

EVERY YEAR, MORE THAN 6000 STUDENTS participate in the SkillsUSA Championships, the nation's largest hands-on workforce development event.

RMGA Sponsors SkillsUSA Utah with over \$3,500 in awards for the winners to attend Nationals, which take place in Atlanta, June 23-27, with a massive set of trades competitions, which spans 1.79 million square feet (equivalent to 31 football fields or 41 acres). The event features over 110 contests for middle school, high school and college/post-secondary students enrolled in career and technical education programs.

The SkillsUSA Champions at Work HVACR contest includes a series of testing stations designed to assess skills identified by industry HVACR standards. Industry equipment used during the workstations portion of the contest may include but is not limited to:

- Ice Machines
- Refrigerated display cases
- Small package HVAC units
- Furnaces and split-system air conditioning
- Heat pump units and geothermal units.

HVACR Winners Celebrated from SkillsUSA/RMGA-Sponsored Utah Event



Kaipo Awong – Post-Secondary Gold Medalist: HVACR category

Rachel Gillam – High School Gold Medalist: HVACR category

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

SCOTT CARPENTER



Dear RMGA Members & Friends,

I want to begin by expressing my gratitude for your ongoing dedication to the HVAC and natural gas industry. We are part of a sector that is essential to the reliability, resilience, and sustainability of growth in our communities. But as our industry evolves it is bringing new environmental goals, regulatory challenges, and supply disruptions with it. The strength of our association will lie not only in its mission, but in the active engagement of each one of you.

*Participation is the heart of progress. Whether it is attending meetings, contributing to committees, supporting advocacy efforts, or sharing best practices, your involvement amplifies our collective voice. **Our industry needs unified professionals to shape policies, influence public perception, and set standards that reflect both safety and innovation.** Your presence, perspective, and professional input make a real difference in what we can accomplish together.*

Education and training are not just about staying current, they are about staying prepared. Our association continues to expand its offerings to help members access the updated codes and technical guidance. Whether you are a seasoned technician or new to the industry, staying engaged with these resources strengthens our workforce and helps maintain the highest standards of safety, efficiency, and service.

*The natural gas industry is undergoing rapid change and staying informed and skilled is more critical than ever. Please consider sending your team members to upcoming training courses like the ACCA manual J, S, & D courses. **The RMGA also offers scholarship opportunities for education in the HVAC trade through one of our great local school programs.** I am proud to say that the RMGA will be sponsoring the local SkillsUSA winners to allow them to continue to compete in the national contest. I look forward to watching the new generation of HVAC technicians compete on the national stage.*

The challenges our industry faces are great, but so is our potential. By showing up, speaking out, and sharing your expertise, you help move our industry forward. Thank you for being a part of this community—and for everything you do to make it stronger.

RMGA BOARD BRIEFING MAR/APR 2025

In March, Bob Main, Investigation Supervisor with DOPL joined us in-person to explain the limitations of his department to investigate unethical contractors and the need for state legislation to increase penalties from misdemeanors to felonies. In the 2025 Utah Governor's budget that the legislature passed, funding was provided for an attorney assigned by the State Attorney General to work on Construction-related crimes.

We discussed Ethics and the RMGA Certification Exam, in both March and April. The board agreed to a motion to add a ten-minute instructor-led discussion on ethics to the RMGA Certification Course, which will accompany an additional Code of Ethics page in the RMGA Certification Study Guides. And at the conclusion of the Certification Test, examinees will be asked to acknowledge that RMGA encourages technicians to adhere to the code of ethics.

Wyoming's RMGA Certification Program is being worked into a State Legislative bill for the 2026 legislative session, with the help of Rick Mair (Enbridge), Lance Ball (RMGA), and WY bill sponsor, Senator Dan Dockstader.

We discussed creating a Public Service Announcement (PSA) that addresses hiring certified HVAC Contractors, and asking Enbridge to put a bill stuffer in future customer invoices that asks them to ask HVAC technicians to show them their RMGA Certification card.

In April, Rick Carman announced his retirement and resignation from the RMGA/UHACCA Board, on which he has served since 1977–78. Wish him well at our upcoming Sept 24th Education Summit, where he will receive the RMGA Distinguished Service Award.

