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Primus and CITCA Training Partnership

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By Primus

Leading tower erectors know that training is one of the most critical aspects of a tower safety management program. With the changes in OSHA that have taken place in the past 18 months, training has become a focal point from both compliance and competency perspectives. Companies not providing qualified training to their employees face a number of consequences, the least of which is an OSHA citation.

Recognizing that quality training is an ongoing need of their customers, Primus partnered with CITCA – The Communications Industry Training and Certification Academy – to offer basic and advanced tower safety training programs.

CITCA, with a corporate office in Champaign, is based on the campus of Kankakee Community College (KCC) in Kankakee, IL and has a regional training facility in Dallas, TX with others in development in Phoenix, AZ and in the Baltimore, MD area as well.

“We serve clients all over the United States,” says Steve Wilder, President and COO of CITCA. “One of our goals is to keep our customers’ training costs down, and regionalizing training facilities has allowed us to reach this goal.” Another key benefit to CITCA training is college accreditation. CITCA students receive college credits when taking CITCA classes. “Most people don’t realize the value of that accreditation,” Wilder notes. “It does not matter that the student is or is not going to use the credits toward a degree. It means that we have the Illinois Community College Board constantly monitoring our classes for student scores, performance outcomes, and student evaluations. It requires us to perform at a much higher level. None of our competitors have such strict quality controls; if we lose our accreditation, we lose our reputation too.”

Paul Carlson, Associate Dean of Business and Technology at Kankakee Community College echoed Wilder’s comments: “The collaboration between CITCA and KCC has not only put KCC on the map as a leader in cell tower and wind turbine training, but it has also been a continuation to our commitment to sustainable education,” says Carlson. “We are very proud of this relationship, and have used it as a model when other colleges visit our campus and look at our program. Being teamed up with a nationally recognized company like CITCA has helped our program gain national recognition as well!”

CITCA has provided classes to Primus customers across the nation. All CITCA instructors travel, and bringing the classes to the customer’s site is another cost savings opportunity for the client. “It costs a lot less for us to send two instructors to a customer site than it costs the customer to send ten people to us for the same training,” Wilder points out.

Among the many classes CITCA offers are Authorized / Qualified Climber, Tower Rescue and Competent Climber (climbing courses also have an option for Train-the-trainer to allow customers to provide CITCA classes in-house using their employed instructors on their own schedule), RF Safety, Site Safety Awareness, Emergency Medical Response, Qualified Rigger, Line Sweeping, PIM Testing, and more. In



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In addition to training, CITCA also offers comprehensive audits of company safety programs, safety consultation services, and written safety program development.

CITCA started in 2004 when Wilder, then a safety consultant in private practice, did some consulting work for a tower erection firm. "Evaluating their training records, it became obvious that they were spending a lot of money sending employees a long way for training," says Wilder. He learned that there was nothing qualified in the Midwest that met the industry needs. "I spoke to my business partners along with some vertical rescue instructors I knew from my years teaching at the University of Illinois Fire Service Institute," says Wilder, who is a retired fire chief with 31 years of fire service experience. From these discussions, the classes were developed.

Wilder then made several trips to Cleveland to meet with OSHA ensuring the programs were meeting industry standards and training requirements. "It took a year, but in the end, we formed a new company, partnered with the college, and began providing the programs that formed the foundation for what we continue to build today."

Shortly thereafter, Wilder became involved with the National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE) and was asked to sit on the NATE Safety and Education Committee, a seat he has enjoyed for several years now. "Being involved with NATE has been fantastic. The organization is dedicated to safety, and shares our passion for sending guys home safe at the end of each day. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to help develop industry safety programs and practices that are intended to do just that."

The Primus / CITCA partnership is a relationship that has steadily grown as well. "I appreciate the relationship between Primus and CITCA and know that our customers will continue to benefit from their fall protection training," says Michael Johnson, President of Primus. "Primus has strived for years to provide the best possible products for our customers and I am glad to say that we are also able to give them the best option for training as well."

Primus customers wishing to get more information on the CITCA training program should contact Primus at 1-800-435-1636.