



CNM

Plumbing & Gas Fitting

CNM PLUMBING AND GAS FITTING NOW AT MORIARTY HIGH SCHOOL



It started as a collaborative idea in the early Fall of 2014, rolled into a site survey of the East Complex of the high school campus in November and resulted in the introduction of the plumbing program in late January.

It was thought that the initial class would be small with a projected 8 or 9 students in the class. To offset student costs, the School of Applied Technologies decided to buy four tool kits that the individual student would normally buy for him/herself. This saved the high school a fairly large expense.

Rolling The Dice

In order to test the waters, a cost saving measure of moving equipment from the CNM Advance Technology Center,

Plumbing Lab was done because a lack of enough first term student enrollment there. This dark cloud gave us the opportunity to have a strategic two fold objective.

1. Save our budget from a large initial investment to purchase tools, materials, fabricate new trainers, establish a classroom and lab environments. This cost just wasn't in the cards since our budget must last us until the end of June. This also saved tax payer dollars.

2. If, for some reason, there was a lack of student interest at the high school, this option meant that the equipment, the individual tools and all materials would be returned without loss of major funds to Moriarty H.S., CNM and the

plumbing program.

The Bet

Hedging our bet, the next task was the biggest, or dare I say heaviest. Enter, the muscle behind the move to Moriarty, the Instructional Technicians (IT) and our own student hire.

Doug, "The Bloodhound" Toca, Adrian "I Got This" Carrillo, Joseph "Too Smooth" Baca and Orlando "I Do It Right" Apodaca muscled two stake trucks worth of equipment in one day with more to follow.

Snake Eyes

So there I was, on the first day of class, the day after MLK Day and I was told that I am

Continued on page 2

How Much Do They Earn?

The plumbing and piping industry in NM can provide a lucrative occupation for skilled plumbers and pipefitters. To the right is the average salaries and hourly rate for these occupations as listed on the NM Workforce Solutions Website.

The hourly rate can be even higher at \$30+ an hour with specialty skills and foreman pay is added. Also, the annual wage value can be more when a health care and retirement package is totaled as well

New Mexico Local Wages Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters			
Area	Entry Wage	Average Wage	Experienced Wage
Statewide Annual	\$31,730	\$44,640	\$55,970
Statewide Hourly	\$15.25	\$21.46	\$26.91

<http://www.dws.state.nm.us/careersolutions/occs/472152.html>

Pinto Pride

Continued from cover page

to report to Stephanie West. Day one and I am already in the principal's office. My high school days flash back in my head. There was a huge difference between the scowling face of my own high school principal and the smiling face of Ms. West.

After a quick briefing, she informed me that I needed to go across the street to fill out paper work and get a photo for my ID. In the mean time keys to the complex, my classroom and lab space would be put together for me.

Well, I thought I was having a pretty good day you know? The sun was shining, I went to the principals office and didn't get chewed out or sent home with a note for my mom, life was lookin' pretty good I tell ya. But that's when it happened...the speed bump. The security background check that is required of all instructors dealing with students had to be conducted and it would take seven days to complete. The class was postponed for a week.

Lucky Seven

With the background check completed, I was cleared to start teaching the following Tuesday. Was I ever surprised when my CNM roster showed only 9 students enrolled in the class, and in walks 20. I needed to lay out some more desks but that's a good problem to have right? Lucky for me, the classroom had plenty stacked in a corner.

The Battle of Enrollment Begins

Now that the classroom was filled, next came the task of getting all the students properly enrolled that were not showing on the roster. Enter the Dean and Associate Dean of Applied Technologies, John Bronisz and Michael Cranney, respectively. Along with Mr. Arnold and Mr. Gunnare, at Moriarty High, this task was handled and soon the students were all enrolled and on my official CNM roster.

The Silver Lining

That dark cloud that loomed over us for a plumbing class at the ATC in Albuquerque, actually gave us what we need-

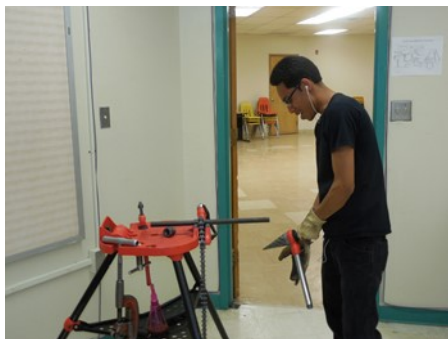
ed to make the class at Moriarty possible. I now have a great class with great students. We laugh, we joke and hopefully along the way, I can teach them that there is way more to this occupation than they first thought.

