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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**WESTERN ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION (WECA) LAUNCHES ORIGINAL VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) GAMING APPLICATION FOR ITS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS**

Rancho Cordova, CA – Western Electrical Contractors Association (WECA) is pleased to announce the launch of its first foray into original virtual reality application development for apprenticeship with a VR (virtual reality) gaming app focused on Commercial Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

This launch is the first in a series of planned additions of immersive and advanced learning technology experiences in WECA's electrical and low voltage training and apprenticeship programs. The initiative was proposed by WECA's Apprenticeship Training Trust Board of Trustees, who first envisioned WECA's ability to develop industry-leading advanced learning technologies focused on XR (extended reality) experiences to bring exciting, remote, and complex environments into WECA's hands-on labs and classrooms.

WECA approached the project from a modern digital product design perspective; beginning with interviewing WECA member contractors to gather and analyze their specific training needs for electricians on Commercial BESS. After a dedicated process of exploring and evaluating different VR development providers and platforms, WECA chose to partner with [Motive.IO](https://www.motive.io). The Motive VR Training Platform allows organizations to create and control their VR training content, with no code required.

WECA applies Agile development methodologies to its curriculum product design for its competency-based apprenticeship curriculum, in which apprentices must demonstrate sufficient skill and understanding to proceed. Hands-on performance-based labs to reinforce and assess mastery of defined competencies are woven throughout the curriculum. The prospect provided by the Motive platform for the WECA team to develop and then retain the ability to make rapid, iterative updates to its VR app itself, without needing to rely on external developers for every minor change, was a significant selling point, and a natural fit with WECA's commitment to serving the most up-to-date technical and relevant National Electric Code content in its programs at all times.

WECA has a commitment to keeping its apprentices on the forefront of new and green technologies, as the WECA member contractors who employ them and sponsor their educations do important work on critical infrastructure and electrification upgrades in the Western United States and rapidly respond to new state and federal emphases and funding for EV charging, battery energy storage systems, and rapid replacement of carbon-based fuels with electric alternatives.

In the WECA Commercial Electrical apprenticeship program's competency on Commercial BESS, Apprentices study a real-world project complete with interactive jobsite simulations in VR. In the VR simulations, students reference the plans, see the actual scale and layout of a BESS container, and explore and interact with PV inverters, transformers and switchboards. Using a map and checklist, apprentices walk through the jobsite and inspect the equipment, connections, signage and more – everything needed for pre-commissioning approval. Along the way, they get quizzed with questions related to Code articles and site-specific requirements. Keeping things fun and gamified, there may even be a few spots that require the apprentice to discover problems and implement fixes in order to pass inspection!

It's a journey of immersive discovery for WECA's apprentices, and those who got to participate in the initial pilots have been all smiles. The VR BESS app has now been fully rolled out to all WECA facilities serving its Commercial Electrical apprenticeship program across the Western United States: Rancho Cordova, CA; Fresno, CA; Riverside, CA; San Diego, CA; Phoenix, AZ; and Salt Lake City, UT.

Watch a quick video preview of WECA's VR BESS App: <https://youtu.be/QzYLP1B9YJE>

Learn more about WECA Apprenticeship: <https://www.goweca.com/Apprenticeship.aspx>

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