

Nitro Training Center Opens to Address West Virginia Workforce Skills Gap

NITRO, WV, UNITED STATES, May 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Good-paying careers in the trades are within reach for more West Virginians, thanks to expanded access to union apprenticeship programs at a new training center in Nitro.

The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters recently opened a larger, upgraded training facility designed to prepare more workers for careers in construction, welding, infrastructure, and other in-demand crafts. The facility is helping meet growing demand for skilled workers across West Virginia.

Union apprenticeship programs offer a direct path to earn while you learn—pairing paid, hands-on training with classroom instruction and family-sustaining wages and benefits. From day one, apprentices earn a paycheck while building real-world experience without taking on student debt and gain the opportunity to build a future close to home.

“

It’s come a long way, and it’s a great facility for our apprentices and staff.”

Everett Johnson, training director, EASCTC

“I’ve always loved working with my hands and doing construction work,” said Aaron Adkins, a 19-year-old second-year apprentice with Carpenters Union Local 439. “This union allows me to build a life for my future family and me and have a good job with good benefits right here in West Virginia.”

A Growing Need for Skilled Workers

Located about 15 miles outside Charleston, the new Nitro facility replaces a smaller, outdated training center in South Charleston that could no longer keep up with demand.



Steve Wyatt and apprentices



Nitro Training Center

The previous training center had simply outgrown its space. Limited parking and crowded classrooms made it harder to keep up with growing interest in the trades. At more than 12,000 square feet — nearly double the size of the previous location — the new Nitro facility includes three full-size classrooms, two shop areas, expanded parking, and room for future growth.

“It’s come a long way, and it’s a great facility for our apprentices and staff,” said Everett Johnson, training director for the Eastern Atlantic States Carpenters Technical Centers in West Virginia.

The demand for skilled workers continues to grow across West Virginia as infrastructure projects, manufacturing, energy development, and commercial construction expand throughout the region. Contractors and employers are increasingly seeking trained workers who can step onto job sites with real-world skills and certifications.

Preparing Apprentices for Long-Term Careers

The center began training apprentices in December 2025 and currently serves about 150 individuals, with enrollment expected to continue growing.

Apprentices receive hands-on instruction in more than 30 skill areas over four years, including carpentry, welding, flooring, scaffolding, interior systems, and pile driving, giving them the versatility to work across a wide range of industries and project types.

Kelsi Paxson, a 32-year-old first-year carpenter apprentice and Nitro resident, said the new facility represents a major investment in apprentices and the future workforce.

“I thought it was a big step forward in the progression of apprentices and their training,” Paxson said. “I was amazed at the new center and thankful for the new space to learn in.”

One of the biggest workforce needs right now is welding. The new center includes a 53-foot mobile welding trailer capable of running 14 booths simultaneously, along with a full-time welding instructor to help train more certified welders.

“We need more certified welders,” Johnson said.

Building More Than Careers

Adkins, who is currently working on road infrastructure projects, said he wants to continue building his skills while helping guide the next generation entering the trades.

“I hope to use my skills to be a good carpenter and teach the ones coming in,” he said. Paxson said she hopes more young people in West Virginia consider union apprenticeship programs as a viable career path.

“I wish I had joined sooner,” Paxson said. “It has changed my life.”

As West Virginia continues investing in infrastructure and economic development, training centers like the one in Nitro are helping ensure local workers are prepared to fill those jobs —

strengthening both the workforce and the communities they call home.

For individuals interested in apprenticeship opportunities or careers in the skilled trades, visit [Trade Up Carpenters](#).

A ribbon-cutting and grand opening for the Nitro training center is scheduled for May 19.

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