



SCAHACC and THE TRADES

"JUNIOR/SENIOR RIDE AND DECIDE PROGRAM"

For every 4 skilled workers that leave the construction industry, only 1 is entering the field.

As everyone in our industry knows, the construction trades are suffering daily from the lack of skilled workers. At the current attrition rate, when the next two generations of tradesmen/women retire in 40 years there will be virtually no one to train. This fact not only affects the trades as an industry, but ultimately the consumer and the future of our society.

What are we going to do about this pressing issue?

The SCAHACC (South Carolina Association of Heating and Air Conditioning Contractors), is South Carolina's state association representing the HVAC trade with members from all aspects of the industry, including education, codes officials, inspectors, utilities, equipment distributors, and contractors. Their primary goal is to make the indoor environmental contracting businesses more profitable and professional, and ultimately, maintain the highest standards of customer safety and service. Not having an adequately trained and available labor force has been an issue for many years and is vitally important to the industry. Therefore, the "Ride and Decide" program for all students in the area is an effort to allow junior and senior high school students to try the trades and see if the fields were a fit for their futures.

Part of the problem is perception of our industry. By providing an avenue where a student can see first-hand what the jobs entail, while getting paid, students are able to make informed decisions if the trades are right for them.

Around the country, other organizations, and surrounding county schools, have joined forces, making this program a huge success! In one area, over eighty students have participated in the program in the past two years, with thirty-one employers enrolled.

From the end of the second program year, the surveys established:

- **ALL of the student's eligible want to enroll in the program the next year.**
- **ALL of the employers want to continue the program next year.**

As good stewards of the community and our industry, it is our responsibility to help correct this problem before it is such a problem for the next generation that it is almost impossible to address. This program assists student decisions and allows them to consider the trades.

Employers- **What was the best part about the program?**

"Teaching fresh, excited, young students about our business."

"Introducing someone new to the trade."

"Students having the opportunity to experience the real work environment."

"Having the opportunity to expose young people to our industry in respect to what the job entails as well as allowing them to see why they may enjoy the career."

"A little extra help when we needed it! Both boys were willing workers."

Students- **What was the best part about the program?**

“Getting to learn about different trades.”

“Working hands on to try it- was great!”

“I learned how everything works from the field to the office to using equipment.”

“I learned to weld, make ducts, change filters and then went to job sites on deliveries to see how stuff worked and fit together.”

“I want to work at this company when I graduate next year.”

“Did service calls on AC and generators- Did not know this was a career.”

For many students, college is the answer. But for many other students, it could be Trade School. For other students it may be a combination of on the job apprentice training with either Trade School or some specific College courses. Careful planning with all the right information could save families hard earned dollars, help the economy, and potentially give a young person a jump start to their future.

The Program Purpose:

Pair students with trade industry contractors to allow them to experience the trade while assisting in paid work functions during their summer school break.

The Mission:

- Offer options through High Schools and their Administrators to encourage the students that either cannot decide, or have not thought about what to do, when they graduate from High School to consider our trades.
- Educate the students and their parents on the benefits of working in the industry including:
 - Competitive wages, get paid while you train.
 - Seriously reduced training and education fees compared to the average four-year college degree.
 - Minimal career obsolescence as society will always need plumbing, heating and cooling.
 - Expanded opportunities for career advancement and owning your own business.
 - Flexible hours and mobility, where society is, our careers are needed.
- Organize a dedicated group including educators, contractors, and administrators that will dedicate the time and effort it takes to establish a successful program as well as set in place a means of keeping it active and remaining successful throughout the years. If properly initiated, promoted and managed, this program will become successful enough to spread throughout the state. Although we are mainly affected by what happens in the HVAC and Plumbing industries, not all students will be interested in our trades, therefore this program must include all facets of the construction and service trades to attract as many students as possible and be a success.

The Student Program:

Student eligibility, student must:

- Be at least 16 years of age before starting the program.
- Have completed their sophomore year of high school.
- Have at least a C average and excellent school attendance.
- Have reliable transportation to and from work location.
- Be recommended to the program by an educator, school administrator, or SCAHACC member.
- Obtain parental permission with a Release for the SCAHACC and educational institution.
- Adhere strictly to the attendance and employment regulations required by the employer and adhere strictly to the SC Child Labor Laws.



For more information, please call Verlon Wulf at 843-238-5805 or email vwulf@carolinacool.com.

Websites: www.sc-rideanddecide.com