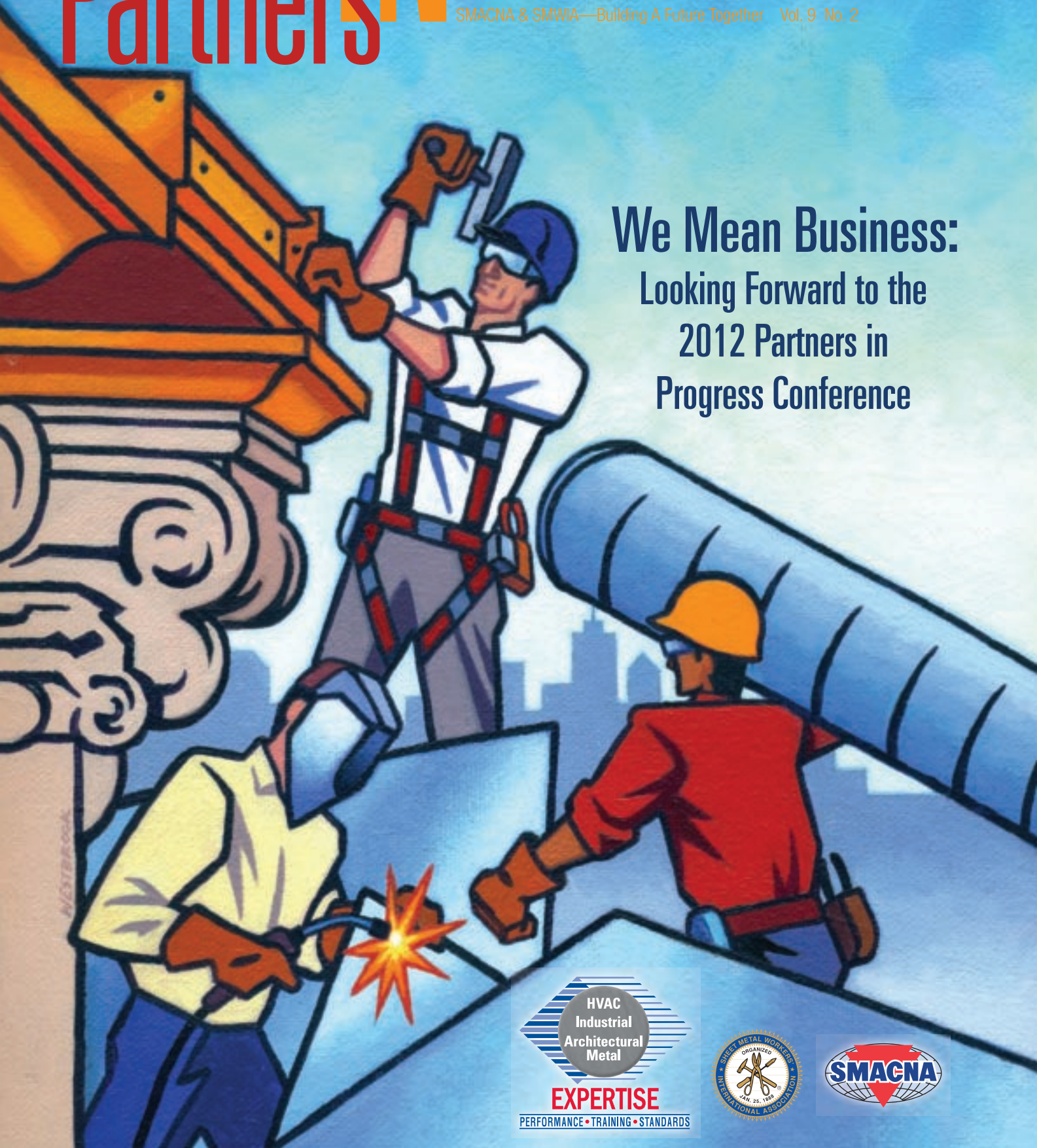


# Partners **IN** PROGRESS

SMACNA & SMWIA—Building A Future Together Vol. 9 No. 2

**We Mean Business:  
Looking Forward to the  
2012 Partners in  
Progress Conference**



# Building Trades and Pharmaceutical Companies: The Right Medicine

By Steve Grieco

Biopharmaceutical companies perform high-risk, high-reward research at a very high level, requiring exacting standards. Their building and system requirements involve working with volatile compounds and biologic formulations that must be rigidly controlled.

“Every worker on the job must adhere to the kind of standards that union training and apprenticeship programs deliver,” says Tim Dickson, executive director of the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association (PILMA). “That means trained union workers—and the contractors who hire them—have a significant advantage.”

