

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY: A CAREER OF OPPORTUNITY



Photo Credit: Arizona State University



Being recognized as the “Apprentice of the Year” is the latest achievement in Tilden Dickson’s growing career in energy efficiency, where his expertise in sheet metal design helps businesses save energy and save money.

Dickson brings savings to others through the efficient design of ventilation ducts. It turns out, the air systems that keep people healthy and comfortable also prevent air from leaking away after owners pay for the energy to heat or cool it. Designing and installing these ducts correctly can cut a building’s energy costs by as much as 30 percent.



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—TILDEN DICKSON  
SHEET METAL APPRENTICE

- Arizona is home to about **40,000 jobs** in energy efficiency, with continued growth projected within the sheet metal industry
- More than **2,100 sheet metal workers** are employed in the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale metro area

Dickson is a member of the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail & Transportation Workers Local 359 (SMART) union in Arizona. During his five-year apprenticeship, he’s worked on a number of flagship projects in the state, including at Intel, the Desert Diamond Casino in Glendale, the Banner Hospital in Tucson,



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Arizona State University, and the Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

At **Arizona State University**, for example, he helped construct one of Arizona’s first buildings to earn the top Platinum score through the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Green Building Rating System. The building features an innovative exhaust system that uses less energy to meet the laboratory’s ventilation requirements.

Albert Blanco, training coordinator for the Joint Apprentice Training Center where Dickson has honed his skills, notes that Dickson was selected as Apprentice of the Year because of his outstanding achievements, including high grades and employer evaluations.

Dickson’s journey to the apprenticeship is, in part, thanks to his father and many other relatives who have been in the sheet metal trade for decades, and encouraged him to pursue a career in this area.

Dickson has a passion for learning new skills, and is pursuing more education and training—even though he graduated from the Sheet Metal Apprenticeship earlier this year.

“I don’t want to relax; I want to keep learning the trade,” he explains.

Dickson currently enjoys his time in the office working on Computer-Aided Design (CAD), and finds the work challenging and rewarding. “I like putting an idea into the field and knowing that it will actually be installed that way,” Dickson says of his work with CAD. “It’s really great to know that the job will flow more smoothly because of the design process.”

Comradery among Local 359 members is one of the highlights of Dickson’s career path. “It helps so much to know that if I ever need something work-related or personally, my fellow brothers and sisters will help out as much as possible,” he says.

Continuous learning and growth are Dickson’s main goals, to attain more knowledge within the trade.

“I am interested in the service side,” he says, “and I know that I have a lot to learn before eventually becoming a manager.”

Dickson’s impeccable work ethic and commitment to learning skills assure him a very bright future in the industry.



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