

Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology

Leading the Way in Preservation



Erica Smith
Freelance Writer

The repair and preservation of wood building components such as windows, doors, porches and moldings is becoming an increasingly desirable alternative for builders and homeowners, rather than using modern replacement materials.

The city of Lancaster, founded in 1730, is known for its diverse residential architecture. Although full of character and rich ornamental wood features, many of these historic buildings are rapidly showing their age. Noticing a growing trend in city revitalization and the need for proper preservation techniques, a committee formed in December 2006 to create the first program in Pennsylvania to offer educational courses in preservation trades technology.



and incumbent workers in the building trades to acquire the specialized skills needed to preserve Lancaster's historic buildings.



Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, the Lancaster County Planning Commission, the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission and the Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board formed a partnership with one distinct goal in mind—to provide opportunities for students

In the spring of 2008, the first wood preservation courses were offered at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. The three-week courses in wood repair and wood window repair trained existing and new business professionals to revitalize, rather than to replace.

Charlie Byers, a self-employed builder for 20 years, and now on the faculty of the carpentry program at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, was one of the original advocates for this program. Stevens now offers those courses, along with 3 additional preservation courses.

They also plan to add courses in porch restoration and complex moldings in 2010, and would like to expand to a full-time remodeling carpentry program that year. Future plans also call for development of courses in masonry restoration.

A unique opportunity from the Lancaster County Workforce Investment Board allows full-time incumbent workers employed in the building trades to receive reduced course registration fees. The preservation students are self-employed contractors and employees of preservation contractors who benefit from learning proper preservation techniques, not to mention the networking opportunities that the course presents. The first of the 2009 Wood Repair courses has graduated students from several local home improvement companies.

The knowledge, skills and new business opportunities that become attainable to those completing the course are well worth





MDB
CONSTRUCTION LLC

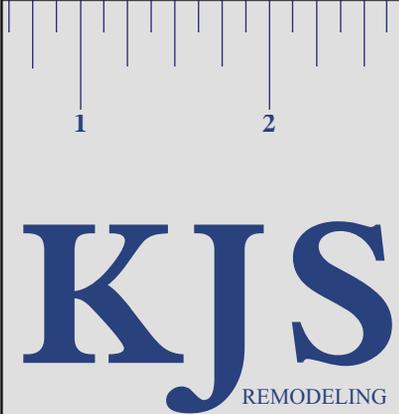
Custom Building & Remodeling
Residential & Light Commercial
New Homes
Additions
Renovations
Repairs

107 Chestnut Grove Road • Conestoga PA
872-4213

the money and time, instructor Charlie Byers explains. “In Lancaster, there is an abundance of work to be done, and many homeowners are becoming increasingly interested in restoration.”

“The problem is doing it correctly. Many homeowners attempt do-it-yourself projects without the proper training and the same is true for many professional remodelers who don’t know the proper techniques. That’s why we began a program solely dedicated to comprehensive wood repair knowledge and restoration techniques.”

Students spend 6 hours on theory and 12 hours working hands-on.



KJS
REMODELING

Kevin J. Sypien | 449 Dolly Drive | Lancaster PA
Cell: 330.4854 | Fax: 569.6395
Kevin@kjsremodeling.com | www.kjsremodeling.com

Salvaged historic wood building components, such as old window sash, are used in the workshop lab portion of the courses to demonstrate to students the proper techniques of preserving old wood. The students then are able to learn and practice these techniques on these salvaged materials.



Phil Leininger, a self-employed contractor for over 20 years and builder for M.D.B. Construction, LLC, specializing

should take it. Any quality craftsman will learn something new with these courses, and actually use these techniques in the future. The course validated what I had been doing, and taught me the quicker, historically correct way to repair.”



“From the oldest to the most current building professional, we all get stuck in ruts. This hands-on course benefits all, thanks to dedicated staff and excellent curriculum.”

Students find the instructor’s real-life experience beneficial, from their entrepreneurial backgrounds and experience in Lancaster, including work on the

in preservation, took the first course in wood restoration that Stevens offered.

Ephrata Cloister, Landis Valley Farm and Cornwall Iron Furnace.

“I benefited from the new methods presented that helped quicken the process and further ensure me that I’m preserving correctly. What helped me most were the new products we learned about, such as epoxies.

Most importantly, the preservation courses give the students priceless knowledge that allows them to further their career, while helping them preserve the area’s historic character.

“The course was very informative, offering invaluable knowledge to each builder applying it to their specific line of work.”

For more information, call Charlie Byers at 717-587-9179 or byers@stevenscollege.edu. You may also visit Thaddeus Stevens on the web at www.stevenscollege.edu. Click on the link to Continuing Education programs to find a listing of upcoming course offerings in preservation trades technology.

Kevin Sypien, another preservation graduate of K.J.S. Remodeling, highly recommends the course.

R&A

“To me, anytime you have an opportunity to further educate yourself, you