



WARRIOR VILLAGE PROJECT®

501 (c)(3) Nonprofit

The Bugle: Vol 8, Issue 6, September 2026

www.WarriorVillageProject.com

PROGRESS REPORT

[Rancho Buena Vista High School](#) students returned to campus on August 12. Teacher Landon Cardenas is teaching five construction classes this year, with a total enrollment of 122 students: 53 Seniors, 29 Juniors, 20 Sophomores and 20 Freshmen. A select group of more experienced students in four classes will continue with the construction of their tiny houses this year.



Teacher Landon Cardenas inspects simple electrical light circuit built by his students.

[San Marcos High School](#) students returned to campus on August 18. Teacher Chris Geldert is teaching five classes with 156 students: 3 Fine Woodworking Classes and 2 Building Industry Technology Academy (BITA) construction classes. His BITA I class includes 28 Juniors, 1 Senior and 1 Sophomore. His BITA II class is comprised of 25 Seniors, 3 Juniors & 2 Sophomores.



Teacher Chris Geldert explains the day's tiny house work plan to his students.

Most of the first two weeks of school were devoted to new school year startup activities. Many students drop and add classes, so the class enrollment takes awhile to settle down. The teachers also need to orient their students to their construction programs, safe working practices, the proper care and use of tools, and procedures for maintaining their working environment. Unfortunately, September was very warm this year. A Heat Advisory kept some of our students inside when they would normally have been outside working on their houses. By the middle of September our students were eager to start work on their houses.

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EVENTS

San Diego Trades Day 2025
Thursday, November 12, 2026
09:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Palomar College
1140 West Mission Road
San Marcos, 92069

VIP PROFILE

Our Students

By Phil Blair, Co-founder of Manpower West Staffing

Published in the San Diego Union Tribune, 14 September 2026

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It's time to fill those unfilled trade jobs I've spent decades in the staffing world, and if there's one thing that keeps me up at night, it's a math problem that doesn't add up.

Here's the one that bothers me lately: America needs about 2.1 million skilled trade workers filled every year. Yet we've only got 800,000 people in training pipelines to fill those spots.

That's a gap of 1.3 million people, year after year, and it's not shrinking — it's getting worse.

We talk endlessly about the AI boom, about data centers popping up like mushrooms, about manufacturing coming back to American soil. And everybody wants to talk about software engineers and chip designers.

But none of that gets built without electricians running the conduit, HVAC techs keeping the servers cool, welders and pipefitters and heavy equipment operators doing the unglamorous work that makes the glamorous stuff possible.

Data center growth alone has created 315,000 jobs over the past five years. Somebody has to actually build and maintain those buildings, and right now, we don't have enough "somebodies."

The stat that really gets me is this: 40% of the annual job openings in skilled trades aren't from growth. They're from retirements.

More than a quarter of the current skilled-trades workforce is 55 or older. That's not a slow-moving iceberg somewhere off in the distance — it's a wave that's about to break.

We're not just failing to grow the workforce fast enough. We're failing to replace the people walking out the door.

Why aren't more young people walking into the trades? I think we know the answer, even if we don't like saying it out loud.

Path to a good life

For about a generation now, we've told kids that a four-year degree is the only respectable path to a good life.

We built our high school guidance counseling, our parental pride, our entire cultural narrative around the idea that success wears a cap and gown.

A majority of high school graduates in the U.S. still head straight to college — over 60%.

How many of those are not ready for college and have no idea what they want to do with their degree?

Meanwhile, we quietly let industrial-shop classes disappear from schools and let "vocational" become a word said with a slight wince.

That was a mistake, and the numbers are the receipts.

A skilled tradesperson today can graduate from a two-year program with zero or minimal debt, walk into a job making real money, and — this is the part many people forget — not be replaced by AI.

You cannot outsource an electrician. You cannot automate a plumber. These jobs are, by definition, hands-on and in-person.

In an economy that's nervous about the influx of artificial intelligence, the trades are looking more stable, not less.

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VIP PROFILE Our Students

*By Phil Blair, Co-founder of Manpower West Staffing
Published in the San Diego Union Tribune, 14 September 2026
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If I'm talking to a parent right now, here's my advice: Stop treating the trades like a backup plan for kids who "couldn't make it" academically.

Treat it like what it is — a smart, strategic, high-demand career choice. Ask your local community college or union apprenticeship program what it takes to get started.

Many of these programs pay you while you train. That's not a compromise. It's a head start.

If I'm talking to a young person deciding what's next, here's my advice: Don't let anybody make you feel like this is "settling" — because the math is on your side.

Employers are desperate, and desperate employers pay well and train aggressively.

Chasing a degree

You could spend four years, and a small fortune, chasing a degree in a saturated field or spend two years learning a trade that nobody else wants to learn and become essential.

Finally, if I'm talking to employers and policymakers, my advice is blunt: This gap doesn't close itself. It closes when companies invest in apprenticeships, the ultimate work-based training.

