What's Happening in Industry Training

FROM THE CEO

Head and shoulders above the rest

We could argue whether British Columbia has Canada’s cleverest apprentices or its best training providers, employer sponsors and support from industry, labour and government — or some combination of those.

But there’s no arguing the fact that our overall Red Seal pass rate is head and shoulders above the rest of Canada. That’s clear in statistics released this summer for 2009, the latest available. Story Page 4.

As well, our Red Seal endorsements set a provincial record, climbing 22 per cent last year. We contributed 18 per cent of the national total, with only 11 per cent of the population.

In recent years, ITA has helped apprentices get ready for Red Seal exams with online practice questions for many trades. CLICK HERE

This fall, we published a step-by-step guide to preparing for the exams, Preparation Guide for Studying the Inter-provincial Red Seal exam.

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YOUTH INITIATIVES

Help boosting essential skills in trade training

Making the grade in a trade career depends on certain essential skills. That’s the bottom line of extensive research showing apprentices without these skills are far less likely to finish their technical training successfully.

“We’re talking about the minimum you need to function in the workplace. Examples are basic math and being able to read and understand written work orders — simple things for some, not so much for many others,” said Jessi Zielke, ITA Senior Lead for Labour Supply Initiatives.

Since early 2009, Jessi has led development of ITA’s new Essential Skills Suite. Now the launch is scheduled this December.

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No medal fatigue here

His work on a plastic repair earned Jay Kendrick-Cook a bronze medal in vehicle collision at the national 2010 Skills Canada competition last spring in Ontario. Previously, Jay won gold in that category for B.C.

The 17-year-old Victoria High School student prepared for the national event using an online program that delivers trades training across the province. Story Page 3 (Photo by Kevin Blenic)
**RECENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Gary Macey assumes COO responsibilities**

Gary Macey began work as ITA’s chief operating officer in September, with overall responsibility for program standards, customer service activities, and relations with industry training organizations. He brings to ITA 25 years of experience in operational and strategic management in the B.C.’s manufacturing and forestry sectors.

CEO Kevin Evans announced Gary’s appointment “with enthusiasm,” noting his background as a “results-oriented leader with a collaborative style that will serve the ITA well in our multi-stakeholder environment.”

Before joining ITA, Gary was general manager of Commercial Body Builders and Commercial Equipment, the largest specialty truck manufacturer in Western Canada. Previously, he was Weyerhaeuser’s senior business leader of hardwood manufacturing operations in Canada.

Gary is a professional engineer who earned a BSc in mechanical engineering at UBC and an MBA at SFU.

**Other appointments**

ITA also recently hired two new managers:

- Natalia Dumitrescu is Lead, Corporate Services working mainly in procurement, her area at her last job with the Canadian Tourism Commission. She is certified by the Purchasing Management Association of Canada and has a diploma in business information systems, a master’s degree in chemical engineering and a diploma in education and youth psychology.

- Ruth McGillivray is Lead, Quality Assurance and Program Standards. She brings to the position extensive management, training and software experience as a consultant and with Motorola Canada. Ruth holds a VCC provincial instructor’s diploma and is working on an MA in learning and technology at Royal Roads University.

**Opening the Direct Access system to Industry Training Organizations**

ITA is rolling out Release 2 of its Direct Access province-wide information system in October to B.C. industry training organizations (ITOs) responsible for developing and managing training for specific sectors.

This connects ITO staff to online training records for registrants in their programs and means development of the overall system is on schedule. The next phase will expand Direct Access to apprentices, training sponsors and school districts. Development is under way now for a wide-scale roll-out in 2011. Apprentices and sponsors will receive personal notifications inviting them to activate their Direct Access accounts.

Meanwhile, design work begins this fall on the system’s next phase. It will include key functions like self-registration by apprentices and new sponsors and reporting of work-based training hours.

“This will realize the vision of apprenticeship self-management for apprentices and sponsors ready to take advantage of the change from paper forms and mail,” said ITA Direct Access Project Manager Robert Holley.

