

SUMMER 2010

What's Happening in Industry Training

FROM THE CEO



A call to action—meet the challenge

Mobilizing to meet the challenge is the title of ITA's 2009/10 annual report. It's as much a call to action as the summary of a year gone by. [CLICK HERE](#)

Statistics in the report are a reminder of the impact downturns historically have on industry training.

Last year, trainee and employer sponsorship participation were down five and one per cent, respectively. Relatively modest declines, yes, but the first since ITA's inception.

And even as the economy begins to recover, we may yet be hit by delayed effects, when apprentice layoffs occurring at the height of the recession hit the statistical radar.

... continued /5

SPECIAL EVENT

Aboriginal celebration at ITA

ITA really savoured National Aboriginal Day — when First Nations celebrate and share their diverse cultures with other Canadians, and everyone reflects on the place of Aboriginal People in society.

All of that happened June 21 at ITA's Customer Service Centre in Vancouver and head office in Richmond.

At both sites, staff and visitors enjoyed a cultural performance and traditional cuisine, introduced by Gary McDermott, ITA's senior lead for Aboriginal Initiatives.

The Chinook SongCatchers offered a dynamic presentation of music and dances from the Squamish and Nisgaa Nations.

Also featured was traditional cuisine prepared by Chef Andrew George of the Kla-how-eya Surrey Aboriginal Centre in Surrey, assisted by two of the centre's two Aboriginal pre-apprentice students. ... continued /3



Andrew George and Gary McDermott mark National Aboriginal Day

Project means better process for standards

The job of developing training in all industries is about to change for the better because of a combined effort by public training providers, Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) and ITA. Started in 2009 and now nearing completion, the Standards Improvement Project (SIP) is intended to make program development a more transparent, usable process.

"ITA has general policies in place, but not enough specific, detailed information to guide training development, largely because we're a relatively young organization," explained Evelyn Taylor, qualification and standards manager.

... continued /2

IN THIS ISSUE

Direct Access update
Students say, 'YES 2 IT'
Innovation on assessing skills
Farewell, Lance Blanco
ITO-ITA Leadership Forum

WELCOME TO ITA E-NEWS

It's a new online publication meant to give you:

- The latest on industry training in B.C.
- A heads-up about what's ahead
- An avenue to share your views



Check your OPSNs

Keep up-to-date on changes in training program standards and delivery to training providers. Changes are online Official Program Standards Notifications posted by ITA. [CLICK HERE](#) They should be read against related program profiles available. [CLICK HERE](#)

Training funding for employers

B.C. employers can apply for provincial training support from the Workplace Training for Innovation Program which runs through next January, subject to funding availability. For program details, including specific criteria apply, [CLICK HERE](#). Training providers communicating to employers about the program must use templates approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education. These are available, [CLICK HERE](#). ▼

Direct Access system opens up more apprenticeship information

ITA is moving ahead with Release 2 of Direct Access, an online information system covering all apprenticeships in the province.

Introduced last year, Direct Access has been used internally by ITA personnel to maintain training records, issue credentials and generate management

information on apprenticeships. As well, training providers can review individual student training records and, in some cases, enter technical training results.

This summer, development continues with Release 2, followed by a phase-in for external users scheduled in the fall for Industry Training Organizations. In 2011, the system will be offered to sponsors, apprentices and school districts.

More responsive service from changes to centre

ITA is making operating changes this summer “to make us more responsive to the people we serve,” said Ashifa Dhanani, senior lead, customer service.

The improvements involve:

- Reorganizing so more customer service representatives are available to take calls, with a focus on resolving issues in a single call.
- Assigning specialized representatives to consistently serve ITOs and training providers.

- Creating two new leadership positions, one to supervise customer service staff and the other to take responsibility for key aspects of ITA examinations.

The changes don’t require raising overall staffing levels.

The service centre can be reached weekdays, 8:30 AM through 4:30 PM.

Call 778-328-8700 in the Lower Mainland, toll free elsewhere to 1-866-660-6011. ▼

Finally, users will be offered online registration of new apprentices and recording of work-based training hours

Eventually, all users will be able to review and confirm basic information on individuals and view and print transcripts showing training results and status against completion requirements. After this, users will be offered online registration of new apprenticeships and recording of work-based training hours.