It's time public schools bring back real vocational tracks and stop pretending prestige and practicality are opposites.

We built this shortage one dismissive attitude at a time. We can unbuild it the same way — one candidate, one apprenticeship, one changed mind at a time. The trades aren't the fallback anymore.

They're the frontier. Blair is co-founder of Manpower West Staffing and can be reached at pblair@manpowerwest.com.



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, SMHS

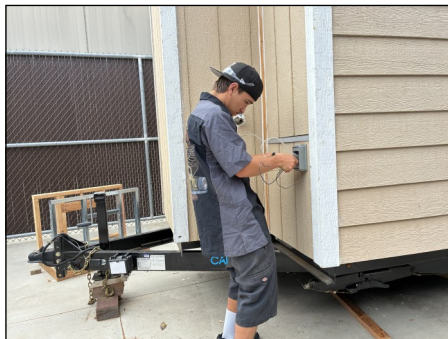
San Marcos High School: SM #1

- Chapter 1 Trailer
- Chapter 2 Framing
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
- Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- Chapter 7 Windows & Doors
- Chapter 8 Exterior
Exterior Trim
Finish
- Chapter 9 HVAC
Venting
- Chapter 10 Insulation
- Chapter 11 Interior Wall
Ceiling Covering
- Chapter 12 Interior Cabinetry
Installations
Flooring
Fixtures
- Chapter 13 Interior Trim Finish
- Chapter 14 Finish Plumbing
Electrical
Fixtures
- Chapter 15 Finish Hardware
Touch-ups
- Chapter 16 Health & Safety
Final Testing
Certification
Submission

Teacher Chris Geldert doubled the enrollment in his construction classes last year. So, we have a large group of Juniors returning as Seniors this fall with a year of construction experience under their tool belts to complete our tiny houses during the 2026 - 2027 academic year.

SMHS has received inspection approval for the Trailer and the Framing. The documentation has been submitted for a virtual inspection of the Wall Sheathing, Roofing Shear and Moisture Barrier, as well as for the Roofing installation. Testing of the rough plumbing and rough electrical is underway.

On September 17 licensed electrician Matt Churchill of [Matt Electric](#) volunteered several hours of his time to inspect the rough electrical installation on SM #1. He traced the wiring for each circuit and performed [continuity tests](#) to make sure that current can flow in each circuit. He also spent time with our students explaining what he was looking for regarding the quality of the [Romex](#) wire installation and the [makeup of the wires](#), and the testing he was doing as part of the rough-in inspection. Thanks Matt!



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, SMHS

San Marcos High School: SM #2

- Chapter 1 Trailer
- Chapter 2 Framing
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
- Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- Chapter 7 Windows & Doors
- Chapter 8 Exterior
Exterior Trim
Finish
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- Chapter 10 Insulation
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A new school year begins with the delivery of materials for our tiny houses as well as lumber for our students who will be honing their carpentry skills in preparation for the annual [Construction Industry Education Foundation \(CIEF\) Design Build Competition](#). A few of our most experienced students will be working on Thursday mornings to complete our tiny houses, while most of our students will be building sheds and designing and building a structure in preparation for the annual [SoCal Design Build Competition® 2026](#) to be held at Golden West College in Huntington Beach on April 22 - 23.



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, RBVHS

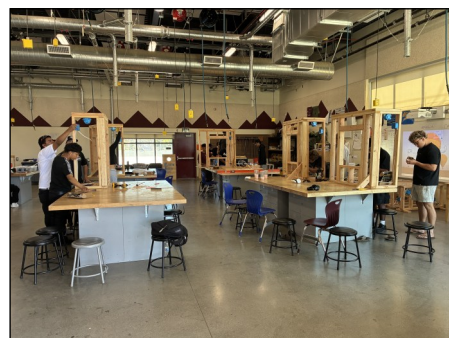
- Chapter 1 Trailer
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- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
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Rancho Buena Vista High School: RBV #1

Teacher Landon Cardenas and semi-retired General Contractor Michael McSweeney spent a couple days at Rancho Buena Vista High School during the summer to get a jump start on the work our students will be doing on RBV #1 and RBV #2 this fall.

They installed 1" x 4" SmartSide textured exterior trim around the windows and the entry door and on the corners of tiny house RBV #1. They also installed sheet siding on the bathroom 'bump out'. With the trim installation complete, a few students started covering the windows and taping the window frames in preparation for painting of the trim. Their work on RBV #1 will serve as a model, or 'Go By', for the trim and siding work other students will be doing on RBV #2.

Landon's curriculum includes classroom work teaching the basics of the building trades in addition to hands-on work on their tiny houses. On a typical day at RBV, you will find some of Landon's more advanced students working on their houses while other students are in the classroom building prototype wall frames, wiring simple electric light circuits, or working on a mockup of a roofing installation. After learning the basics in the classroom, they will take their newly acquired to the build site, just outside the classroom door.



