

## **Union Carpenters and Contractors Announce Floor Covering Alliance**

Union Carpenters and Contractors have been successfully building first-class office space throughout New Jersey for decades. While this strong partnership has provided owners and developers with on-time and on-budget projects, in many instances, this “project team” does not always compete for rehab and renovation work. A recent research study conducted by Reich Research Group shows there is a perception among building agents and managers that construction unions are not interested in renovation work and their contractors are too large to bid the work.

“We are working to change the perception about the ‘level of interest’ union carpenters and contractors have in renovating facilities that we had initially built,” explains Tom Canto, Executive Secretary Treasurer of the NJ Regional Council of Carpenters (NJRCC). To that end, NJRCC’s first concerted effort in addressing this perception has been the development of a communication plan aimed at the corporate real estate community. This plan illustrates the resources and training shared by NJRCC and its contractor partners and how these factors lead to value, quality and savings from union-performed renovation projects. NJRCC is developing this plan with its signatory union employers, most notably those affiliated with the Building Contractors Association of NJ (BCANJ), Drywall Interior Systems Contractors Association of NJ (DISCA) and the Floor Covering Institute of NJ (FCINJ).

The plan’s first target segment is aftermarket floor covering. Beginning in 2007, NJRCC will be working with Union Flooring Contractors (FCINJ) to educate corporate real estate professionals on the value associated with the group’s dedicated floor covering component. In fact, NJRCC and FCINJ are part of a formidable alliance that delivers a value-added aspect to the installation process of carpet, wood and vinyl flooring. This alliance, called INSTALL, brings together the labor and management partners as well as floor covering manufacturers. Companies such as Armstrong, Shaw and Mohawk rely on both groups to assist in establishing floor covering installation standards and certifications on a national level. Jim Hannon, President of FCINJ, had this to say about the alliance: “We need to deliver our message of value along with the fact that we are ready, willing and able to handle aftermarket floor covering installations. The partnerships established through INSTALL are important to building owners because it means affording quality installations with fewer call backs.” Since the INSTALL alliance was established in New Jersey in mid-2006, the training component of the program has been working toward full certification of more than 500 Union Floorlayers. While all Union Floorlayers have been trained through a four-year apprenticeship program, the INSTALL certification takes this training and dedication to a new level of professionalism. Along with the training and certification process, INSTALL advertising, editorial placement and a new website ([www.installnj.org](http://www.installnj.org)) will feature news on training, technology and other value-added information associated with union floor covering installations throughout 2007 and beyond.

Summarizing the entire program, Mr. Canto said, “While we have a lot of information to share with corporate real estate professionals, we understand that the true test of our alliance lies within the performance of our members and smart bids from union contractors. If building owners have tenant fit-out work, they should know union carpenters and contractors are interested in their

projects and our quality installations will maximize their lease holdings.”