Pharmaceutical companies have long been great customers for SMACNA contractors and their SMWIA workforce. Back in 2000, unions and employers in the biopharmaceutical industry started working together—forming PILMA—to promote industry employment, innovation, and legislation affecting working families.

Besides SMWIA, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, International Association of Bridge, Structural & Ornamental Iron Workers, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, participate in PILMA.

Now Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Merck, Novartis and other PILMA members have taken the relationship to a new level, working as partners with SMWIA and SMACNA chapters on key issues affecting the pharmaceutical industry and organized labor.

One of the things the coalition has been advocating for years is meaningful reform of the United States’ patent system. A strong patent system is crucial to American competitiveness, especially in the biopharmaceutical sector where innovation is costly and risky.

“We encouraged passage of the America Invents Act, an important step in protecting intellectual property rights,” Dickson says. “Among the beneficiaries of such legislation are trade unions and signatory contractors across the country that will get more construction, renovation, and maintenance jobs at biopharmaceutical facilities.”

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Learn more about entering new markets at the 2012 Partners in Progress Conference, March 8-10, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Thomas C. Schleifer will present a breakout session on *Flirting with Loss: Entering New Markets*. Schleifer brings more than 45 years of contracting and consulting experience to his presentation. He has a doctorate in construction management from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland, and experience serving as foreman, field superintendent, project manager, and vice president of a construction company. Another breakout session will cover dealing with the multiemployer world on Capitol Hill. For more information, visit [pinp.org/conf12/](http://pinp.org/conf12/).

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Wing's Testing and Balancing Co., Inc., based in Branford, Conn., positioned itself to take advantage of such opportunities.

In the past, testing and balancing work in the lab environment was limited to individual projects where sheet metal workers installed ductwork and fume hoods, while testing and balancing technicians ensured design flow rates were met. A separate certification agency would test the hoods under the ASHRAE 110 guideline.

Wing's leadership saw the opportunity to have SMWIA members perform the certification work, and proposed to TABB that a certification be developed for fume hood certification testing.

"This testing protocol goes beyond basic flow measurements. It quantifies the containment of a fume hood by using prescribed methods, smoke visualization, and tracer gas measurement," explains Matthew Cole, Wing's field operations manager. "Building owners and managers rely on this testing for the safety of their workers and to ensure efficient energy usage."

In 2010, Cole and three other Wings' technicians were among the first trainees in the newly minted TABB Fume Hood Performance Testing Technician Certification. Since then, Wings has performed ASHRAE 110 testing on over 100 fume hoods, creating man-hours in a difficult economic climate.

"This is a perfect fit for our testing and balancing company," Cole says. "As certified TABB technicians, we have the training and knowledge to test and adjust complex HVAC systems. Companies that only certify will just say 'Fail.' Being balancers as well as certifiers, we can make the needed adjustments to the system and change the fail to a pass."

Dave Roche, business manager for local 40 in Rocky Hill, Conn., also sees the value of training apprentices to properly install fume hoods and understand all aspects of installation—from placement and measuring to installing ductwork and balancing the system.

"We know and understand the needs of our contractors and the biopharmaceutical companies because we have worked with them," Roche explains. "Training journeyman and apprentices provides work opportunities that benefit our members, contractors and customers."

During an August 2011 event at the JATC in Rocky Hill, SMWIA, SMACNA's Connecticut chapter and the Associated Sheet Metal & Roofing Contractors of Connecticut (ASMRCC) highlighted the mutual benefits of matching highly-trained SMACNA/SMWIA partners with pharmaceutical and biotech companies.

Senator Richard Blumenthal toured the facility and said efforts to create jobs and grow the economy depend on workers with the skills that they need to fill job openings that exist today.

Local 19 and SMACNA's Philadelphia chapter held a similar event in September, helping to create a political and

## Fume Hoods Go Green

Fume hoods protect technicians and researchers from toxic or noxious fumes by sucking bad air out of a work area, just like the exhaust fan on a homeowners stove.

In industry, fume hoods are invaluable, but they are also expensive to operate—often adding \$10,000 to \$20,000 to institutional energy bills. Considering that there are as many as 1.2 million of these hoods operating nationwide, it's clear that they add considerably to America's energy usage.

Robert Morris, an engineer in New Jersey, has designed a retrofit kit that cuts the volume of air that a fume hood needs to move in half. The new design, once installed, would mean that HVAC systems will only have to work half as hard and the savings should show up on the bottom line.

Three of the Morris-designed retrofit kits have been installed in labs at Villanova University at a cost of \$8,000 each, plus labor. If the kits work as expected, the university says it will install them in their remaining 144 fume hoods over an extended period of time—and would expect to realize annual savings of \$5,000 a year for each installed kit.

The retrofitted kits save approximately 60% over the price of new hoods. Working with the Facilities Department at Villanova University, Philadelphia local 19 signatory contractors Ernest D. Menold, Inc., and Keystone TAB Consulting, LLC arranged and performed the conversion of the three hoods.