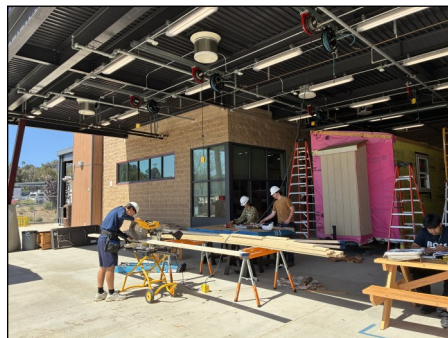
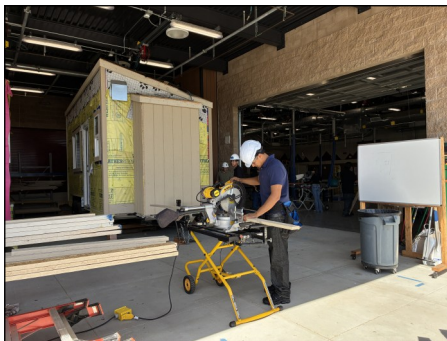
CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, RBVHS

Rancho Buena Vista High School: RBV #2

- Chapter 1 Trailer
- Chapter 2 Framing
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
- Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- Chapter 7 Windows & Doors
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Our returning students started working to complete the installation of the 2" x 6" fascia and 1" x 4" exterior Trim around the windows and the Entry Door and on the corners of tiny house RBV #2 (formerly known as SP #1).

They will also complete the installation of sheet siding on the two end walls before military personnel from the [HBI Transitioning Military Program](#) in San Marcos come to campus to work alongside our students to help install SmartSide textured lap siding on the front and back walls.



PARTNERS



CIE Foundation
WHERE INDUSTRY MEETS THE CLASSROOM™

SAN DIEGO

TRADES DAY
A DAY FOR CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING

PRESENTING PARTNERS

EDUCATION
San Diego County Office of Education
Serving San Diego County

PALOMAR COLLEGE
Learning for Success

NOVEMBER 12, 2026

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

PALOMAR COLLEGE | SOCCER FIELD PARKING LOT
1140 WEST MISSION ROAD, SAN MARCOS, CA 92069

CONNECT STUDENTS TO CAREERS

Expose your students to hands-on opportunities across the built environment—from

**CONSTRUCTION, ENGINEERING,
DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY,
SUSTAINABILITY, AND MORE!**

Give them real-world insight into careers that span labor, leadership, and innovation.



JASON MANION
PROGRAMS MANAGER
562.715.0934 | jmanion@cie.foundation

REGISTER NOW

TRADESDAY.ORG



TIME SLOTS

Schools, youth groups & individual students are invited to register for a two-hour block starting from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Upon arrival, students will go through a safety tailgate talk before entering the exhibition halls.

***Please note: student lunches are not included.**

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM



PARTNERS



Come watch the sparks fly!

Date: Friday, October 2, 2026

Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Place: Workshops for Warriors, 2970 Main Street, San Diego, CA 92113

Spend the day on the shop floor at Workshops for Warriors, a nonprofit trade school that trains, certifies, and places veterans and civilians in advanced manufacturing careers. Bring the family, meet our students, and see how it's really made.

National Manufacturing Day will feature:

- Live welding and CNC demos
- Guided campus tours
- Refreshments & partner meetups (complimentary lunch 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

Sponsored by The Boeing Company



RSVP Today

SPONSORS



DONATE TO THE WARRIOR VILLAGE PROJECT

The Warrior Village Project has joined the San Diego Gives 2026 Campaign. It is easy to donate to the Warrior Village Project through the [San Diego Gives online platform](#). Your donation will go to the Warrior Village Project General Fund to purchase materials to build Moveable Tiny Houses in high school construction classes in San Diego County.

The trailer foundation and building materials and consumables required for one Moveable Tiny House (MTH) cost about \$44,000. The curriculum and the inspection and certification package cost about \$6,000.

The cost of installing an MTH as an Accessory Dwelling Unit would depend on the site. But, it should cost about \$20,000 per house. Hence, we can provide a permanent, fully equipped tiny house for a homeless person for about \$70,000 per unit.

According to the [Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley \(January 2026\)](#): "In 2023, it cost approximately \$630,000 to develop one subsidized housing unit funded with Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) equity in California, nearly 20 percent more than in 2019, after accounting for inflation."

Isn't it time to start building truly affordable housing?



Donate

You're making a donation to **Warrior Village Project, Inc.**

ORGANIZATION
Warrior Village Project, Inc.

☒ One-time donation ☐ Monthly donation

\$ Donation amount

☐ Hide amount from public

☐ Hide name from public

[Privacy info](#)

☐ Add a dedication to your donation

Designation
General Fund

Help us build truly affordable housing while training the next generation of home builders.



2026 Campaign

<https://sandiegogives.mightycause.com/donate/Warrior-Village-Project>

We need to raise \$80,000 to purchase materials to complete the four Moveable Tiny Houses we are building at San Marcos High School, San Pasqual High School and Rancho Buena Vista High School.