Our next board meeting is on ZOOM, beginning at 11:00 a.m., on Wednesday, May 7th. ■

2025 RMGA GAS CERTIFICATION CLASSES

You can now request registration on the new RMGA website: <https://utrmga.org/certification>

CALL 801.521.8340
OR EMAIL
RMGAUTAH@GMAIL.COM
TO REGISTER



MAY IN-PERSON

(And on Zoom)

Salt Lake City

Thursday, May 8

Friday, May 9 &

Saturday, May 10

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Enbridge Gas CTC Room

1000 West 100 South

Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

AUG IN-PERSON

(And on Zoom)

Salt Lake City

Thursday, August 7

Friday, August 8 &

Saturday, August 9

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Enbridge Gas CTC Room

1000 West 100 South

Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

SEP IN-PERSON

(And on Zoom)

Salt Lake City

Thursday, September 25

Friday, September 26 &

Saturday, September 27

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Enbridge Gas CTC Room

1000 West 100 South

Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

All Certification Classes are \$400. Price includes the RMGA Study Guide, IFGC, online video access, 24 hours of instruction, and 2 attempts at the exam (if necessary). Technicians should attend ALL sessions. In-person attendees should bring lunch or plan to visit a local restaurant during the lunch hour. **Take the Pre-Test to evaluate your readiness for the exam at <https://utrmga.org/certification/pretest>**

Partial funding of RMGA training programs has been provided by the Division of Occupational & Professional Licensing from the 1% surcharge funds on all building permits.

**RMGA Spanish
Language
Certification
Study Guides are
available for
\$125, with free
shipping!**

MECHANICAL CODE DISCUSSION

2021 IRC/IMC - APPLIANCE ACCESS – Update

BRENT URSENBACH

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EXPERT WITNESS

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BRENT URSENBACH

DESPITE WRITING ABOUT APPLIANCE ACCESS issues four years ago, ongoing problems and questions necessitate another review. In the early 1970s, at the beginning of my HVAC career, crawlspace installations often required disassembling furnaces to fit through small openings, resulting in old, abandoned furnaces scattered around in the crawlspace. Today, professionals frequently face similar challenges: removing other furnaces or water heaters to replace an appliance, cutting access opening in permanent construction, working in attics without proper platforms, using flashlights or extension cords due to poor lighting, and struggling with insufficient clearance for maintenance tasks. Mechanical codes address these issues to ensure safe and efficient work conditions. These quoted relevant IRC sections mirror those in the IMC and IPC. **PLEASE study these code sections, paying particular attention to underlined text.**

2021-M1305.1 Appliance access for inspection service, repair and replacement. *Appliances shall be located to allow for access for inspection, service, repair and replacement without removing permanent construction, other appliances, or any other piping or ducts not connected to the appliance being inspected, serviced, repaired or replaced. A level working space not less than 30 inches deep and 30 inches wide (762 mm by 762 mm) shall be provided in front of the control side to service an appliance.*



I shot these photos in a multi-million dollar home located in one of the ski resort areas. The back furnace is 24" wide, with a 12 1/2" wide space for access and furnace removal.



2021 M1305.1.1 Appliances in rooms. *Appliances installed in a compartment, alcove, basement or similar space shall be accessed by an opening or door and an unobstructed passageway measuring not less than 24 inches (610 mm) wide and large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance in the space, provided there is a level service space of not less than 30 inches (762 mm) deep and the height of the appliance, but not less than 30 inches (762 mm), at the front or service side of the appliance with the door open.*

M1305.1.2 Appliances in attics. *Attics containing appliances shall be provided with an opening and a clear and unobstructed passageway large enough to allow removal of the largest appliance, but not less than 30 inches (762 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide and not more than 20 feet (6096 mm) long measured along the centerline of the passageway from the opening to the appliance. The passageway shall have continuous solid flooring in accordance with Chapter 5 not less than 24 inches (610 mm) wide. A level service space not less than 30 inches (762 mm) deep and 30 inches (762 mm) wide shall be present along all sides of the appliance where access is required. The clear access opening dimensions shall be not less than 20 inches by 30 inches (508 mm by 762 mm), and large enough to allow the removal of the largest appliance.*

Exceptions:

1. The passageway and level service space are not required where the appliance can be serviced and removed through the required opening.

2. Where the passageway is unobstructed and not less than 6 feet (1829 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide for its entire length, the passageway shall be not more than 50 feet (15 250 mm) long.

→→→ **M1305.1.2.1 Electrical requirements.** A luminaire controlled by a switch located at the required passageway opening and a receptacle outlet shall be installed at or near the appliance location in accordance with Chapter 39. Exposed lamps shall be protected from damage by location or lamp guards.

