



Spotlight on the Corridor



CLEVELAND

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James Bell

The Opportunity Now and Growth for the Future

With the noise of construction all around him, he works quietly, skillfully and with ease operating a 15-ton front loader that would intimidate most people. His focus is on the road and on the people as he ensures safety at all times. The man being described is Ward 4 resident, Mr. James Bell. Since June of 2015, Mr. Bell has had the opportunity to work with the joint venture McTech-Perk on the Opportunity Corridor Project, a three-mile boulevard being constructed on Cleveland's eastside. Because of the on the job training he has been receiving, Mr. Bell's skills have increased beyond his expectations.

Initially, Mr. Bell's skill sets were comprised of a carpentry background. In December 2014, he decided to join the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 18 (IUOE Local 18) in order to receive heavy equipment operating training, and a new career position. Six months after joining the IUOE Local 18, Mr. Bell obtained work from McTech-Perk on the Opportunity Corridor Project. Over the course of the 2015-year, Mr. Bell received specialized training on heavy equipment that exceeded his initial training at IUOE Local 18. "They opened me up to things I did not know. I have learned a lot from the Foreman, Bob H. who has exposed me to various equipment such as an excavator, bulldozer, roller, and the loader," said Mr. Bell. The irony is that the union through McTech-Perk brought in Mr. Bell to work a *skid steer*, which is a smaller engine-powered machine, and now his skill sets have enlarged because of the Opportunity Corridor Project.

Additionally, Mr. Bell has currently seen the benefits of the road and has a greater appreciation for the work underground. "I have a better understanding of the road's infrastructure underground and how it vitally functions to help the community from water mains, conduits etc.," said Mr. Bell. When he is not learning new specialized heavy equipment, Mr. Bell enjoys raising his two year old son and delights in his six grandchildren who call him, "Poppop!" He is also a self-taught artist and has been painting for over 25 years. Mr. Bell has a unique artistic perspective that uses 3-D and Afrocentric expression in his art. He plans to publicly release his art at different showings this summer.

Ohio Means Jobs with the help of the Opportunity Corridor Roadway Project wants to give every resident the opportunity to grow and increase their skills sets just like Mr. Bell.

For more stories like this one and to find out additional information about the Opportunity Corridor go to <http://opportunitycorridor.transportation.ohio.gov/>.