

Valley Today

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Local • Bay Area

WHERE WE LIVE

AREA CONSTRUCTION WORKERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE WITH RUSSIAN COUNTERPARTS



CINDI CHRISTIE/TIMES

RUSSIAN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LEADERS, Andrey Yefimov, Anton Plekhanov, Sergey Gurenko and Anatoliy Khrulev, from left, take a closer look at a weld while touring the Pleasanton Training Center on Tuesday.

Building blocks of business

■ **PLEASANTON:** Leaders in Russian carpentry industry hope to hone skills, build trade

By Chris Metinko
TIMES STAFF WRITER

When most people think about big industry in the East Bay, shipping and technology spring to mind. Construction also plays a large role in the region's development, and it was that trade that brought a delegation of Rus-

ian leaders in the field to Pleasanton.

A dozen Russian construction industry leaders visited the Pleasanton Training Center on Tuesday for a chance to watch training displays and learn construction training techniques while touring the Santa Rita Road center, which is administered by the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council and its Carpenters Training Committee for Northern California.

The Russian delegation's visit, sponsored by the Center for Citizen Initia-

tives and the Rotary Club of Oakland, is part of a larger project sponsored in part by the Construction Employers' Association to improve the construction trade in Russia by connecting Russians with their U.S. counterparts.

"I would like to send all my workers here for training," said Nikolay Glusnschenko, part of the Russian delegation touring the center.

The tour served as a crash course in

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how construction workers in this country are trained and how they learn skills such as carpentry or welding. With capitalism a relatively new player in the former Soviet Union, some basic, time-tested methods in U.S. commerce are often new endeavors for a still-burgeoning force of Russian builders.

"You have to remember that pri-

vate businesses such as theirs have only been around 10 or 15 years," said John Bullock, the center's executive director. "They don't have a lot of experience. They're learning about how to bid, how to provide safety to their workers, how to get worker training."

Many in the group said training for such skilled workers differs in their country, where there is much less hands-on experience and more teaching of industry theories. Some also said

workers who do attend vocational school often are not trained in a variety of construction fields as they are in the United States.

Most of the visitors who attended Tuesday's tour seemed to come away impressed with training techniques U.S. workers receive.

"I now have the secret to success in this country," Sergey Gurenko, general director of a construction firm in Russia, said

through a translator. "Everyone here knows what their responsibility is. I can see why everyone is so successful."

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