

TRADEFUTURES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tradeswomen Build Nations Conference Draws 6,000 to Chicago, Celebrates Women's Leadership in the Skilled Trades

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 29, 2025 – The 15th annual [Tradeswomen Build Nations \(TWBN\)](#) conference concluded Sunday, September 21st, after drawing 6,000 tradeswomen, labor leaders, government officials, and industry stakeholders to McCormick Place in Chicago. Hosted by [TradesFutures](#), in partnership with [North America's Building Trades Unions \(NABTU\)](#), the conference showcased the growing influence of women in the skilled trades and provided a platform for leadership development, mentorship, and solidarity. TradesFutures' mission is to expand nontraditional pathways into the skilled trades through Apprenticeship Readiness Programs, opening doors for more women and individuals from all backgrounds to access and thrive in life-changing, family-sustaining careers.

This year's theme, ***"She's Not Waiting. She's Leading,"*** resonated throughout the three-day event, highlighting the proactive role tradeswomen are taking in shaping the future of the construction industry. In addition to packed conference plenary sessions, meaningful skill-building workshops, and an awe-inspiring and energetic banner parade, the conference includes networking opportunities for tradeswomen to deepen their connection with peers from across North America.

"Tradeswomen Build Nations is more than just a conference; it's a testament to the invaluable contributions women are making to build North America," said Sean McGarvey, President of NABTU and TradesFutures Board Chair. ***"Our tradeswomen aren't waiting for change, they're driving it. As we continue to expand opportunities in the trades, their vision, skill, and determination are essential to our success. They are EXACTLY what this country needs right now — to get us back to common sense, back to seeing the humanity in each other, so we all can make progress and win for working people"***

TradesFutures Executive Director Marina Zhavoronkova emphasized the importance of empowering the next generation of tradeswomen. ***"We see firsthand the transformative impact women are having on the skilled trades. This conference is a crucial opportunity to accelerate our efforts, strengthen our training pipeline, and ensure that women are not only participating but leading the way. They are literally building our legacy for generations to come."***

The conference also emphasized the importance of the Infrastructure Generation, the historic increase in the labor force fueled by unprecedented federal investment. Speakers highlighted the need for inclusive workforce development, equity, and continued advocacy to protect the rights and opportunities of working people.

TWBN 2025 Individual Speeches:

- [Hannah Semeniuk](#) introduces [NABTU President Sean McGarvey](#)
- [AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler](#)

- [John Ridgley](#) introduces [General Organizer at Ironworkers International and TWBN Committee Member, Vicki O' Leary](#)
- [Natalie Montoya](#) introduces [General President at International Union of Elevator Constructors Frank Christensen](#)
- [Louquana Davis](#) introduces [President of Bechtel's Manufacturing & Technology Business, Catherine Hunt Ryan](#)
- [Sammie Coissart](#) shares her song, "Tradeswoman".
- [Sylvia Nunez](#), [Mariela Duran](#) & [Ashley Deschenes](#) introduce [President of the Military Women's Memorial Foundation, Phyllis Wilson](#)
- [Mandy Jo Ganieany](#) introduces [Governor of Illinois JB Pritzker](#)
- [PT 1. NABTU President Sean McGarvey](#) introduces the Lifetime Achievement Award 2025 Winner Randy Hedgecock
- [PT 2. NABTU President Sean McGarvey](#) introduces the [Lifetime Achievement Award 2025 Winner Randy Hedgecock](#)
- [Rennae Ross](#) introduces [Boilermakers Local 455 Cheyenne Ray Gregory](#)
- [Cattie Tenzillo](#) & [Asante McKinney](#) introduce [TradesFutures Executive Director Marina Zhavoronkova](#)

Community Support

This year, TWBN 2025 [supported Connections for Abused Women and their Children \(CAWC\)](#), a Chicago-based organization committed to ending domestic violence. Throughout the conference, tradeswomen from across North America fulfilled CAWC's Wishlist, donated physical items, and contributed over **\$100,000** in financial donations to support their work.

TWBN 2026

Next year's conference will be held in October 9-11, 2026 in Houston, Texas.

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About TradesFutures: TradesFutures is a non-profit corporation organized to develop, promote, and improve Apprenticeship Readiness Programs ("ARPs"). ARPs are educational programs that provide students with the fundamental skills and knowledge necessary to choose, obtain, and succeed in a formal, registered apprenticeship in the construction industry. TradesFutures is also dedicated to assisting women, veterans, and people of color in establishing and maintaining careers in the construction industry. Learn more about TradesFutures and its work to develop a more diverse and accessible quality construction workforce at tradesfutures.org.

About NABTU: North America's Building Trades Unions is an alliance of 14 national and international unions in the building and construction industry, collectively representing over 3 million skilled craft professionals in the United States and Canada. Each year, our unions and signatory contractor partners invest over \$2 billion in private-sector money to fund and operate nearly 2,000 apprenticeship training and education facilities across North America that produce the safest, most highly trained, and most productive, skilled craft workers found anywhere in the world. NABTU is dedicated to creating economic security and employment opportunities for its construction workers by safeguarding wage and benefits standards, promoting responsible private capital investments, investing in renowned apprenticeship and training, and creating more construction career pathways to the middle

class for women, communities of color, Indigenous people, veterans, and the justice-involved. For more information, please visit nabtu.org.