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Autodesk and Associated General Contractors of America Equip Women in Construction with Properly Fitting Safety Harnesses
Grant Program Provides More Than 300 Women with Harnesses that are Better Designed to Fit & Recruit More Women into Industry

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., March 2, 2020 — Autodesk Construction Solutions and the Associated General Contractors of America are awarding grants to 21 construction firms to provide more than 300 fall protection safety harnesses designed for women, the two groups announced today. The grants are designed to address one of the most significant safety hazards for construction craft professionals and recruit more women into high-paying construction careers.

“We recognize the need for more women to join the construction industry to help fill the labor gap, and keeping them as safe as possible must be top priority,” said Allison Scott, director at Autodesk Construction Solutions. “For three hundred women in construction, AGC and Autodesk are highlighting this need, and this is a first step in drawing attention to the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other customized equipment for women.”

Scott noted that women make up less than nine percent of the total construction workforce, and less than three percent of the construction craft professional workforce, according to [federal data](#). Meanwhile, U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration data shows that falls in construction are one of the “[fatal four](#)” leading contributors to injury and death for workers in the industry.

“Our members understand that the best way to recruit more women into the industry is to make sure they have the support to do their jobs safely,” said AGC of America’s chief executive officer, Stephen E. Sandherr. “These grants will help equip hundreds of women with the kind of custom equipment and properly-fitting safety gear they need most.”

Sandherr noted that ill-fitting personal protective equipment can fail to prevent and even contribute to serious injury from falls. He added that the grants will not only improve safety but help construction firms address labor shortages at a time when 80 percent of firms report having a hard time finding enough qualified workers to hire.

Representatives with the winning firms report the new grants will help them improve their safety programs and recruit more women into the industry.

“We are constantly innovating and addressing ergonomics and safety to help our workers do their jobs better,” said Russ Nicolai, safety manager, Snyder Roofing. “This grant comes at a critical time, and we couldn’t be more pleased to have conversation and ultimately equipment to address the needs of women in the roofing industry.”

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“Men make up 90 percent of the construction labor force. The crushing labor shortage has highlighted that an entire gender comprising more than 50 percent of the population has zero exposure to construction,” said Anne Brown, director of business development and marketing, Christman Constructors, Inc. “We care deeply about diversity and safety in the construction field and stand with AGC and Autodesk. It’s time to focus on supporting women and opening their eyes to this great field.”

“We strive to have an open conversation with our female employees around personal safety and what they require to do their jobs comfortably,” said Billy Naylor, regional safety director, McCarthy. “Properly fitting equipment for females is an issue across the construction industry, and we are excited to advance the discussion and begin implementing a solution to the problem of ill-fitting PPE for women.”

Together the 21 firms winning the grants employ 22,000 people. The firms are:

1. Hughes General Contractors (North Salt Lake, Utah)
2. Hurckman Mechanical Industries (Green Bay, Wis.)
3. Swalling General Contractors, LLC (Anchorage, Alaska)
4. Mid-Valley Commercial Construction (Salem, Ore.)
5. Wayne Electric, Inc. (Houston)
6. Christman Constructors, Inc. (CCI) (Lansing, Mich.)
7. Faith Technologies (Menasha, Wis.)
8. Thompson Electric Company (Sioux Falls, S.D.)
9. Newkirk Electric Associates, Inc. (Muskegon, Mich.)
10. Healy Tibbitts Builders, Inc. (Aiea, Hawaii)
11. Capital Electric Construction Co., Inc. (Kansas City)
12. Snyder Roofing of Oregon (Tigard, Ore.)
13. Elcon Corp. (Everett, Wash.)
14. W.S. Bellows Construction Corp. (Houston)
15. McGough Construction (Roseville, Minn.)
16. Tarlton Corp. (St. Louis)
17. McCarthy Building Companies, Inc. (Dallas)
18. Wanzek Construction, Inc. (Fargo, N.D.)
19. Med-Tex Services (Philadelphia, Penn.)
20. Rosendin Electric, Inc. (San Jose, Calif.)
21. Performance Contracting Inc. (Pasadena, Texas)

AGC is partnering with safety equipment manufacturers MSA and 3M to provide the proper-fitting safety harnesses designed with women in mind, and all winning firms are required to participate in training programs on the proper use of the harnesses.

Grantees attending the AGC Annual Convention and the CONEXPO-CON/AGG conference in Las Vegas will be recognized the week of March 9. Media interested in speaking with Autodesk, AGC or the grantees may contact alyson.moses@autodesk.com.

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