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Carpentry Class Offers ‘Way to fill that Gap’ in Society

PEARL – Carpentry is one of the trades that inmates at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility are learning to be employable upon release.

Here is an excerpt description of the Carpentry and Framing Program from The CMCF Focus newsletter editor, Willie Wilson:

For several hours every day, the back corner of the vocational village is transformed. The Carpentry and Framing program is underway. The sounds of the facility, the slamming of gates, and the crackle of radios are drowned out by the steady thwack of hammers and the high-pitched whine of a table saw.

The carpentry class is a rigorous vocational journey designed to take men from "I've never held a level" to "I can frame a three-bedroom house."

Carpentry is often called the "King of the Trades." Why? Because a carpenter is usually the first person on a job site and the last one to leave. From the initial layout and floor joists to the final crown molding, the carpenter oversees the skeleton and the skin of the building.

In today's economy, the "Outside" is facing a massive shortage of skilled laborers. Residential construction is booming, and companies are looking for people who show up on time, know how to read a tape measure, and respect the tools. This class offers us a way to fill that gap. Students spend weeks learning about scale, elevations, and material take-offs.

The highlight of the program is the Tiny House Project, in which the class works as a team to build a small house from the ground up.

Ask an instructor what the most important tool in the shop is, and he won't point to the miter saw. He'll point to the broom. "A clean shop is a safe shop." But more than that, carpentry is about discipline. If you're sloppy with your workspace, you're sloppy with your measurements.

If you're sloppy with your measurements, you're wasting someone else's money." The class fosters a level of teamwork rare in a prison environment. You can't stand a 12-foot wall by yourself. You have to communicate, you have to trust the guy holding the other end of the board, and you have to be willing to admit when you've made a mistake so it can be fixed before the siding goes on.

Like the electrical program, the Carpentry class is NCCER Certified. As you complete modules on "Hand and Power Tools," "Rigging," and "Drywall Finishes," those credits are logged into a national registry. When you walk into a union hall or a job site after your release, you have a verified transcript of your skills. Enroll Now & Take Advantage."