M1305.1.3 Appliances under floors. *Underfloor spaces containing appliances shall be provided with an unobstructed passageway large enough to remove the largest appliance, but not less than 30 inches (762 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide, nor more than 20 feet (6096 mm) long measured along the centerline of the passageway from the opening to the appliance. A level service space not less than 30 inches (762 mm) deep and 30 inches (762 mm) wide shall be present at the front or service side of the appliance. If the depth of the passageway or the service space exceeds 12 inches (305 mm) below the adjoining grade, the walls of the passageway shall be lined with concrete or masonry extending 4 inches (102 mm) above the adjoining grade in accordance with Chapter 4. The rough-framed access opening dimensions shall be not less than 22 inches by 30 inches (559 mm by 762 mm), and large enough to remove the largest appliance.*

Exceptions:

1. The passageway is not required where the level service space is present when the access is open, and the appliance can be serviced and removed through the required opening.
2. Where the passageway is unobstructed and not less than 6 feet (1829 mm) high and 22 inches (559 mm) wide for its entire length, the passageway shall not be limited in length.

M1305.1.3.1 Ground clearance. Equipment and appliances supported from the ground shall be level and firmly supported on a concrete slab or other approved material extending not less than 3 inches (76 mm) above the adjoining ground. Such support shall be in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions. Appliances suspended from the floor shall have a clearance of not less than 6 inches (152 mm) from the ground.

Please see **M1305.1.3.2 Pit locations**, for details where a pit is dug out for an appliance.

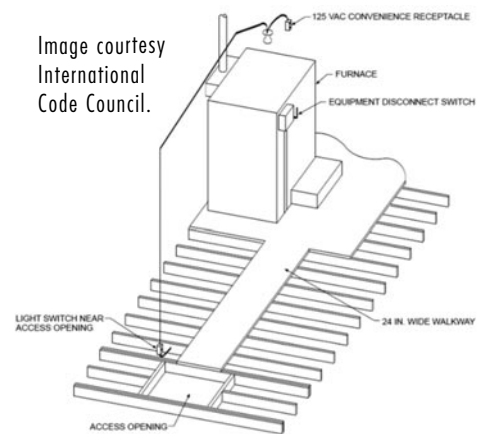
Summarizing:

- Each appliance must be installed with an access opening allowing removal and replacement of the largest appliance. Another appliance cannot block replacement access or removal.
- Space must be provided as defined, from the appliance to the access, for travel and appliance removal.
- These travel spaces do not include exceptions for crawling over and under ducts, pipe, wires, etc. These and other obstacles must be installed where they do not encroach into service access and service spaces.
- 30" wide and deep service spaces, with level platforms or surfaces must be provided in front of all sides of an appliance requiring service. See manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Where service platforms are located within insulated attics, the platform and passageways must be installed above the required insulation. Walkways above the insulation **MUST** be provided to the appliance.
- Have you ever been tempted to leave a pull chain light on, rather than navigate back across the trusses in an attic to turn it off, then work your way back to the access in the dark? A light and receptacle are required at each appliance location, with the light switch at the access opening.

The IRC does not require updating other codes, (other than mechanical and fuel gas codes) with an appliance replacement; however, if you are working on a remodel

project, do not hesitate to remind the general contractor or inspector of these important code requirements. If you are installing systems in a new construction home or addition, these are mandatory in every situation. Additionally, you cannot create a code violation in a new installation, blocking access to an existing appliance, when adding a new furnace or water heater.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions or comments on this or other code subjects. Thanks — **Brent** ■



Meet and Get to Know:

JEFFREY HEINZ

Q. Tell us about your company. . .

A. Mountainland Technical College (MTECH) is Utah's largest public technical college, serving over 6,000 students annually across 43 industry-focused programs. Located in Lehi, Utah, with additional campuses in Orem, Spanish Fork, and Provo, MTECH continues to expand its reach with a new campus opening in Payson this summer and a Heber campus scheduled to open next year.

As a part of the Utah System of Higher Education and accredited by the Council on Occupational Education (COE), MTECH is dedicated to enhancing the employability of individuals through market-driven career and technical education. The college offers diverse programs across Healthcare, Services, Technology, Trades, and Apprenticeships.

MTECH is proud to have recently received its sixth Best of State Award for Best Vocational Training Public Institution in Utah, a recognition of its continued excellence in career-focused education.