PINTO PRIDE BABY!! :)



Pintos Running Natural Gas Piping





Tips

Escutcheons—Just a Pretty Face?

In the plumbing world, escutcheons (*Pronounced ih-skuh-ch-uhn*), are an ornamental or protective plate around piping protruding through finished walls or sinks. You may have not heard the term before, but you sure have seen them.

These decorative plates give installations that clean, finished look, but can sometimes cause big problems if not installed correctly.

Where a bad installation can cause the most issues for a homeowner is on the shower escutcheon plate. What constitutes a bad install on a simple plate? Most installers use silicone or other approved sealants, however, water is a tricky devil and if it gets behind the escutcheon, it has the potential to get into the wall and that means problems...nasty problems.

Besides initial water damage inside the wall that most people don't see until it is too late, it can cause mold growth on a major scale. You do not want mold in your home. Once in the air, mold can lead to problems like itchy eyes, sneezing and coughing, but it can cause serious problems like asthma attacks, allergic reactions and permanent lung damage.

So how can this problem be mitigated? You can purchase a pre-made vinyl membrane seal like the Kerdi—Mixing Valve Seal by Schluter Systems. If you want to do it yourself using silicone (represented in red) be sure to leave a weep hole at the bottom of the escutcheon when sealing so it leaves a way for water that *does* get behind it an alternate path



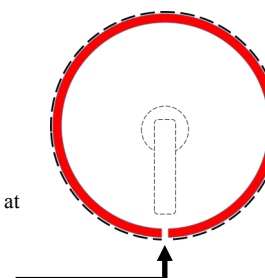
Escutcheon

Image Credit:
Moen.com

Mixing Valve
Seal



Image Credit:
Schluter.com



Silicone Seal (depicted in red) should have a weep hole at the bottom to let trapped water escape

Image Credit:
(Ray Trujillo—Central New Mexico Community College)

Blast from the Past

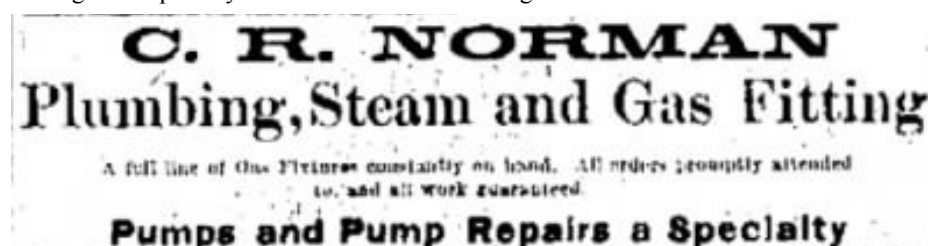
Ever wonder how far back plumbing and gas fitting has been a viable occupation in Albuquerque?

This might give you a clue. C.R. Norman, Plumbing, Steam and Gas Fitting was located downtown on Second Street, between Gold and Silver Avenues, across the street from what is now a multi-story parking garage near the train station

When were they there you ask? Well

this ad came from The Albuquerque Journal, Friday, 7 April 1882. Yeah, you read that right. Keep an eye out for more his-

torical plumbing business' in the next issue of the CNM Plumbing and Gas Fitting Newsletter.



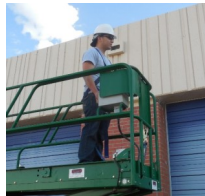
Our Former and Current Students in the Workplace



Christopher Lucero



Christopher Store



Victor Garcia



Jacob Lange



Ronnie Dingus



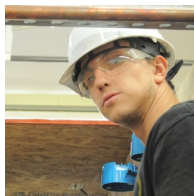
Michael Sandoval



Daniel Lucero



Oscar Zapata



Christopher Kimmel



Michael Holley



To all. If you have a photo of you on the job, please send it to me so we can keep this section current.

If you are a recipient of a CNM/TVI Plumbing & Gas Fitting Certificate and want your name and company listed here, send me an e-mail at;
rtrujillo149@cnm.edu

Geo-Thermal

The Big Deal About Grout

In a previous article, I mentioned that Geothermal systems had gotten a bad reputation because of poor performance all linked to the installers lack of research. This same thing happened when the government was offering huge tax benefits when solar was in demand. Fly by night business' looked at cashing in and did shoddy installations.

