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**GRANT TO FUND CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION AWARDED TO LABOR-MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE OF THE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS:  
COMMITTEE WORKING TO FILL GAPS IN THE REGION'S WORKFORCE**

**EDWARDSVILLE, ILL., MAY 28, 2002...**The Labor-Management Committee of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois today announced that the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs granted the Committee \$8,800 to purchase educational modules designed to provide students and teachers with information about the construction industry and its trades.

Recent trends in education indicate parents and teachers should begin to explain career choices to students at an early age. The Labor-Management Committee will provide one educational module to each 5<sup>th</sup> grade class in Madison and St. Clair counties. The modules, called "Build Up! Toolkits for Learning," contains teaching material along with a book, video, and poster. The Labor-Management Committee also plans to organize workshops to inform teachers and provides tips on how to most effectively use the module tool kits.

"This initiative is part of the Labor-Management Committee's long-held commitment to improving education to careers efforts and workforce preparation in the region," said Dr. Marv Finkelstein, executive director of the Labor-Management Committee of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois. "We hope that this program will encourage parents, teachers, and students to learn and explore all the industry offers and how it is a viable profession to last a lifetime."

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## **Labor Management Grant First and Final Add**

Research suggests that a negative perception about construction as a career choice has plagued the industry. According to a study conducted by the Construction Research Council based in Washington, D.C., the number of construction workers in Southwestern Illinois and the St. Louis region is expected to decline by one-third in the next five years and many in the existing construction workforce are expected to retire in the next decade. Not only will these workers have to be replaced, but new workers will be needed to keep up with the expanding demand.

The increasing demand of workers has prompted the Labor-Management Committee to take an educational initiative to help teachers, students, and parents gain a clear understanding of the construction industry and what it has to offer the future workforce in terms of training, benefits, and competitive salaries. The Committee hopes to reach and educate 1,000 students with this program.

“There are many options available today for young people to consider and while construction remains a viable option, many students are unaware of what the industry has to offer,” added Finkelstein.

The Labor-Management Committee was founded in spring 1983 as the first committee of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois. Its purpose is to improve the labor-management image in Southwestern Illinois. Committee membership involves individuals from manufacturing, construction, service, government, and education. This committee is comprised of 12 representatives from labor and 12 representatives from management. For more information about the Labor-Management Committee of the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois please visit the Labor-Management Committee website at [www.ezl.com/lmc](http://www.ezl.com/lmc).

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