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CMAA Launches Online Certificate Programs

From Contract Administration to Value Engineering, construction professionals seeking to upgrade their Construction Management and Program Management skills will soon be able to get a complete basic education through a new series of online Certificate programs developed by the Construction Management Association of America.

CMAA used its just-concluded National Conference & Trade Show in Chicago as a debut forum for the first in its projected series of eight self-paced, online Certificate modules. An additional Construction Manager in Training program will be rolled out early in 2008.

The modules can be taken separately or combined into a complete basic course, ideal for industry newcomers or architects, engineers and constructors who want to add CM and PM skills to their qualifications. Each module includes video instruction by prominent industry experts, together with slides and other visual material, plus periodic self-assessments to help participants measure their own progress.

In the initial Contract Administration module, for instance, students learn from attorney Chris Brasco and Joyce Dawson, CCM, project manager at Heery International.

CMAA intends the online programs to meet a growing user desire for more flexibility in professional development and more self-paced, self-directed learning opportunities, says CMAA Vice President/Professional Development George Gehringer, PhD. They also fill a key gap, providing a clear career advancement path linking entry level employment to the industry's higher levels of achievement.

"We want to be *the* source of authoritative continuing professional education for every stage of a member's career, from entry level to the high degree of accomplishment represented by the Certified Construction Manager credential," Gehringer says.

Leading industry CMs and construction owners have welcomed the CMAA online initiative.

James Moynihan, president and CEO of Heery International, calls this education "more important than it ever has been. We must seek constant new knowledge," he adds, "and given the schedules we're all working under, to be able to learn in alternate ways is very beneficial. The traditional means of learning have their place and their role, but they entail costs and take time, and you're away from your office and your clients, so having the alternate ways of learning is a great benefit."

Owners have a particularly important stake in programs like these, says Gary Cardamone, Director of Construction Management for the Port of Long Beach, California.

“These online certificate programs provide a very cost effective way to obtain training or sharpen skills in areas of critical importance to CM practitioners,” he says. “As an owner that hires CMs from the private sector, we look for distinguishing credentials that are differentiators in the selection process. CMAA’s on line certificate courses represent one way to distinguish yourself from the competition.”

Tom Bishop, PE, senior vice president, West & Construction Services at URS Corporation, agrees that “the flexibility afforded by online courses will allow even the busiest of us to continue our personal and professional development in a focused and efficient manner. CMAA’s new Online Certificate Courses will assist those new to our practices in efficiently obtaining the knowledge basic to our discipline and will help our seasoned CMs update their capabilities, while honing their skills,” Bishop concludes.

CMAA Past President Robert Fraga of the U.S. General Services Administration points out that “these courses are developed by leading practitioners and cover the latest and best practices for each subject. In this era of rapidly changing technology and workload,” he adds, “the online certificate courses provided by CMAA are an excellent, cost effective way for owners and practitioners to gain, refresh or augment their knowledge, skills and abilities on specific areas of professional practice.”

Following Contract Administration, the next online module to be delivered will be a new Construction Manager in Training (CMIT) program derived from the familiar Capstone basic course. Other planned certificate modules include:

- Professional Practice
- Program Management
- Value Engineering
- Cost Management
- Safety and Risk Management
- Time Management
- Quality Management

Additional details and pricing information, including volume discounts, is available at the CMAA website, www.cmaanet.org.

CMAA is North America's only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of the professional construction and program management industry. On behalf of its twenty-five regional chapters and more than 4,500 public and private firms and individuals throughout the nation, CMAA promotes the construction management industry and provides professional resources, advocacy, professional development, certification, and business opportunities to its members. CMAA's national headquarters is located in McLean, Virginia and the Association’s website is www.cmaanet.org.

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