

## **Steel Toe Communications Launches Workforce Development Social Media Campaign, @Chat\_CTE, to Bridge the Skills Gap**

Montgomery County, Maryland -August 29, 2024, [Steel Toe Communications](#), a leading digital marketing firm serving the commercial contracting industry, is excited to announce the launch of its new career exploration and workforce development social media campaign, @Chat\_CTE. Inspired by Salary Transparent Street, Body by Marc, and other popular social channels that found success with short interview-style videos. @Chat\_CTE aims to address the critical skills gap in the construction industry by connecting skilled trades professionals with career explorers through [TikTok](#) and [Instagram](#).

Steel Toe Communications facilitates on-site visits for high school students interested in media and communications to tour construction sites and interview trades professionals. These interactions provide the students firsthand exposure to exciting and rewarding careers in the construction industry and other skilled trades. The resulting videos are then shared on TikTok and Instagram, reaching an even wider audience of students, parents, veterans, women, and minorities with easy-to-digest information about hands-on career paths.

"With the decline of shop classes in local school systems, many students are unaware of the diverse and fulfilling careers available in construction," said Stacey Holsinger, Owner of Steel Toe Communications. It's our responsibility to act now, work together, and explore more innovative options for connecting industry to students and beyond. We know we can't pull our tradespeople off-site because we are already short-staffed, so we will come to them for a moment in time and capture their experiences to share with the world."

The campaign, launched in June 2024, is a collaborative effort that has included participation from local commercial contractors, Montgomery County Schools, and non-profits like the [Maryland Center for Construction Education and Innovation](#) (MCCEI) and Skills USA. Holsinger incubated the project in the Harbor Freight Leadership Lab (HFLL), a cross-sector program of [Bendable Labs](#) and [Harbor Freight Tools for Schools](#) seeks to elevate the performance and prestige of Skilled Trades Education nationwide.

"@Chat\_CTE is a focused yet fun way to deliver low-cost career exploration to people from all walks of life," said the director of HFLL, Phalana Tiller. "It has already reached about 84,000 views in just three months and is a smart drop in the larger bucket of efforts with educators, policymakers, industry, parents—and influencers— that need to come together to ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers for the future."

"In my experience, many construction companies have yet to fully capitalize on social media's power. @Chat\_CTE is leading the way in this regard, and their success should inspire others in the industry," Aaron Shapiro, Shapiro and Duncan Mechanical Contractors.

@Chat\_CTE aims to feature representatives from all trade categories on their social media platforms within the year, including both merit shop and union workers and professionals in

residential and commercial construction and office support positions. By showcasing the variety of roles available, @Chat\_CTE's mission is to inspire and attract a new generation of skilled workers to the industry. Contractors are invited to participate in this workforce initiative by inviting @Chat\_CTE to your job site.

@Chat\_CTE was initially launched in Maryland and has garnered positive responses from the DMV region and across the United States. Steel Toe Communications hopes to expand the initiative to other states and territories, contributing to the overall development of the construction industry workforce.

#### About Steel Toe Communications

Steel Toe Communications is a digital marketing firm dedicated to helping small—to mid-size construction firms, subcontractors, general contractors, vendors, suppliers, associations, and service providers succeed in the digital age. Focusing on the commercial contracting industry, Steel Toe Communications provides tailored solutions to drive growth, enhance brand visibility, and attract qualified leads.

Stacey Holsinger, Owner [staceyh@steeltocomm.com](mailto:staceyh@steeltocomm.com)(240)755-3187