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## PLHS students take part in skilled trades orientation

Recently, roughly 35 Pequot Lakes High School juniors traveled to Superior Mechanical in Pequot Lakes to attend the Future Skilled Trades Orientation.

The event was hosted to inform students of career opportunities, particularly in the lakes area, that may only require a year of training or an apprenticeship, as opposed to a four-year degree, to become qualified. The Mid-Minnesota Builders Association (MMBA) met with the high school principal and guidance counselor a few months before the event to discuss opportunities to work together in raising awareness of the benefits of the building industry.

“Kids don’t always have to move away and go through four years of classrooms and books,” said Colleen Faacks, the event organizer and MMBA Executive Officer. “A lot of them can enter a one-year program that they like and get into that industry.”

The two-hour event allowed students to meet with skilled trade workers from the area to discuss opportunities available in their respective fields - including expectations of the job and necessary qualifications - over pizza and pop.

It was held in response to a nationwide shortage in skilled workers in the building industry due to employers seeking “job-ready” employees. Students went station-to-station to hear about what it takes to be a skilled worker in the industries of construction, plumbing, electrical maintenance, heating and cooling and more.

“There are options here within the manufacturing and building trades at some local community colleges and trade schools that you can have with a one-year degree,” Faacks said. “The shortage of skilled workers within the construction industry is so high.”