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Initiative to link minorities with construction work at Hall of Fame Village project

By CRAIN'S AKRON BUSINESS

Fairlawn-based **Welty Building Co.**, the city of **Canton** and the American Center for Economic Equality/Black Contractors Group are teaming up to help young minorities get jobs working on the construction of the Hall of Fame Village at the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The groups announced the summer jobs initiative, aimed at minorities ages 18 and over from Cleveland and Canton, in a Thursday, July 13, news release.

The program will be facilitated through Canton's employment and camps programs and ACEE's programs that aim to develop work skills. Participants will work with contractors and unions working on the \$700 million Hall of Fame Village project. Some might even have a shot at apprenticeships.

Welty, the construction manager of the Hall of Fame Village, is working to secure jobs for participants and is talking with carpenters, plumbers and other trades, encouraging them to participate in the program, according to the release.

"Our summer employment programs offer young people valuable employment experiences and encourage them to work to achieve a set of goals," Canton deputy mayor Fonda Williams said in the release. "The program increases participants' income, helps develop professional skills and improves prospects for future employment within the construction trades."

Participants -- who must have a valid driver's license, be drug tested and have no felony record -- will attend two weeks of skills training provided by the Stark County Community Action Agency. They will also go through a three-week training program at Operators' Union Local 18 facility in Richfield. Building Trades Local 94 also will provide a week of safety training, beginning Aug. 7.

Welty will pay for participants' work clothes, boots and other essential items, as well as provide them transportation to the Richfield training sessions.

"The cooperation between the City and ACEE is a great example of what can be achieved when organizations come together, cooperate and focus on accomplishing something worthwhile," said Don Taylor, Welty president and CEO, in a statement. "Welty is pleased to be a part of this productive and promising partnership."