"Innovations like the retrofit kits can help reduce unemployment among the local's 4,500 members," says Joe Sellers, SMWIA general secretary treasurer and former president of local 19.



legislative climate that is favorable to the biopharmaceutical industry nationwide.

After touring the JATC, Senator Robert Casey wrote in his blog, “[It] was a great opportunity to see, first-hand, the kind of comprehensive training these workers are receiving. I had the opportunity to meet several of the trainees, get an overview of how the training process works and speak with several contractors and employers who utilize these trainees after they have completed all of the necessary requirements.”

Dickson hopes to conduct several more of these programs. “Look for events in states where there is a good deal of biopharmaceutical industry density, such as New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Rhode Island,” he says.

Other unions are also on board with these programs. “By bringing the pharmaceutical industry into your training facility and allowing them to see the skill level and certifications that we can provide today’s marketplace, we can ensure that the union industry is the leader in economic growth and innovation well into the future,” says Jeff Stinson, business manager for Iron Workers local 22. ■

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*Grieco is a freelance writer based in Blacksburg, VA. For more details about the growing union-management-biopharmaceutical partnership, visit [PILMA.org](http://PILMA.org).*



## Use Your Imagination

TABB Fume Hood Performance Testing is a huge market, and certification gives SMACNA and SMWIA an advantage in the marketplace. “Look beyond the pharmaceutical industry,” says Matthew Cole, field operations manager for Wing’s Testing and Balancing of Branford, Conn. “High schools and colleges around the country are filled with hoods and hoods are used in industrial applications everywhere.”

What’s more, it’s recurring revenue. “Hoods must be tested regularly. The certification stickers we apply to the hood have our company contact information and a date for retesting,” Cole adds. “The man-hours that this certification has helped to create will happen again and again for years to come.”

## Trim the Fat *continued from page 18*

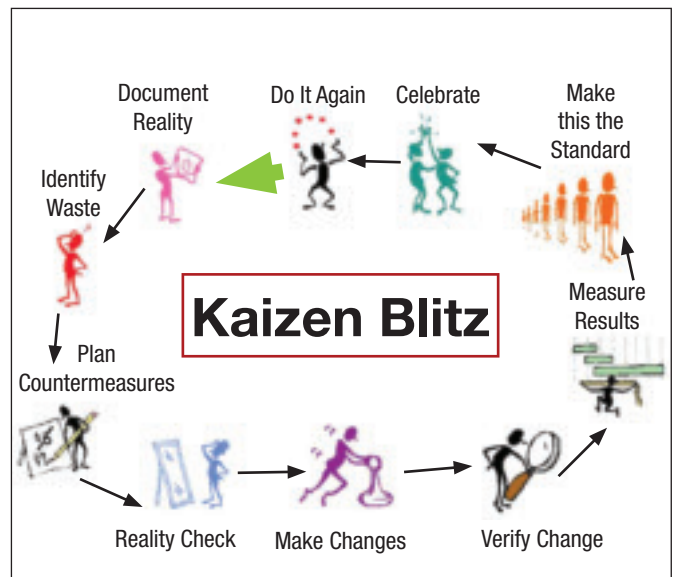
With the Last Planner system, the foreman can tell the superintendent what actually *can* be done. “It’s about planning tools that allow foremen to make commitments they can keep,” Sowards says.

## State of Lean

Why isn’t lean the way it’s been done for the past 15 years?

For contractors just trying to stay alive, economic challenges make going lean seem less frivolous. “Some contractors, though, have been able to position themselves to get more work by going lean,” says Sowards.

Lean consultant Larry Swanson, who wrote a New Horizons Foundation report about the Kaizen Blitz, believes that as time goes by, more and more of those people who either didn’t



want or couldn’t handle change will become the chief advocates of the process. “They’ll say ‘Where have you been? Why didn’t you come sooner? Can we apply this to whatever I do?’”

Indeed, one of the foremen at Blouin was that type. The first time the company used pre-assembly on a large project, he was skeptical. Two weeks into the project, he was a believer. “He couldn’t believe he’d been doing business differently for the past 40 years,” Cullen says.

Even without quantifying the company’s savings, Stokes can attest to a reduction in wasted time and resources in the shop and at job sites. “I’m stunned that it took so long to make these changes. We’ve found there are better, faster, smoother ways of doing things.”

Sometimes change is good! ■

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*Caughill is a freelance writer based in Ontario, Canada. Additional information is available in Partners in Progress, Vol. 9, Issue 1 at [pinp.org](http://pinp.org), and from New Horizons Foundation ([newhorizonsfoundation.org](http://newhorizonsfoundation.org)).*