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## First Graduating Class of Central Valley Training Center in Selma Ready to Work on High-Speed Rail

**SELMA, Calif.** – The first cohort of students graduated from the Central Valley Training Center in Selma today equipped with the skills to help build the nation’s first high-speed rail system in California.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority, in partnership with the local Building and Construction Trades Council, Fresno County Economic Development Corporation and Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, recognized the hard work of the first 22 students to complete the 16-week job training program.

“This training center opened during a time when the state and the rest of the country looked for ways to expand job opportunities,” said Henry Perea, High-Speed Rail Board Member. “We are proud to continue training and investing in a skilled workforce to help rebuild the economy.”

The pre-apprenticeship training center provides veterans, at-risk young adults and low-income people from the Central Valley with a comprehensive and innovative look into careers in more than 10 different construction trades. The graduates received pre-apprenticeship and hands-on construction training from



*Click Image to Watch Video*

professional carpenters, cement masons, electricians and other specialists. Students also developed skills that include active listening, teamwork and critical thinking that can be applied at construction sites and in other employment opportunities.

“I’ve been in the trades for 34 years and worked with people up and down the state of California, and I would put the tools on and work with any one of these students today,” said Chuck Riojas, executive director of the Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings Building Trades Council. “The Central Valley Training Center is designed to expose students to the trades so they can find what interests them. Once they show an interest in a field, they’re more apt to do better in those apprenticeship programs.”

Students also graduated with more than five industry-specific certificates, including Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 and Forklift certifications. Upon completion of the program, the high-speed rail project and its contractors assist all graduating students with job placement.

“The program is well worth it,” said Arturo Garza of Selma, a student in the first graduating cohort. “It’s a challenge because a lot of people need to work, but the sacrifice is well worth it because at the end of the day, we get these certifications in hopes to get a high-paying job. A little sacrifice is nothing compared to the reward.”

Since the start of construction, more than 5,000 construction workers have been dispatched to build the high-speed rail system in the Central Valley where there are currently 35 active construction sites. The Authority has doubled construction jobs since 2018, with an average of 1,100 workers a day at construction sites. In addition, more than 570 certified small businesses throughout the state are contributing to the high-speed rail program. For the latest on construction, visit [www.buildhsr.com](http://www.buildhsr.com).

Nearly 500 Central Valley residents have applied to take part in the Central Valley Training Center program since its opening last year. The training center is recruiting its second and third cohorts with classes beginning on Feb. 8. For more information, visit [www.cvtcprogram.com](http://www.cvtcprogram.com).

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