBS! We need skilled jobs today – and we’ll need them by the millions over the next 10 years.

The 10 By 20 Pledge for America seeks 1 million signers mobilized to support 10 million new skilled jobs by 2020.

Let’s show politicians that Americans can get it done – starting with our own communities. We invite you, your friends, workers, employers and community leaders to Join the Campaign at www.CenterforAmerica.org.

Join the Campaign Today!

The skilled worker and jobs crisis threatens the lifeblood of American prosperity. We must restore the dignity and pride of America’s skilled workers. This is bigger than partisan politics – this is about America!

Well-known leaders, celebrities and heartland organizations will share compelling stories and empowering ideas to inspire community action. Multi-media outreach – print, website, electronic, TV and radio – will reach millions of Americans with the “10 By 20 Pledge for America” messages.

Someone taught me...so I will teach it forward

What can I do to help? The American success story is built on teaching each other how to achieve. Every community can create the right combination of programs tailored to local needs without waiting for government to do it for them. Click here for some specific ideas to get started!

And – government may learn what America really needs and how to help us get there – SKILLED JOBS!

Companies, unions, community and faith-based groups are signing up to be part of the national 10 By 20 Pledge for America campaign. Sign the Pledge and let’s get started!

Sponsorship Opportunities

• Become a sponsor or funder today – please contact: Karen Kaplowitz, Vice President, 888-890-4240 or kkaplowitz@newellis.com.

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