

For immediate release:

2015 Job Growth Stifled by Construction Labor Shortage

December 9, 2014 -- Since 2011, Colorado Construction Institute (CCI) has been delivering innovative workforce development solutions for Colorado’s residential construction industry. While Colorado’s economy has been one of the quickest to recover from the Great Recession, trends in employment pointed to a growing middle-skills gap in construction trades. According to research released this week, it appears that 2015 will be the first year when this skills gap makes a noticeable impact on Colorado’s job growth rate.

Yesterday, Colorado Public Radio’s Rachel Estabrook reported on the *2015 Colorado Business Outlook* published by the University of Colorado’s Leeds School of Business. According to the study, Colorado will gain only about 61,000 jobs in 2015, down from about 70,000 in 2014.

Estabrook spoke with the study’s lead author, Richard Wobbekind, who claimed 2015’s job growth could be higher, but that industries, particularly construction, are having trouble finding qualified workers. “A lot of [construction workers] appear to have migrated to the oil and gas industry,” claimed Wobbekind. “We certainly have seen the workforce disappear in [the construction] industry that is no longer available to be hired here locally.”

Fortunately, approaches to workforce development are being undertaken by nonprofit CCI to train a new pool of workers for employment in the construction trades. “We’ve been preparing for the middle-skills gap to eventually show itself,” said Michael Smith, CCI’s Executive Director. “The economic recovery exposed [the middle-skills gap], and labor shortages are being compounded by an aging workforce entering retirement. Now is the time for the entire industry to work together to educate an unemployed and underemployed population that construction jobs are good jobs, that construction jobs lead to long-term careers at a family-wage.”

CCI is a nonprofit organization providing construction-industry workforce development programs for disadvantaged persons with barriers to employment. CCI believes that poverty, and its systemic problems like poor education and lack of transportation, creates barriers that prevent individuals from participating in traditional construction-industry workforce development avenues like Registered Apprenticeships. CCI programs provide both vocational and personal development skills trainings so that individuals can overcome their unique barriers and transform into effective, middle-skilled employees.

“Our mission is to provide skill training programs for an unemployed and underemployed population so they can earn middle-skilled jobs with upward mobility,” continued Smith. “This population has the potential to be a major solution to the labor needs of Colorado’s construction employers.”

For more information about CCI or to enroll in a CCI training program, please visit www.ccidenver.org. To find Ms. Estabrook’s article, follow [this link](#) to CPR’s website.