Many customers have heard of the benefits of using GEO thermal and thought this is another alternative to energy savings since it is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week in every season, unlike solar during the day only and wind only when wind speeds met the minimum velocity.

I mentioned the different installations that are available. The Vertical Loop, the Horizontal Loop, and the Slinky Loop. Each installation can vary based on the amount of land available to the owner. So lets take a look at two systems this time;

- The Vertical Loop
- Pond Geothermal

The Vertical Loop

As mentioned in a previous article I wrote, a soil analysis is critical to a proper installation and this is never more important than in the vertical loop.

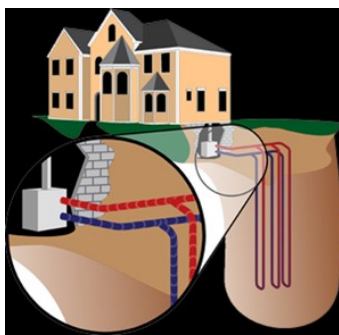


Image Credit:
(IGSHPA/Oklahoma State University)

“It is extremely important to know the soil and understand its Thermal Connectivity and Thermal Diffusivity. Because heat always travels to cold, we must know how a particular soil conducts heat

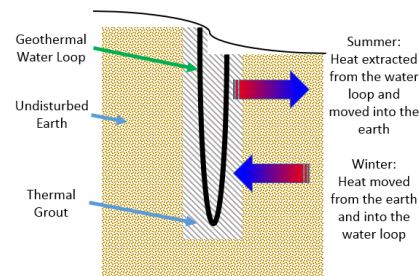


Image Credit:
(Ray Trujillo—Central New Mexico Community College)

transfer to the liquid medium and how well it receives heat from the same medium.”

Diffusivity: Means ability to transfer heat from the water loop into the earth (Summer)

Conductivity: Means the ability to bring heat into the water loop (Winter).

Once the boreholes are drilled by a certified borehole driller and the engineer analyzes the soil make up, the proper grout can be chosen. When done properly this installation can operate at peak performance for 50+ years.

A heat pump, which is not known for its ability to heat a home in temperatures less than 40 degrees without the use of space heaters, can now become a primary heat source in even the coldest regions of the United States and save the consumer up to .75 cents on the dollar in heating and cooling costs based on current energy prices.

Pond Geothermal

A pond or lake can be used to pre-heat or pre-cool the water circulating in the system so your heater and air-conditioned doesn't work so hard. The principle is the same as a ground loop system.

This particular system can work very well in community home development. One system can serve multiple homes. It can be installed in the building phase of a man-made pond system or be added to an existing pond.

The sealed water is cooled or heated

(depending on the season) by the pond and circulated through heating/cooling fins akin to a radiator. The air is pushed over the fins before it enters the heater and air-conditioner, thereby tempering the air. This creates a less dramatic temperature delta (the temperature difference between incoming air and your desired temperature).

Okay Ray, what does that mean?

Think of it like boiling a pot of water for spaghetti. If you start with cold water, it is going to take more energy to boil that water as opposed to starting with hot water from the tap.



Installation in a n existing pond
Image Credit: AWEB Supply
(<http://www.awebgeo.com/illustrarions.html>)

In the end, it is about saving energy and because this form is available day and night, all through the year, it makes it more reliable than trying to harvest solar or wind energy, which is not available 24 hours a day. To have energy during the times when the sun or wind is not producing power, many large batteries are needed in order to store the energy when the source is not available.



Installation in a man-made pond prior to filling
mage Credit: AWEB Supply
(<http://www.awebgeo.com/illustrarions.html>)

What can one rock do in a pipe bed?

When laying pipe down in a trench, it is very important to have a fairly smooth ground free of rocks and other debris.

Come on Ray, what damage can a rock or two do that is so bad?



*Rock left in soil bed did catastrophic damage to this pipe
Image Credits: Chris Augster, UA Local 412*

Plenty! Take a look at what *one* fist-sized rock did that was not removed from the soil bed by the original installers. This pipe was in place for a few years before its untimely demise.

My good friend Chris Augster of UA Local 412 snapped these pictures after

the pipe was dug up to assess what had happened. Because someone left this rock in the bed, it cost hundreds of man-hours and thousands of dollars to repair, not to mention the down time of the facilities connected to this system.



