

# Chicago Pipefitters Local 597 Training Center

## Training Center Tour with Senator Dick Durbin



August 7, 2013

Mokena, IL

### Attendees included:

- Senator Dick Durbin
- Tom Villanova,  
Chicago Building Trades
- Michael Maloney,  
Chicago Pipefitters 597
- John Conrad, Illinois BIO
- Evan Williams,  
Mechanical Contractors  
Association of Chicago

*"For the assignments they're given – and the biopharmaceutical industry is a good illustration – they've got to be the best. It isn't just so that they produce a good product, it's so that what comes at the end of the laboratory work and the production work does the thing it's supposed to do – keep America healthy and safe. They're an integral part of it. What the UA and Local 597 are doing at this training facility is key to the success of this effort."*

*-Senator Durbin*

## Labor and Industry Work Together For Illinois

On Wednesday, August 7, 2013, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin toured the state-of-the-art Pipefitters training facility in Mokena, IL.

The event was hosted by the **Chicago Pipefitters Local 597**, the **Pharmaceutical Industry Labor Management Association (PILMA)**, and **We Work For Health (WWFH)**.

The event was attended by representatives from **Takeda**, **iBio**, **CSL Behring**, the **Chicago Building Trades**, the **United Association of**

**Plumbers, Pipefitters, Welders, and HVAC Service Techs**, the **Mechanical Contractions Association of Chicago**, and members of **PhRMA** and **WWFH**.

The event showcased the facility's top-flight clean room and highlighted how the biopharmaceutical industry and labor work together in Illinois to build new facilities, stimulate job growth, encourage innovation, support the local economy and create new, life-saving cures.

## Life Sciences and Building Trades Invest in Illinois

The biopharmaceutical industry contributes significant economic resources to Illinois.

In 2011, over **37,700 jobs** in Illinois were directly supported by the life sciences industry, and the industry generated just over **\$53 billion** in state economic output in Illinois.

Training centers like the one in Mokena prepare skilled craftsmen and women to build efficient, state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities that help foster innovation in the

industry. The partnership at Local 597 extends to working with local companies in devising new training measures that will directly relate to industry needs.

To encourage medical innovation, trade unions **invest over \$1 billion annually**, at no taxpayer expense, to teach the latest techniques and skills to their workers.

As a result, building trades workers are trained and ready to build the facilities needed by the industry.



Senator Durbin practices on the electronic welding machine during his tour of the Local 597 Training Center in Mokena, IL.

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## Manufacturing a Better Tomorrow: Local 597's Clean Room

The clean room is a vital part of any modern biopharmaceutical research facility.

As technology evolves and new medicines and cures become increasingly complex, biopharmaceutical companies have increased their reliance on state-of-the-art facilities and processes to create the drugs of tomorrow.

At the Chicago Pipefitters Local 597 Training Center in Mokena this necessitated the construction of their own clean room, which is used to train apprentices and journeymen in the new techniques required for highly-technical life sciences manufacturing. The clean room's construction was the result of an ongoing dialogue between the Building Trades unions and local biopharmaceutical companies.

"The pharmaceutical industry can tell us, 'this is what's coming next, this is the technology change, this is what you have to teach your apprentices,'" Chicago Building Trades President Tom Villanova said. "The clean room is the perfect example – the pharmaceutical industry said this is what we need, this is what's coming down the line, get on board, start teaching it now, so when it becomes an effect of the industry, we're already ready."

Local 597's clean room is an excellent example of the partnership between industry and labor in the life sciences sector

having a positive effect on workforce development and medical innovation.

"We're here to cater to them, it's their building ultimately, we're turning the keys over to them," Local 597 Clean Room Welding Instructor Glenn Birch said. "It's their mechanical system, they need somebody to build it. We're stepping up, we're saying 'hey, you want to use us, and this is why,' because we're training on the specs that you want and need for your facility."

Each day, apprentices and journeymen and women use the clean room to learn jobs skills that directly translate to the field.

"[The clean room training] teaches you to be very particular and neat, with attention to detail. You want it to be as sanitary as possible so no one ends up sick and you don't lose products because of contamination," 2nd year apprentice Joe Mayhall, who is currently earning his clean room certification at the Local 597 facility, said. "The building trades are always on the leading edge of technology, they're always one to be the first to teach you the new things that come out."

Locally, the Illinois building trades spent \$13.5 million dollars on training



Senator Durbin learns more about the welding processes taught to apprentices and journeymen and women inside the Chicago Pipefitters Local 597 Training Center clean room in Mokena, IL.

programs and certifications in 2012. Nationally, the building trades spend over \$800 million annually.

The end result is the world's best-trained workforce and a fulfilled commitment to providing the biopharmaceutical industry with skilled craftsmen and women.

Following a tour of Local 597's clean room, United States Senator Dick Durbin called the creation of these facilities "a life and death investment," and recognized the building trades' key role in assisting medical innovation.

"[The apprentices] are developing a set of skills that are unique," Durbin said. "They're unique not only in Illinois but around the world. They're skills which are going to sustain critically important industries, and the biopharmaceutical industry is one of them."