

## WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

Chicagoland Women in Roofing answers questions and supports community initiatives

# New organization grows from an idea to 60-plus members in less than a year

Chicago Construction News staff writer

Chicagoland Women in Roofing (CWIR) has grown from an embryonic idea to an organization with about 60 members and a comprehensive schedule of networking, educational and community service programs in less than a year.

Stephanie Creed, who works as a sales representative at Contractors Express, says CWIR has attracted membership from roofing contractors, distributors, manufacturers and architects/consultants.

She said the idea for a local women's roofing industry group was conceived at the National Women in Roofing gathering at the International Roofing Expo in Dallas last year.

"While they had not set up councils and were focusing on mentoring, several of us from Chicago began to discuss what we would like from an organization like this. With word of mouth as our only option, we chose a March date to see if anyone would attend and there was an interest at a local level."

The first meeting was successful with 18 women attending to network and discuss what they would like to see in a local women's roofing organization, Creed said.

"From that meeting, the number of attendees has consistently increased. Word about the potential for a women's roofing group in Chicago spread, and the level of excitement and motivation was apparent."

The group quickly set out its name, mission and vision.

Meetings include some "basic roofing education" as well as question and answer sessions where women are comfortable asking about "anything no matter how basic or complex."



**Anna Swiontoniowski, Jessica Sanchez, and Beata Dalcamo at the annual ABC sales meeting**

**Laurie Moore, owner of Kreiling Roofing, on the Twin Towers (30 storeys) in Peoria, IL.**



CWIR has three objectives, Creed said.

### Education

The group seeks to create an environment where women feel comfortable asking questions. "There is hesitation at times in asking a boss or co-workers questions that they feel like a woman should know," Creed said. "The organization's platform encourages questions and pushes women to become educated on topics that they might not have an opportunity to learn about in their daily routine."

### Networking

"Since our organization has started, there has been an increase in attendance by women at other industry events because they know they'll see fellow CWIR members there," Creed said. "This support system makes them more confident in their knowledge and interactions."

### Giving back

"This fall CWIR will undertake our first community service project: donating time and supplies to an abused women and children's shelter (WINGS)," she said. "We are continually looking for additional opportunities to support the communities in which we live and work with a goal of quarterly opportunities."

CWIR plans its first educational presentation at the Chicago Roofing Contractors Association (CRCA) Trade Show and Seminars on Jan. 18, 2017. More immediately the group plans an educational program at its Nov. 10 meeting on "Metal Deck 101."

"Our focus is not to specific products but to understand what goes into steep-slope and low-slope roofs," Creed said.