



R. Thomas Buffenbarger  
International President

## Commentary

# Skills

Each decade, thirty million kids enter American high schools. Only one in five will ever receive a college degree. The rest – about 24 million young Americans – will need solid SKILLS to earn enough to support their families, to have a fair shot at life.

And yet, public investment skews almost completely towards the college bound. It is time we begin to leverage more public monies for vocational and technical high schools, expand the courses offered by community colleges, create high-tech manufacturing institutes and increase the number of apprenticeships.

*America's Edge: Our Skills, Our Kids* is the IAM's new issue campaign. With television ads running in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, the IAM is fighting to push this issue onto the national agenda. A new website – [www.AmericasEdge.TV](http://www.AmericasEdge.TV) – invites all Americans to join us in this fight.

Today, I proudly welcome the presidents of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association to the pages of the *IAM Journal*. This is another historic first for our unions. Together we are leveraging the persuasive power of almost five million teachers and machinists.

Please help us sharpen America's Edge. Add your name to the blackboard that presidential candidates will visit. Post a video on AmericasEdge.TV showing the world your special skills. Or post a video of your most important legacy: your own kids.

We're fighting for something unique and very special: the children who may never graduate from college but who are truly America's Edge.

Tom

## IAM JOURNAL



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