For more information on the system, **CLICK HERE**

**Essential Skills from /1**

It will feature a free, online tool that lets users measure their skills against requirements for more than 50 Red Seal and other trades in B.C. The suite delivers individual assessments, personalized learning plans to address any essential skills gaps, and links to other online aids.

“We expect that the suite will work best used with an instructor or employer, but nothing prevents anyone from accessing and using it independently,” said Jessi.

ITA is working with training providers, employers, industry associations and unions, explained Jessi, “so they can help people use the suite in all kinds of learning and working environments.”

She calls essential skills “the Velcro needed for technical training to stick and continuing learning to help adjust to lifelong workplace change.”

Apprentices with good essential skills are eight times more likely to pass their exams, less likely to be hurt on the job and able to look forward to greater lifetime earnings and promotion opportunities.

For employers, the pay-offs of essential skills include higher productivity from workers able to perform more complex tasks and greater returns from investments in on-the-job training.

The countdown is on:

Watch for the year-end launch of ITA’s Essential Skills Suite. **CLICK HERE**
**Youth Initiatives**

**Teens get a head start on trades with eLearning**

*Teens in British Columbia can go online now for a head start to trades careers.*

That’s possible because of break- through eLearning programs extending the reach of an initiative called Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training (ACE IT).

For years, ACE IT funding by ITA has brought technical training to teens in traditional workplace-and-classroom arrangements. Completion earns them credit toward high school graduation as well as Level 1 post-secondary trade credentials.

B.C.’s new eLearning approach uses the Internet to deliver the program across the province.

“This gives important opportunities to high school students in districts that may not have access to technical training because no colleges are nearby,” said ITA Lead for Youth Initiatives Rodger Hargreaves.

“It’s training at the post-secondary level that enhances the high school experience.”

So far, two eLearning programs developed by Vancouver Community College (VCC) are up and running: Vehicle Collision and Automotive Service Technician. Camosun College in Victoria is developing a professional cook program.

Kevin Blecit teaches the Vehicle Collision course at Victoria High School. He sees eLearning complementing what we do in the classroom, with in-depth exposure to auto collision from repair to refinish.

“The teacher has more flexibility in being able to juggle different aspects of instruction,” he said. “The kids like it, too, and working together on the computer created teamwork.”

Find out more: Details on all of ITA’s Youth Initiatives are available. [Click Here](#)

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**Important last steps in certification process**

The prized certificate of qualification comes automatically after an apprentice completes technical training, has enough work-based hours and passes the exam. Right?

Well, not quite.

The last step is actually a written recommendation confirming the apprentice is ready for certification. This is signed by the sponsor and a journeyperson in the same trade (though only one signature’s needed when sponsors are journeypersons).

“We send the recommendation form to the sponsor after checking that the apprentice meets all requirements,” said ITA Senior Lead for Customer Service Ashita Dhanani. Apprentices are notified when this happens, electronically if they use email to communicate with ITA.

“But it’s the apprentice’s responsibility to see that the sponsor signs and returns the form to us,” she explained. “Only then can we send the certificate for the sponsor to present to the new journeyperson.”

Sponsors should sign and return forms quickly. Apprentices can ask sponsors about this — “hopefully politely,” said Ashita — within a few weeks of ITA sending the form.

One sponsor that stays on top of the process is Dueck on Marine, a Vancouver car dealership. Service Manager Rick McKoryk emphasizes “dotting all the i’s and crossing all the t’s as every apprenticeship comes to an end. “Communications are key, so everyone knows where they stand.”

New auto service technician Henry Questroo (left) receives his certificate of qualification from Rick McKoryk, service manager at Dueck on Marine, a sponsor that works with apprentices to stay on top of the certification process.

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**Go paperless**

Apprentices can get same-day notification whenever their records change by using email to communicate with ITA.

