

# Compressor training producing critically needed skills

*Southern States Millwright Regional Council*

The Southern States Millwright Regional Council's (SSMRC) Gulf Coast Millwright Training Center provides more than 25,000 square feet of training space. Situated front and center in one of the new facility buildings is the compressor training section, where both centrifugal and recip-

cating compressor training is occurring at a rapid pace. SSMRC millwrights are using the equipment to enhance in-demand skills for work in the petrochemical and other related energy fields.

"The idea for enhancing this type of training came about in May 2011, when we saw

the opportunity to increase the training of our millwrights, specifically for expert compressor work, so requests from our customers for millwrights with this specialized skill are filled with experts," said Dennis Donahou, executive secretary-treasurer of the SSMRC.

With help from the United Brotherhood

of Carpenters' International Training Fund, the SSMRC renovated its Houston training school, accumulated the tools and equipment to simulate in-field conditions and service scenarios, and had a class up and running within a year.

The end result is training that revolves specifically around compressors and their function. The 80-hour compressor course addresses every level of compressors, from the basic knowledge of compressors and how they work, disassembly and problem diagnosis, to the reassembly of the compressor and exact specifications.

"After completing this compressor training, Southern States Millwrights are extremely knowledgeable on the repair and maintenance of compressors, which in turn keeps this machinery in optimal running condition," said instructor Jim Upton, who helped create the course's curriculum. "The compressor classes are going extremely well. The students are passing with top grades and immediately contributing to the productivity on active job sites."

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— Jim Upton, SSMRC

"Jim Upton's expertise in the field of compressor maintenance and his ability to build curriculum has gotten this training course immediate recognition as the best compressor training in the region," said Donahou.

Compressors are typically found at facilities such as oil refineries, chemical plants, gas pipelines and natural gas processing units. The machinery is usually one of the most important and expensive components of a plant, so having experts who are versed in this machinery is crucial to keeping systems running properly and profitably. When cared for properly, the compressors produce long service lives and require an efficient amount of energy to operate.

"Compressors have incredible potential for cost-effective, productive service," Donahou said. "It's easy to see the benefit a trained, experienced millwright can provide to compressor maintenance and repair, and that's exactly the type of professional we are creating through our compressor training program."

For more information, visit [www.southernstatesmillwrights.org](http://www.southernstatesmillwrights.org) or call (479) 967-0639. ●

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