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Summit Academy OIC expands partnerships with unions

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Eddie Jackson and Artie Crawford worked on construction of the new Target Field stadium as a part of Summit Academy's 100 Hard Hats program, a community-based, skills-focused training effort that combines community services, vocational training and employer services. - Photo: Elliot Stewart-Franzen

Partnerships ensure minorities have access to opportunities within the high skill

Summit Academy OIC offers specialty training in three high-skill areas thanks to strong partnerships with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and Cement Masons, Plasterers & Shophands, Local 633. Summit developed a similar partnership in 2010 with the International Union of Operating Engineers – Local 49.

"These partnerships demonstrate the ability to turn conflict into progress," said Louis King, CEO of Summit Academy OIC. "They also serve as a template of what is possible when there is a commitment to integrity, hard work and fair play because partnerships between labor and the African-American community are mutually beneficial."

Summit Academy OIC partnered with Local 49 in 2010 to offer a first-of-its-kind heavy equipment operator training – a hands-on, high-tech, 20-week program with 15 weeks of classroom, online and simulator training at Summit's Minneapolis facility and then five weeks on the actual machinery in Hinckley. Twenty students are currently enrolled in the program.



Louis King, President and CEO Summit Academy OIC - Photo: Suluki Fardan

"The partnership with Local 49 came after months of legislative testimony, protests and negotiations by Summit Academy OIC to ensure MnDOT would develop a multi-million dollar plan that extends to 2014 to increase the number of people of color and women in the trades," King said. "Local 49 was the first union to extend an invitation to partner, which is significant because they are the dominant trade in the road construction industry which includes the light rail project."

Earlier this year, Summit forged partnerships with Local 633 and IBEW. Currently 24 students are enrolled in the cement finishers program and eight individuals are training with IBEW in St. Michael.

Summit Academy OIC is a Minneapolis-based nonprofit educational and vocational center that teaches individuals from economically depressed neighborhoods in the Twin Cities to become educated, employed, contributing members of the community. For more information, visit www.saoic.org.

About Summit Academy OIC

Summit Academy OIC (SAOIC) is a nonprofit educational and vocational training center that empowers adults residing in the most economically depressed neighborhoods in the Twin Cities to become educated, employed, contributing members of the community. Focused on high-demand, high-growth industries, Summit's results-oriented programs effect long-term change. Summit graduates are skilled and motivated workers who can stop drawing public assistance and start caring for their families, paying taxes and helping to stabilize and vitalize their communities. For more information, visit www.saoic.org.

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