Q. What is your position within the company?

A. Currently, I serve as the Team Lead and Coordinator for the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVACR) Apprenticeship program. I manage a state-of-the-art HVACR training lab, and three classrooms equipped with over \$750,000 in industry-grade training systems. My responsibilities include recruiting, hiring, training, and supervising a team of seven instructors. I also lead the development and implementation of curriculum across three semesters, covering a total of seven comprehensive courses.

In addition to program leadership, I actively build and maintain strong partnerships with local HVACR contractors, vendors, and manufacturers to ensure our training aligns with current industry standards and workforce needs.

I also serve as the SkillsUSA Utah HVACR Education Team Lead, overseeing the organization and execution of the state's HVACR competition—part of the largest vocational competition in the nation, involving participants from all 50 states. State winners advance to represent the U.S. at WorldSkills, competing among professionals from over 80 countries.

Q. If you weren't an HVACR Educator, what would you like to be?

A. If I weren't an HVACR Technical Training Instructor and Program



JEFF HEINZ & THURL BAILEY

Coordinator, I would pursue a role as an educator and leader in commercial facilities operations. In that position, I would oversee building performance and environmental systems across college campuses, ensuring that students and faculty benefit from a comfortable, healthy, and efficient learning environment.

I'd focus on using smart technologies and data-driven maintenance strategies to improve system reliability while significantly reducing operational and maintenance costs. My passion for sustainability, energy management, and indoor environmental quality would allow me to bridge technical operations with educational excellence—creating spaces that support both learning and fiscal responsibility.

Q. What was your most unusual work experience?

A. One of my most unique work experiences occurred during my deployment to the Middle East with the U.S. Air Force at Balad Air Base during the Iraq War. While working in and around hardened facilities, I was tasked with reconditioning an abandoned, Russian-made 100-ton air-cooled chiller system. Through extensive repair and restoration efforts, I successfully brought the system back online, restoring chilled water to critical facilities. This eliminated the need to install multiple ductless split systems across both underground and above-ground structures—significantly improving operational efficiency and resource allocation.

Q. What are your favorite aspects of your job?

A. My favorite aspect of my job is the opportunity to positively impact people's lives. Through teaching and mentorship, we inspire students and equip them with the skills needed to pursue meaningful careers in the HVACR industry. This not only opens new employment opportunities but also enhances the quality of life for individuals and their families by increasing financial stability and long-term career growth.

Mountainland Technical College Mission Statement: "To enhance the employability of individuals through market-driven career and technical education."

Q. Do you have a motto to live by?

A. "Serve others. Build people. Leave it better than you found it."

Q. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

A. I would journey through Ireland and Britain. Being 52% Irish, I've always felt a strong connection to that part of the world. Exploring the landscapes, culture, and heritage of my ancestors would be a meaningful and unforgettable experience—walking the same paths they once did and gaining a deeper appreciation for the history that helped shape who I am today.

Q. What is your favorite hobby? When did you last do it?

A. One of my favorite hobbies—and truly a labor of love—was serving as a Boy Scouts of America Youth Leader while living in Alaska. I had the privilege of leading a BSA Scout Troop that included my son, and together we built lifelong memories and friendships in some of the most breathtaking wilderness the world has to offer.

Our adventures were unforgettable: hiking rugged trails, camping under vast northern skies, canoeing through pristine waters, combat fishing in roaring rivers, deep sea fishing in the Gulf, snow machining through the mountains, and even climbing around glaciers. The wild rivers and rainforests of Alaska offered a kind of beauty and freedom that can't be matched—and I often tell others, there's simply nothing better.

Though it's been nearly 13 years since I retired from the U.S. Air Force and left Alaska, the memories remain as vivid and cherished as ever. That time shaped not just my son's life, but mine as well.

Q. Tell us about your hidden talent.

A. My hidden talent is the ability to recognize challenging situations and uncover practical, achievable solutions. I enjoy breaking down complex problems, seeing the opportunity within the obstacle, and crafting a path forward that others might overlook. It's a skill that's served me well—especially in fast-paced, hands-on environments where clear thinking and decisive action make all the difference.

Q. If you won a \$50,000,000 dollar lottery, what would you do?

A. I wouldn't just spend it—I'd use it to make a lasting difference. My first goal would be to grow the wealth through smart investments, with the purpose of creating a perpetual education and training fund. This fund would be dedicated to setting up multiple trade scholarship programs, focused on helping individuals build sustainable careers and transform their lives through skilled trades.

I believe in the power of education to create opportunity, and I'd use this gift as a way to open doors for others—supporting their journey toward self-reliance, purpose, and prosperity.

