
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Economic Development
Industry Training Authority

B.C. CELEBRATES THREE NEW TRADES TRAINING INITIATIVES

VANCOUVER – Industry leadership of British Columbia’s skills training system continues to expand with the approval by the Industry Training Authority (ITA) of three new industry training organizations (ITOs) in vital economic sectors: tourism, industrial/commercial/institutional construction, and resource industries, announced Economic Development Minister Colin Hansen today.

“This is the first step in honouring the Premier’s commitment last month to expand the number of ITOs through partnerships with the ITA and the private sector,” said Hansen. “Industry-driven training programs will ensure that B.C.’s workforce is the most skilled anywhere, and will give our province a competitive edge as we strengthen ties with the Asia-Pacific market.”

Operating as not-for-profit legal entities, ITOs are responsible for defining the training strategies for their sectors, including provincial and regional labour demand, maintaining and recommending training program standards, and interfacing with industry and apprentices. For example, industry representatives in B.C.’s resource sector identified a need for Industrial Electricians, and a training program is now under development.

The three new ITOs are expected to be operational by March 2007. They join those already operating in the automotive, residential construction and horticulture sectors, and together cover approximately 80 per cent of apprentices.

“We are pleased to see industry stepping forward to take this leadership role,” said Brian Clewes, ITA chief executive officer. “Employer input into training standards and labour market requirements is a critical ingredient in creating the skilled workforce B.C. requires in the future.”

In its June 2006 report, the BC Competition Council recommended that the launch of ITOs be accelerated to increase the supply of skilled workers for B.C. The ITA plans to establish up to 10 ITOs by early 2008, while retaining responsibility for the remaining programs in addition to system governance and funding.

The construction ITO has established a board of directors to be chaired by Dan Mott of Mott Electric, and the resource ITO will be chaired by Tom Kirk of Tembec Industries. The tourism ITO will be chaired by Kate Dodd of Mount Washington Alpine Ski Resort and operated as a division of go2, an independent not-for-profit body already established to assist the industry with human resource issues.

Since it was established in 2004, the ITA has surpassed its initial two-year goal to increase participation in the trades. Today, in recognition of the ITA's reaching the milestone of 30,000 apprentices, Minister Hansen presented Bernardus Speckling, an industrial instrument mechanic, with a Fluke meter, a tool he will need when he begins his in-school training next month. Joining Minister Hansen for the presentation were Brian Clewes, Tom Kirk and Mark Doucette, the director of facilities for the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Speckling registered as an apprentice in October, bringing the number of apprentices in B.C. to an unprecedented 30,000.

As of Nov. 30, there are 32,224 registered apprentices in B.C., up from 14,676 apprentices when the ITA was created in 2004. There are 4,872 youth participants in programs such as Secondary School Apprenticeship and the Accelerated Credit Enrolment for Industry Training (ACE IT). Over 9,000 employer sponsors currently offer placements to apprentices in B.C., a 35 per cent increase since the creation of the ITA.

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