

Jess Mendenhall

Tradeswomen Heroes Award
Winner - May 2025



Level of Experience: Journeyworker

Years in Trade: 12 years

Union: Boilermakers

Local: 83

City: Wheatland, MO

Bio

Jess Mendenhall is a Boilermaker mechanic with Local 83 (Kansas City, Missouri). She's a certified Associate Welding Inspector and former foreman. She has led teams of up to 20 people and has worked coast to coast, from emergency refinery rebuilds to project coordination.

Jess began her Boilermaker career in 2012 and is currently working as a supervisor at Kiewit, as well as pursuing a degree in business management with plans to earn her PMP certification. Jess is passionate about mentorship and education and continues to advocate for greater opportunities and inclusion for women in the trades.

Why Nominate Jess?

Jess Mendenhall embodies what it means to be a Tradewomen Hero by blazing trails, breaking barriers, and demonstrating exceptional leadership and skill as a Boilermaker. Since indenturing into Local 83 in 2012, Jess has forged an impressive path in a male-dominated field, earning respect through hard work, fortitude, and a drive for excellence.



Her dedication to the trade and commitment to lifelong learning have made her stand out not just among her peers but also to instructors and leaders across the country. Jess recently became only the second woman in 20 years to complete the Boilermaker MOST Project Management course, which speaks volumes about her ambition and perseverance.

MOST instructor Gerry Klimo noted her strong presence and potential: "She's outgoing and knowledgeable. I've taught 30 or more of these classes, and sometimes there are people who really stand out." Her career has spanned coast to coast, including leading teams as a foreman in California and taking on complex emergency projects, such as a high-stakes, on-the-fly refinery rebuild in Toledo, Ohio.

She's also held roles as a project coordinator and instructor, giving back to the trade by sharing her knowledge and supporting others. Jess holds a Certified Associate Welding Inspector credential and is close to completing her associate degree in business management, with her sights set on earning a PMP certification.

Because she works in the trades, she's able to pay her school tuition in full each semester. While Jess has faced significant challenges, especially when it comes to access to

advancement opportunities, she continues to advocate for mentorship and equity in training for women in the trades. Her resilience, passion, and commitment to growth make her an ideal candidate for the Tradeswomen Hero Award.