*Pipe had to be cut past the extent of the traveled crack to be properly repaired
Image Credit: Chris Augster, UA Local 412*

Who is this Hulse Guy?



Mr. Thomas Hulse checks the level of the gas line that is hard piped to the water heater

Mr. Thomas “No Problem” Hulse is a working student that values his education and pursues his goal of getting his certificate.

Mr. Hulse already has a vast amount of experience from troubleshooting water-heater problems, to faucet repairs and even helping with drainage pipe repairs and if ever there was a motivated guy, he is it.

In one of my classes we discussed “Soft Skills” which is something very important to employers in how their employees deal with the customer. He took those lessons and immediately applied

them to his drain cleaning business that he was just starting to get off the ground. The impact was immediate and when he came back to class, he shared his experience about a customer who had not only given him a huge tip, but a customer that would help spread the word of his customer service, respect for their home and his complete honesty.

But the story doesn’t stop there for this guy. Ever since day one, this student has brought his experiences to bear in class that are directly related to the topic/lesson being discussed and the best thing is that he does so, not in a condescending tone, but in a honest effort to share his lessons learned in the field with his fellow students so they can benefit from it.

When I was in the military, we used to use a phrase called “growing our own leaders” and that entails letting someone play their strengths and I continue to do that when possible. Case in point, I decided to allow Mr. Hulse to do some teaching in the lab when it came to faucet repairs. I can’t tell you what a joy it is for me to watch students grow in their knowledge and confidence. Watching Tom demonstrate his skill and answer questions from fellow students was very

inspiring.

What else does this guy do? He brings in older equipment that has been replaced so fellow students can see what is out there, like cast-iron fixtures, a variety of faucets and much more.

You know, sometimes things in life happen that just seem to defy karma. Remember I said that Mr. Hulse was just starting to get his drain cleaning business off the ground? During the Christmas Holidays, his van was stolen and he lost all of his snake machines, snakes, heads and much more. The insurance would not even cover half the replacement costs. Needless to say I shook my fist up at the plumbing gods over that one.

Mr. Hulse continues to try to save money to replace his machines and re-establish himself.

Thank you Tom for being an example both in and out of the classroom and an inspiration to us all about never quitting. You rock My Brother!



Natural Gas

There have been people that have asked me why copper pipe is not used in the state of New Mexico, when it was allowed in the states of their previous residence. I tell them one thing...rotten eggs.

What?

Natural gas has no odor to it which can make it difficult to notice a leak in the system for the consumer. Many consumer fatalities resulted from gas leaks that were not able to be detected without sophisticated equipment before the additive Hydrogen Sulfide, you know, that rotten egg smell that tells you something is wrong.

New Mexico is a very large state (5th largest, behind Alaska, Texas, California and Montana) which means that there is a whole lot of gas lines running to service the residents. That means that a large amount of Hydrogen Sulfide must be added.

Why so much?

Lets look at it from the perspective of a cup of water and a swimming pool okay? If I were to take some food coloring and add it to a cup of water, it would only take a couple of drops to notice a change

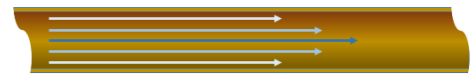
in color right? Now, how many drops of that same food coloring would it take for me to notice a change in a swimming pool? Lets go one step further. How much would it take to change the tint of a lake? The larger the amount of gas supplied, the more hydrogen-sulfide is needed to create a noticeable odor.

What does that have to do with copper Ray?

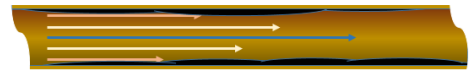
Hydrogen sulfide can lead to the development of cuprous sulfide which is a scale result of the interaction between the copper and the hydrogen sulfide. Although this scale usually remains against the wall of the pipe, it can flake off and if not caught in the sediment trap of your system, it can enter and clog the gas valve. But even if it stays on the wall of the pipe, this can lead to resistance of flow. It can also pre-maturely cause a pipe to fail through corrosion.

Hey Ray, natural gas is...well...a gas. What resistance are you talking about?

I like comparisons so lets compare it to the inside wall of a water pipe. Even if the wall of a water pipe is smooth, the water that is in contact with the wall of



Smooth walled copper pipe has resistance



Scale walled copper pipe has even more resistance

Image Credit:

(Ray Trujillo—Central New Mexico Community College)

the pipe travels slower than the water traveling in the middle of the pipe.

