

America's Edge

Of the 30 million American kids who enter high school each decade, only 20 percent will ever receive a college degree. Yet, colleges and universities reap more than 98 percent of the half trillion in taxpayer dollars spent annually on education. Technical and vocational education, by contrast, receives less than two percent.

Blue-collar kids frequently find the road to a college degree blocked by exorbitant tuition costs, intense academic pressure and enrollment limits. Entering the workforce after high school is frequently their only option.

The problem is compounded by the limited number of local community colleges that offer instruction in real world manufacturing technologies, leaving employers desperate to fill positions that pay well, but require skills not held by many high school graduates.

To address the issue, the IAM is launching '*America's Edge: Our Skills, Our Kids*,' a campaign to urge more public investment in skills development and technical education. The year long campaign, which will include TV ads in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, aims to increase public and political awareness of the growing skills deficit.

"It's time we invested in the skills training to give kids who are not college bound a chance to succeed in today's economy," said Machinists President Tom Buffenbarger. "Their career choices should not be reduced to chasing a college degree or accepting a minimum wage job. That's not the American way."

To learn more about the IAM campaign and to preview the 30-second ad that features images of workers in the high tech jobs of tomorrow, please go to www.goiam.org.

Have you heard?

An Internet Bulletin for IAM Communicators

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