



Firebirds in the Field Recap – Skilled Trades

Thanks to community partner [Shook Construction](#), staff members from Southdale, Orchard Park, KMS, Van Buren, and Fairmont learned about skilled trades careers at the September 30, 2025 [Firebirds in the Field](#) workforce experience. Staff learned about diverse pathways to careers in skilled trades and construction and visited the construction site of West Carrollton's new secondary buildings.

Key Takeaways

- **Thoughtful Communication:** We learned that exceptional communication skills are vital for success in all positions in this industry. From finish carpenters to electricians to civil engineers, face-to-face and written communication skills are vital to the success of a project and for career growth. Students can prepare for future success in this industry – and others – by making phone calls, giving presentations to peers, and discussing creative ways to solve problems.
- **Flexibility & Curiosity:** From the co-op students who are still attending UD and UC to veterans who have been with Shook since the 1990s, every person who shared their personal career journey touched on the need to be flexible and open to change. Whether it is using an Environmental Sciences degree to make a career of building wastewater treatment plants or becoming a Virtual Construction Engineer after working in residential plumbing for a decade, individuals who are curious about new possibilities will find a pathway to success.
- **Mindset Matters:** Industry leaders emphasized the importance of attitude, mindset, and mission alignment as key elements for Firebirds in their future careers. Apprenticeship programs are designed to build the practical skills needed for the trades; individuals who are motivated to learn, show up with a positive mindset, and work hard will be able to build a lucrative and rewarding career path.



Firebird Feedback

"There are so many opportunities in the construction industry. The emphasis was on construction management and civil engineering for degrees, but there are ample opportunities in apprenticeships for skilled trades. I loved that the people who spoke to us all had different paths to finding their passion in this field."

Jena Murray
Fairmont English Teacher

"I learned that construction is so much more than what we think. There are many different jobs that come together in a variety of ways to build a finished product. Also, students who are interested in any kind of trade can enter that trade through a union with a paid apprenticeship and free education. These are jobs that pay well and are in high demand."

Kelly Mora
Fairmont World Language Teacher

"The options for students are endless, and it is not necessary for a student to be pushed to go to college. Students must find their passions and allow those passions to guide them to their career choice. Many options are available for a person to find their way in construction from technology or marketing to electrical or carpentry."

Megan Porter
KMS 6th Grade Science Teacher

"Firebirds in the Field reinforced the importance of providing opportunities for students to engage in the 4 C's of 21st century learning. There is a significant long-term benefit from project-based learning that allows students to work creatively at higher levels of thinking to prepare them for the collaboration and creativity needed for their future careers."

Jessie Muhleman
Southdale Kindergarten Teacher

"Firebirds in the Field showed me that there are great paying jobs with great companies willing to work with students if they simply show initiative, so we need to encourage students to think outside the box about what they enjoy doing and not let finances determine their futures."

Karen Locke
Van Buren Career Exploration Teacher

"I was impressed by the presentation prep. Shook was really thorough about reaching us on a personal level and they made it so that we would want to encourage our students to take that step in their direction. I learned that there are so many opportunities in this field."

Julie Clark
Fairmont Job Coach

Interested in *Firebirds in the Field*? Reach out to **Jessica Stickel** to learn more about attending, partnering, or supporting this program.

Jessica.Stickel@KetteringSchools.org | 937.499.1459

Check out the pictures below from our visit and view this [flyer](#) for more details.



FIREBIRDS IN THE FIELD