The 2009 Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC) states;

1309.5.2.3 Copper and brass pipe shall not be used if the gas contains more than an average of 0.3 grains of hydrogen sulfide per one-hundred (100) scf of gas.

In addition, New Mexico Title 14 goes a step further and states;

14.9.2.21—Chapter 13 Fuel Piping See this chapter of the UMC except as provided below.

Tools

Just about every plumber has their own idea of not only which tools to keep in their tool box, but also what mode will be used to carry them. I tried different systems from what was called "heavy duty" plastic (yeah, that was a joke) to metal tool boxes and even the ever enduring canvas bags. Each has their strengths and weaknesses.

What I like best about boxes, is the ability to organize my tools in different compartments while trying to keep some semblance of order (maybe I got that from the military, do ya think?) The problem is that they are usually bulky and very uncomfortable to carry.

The canvas bags are so much easier to carry but there is just no way to keep any order inside them.

I even bought a combo box system that had wheels and a telescoping handle.

Yeah those wheels lasted all of three days on the rough terrain jobsite.

So you might imagine my delight when I found that DeWALT® created their ToughSystem® line of tool boxes that are modular and can also be attached to the ToughSystem Carrier.

The boxes are made of 4mm structural foam for durability and have an integrated water seal to protect your cordless tools in the elements and is IP-65 rated.

So what does IP-65 rated mean Ray?

The IP stands for International Protection. The first digit is for solids and the second digit is for liquids so this particular rating is;

6—Dust Tight—No ingress of dust; complete protection against contact.

5—Water Jets—Water projected in

powerful jets (12.5mm nozzle) against the enclosure from any direction shall have no harmful effects



Image Credit: DeWALT

Something's Happening Here

In the complex that currently houses the last cottage that was part of a multi-trade build, there now sits a poured slab. The idea originally came from Joseph Hirschfield, the carpentry instructor. The original purpose was to give the carpentry students a place to practice framing.

Then Came the Piping Idea

As will all good ideas, they tend to gather momentum and other ideas. Mr. Hirschfield approached the Electrical and Plumbing programs to stub up a few dummy pipes so that his students would have to learn to frame around them.

Thinking this was a good plan, we got on board and as all the construction trades here at CNM do, we got our groove on.

Options

From the plumbing standpoint, we looked at a few things, would we stub up with cast-iron, would it be ABS or PVC.

⇒ Cast-Iron, although very durable, if it is hit and broken (which does happen) then the repair might include having to hammer drill or saw cut

the concrete for the repair. Meh

⇒ ABS / PVC, is a nice option, but in direct sunlight, it becomes extremely brittle and breaks easily. Nah

The Idea

After discussions in class with the students, we came up with a few ideas.

⇒ Make the pipe removable so the plastic pipes would not become brittle and crack over time

⇒ Use female adapters to screw in dummy pipe stub outs

⇒ Use screw in plugs to protect the threads when pipes were not going to be needed

Solution

We opted to stub up dummy plastic pipes with bushings / couplings that would terminate flush with the top of the slab. So what did we do that for you may ask?

⇒ Allows pipes to be easily removed

and installed

⇒ Non-threaded bushings and couplings would eliminate the possibility of damaged threads over time

⇒ No plugs creating a tripping hazard

The Benefit to the Plumbers and Electricians

The next step is a retaining wall adjacent to the slab that will house a digging area for our students to actually dig in pipe and set grade. Shall we call this Phase II? :)



CNM Instructors and Students bringing a vision to life



Carpentry Instructor Joseph Hirschfield oversees the project the morning of the concrete pour



Electrical Instructor and Construction Chair, Denise Ojeda, and I the morning of the pour



Doug Toca guides and controls the flow of concrete allowing instructors and students to concentrate on the task at hand.



Plumbing students stubbed up pipe and topped with couplings and bushings set to finished grade



Plumbing students hit their marks and are inside the plumbing wall as they should be



Pipes are removable with a simple pull to allow versatility in wall framing

SkillsUSA Competition

Each Fall an in-house competition is conducted for students that wish to represent CNM at the state-level competition held in the Spring.

