

NEWS RELEASE

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Knight Cities Challenge Winner, Steel City Salvage, trains local contractors to harvest building materials from blighted structures in Gary

GARY, IN — January 23, 2017 —Delta Institute has kicked off contractor training to enable the safe deconstruction of vacant buildings that will eventually supply Steel City Salvage, a marketplace for building materials that will return economic benefits for Gary residents. Steel City Salvage is a 2016 Knight Cities Challenge winner, an initiative of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which seeks ideas to make cities more successful.

Deconstruction refers to systematically taking a structure apart to maximize reclamation of the highest quality materials – which vary from structure to structure, but typically include lumber, doors, windows, flooring, and fixtures. Reclaimed building materials can either be reused for their original purpose or converted to higher value materials.

Deconstruction requires a specific skillset of contractors in demolition, renovation, and construction. The Delta Institute is increasing the number of trained contractors to build the capacity of Gary businesses to salvage building materials and bring those materials to the market where they can generate economic activity for Gary. Eve Pytel, Director at Delta Institute said, “Demolition contractors are a critically important to supply the market place. While there is a learning curve, training give contractors the capacity to safely and effectively get the most valuable building materials out of homes.”

The 24-hour training, executed by the Building Material Reuse Association, will cover a variety of topics related to deconstruction. Participants will partially deconstruct 2 vacant homes in the Aetna community. Roger Hayward, founder of Its Gary’s Time, is providing homes for the deconstruction. It represents an opportunity to get more skills and resources to Rebuild Gary, Indiana, one home, one block, one community at a time. Hayward also serves as a member of the Steel City Salvage advisory committee.

Since receiving funding from Knight Foundation, Delta Institute has researched and analyzed several components of establishing the reclaimed building material marketplace in Gary, IN. While the City of Gary has deconstructed 9 homes as part of a pilot program, the lack of Gary licensed contractors with the Deconstruction Credential was identified as a barrier. With 9 people signed up for the course, Steel City Salvage is greatly expanding the capacity of local contractors. Delta Institute plans to offer a similar training in the summer of 2017.



For more on the Delta Institute, please visit delta-institute.org. For information and updates follow [@deltagreatlakes](https://twitter.com/deltagreatlakes) on Twitter.

For more on the Knight Cities Challenge, visit knightcities.org. For information and updates follow [@knightfdn](https://twitter.com/knightfdn) and [#knightcities](https://twitter.com/knightcities) on Twitter.

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About the Delta Institute

Delta institute works in partnership with businesses, government, and communities in Chicago and the Great Lakes region to create and implement innovative, market-driven solutions that build environmental resilience, economic vitality, and healthy communities. Visit online at www.delta-institute.org.

About Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation is a national foundation with strong local roots. We invest in journalism, in the arts, and in the success of cities where brothers John S. and James L. Knight once published newspapers. Our goal is to foster informed and engaged communities, which we believe are essential for a healthy democracy. Go to knightfoundation.org for more.