



NAWIC introduces girls to careers in construction

By: Nate Beck, nbeck@dailyreporter.com July 12, 2019 2:43 pm



Wearing hard hats, girls attending the National Association of Women in Construction's Camp NAWIC MKE 2019 go on a tour of The Southeast Wisconsin Carpentry Training Center/North Central State Regional Council of Carpenters in Pewaukee. (Photo by Kevin Harnack)

The Wisconsin chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction took a big leap forward last week in its attempts to interest girls in joining the industry.

The group's Camp NAWIC, which wrapped up Friday, grew from a two-day event to a week-long one this year and gave a group of campers a broad look at what the industry can offer.

Barb Osheim, NAWIC Wisconsin's president, said event organizers worked with industry partners to introduce high school girls to careers construction. After last year's event, NAWIC was driven to offer campers even more this time around.

"We want this chapter to be known for getting girls first-hand experience and meeting other women in the industry," she said. "It can be boots-on-the-ground training for them."

Osheim said members of Wisconsin's NAWIC chapter were inspired to bring the summer camp experience to Wisconsin after learning of similar events held by chapters in the Kansas City and San Diego areas.

Members of the Wisconsin chapter found industry partners eager to introduce campers to the trades this year. The week began with a safety presentation from the Associated General Contractors of Greater Milwaukee.

The group then attended seminars and hands-on training sessions put on by groups and companies such as the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 7, Faith Technologies, The Wisconsin Regional Trades Partnership's Big Step program and the Iron Workers Local 8 – which provided a bus to shuttle the girls between events.

The campers were also brought onto an ongoing hospital construction project in Wauwatosa.

The itinerary included talks from women leaders from various corners of the industry. Osheim said NAWIC Wisconsin was careful to introduce campers to industry professionals they could look up to.

"We definitely try to make sure that we have as many women representatives as possible," she said. "It's so important to have a role model. It helps to develop better self-confidence better self-esteem for the girls."

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