Q. Do you have a favorite movie?

A. Not exactly—but I'm all in on the Yellowstone TV series and its growing universe of spinoffs. The storytelling, intensity, and rugged American spirit of Yellowstone instantly pulled me in. I'm a big fan of the entire saga—from the historical depth of 1883 and 1923, to the modern frontier drama in Yellowstone, Landman, and the high-stakes intelligence world of Special Ops: Lioness.

Each show brings a unique edge—legacy, loyalty, survival, and sacrifice—all wrapped in incredible cinematography and sharp writing.

Fun fact: If it's written by Taylor Sheridan, chances are it's already on my watchlist!

Q. If you could invite any three people to dinner (dead or alive), whom would you invite and why?

A. My choices would reflect a blend of innovation, leadership, and legacy.

Elon Musk – I deeply admire Elon Musk's bold vision and relentless pursuit of progress. From revolutionizing electric motors and pushing the boundaries of space exploration, to his interest in artificial intelligence and streamlining government systems, his work is reshaping the world. If he ever creates a cell phone, I'd be first in line to get one. His courage to challenge the status quo in pursuit of humanity's future is nothing short of inspiring.

Thomas Jefferson – As one of our nation's founding fathers, Jefferson faced enormous political, economic, and societal challenges. His role in shaping the foundational documents of the United States, and his ability to balance the complexities of leadership, business, and agriculture during a time of deep division, makes him someone whose insights would be invaluable in any era—including today.

Donald J. Trump – As the 45th and 47th President of the United States, I see in him an unwavering love and commitment to this country. Like the founding fathers, he has endured personal and political sacrifice in the pursuit of what he believes is best for the nation. His resilience and bold approach to leadership echo the spirit of America's early visionaries.

Together, I imagine the dinner table conversation would be nothing short of legendary—full of bold ideas, unfiltered truths, and deep insight into the past, present, and future of our nation.

Q. People would be surprised to know. . . .

A. As a "voluntold" non-prior service recruiter in the U.S. Air Force, I found myself in some unique situations—but one of the most memorable took place at a Denny's in Montana.

One morning, my team and I—three other recruiters—stopped in for breakfast, only to find out the cook was running over 15 minutes late. Jokingly, we asked the manager if we could just make our own breakfast. To our surprise, he agreed without hesitation.

So, like a scene out of a sitcom, four uniformed Air Force recruiters headed into the back kitchen and got to work. We cooked our own meals, enjoyed our breakfast, and when we were done, the manager comped everything with a smile. In return, we left a large tip for our waitress as a thank you.

Only in Montana. A place where hospitality, trust, and a good sense of humor still go hand in hand. ■

Jeffrey Heinz can be reached at Mountainland Technical College: <https://mtec.edu/programs/hvacr-technician/> or Email: jheinz@mtech.edu



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

153 SOUTH 900 EAST, #3
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84102



**WELCOME
OUR NEW
RMGA
MEMBER!**

D&S PIPING

Daniel Brinkerhoff
PO Box 963
Salem UT 84653
801-647-2544
dandspiping@gmail.com

It's Your Life: Reward and Retain Top Talent with an Executive Bonus Plan

MANY BUSINESSES RELY ON key employees. These people are critical to daily operations and play a significant role in keeping things running smoothly and successfully. A challenge for employers can be finding ways to retain and reward these employees. An executive bonus plan can offer an effective solution to help achieve both goals.

An executive bonus plan allows an employer to pay for personally owned life or disability insurance for a key employee. The business provides the premium as a bonus, which is tax-deductible as employee compensation. In turn, the employee pays income tax on the bonus.

If the employee passes away, their beneficiary receives the death benefit tax-free. If the employee becomes disabled, the disability benefit is paid to them tax-free.

Benefits for the Employer:

- ◆ Executive bonus plans are easy to set up and don't require IRS approval.
- ◆ Premiums are tax-deductible as part of the employee's compensation.
- ◆ Employers can choose which employees to cover, as well as the benefit amounts and premiums.
- ◆ Plans can be ended at any time.

Benefits for the Employee:

- ◆ Employer-paid life insurance can provide a tax-free death benefit.
- ◆ Employer-paid disability insurance can offer income protection.
- ◆ Employees own their policies and can name their beneficiaries.
- ◆ Policies are portable, so employees can take them if they leave the company.

Contact your local Federated Insurance marketing representative to learn how an executive bonus plan can help you. They can connect you with specialists and guide you through your options. ■