



# What's happening

# IN MASONRY



Gary Porter, Engineering & Technical Services for the Masonry Advisory Council is called upon with questions about construction concerns and for masonry advice from a variety of Architects, Engineers, Contractors, Developers and Distributor sources. He is dedicated to ongoing education of masonry and shares helpful tips from his professional experience that may be beneficial to you.

August 2018

## Labor shortages create new challenges

Last week at the Indiana mason contractor golf outing, my golf partners were telling me about the lack of qualified masons in Indiana.....as well as carpenters, electricians, plumbers and laborers. One mason contractor in Indiana has purchased 2 SAM (Semi-Automated Mason) bricklaying robots to combat the lack of qualified masons. These machines are good in the middle of the wall, but they cannot build a corner, cut off a mortar joint or strike a mortar joint. This robot can lay what 3 to 4 masons install in one day. The machine can lay as many utility bricks (3/square foot) as modular bricks (6.75/square foot) so this makes it more efficient and a real game changer with utility sized brick.



This shortage of qualified masons was a big discussion topic last year at World of Concrete/World of Masonry. Many parts of the country are struggling with the shortage of qualified labor. There was a program mentioned at that convention called National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) aiming at training military vets, unsure of their future, to become a mason through a 3 year apprenticeship. At that time there were about 80 veterans participating in the program and the program was expanding.



# What's happening

# IN MASONRY



## Labor shortages create new challenges (continued)

August 2018

In Chicago there seems to be an ample supply of union masons available. There is a program in place for mason contractor's to share their masons with another contractor as long as the masons shared go back to the original contractor when needed. This is a great program for contractors and masons as the workers are kept busy and get more work hours per year. Material delivery, weather, schedule and job site conditions are variables that frequently cause interruptions in a contractor's work load so a mason might get laid off or be asked to stay home for a few days due to one or more of these factors.

Just a few years ago there was a massive layoff of tradesmen as the economy crashed. Now it appears we need them back! Many have retired, switched careers or relocated to different parts of the country.

If my son or daughter were not sure about their career path or if college is not the right choice after high school, why not consider masonry? After four years of college, there will probably be a great debt owed for college. A future in the trades could lead to a sizeable income after four years and is a great career choice. Union masons have health insurance, pension and annuity funds for a secure retirement. They also take pride and have the satisfaction of creating something with their hands. They are the ones who can drive by years later and say "Look at that, I helped build that place!"



The Masonry Advisory Council is a non-profit organization that markets and promotes the benefits of building with masonry. Our vast network of industry professionals are available through MAC as a source of education, technical support, promotion, and marketing outreach.

Visit our website [masonryadvisorycouncil.org](http://masonryadvisorycouncil.org)

For immediate support call us at 847-297-6704



Call MAC for FREE Masonry  
Technical Support!

**847.297.6704**



Do you want to learn more about building  
with masonry? Schedule a FREE Lunch &  
Learn for your office!

[L&L Topics](#) >