



# New course prepares Taos High School students for building-trades jobs

June 11, 2020

Los Alamos National Laboratory Director Thom Mason, New Mexico Building and Construction Trades Council (NMBCTC) Executive Director Brian Condit, and Taos Municipal Schools Superintendent Lillian Torrez have announced a collaboration creating a building-trades course for Taos High School students.

“The Laboratory is pleased to partner with the New Mexico Building and Construction Trades Council and Taos High School to offer options to the emerging workforce who are interested in trade careers,” says Director Thom Mason. “These are stable, good-paying positions that are vital to the Laboratory. Building the regional workforce benefits both Northern New Mexico and the Laboratory while supporting our communities over the long term.” Mason adds that the Laboratory projects it will hire more than 1,200 craft, or specialized building-trade, workers in the next five years.

“The union is very excited to move forward with this collaboration with the Laboratory and Taos High School,” says Courtenay Eichhorst, president of the NMBCTC. “We’re glad to respond to the growing demand at the Lab and in Northern New Mexico for skilled builders.”

Beginning in the fall of 2020, Taos High School students will be able to take a course specially designed to meet union standards. The course, paired with a high-school diploma, allows students direct entry into union apprenticeship programs at age 18. As apprentices, they will work full time at the Laboratory or with other employers at the starting salary of \$16/hour while receiving additional classroom and on-the-job training.

Upon completion of the apprenticeship, trainees will be journeymen with starting salaries as high as \$72,000/year plus benefits. Participation in the course is free to students.

“This approachable training program starts students down a well-paid career path with New Mexico employers,” says Superintendent Lillian Torrez. “Training students for high-demand jobs is a top priority for Taos High School.”

*To learn more about the upcoming building-trades course, contact CJ Grace, Taos High School principal, at (575) 751-8000.*

*To start a similar training course at your local high school, contact Brian Condit, executive director NMBCTC, (505) 268-1000 or Rebecca Estrada, community outreach specialist for higher education and workforce, at the Laboratory, (505) 695-4974.*

