

## Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of B.C. Awards & Recognition Celebration

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Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell  
Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of B.C.  
Awards & Recognition Celebration  
Vancouver  
November 19, 2005

### *Check against delivery*

We are here tonight to honour a number of Applied Science technologists and technicians who have contributed to the growth and development of applied science technology in B.C.

I am glad to be here as you reward excellence in your profession and to lend a hand in helping burn your mortgage.

It is a very satisfying bit of paper to send up in flames and I know if we get in trouble the fire protection technicians are right on hand!

I would like to acknowledge the six award winners:

1. Mike Donnelly, ASCT - Professional Achievement Award - in recognition of service to British Columbia's citizens with disabilities.
2. Mike Tarr, ASCT - in recognition of professional input at the national level for new standards for both gas and electrical regulations.
3. Dale Churchill, ASCT - Advanced Technology Award - in recognition of environmental initiatives leading to major reductions in the consumption of electricity and natural gas within the facilities of School District #34.
4. George Hunter - Honorary Membership - in recognition of service to British Columbia's high-tech community.
5. Greg Miller, P.Eng. - in recognition of many years of legal advice that has helped ASTTBC evolve into a highly regarded professional association playing a key role in protecting the public interest.
6. Bill Belsey, ASCT - Life Membership - in recognition of service to the citizens of BC and support for the career advancement and professional recognition of technologists and technicians .

My congratulations to you all.

I also congratulate the ASTT-BC for seeing the importance of recognizing the accomplishments of its members in such a public way.

You should be pleased with the accomplishments of your association in its first 47 years. ASTT-BC has become a well-recognized and respected professional association. It has achieved a great deal for its members over the years and has very ably carried out its mandate to serve and protect the public interest.

I like the quote that came from your last conference in June 2005 where technologists and technicians were described as a valuable resource because they not only "know what needs to be done" but "how to do it."

And they know "how to do it" in so many fields – from the agriculture sciences to astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering, forestry, geology, geophysics, meteorology, and physics. And I know that's not

even half of your disciplines.

Technologists and technicians make life much easier for the rest of us - but their contributions often go unnoticed or are taken for granted.

They can work alone or work with a team of other professionals like engineers, architects, foresters or biologists on the design, installation, testing, operation and maintenance of a whole range of systems.

Technologists and technicians make a significant contribution to B.C.'s economy.

The range of technologist and technician career options are astounding. So much of what you do every day for the average and not-so-average British Columbian is behind the scenes.

I know there is a need to enhance the awareness of the great technology careers open for those who choose this career path.

There are pressures on the technology programs at BCIT, our community colleges and institutes. Some programs face low enrolments. Some have been shut down. This at a time when the demand is higher than ever.

I understand that your executive is developing a program to take to schools around the province informing students about the many job opportunities that are available if they pursue career and technology diploma programs.

This is excellent timing as technologists and technicians are in high demand as they help to support the growing B.C. economy.

B.C. is seeing sustained economic resurgence – our province is outperforming the national average, with record growth in construction.

And the demographic change means a high rate of retirement.

I encourage you to continue working on the challenges of attracting quality people into your profession. The government strongly supports careers in the tech sector. It is one of the reasons why my ministry, the Ministry of Advanced Education, has expanded the mandates of colleges and institutes to offer applied degrees that build on the two-year career and technology programs.

A student can take a tech diploma program for two years, and then get some work experience. The student can then return to school for two more years and earn a Bachelor of Technology degree. This provides a career path for technologists.

Government is helping another way. The shortage of workers is fuelling concern in B.C.'s growing oil and gas sector as we head into the busy winter drilling season. The government stepped in to help by hosting job fairs, and more than 2,300 people attended 15 sessions.

We wanted to help support the recruitment of technologists and technicians. We recognize that technologists and technicians are important contributors to B.C.'s economic development.

B.C.'s technologists and technicians are an integral part of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and Whistler.

The 2010 Olympics are B.C.'s turn to shine – for athletes, obviously, but also for the many technical professionals helping build the infrastructure needed for the games to exist

Technologists and technicians are helping to develop athletic venues, the International Broadcast Centre, athletes' villages, transportation systems and support infrastructure like sewer, water, and solid waste management

They are helping to make B.C. a world showcase for green building design and construction.

The revamping of the Sea to Sky Highway is a complex engineering feat that technologists and technicians are helping to accomplish in the day-to-day challenges. There are near-vertical rock cliffs

above and unstable rockfill slopes below and it has more twists and turns than a Revenue Canada tax manual.

The Sea to Sky Highway evolved from an old logging road, which has the exact opposite design parameters from public roads. For a logging road, twists and turns are OK – it's the steep grades you avoid, because they're hard for heavily loaded trucks to negotiate.

For public roads, up and down is OK, but twists and turns cause fatalities so there were huge challenges in the re-engineering of this road.

Innovative techniques were developed, and a test section was completed on time AND 30 per cent under budget. This is an amazing accomplishment, and lays the groundwork for an improved road that will save lives long after the Olympics are over.

I'm aware the ASTT-BC has submitted some proposed legislative changes to their act. I met recently with your President Keith Switzer and Executive Director John Leech.

I am committed to work with my staff and your executive to review these suggested changes with the hope of an early introduction into the legislature.

I look forward to the continued excellence of the work of technologists and technicians to help B.C. achieve our five great goals.

Just take the first one – making B.C. the best-educated and most literate jurisdiction on the continent. For that, we need schools, libraries and universities. We need the machinery to print books, newspapers and magazines. We need the buses that deliver those books, newspapers and magazines to remote communities as part of our adult literacy program and we need the roads for the buses to drive on. All of which your members play such a significant role in accomplishing and many of the advances we'll be making in the Golden Decade ahead will depend on the hard work of technologists and technicians.

Thank you for your contributions in the past – and your contributions yet to come.