The competitors were in alphabetical order;

Mr. *"I Do It Right"* Apodaca

Mr. *"On The Money"* Cordova

Mr. *"Sniper"* Dingus

Mr. *"Signal Man"* Kirschner

Mr. *"Can't Touch This"* Lucero

The competition was closer than it has ever been before and every one of these individuals would have done CNM proud, but alas, there can only be three to go on to represent CNM at the state competition and those were;

Mr. *"On The Money"* Cordova

Mr. *"Sniper"* Dingus

Mr. *"Can't Touch This"* Lucero

On 10 April the state level competition was held on the CNM campus. To maintain fairness, judges not affiliated with CNM are asked to score the student performances. And what better judges could you ask for than the Chief of the Construction Industries Division of New Mexico and State Inspectors. Unfortunately, unlike last year, there were no high school competitors. If Moriarty High School continues it's Plumbing & Gas Fitting program next Fall, they will be eligible to compete to represent New Mexico in the high school division at Nationals.

So how did it all turn out you ask? The results are;

1st - Mr. *"Can't Touch This"* Lucero

2nd - Mr. *"Sniper"* Dingus

3rd - Mr. *"On The Money"* Cordova

Mr. Lucero will go on to represent the State of New Mexico at the National SkillsUSA competition.. Last year Mr. Lucero finished 7th in the nation and hopes to medal this year.

Congratulations to all our competitors for stepping up and setting yourself apart from your peers and congratulations to Miller-Bonded for having our top apprentice representing the state of New Mexico at the national competition.



And the Winner Is...

Congratulations to Chris Lucero as the first place winner in the college division. He will go on to represent the State of New Mexico at the Nationals.

We are very proud of these individuals and we know that all of them will represent the companies they work for extremely well in the future.

Thanks goes out to Russell Johnson and Doug Toca for getting this whole event put together. A lot of work goes into the planning, coordination and execution of this competition. Thanks to these guys, these students got a chance to show off their skills.

Also a huge Thank You to Johnstone Supply and The New Mexico Chapter of IAPMO for supplying prizes to these competitors.



From left to right; 2nd Place Mr. Dingus, 1st Place Mr. Lucero, 3rd Place Mr. Cordova

What is a Champion?

Enter Mr. Apodaca. Here was a first term student that was gutsy enough to enter the SkillsUSA plumbing competition in his first term and nearly completed a Cinderella story. Not only did he compete in the plumbing division but also in the leadership division.

He had faith in himself and the courage to do what most other first-term students would not have even considered.

Barely being edged out into the 4th place position in plumbing, Orlando placed in the leadership division. I cannot begin to tell you how proud I am of this guy. My only regret was not being able to see him compete at the state level due to a teaching commitment.

When next I saw him, I asked him how he placed. He said he was disappointed and didn't do as well as he hoped. He was upbeat about it and said he would compete again in the Fall.

So how does an instructor tell a student how proud he is of him no matter what, without sounding like his dad? You speak from the heart and remember a time in your life when someone did the same for you. A pivotal moment when you realize there are people out there that truly believe in you.

Is a champion marked by how many times he wins or by the fight it took to get there?

I like to think of a champion as a person who may not have won, but does not let that stop him or her. It is the intestinal fortitude to push forward no matter the odds and the ability to stand back up and say "you may have beat me this time, but I will be back, better and stronger than ever".

A champion is a person that we can look up to regardless of their station in life. Believe me, I have seen many my junior display heroism in their daily lives to whom I look up to. Is a champion bullet-proof, or is he/she as human as the rest of us? It is the drive inside them that inspire the rest of us to rise up and cheer. Do we applaud more the winner to whom the prize came all too easy, or do we cheer more for that underdog....the one that doesn't get the prize, but fights on in a desire to achieve that glory someday.

I once had a squad-leader in the military tell me that I had the making of a good leader, when I still had not been in a true leadership position. It was that moment, when he saw in me, something I did not see in myself. I never forgot that day or the man—SGT Dodson.



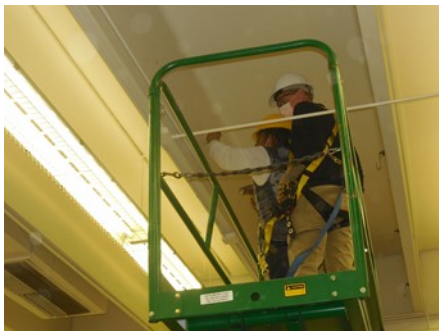
Mr. Apodaca practices his soldering skills in Term 2 Plumbing Code class

To you Orlando, you have the makings of a great plumber and pipefitter. Your constant desire to push yourself to become the best craftsman you can shows me that not only are you going to be great at this profession, but you are going to be a great member of any crew because you care about the success of that crew.