For more information on Direct Access Release 2, [CLICK HERE](#). ▼

Better process for standards from /1

SIP should fill the gap in two ways, she said:

- Giving ITOs support tools and templates that go from program inception to implementation.
- Improving internal ITA procedures for approval of industry-recommended training.

Taking an active part in SIP are people like Dennis Green, senior manager, industry training at go2, the tourism industry’s ITO.

Dennis sees the project as “a good collaborative process” that should streamline the training approval process. “For ITOs, it’s a smoother process of working with ITA on behalf of industry to get training into the system in a timely manner.”

That dovetails with ITA’s aim of making “program development more understandable and easier to complete. We’ll also improve our end, with feedback to ITOs for example,” said Evelyn.

Work on SIP continues through the summer, and she is looking at a transition to the new program standards starting late this year. ▼

B.C. students say, 'YES 2 IT'



Welding instructor Ken McKay works with Grade 9 students at College of the Rockies YES 2 IT event (Photo courtesy of COTR)

First-hand experience is the best introduction. That's behind a program called YES 2 IT — a Twitter-ese translation of the phrase "youth exploring skills to industry training."

Raising trades awareness among students in Grades 6 to 9, YES 2 IT is a partnership of ITA and the B.C. Ministry of Education.

The program offers a fun, hands-on chance to try skills in different trade careers and meet tradespersons in the community. Funding is available to support local YES 2 IT events.

An example is a recent Cranbrook workshop hosted by the College of the Rockies (COTR). It involved 78 youngsters rotating through carpentry, welding,

electrical and automotive technician work stations, guided by apprenticeship students and instructors.

COTR workshop sponsors were the Resource Training Organization (the resource sector's ITO), all three East Kootenay school districts, RONA, Teck Coal Limited and WorkSafeBC.

In a post-event survey, 61 per cent of the participating youngsters were "very likely" to pursue a trade career, compared to 31 per cent before the workshop.

"The program works because it's tailor-made by and for individual B.C. communities," said Rodger Hargreaves, ITA lead, youth initiatives.

- For YES 2 IT information and an electronic funding application, [CLICK HERE](#).
- To explore the Resource Training Organization website, [CLICK HERE](#). ▼

Aboriginal celebration from /1

Gary noted that the Kla-how-eya organization is running cook pre-apprenticeships for 48 Aboriginal students this year. On completion, they can find related jobs or advance to professional cook training as most are expected to do.

It's one of several programs ITA supports with funding under the Canada-B.C. Labour Market Agreement.

"This is crucial to our province-wide efforts to help more young Aboriginal men and women take trades and apprenticeship training," he said. "We're also grateful to a volunteer Aboriginal advisory committee working with ITA to raise awareness in Aboriginal communities of the great potential of apprenticeships."

ITA has focused on this issue since 2007, and Gary said the early results are encouraging. The number of Aboriginal students in public post-secondary apprenticeships has grown by 88 per cent, compared to 32 per cent for non-Aboriginals. (These figures, the most recent available, cover the two fiscal years ending 2008/09.)

"This is good news, but we still have a lot of catching up to do — training Aboriginal British Columbians for productive careers that benefit them personally, their families and communities and the province as a whole.

A 2009/10 report on ITA's Aboriginal Initiative is online.

[CLICK HERE](#) ▼

Approach to new standards is evolutionary, not revolutionary

ITA is taking a national industry training leadership role. Occupational Performance Standards (OPS) could eventually affect Red Seal trades governed by cross-Canada standards.

Multiple Assessment Pathways (MAP) is a made-in-B.C. approach, testing concepts that might apply to national standards and those for trades administered here.

Here's what's involved.

Clarifying concepts

A careful process is underway to “evolutionize, not revolutionize” Canada’s Red Seal trades, according to Jeff Nugent, ITA executive lead, strategy and policy.

He’s a key figure in the national effort to clarify broad concepts on occupational performance standards (OPS) and review assessment tools for the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA).



Sandy Steward and Jeff Nugent take key roles

“The goal is to make a proven, successful system stronger and more effective. No one wants to throw out what works, and that’s why CCDA isn’t skimping on consultation to learn the priorities of the people who use the system and know it first-hand,” he explained.

The OPS process will look closely at the results of some testing: a pilot this year with the heavy duty equipment mechanic trade in B.C. and a 2009 cook pilot.

