

Arizona Ironworker apprentice ranks among the best internationally

Practice paid off for Jordan Howard, an apprentice of Ironworkers Local 75, who's now getting some regional and international recognition for his job skills.

Howard – the top finisher in a regional job-skills competition - placed sixth during the 2014 International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Ironworkers Apprentice Competition held Sept. 26-27 in Toronto.

The Arizonan competed against 60 ironworker apprentices from across North America in eight career-related skills, including welding, rod tying and a 35-foot-high steel column climb.

Howard says he is proud to have competed against such top-notch, professional ironworkers.

“Every one of the ironworkers there went to win – there were so many talented and hard-working ironworkers,” he says. “These guys don’t just go to work to collect a check. They truly have pride in what they do.”

To prepare, Howard built a rebar rack in his garage using scraps so that he had a place to practice his tying skills for the apprentice competition. He kept records of his times, charting his improvement.



Even with all the practice, he says that during the competition torch cutting and rigging was the most difficult for him.

He credits his overall success to the support and training he received from the union's training center.

“Alan Ruda, George Facista and some of the other teachers really spent a lot of time to help me hone the skills that I gained through the apprenticeship,” says Howard.

“I really wanted to do well not just for myself, but also for our Local and our state,” he says.

The Ironworker job-skills competitions take place every two years. Top finishers in regional competitions are sent to the international event. Howard placed first among his fellow apprentices from California, Nevada and Arizona.

Other representatives from the District Council of Ironworkers of the State of California and Vicinity were David Dvorak of Local 229-San Diego, Jeremy Braun of Local 118-Sacramento and Maxwell Svader of Local 416-Los Angeles.

After the competition, Howard and his wife, Sheila, took some vacation time to enjoy their first trip together to Canada.

“We traveled to Quebec City and really almost felt as if we were in Europe. There were so many languages spoken everywhere we went,” he says.

“I’m really grateful that I got to be a part of this and see the U.S. and Canada working together to help ironworkers showcase high quality skills that we can all be proud of.”