Never stop pushing to improve yourself and never let anyone else tell you what you can or cannot do. If you can dream it, you can achieve it. There are a lot of people that believe in you and I am truly one of them.

Believe in yourself Orlando and I am sending you all the Plumbing Mojo I got!

In the Lab



Summer Classes

Want to know what is in the summer line up of classes for plumbing?

93651	Backflow Prevention	PLMB 1205	4:30 pm - 6:45 pm	Mon thru Thur	26 May - 5 July	Main Campus
94362	Commercial Plumbing	PLMB1210	7:00 pm - 9:15 pm	Mon thru Thur	26 May - 5 July	Main Campus
94286	Solar Thermal Sys	PLMB 1320	4:30 pm - 7:20 pm	Mon thru Thur	6 July - 15 Aug	Work Force Tng. Ctr.
93560	Hydronics/Plmb Sys	PLMB 1230	7:30 pm - 9:45 pm	Mon thru Thur	6 July - 15 Aug	Work Force Tng. Ctr.
94287	Energy/Water Conserv	PLMB1330	TBA	TBA	26 May - 5 July	Online

Ink and Metal

To the individual employee, soft skills may seem like fluff, but don't tell that to the boss. Contractors place a high value on an employee that not only learns about soft-skills, but embraces them.

Our hard skills are those which directly involve my craft like competence and knowledge of my trade and my ability to apply that to the quality product I turn out.

Our soft-skills are those skills that we use in dealing with the people around us, but of particular importance is how we interact with the public/customer as a direct representative of the company we work for.

Most people tend to agree with the common sense approach of treating the customer fairly and courteously but there is something new that has some people up in arms...tats and piercings.

This argument is usually squarely divided by those that have them and those that don't. So what is the right answer?

In a web article written by Travis Stevick in August 2013 entitled "More employers accepting of tattoos, piercings in the workplace", Kathy Dickson, Director of Career Development at Bluffton University said "I have definitely seen a shift in the acceptance of tattoos and piercings" and "For some employers, it's still very much a big deal, but it depends ... not only on the field, but the individual employer, because every organization has its own culture."¹

There is a certain level of acceptance that we are seeing in some workplace environments that allow for this form of

self expression, however Ms. Dickson went on to add "The business and education fields are still two of the more conservative as far as having piercings and tattoos right out there in front of customers or students,"

So why is that? Is that wrong?

For the most part, it is just about business and it is not wrong for an employer to expect a certain level of decorum on the job based on the level of interaction you will have with customers.

Okay, before some of you start calling me a tattoo hater and piercing cynic, you should know that even though I am retired military, I have long hair that I wear in a ponytail, I have tattoos and I wear earrings, much to the chagrin of some of my fellow retirees. I have been fortunate to work on "new construction" in my field where having ink and metal worn on the job was not a big deal at all.

That being said, I understand that if I ever did do "service-work" as a plumber, that I may be asked to wear a long sleeve shirt and remove my metal while on the job and do you know what? I am okay with that, because I know that while on the clock, I am being paid to represent the company and not being paid to express myself.

There is plenty of time for me to sport my ink and metal off the clock. The argument of it being a civil-rights issue does more to demean civil rights than to support it. We did not have the choice as

to what skin color we were born with, we did not have a choice as to what country of origin we were born in either and in the last decade or so, we are realizing that gender identity falls into that same category based on medical and psychological research.

But when it comes to metal and ink—we did have a choice and as the saying goes, you are free to choose, but you are not free from the consequence of your choice.

I am by no means trying to tell anyone they should not get that tattoo or piercing they want, but what I do tell my students in soft-skill training is that if I decided to go out and get a rhino tattooed on my face and gauge my nose with a horn, I have by default placed myself outside of the current

social norm and sometimes that means I have voluntarily limited my job opportunities.

So the bottom line is, I have the right to express myself, but I don't have the right to be paid for it as well.

¹ http://www.limaohio.com/news/local_news/article_68badef2-e677-11e2-bac9-001a4bcf6878.html

This article was prepared or accomplished by Ray Trujillo in his personal capacity. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not reflect the view of Central New Mexico Community College, the School of Applied Technologies or plumbing contractors as describe in this article.