“But no one is going to flip a switch and turn the Red Seal program inside out,” Jeff declared.

“The current extensive consultations will be followed by evaluation of the feedback before decisions for change are considered. Then any implementation would be gradual to assure stability.”

For more details on the developing OPS story [CLICK HERE](#).

Assessing skills

A better way to assess people who want to have their trade skills recognized. That’s the goal of Multiple Assessment Pathways (MAP).

New to Canada but used in some other countries, MAP “strikes a better balance at judging the skills of individuals and assuring industry that they’re competent,” said Sandy Steward, ITA executive lead, strategic initiatives.

Red Seal chair

ITA CEO Kevin Evans was named in mid-June to a two-year term as chair of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship. The organization is responsible for management oversight of the cross-Canada Red Seal program.

Instead of the usual multiple-choice exam, she explained, MAP uses a combination of documentation review, interview, practical assessment and short written test.

That was the basis of a 2009 pilot run in collaboration with PROPEL™, the tourism and hospitality ITO. All but 10 of 65 participants qualified for professional cook I, II or III credentials; the others were guided to targeted upgrading. After overseeing the pilot, the Red Seal organization CCDA launched its related performance standards project.

“MAP supports that national effort, testing assessment and standards concepts. We need to operate in the broader context because so much B.C. training involves Red Seal trades,” explained Sandy.

“Our experience will help foster national improvements that work for everyone. No single province can roll out and sustain developments like this on its own.” ▼

Blanco will be sorely missed

Lance Blanco left ITA at the end of June, ending a six-month period as chief operating officer that CEO Kevin Evans said will make “a lasting difference” to the organization.

“In a short time, Lance led a successful effort to put in place processes and procedures giving ITA greater stability and positioning us well to pursue our mission with increased vigour. He will be sorely missed,” said Kevin.

Lance became president and CEO of a publicly-traded B.C. forest company, returning to the sector where he previously worked 25 years. ▼



Lance Blanco positioned ITA well

Forum focuses on strategy

Strategic collaboration is the object of a new body formed in June to advise ITA as it works to manage and improve B.C.’s industry-driven training system.

ITO/ITA Leadership Advisory Forum consists of the chairs and CEOs of ITA and the province’s seven Industry Training Organizations (ITOs).

“This will strengthen our partnership with the independent, industry-governed ITOs addressing training and human resources planning needs of specific sectors,” said ITA Chair Frank Pasacreta. ▼

Climb to safety

Apprentices and others can learn ladder safety and enter a contest to win an iPad in an online WorkSafeBC contest. For British Columbians older than 13 years, it runs until August 31. For details, [CLICK HERE](#).

Does length matter?

Whether apprenticeship duration relates to completion and success rates is examined in a new Statistics Canada study of data from six provinces: Alberta, B.C., Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario and Québec. Released in late June, the study is available.

[CLICK HERE](#)

One-point access

British Columbians now have a single inventory of all labour market training programs in the province. Launched in late spring, users can search for programs by keyword or geographical locations and access them online. [CLICK HERE](#)

It was developed jointly by three provincial ministries: Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, and Housing and Social Development.

Apprenticeship listings

Information on trades and apprenticeship programs in public

post-secondary institutions is now part of the detailed offerings. [CLICK HERE](#)

Users can access trade profiles, program scheduling details and more, thanks to a partnership of ITA and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer which manages the website. The two organizations are exploring adding information on private institution trades offerings. ▼



YOUR INPUT

We value your feedback on the newsletter, your insights into industry training in B.C. and ideas for stories that we, or you, might write. Thank you.

—ITA eNews Editor
Karen Zukas
Email kzukas@itabc.ca

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A call to action—meet the challenge from /1

No news flash is needed about our aging workforce and looming skills shortages. But the recession was a wild card that deepened the challenge of meeting B.C.’s labour market needs.

The situation today calls for disciplined mobilization of all the resources at the disposal of the industry training system. They are formidable, and much can be accomplished when training providers, Industry Training Organizations, organized labour, government and employers work collaboratively to reach a common objective. That objective, and the call to action, is to embed in B.C. workplaces a durable training culture — with employers of all sizes investing in training because they know it’s essential for their businesses’ future success.

KEVIN EVANS, Chief Executive Officer