

## Special to the Nevada Appeal

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# Miles Construction in Carson City partnering with Western Nevada College construction program



Cary Richardson, vice president of business operations at Miles Construction, congratulates Victor Mejorado on joining the firm as project engineer. Mejorado graduates with his Bachelor of Technology from Western Nevada College in December 2015.

Carson City based Miles Construction has hired Victor Mejorado as a project engineer to support project management teams on two large regional projects, the AquaMetals lead battery recycling AquaRefinery and the Fulcrum BioEnergy Sierra feedstock processing facility. AquaMetals is located at the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center near the Tesla Gigafactory, with Fulcrum located just down the street in Lockwood. Both projects are partially funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mejorado will graduate with a Bachelor of Technology degree in construction management from Western Nevada College in December 2015.

Cary Richardson, vice president of business operations at Miles Construction, who serves on the WNC Foundation advisory board, said the construction program is in the process of changing curriculum to meet today's industry needs.

“The construction industry is short on qualified personnel and trades people in the area,” he said. “WNC is creating partnerships with local companies like ours for workforce development, and Victor really embodies that effort.”

Mejorado, a 2002 Carson High School graduate, worked locally in various industries until the

recession hit in 2008 and he was downsized by his employer. He enrolled in the construction management program at WNC — sometimes as a full time student, and sometimes part time, depending on his workload. He will graduate in December, seven years after he started.

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“That’s why we are so impressed by Victor,” Richardson said. “Seven years shows strength of character and dedication. That commitment, character and work ethic just can’t be taught.”

Mejorado said he was motivated to complete his bachelor’s by how it felt to bounce around without direction.

“I wanted to build a career in construction, to go beyond framing houses and build it on diverse projects,” he said. “I wanted a better opportunity to do more and to open more doors.”

Richardson said a perception problem exists when people think about construction.

“People think of someone with a hammer and a shovel, but it’s so much more,” he said. “We don’t just build track houses; we help make the world a better place with projects like the Fulcrum plant that will process 200,000 tons per year of household garbage from Northern Nevada into a feedstock that will be converted into clean renewable transportation fuels at the Sierra biorefinery that Fulcrum is constructing in the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center; or the first Aqua Metals AquaRefinery that transforms the way that the most recycled product on earth — lead batteries — are recycled with their clean recycling technology.”

Richardson said he’s optimistic about the future of construction in Nevada, especially with resources like WNC’s construction program, but the community needs to rally behind it.

“There’s a lack of understanding of what WNC has to offer,” he said. “The WNC trade programs continue to evolve with new focus on general business and communications skills. It’s important to be able to write a good letter and to pose a good argument, these are skills that have been missing. The new curriculum addresses those skills, along with others like cost accounting, estimating, scheduling, finance and contracts.”

Skills Mejorado gained during his time at WNC. As a project engineer, Mejorado will support the project management team on the Fulcrum and AquaMetals projects with submitting and processing requests for information, material and equipment submittals, pricing and coordinating with subcontractors and designers.

“This job will be Victor’s continuing education to move him along to managing his own smaller projects,” Richardson said. “Estimating and interfacing with clients will help him to become a full-fledged project manager.”

Mejorado said he’s ready for the challenge, and offered advice for people considering returning to school.

“Go for it,” he said. “Get to know what you can do with a bachelor’s degree. You can open many

doors such as working for a company like Miles Construction, or even owning your own company. Your opportunities are unlimited.”

Information about partnering with the Western Nevada College Foundation advisory board can be found at <http://www.wnc.edu/foundation/> or by contacting [katie.leao@wnc.edu](mailto:katie.leao@wnc.edu).

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