Switch to email by calling 778-328-8700 in the Lower Mainland/toll-free elsewhere to 1-866-660-6011 or emailing [response@itabc.ca](mailto:response@itabc.ca). Include this information:

- Full legal name
- ITA individual ID
- Birth date (day/month/year)
- Mailing address
- Email address [Click Here](#)

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**Safeguards on exam results**

To safeguard individual privacy, ITA no longer releases trade exam results by phone to apprentices, challengers and employers. This change was implemented October 1. For information, [Click Here](#)
Red Seal pass rates lead the rest of Canada

A statistical snapshot shows British Columbia leading the rest of Canada for pass rates on exams for the Red Seal program, the national inter-provincial trade qualification system.

“This confirms that we’re building a robust apprenticeship system here, with consistently-high pass rates and solid year-to-year growth in the number of exams written,” said ITA Executive Lead for Strategy and Policy Jeff Nugent.

The figures cover 2009, the latest year for which Red Seal results are available. They show 7,446 exams written in B.C. Apprentices achieved a 78-per-cent pass rate, compared to 51 per cent for challengers (non-apprentices approved to write exams based on experience and skills). Both groups outperformed their counterparts in the rest of Canada (Table 1).

Overall in 2009, British Columbians earned 4,536 Red Seals, 77 per cent issued to apprentices and the rest to challengers. Three of 37 trades accounted for more than half of successful apprentices — construction electrician, 22 per cent; carpenter, 16 per cent; plumber, 14 per cent.

B.C.’s Red Seals accounted for 18 per cent of the 24,584 issued across Canada in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Seal Pass Rate</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>Challengers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Canada*</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These percentages are based on the number of exams written; the “Rest of Canada” doesn’t include B.C.’s pass rate.

Table 2: Exams and Red Seals, 2009

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Red Seals issued</td>
<td>3,191</td>
<td>3,708</td>
<td>4,536</td>
<td>+22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices writing exams</td>
<td>3,341</td>
<td>4,178</td>
<td>5,179</td>
<td>+24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challengers writing exams</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>2,267</td>
<td>+47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That year also saw the province continue a trend of significant increases in exams written and Red Seals issued (Table 2).

Information on the Red Seal program is available at a toll-free info-line at 1-877-599-6933 and online. **CLICK HERE**

More B.C. statistics

The province has published a survey gauging apprentices’ satisfaction after completing their programs. For the results, **CLICK HERE**

Head and shoulders from /1

B.C. trades with the highest pass rates last year were Powerline Technician (96 per cent), Metal Fabricator (92 per cent), Construction Electrician (91 per cent), Baker (88 per cent) and Machinist (85 per cent).

At the other end of the scale, the statistics highlight trades where improvements may be needed. Our 63-per-cent welding pass rate is six points below the national average. I’m glad to report that we’re already implementing modifications to this program, with input from industry and the Resource Training Organization. This is typical of all B.C. trades— dozens of subject matter experts contributing to standards reviews and exam bank development.

With the Red Seal 50th anniversary just behind us, all of this speaks to British Columbia’s support of the program. It’s stronger than ever, as our results and commitment demonstrate.

Kevin Evans, Chief Executive Officer
Starting professional truck driver training

On the road across B.C. by the end of 2011 will be a new voluntary professional truck driver training program announced this fall by the Transportation Career Development Association and the BC Trucking Association (BCTA).

A pilot with 12 participants began in September and involves 12 weeks’ classroom and practical instruction, a supervised four-week practicum and 1,000 hours’ solo driving.

The goal is to create professional truck driver certification delivered through ITA, which funded program development along with the federal government and BCTA’s Flemming Sondergaard Legacy Program.

For more information, CLICK HERE

ITC NEWS BRIEFS

From Industry Training Organizations (ITOs), provincial non-profit bodies developing and managing training on a sector basis in B.C.

transCDA has launched a web log on transportation training issues to engage and seek feedback from apprentices, employers, industry stakeholders and the general public. CLICK HERE

RCITO has a new office in Sidney, a new website and new series of information materials for its work as the residential construction ITO. To find out more, CLICK HERE

RTO is starting publishing a quarterly newsletter covering training for the province’s major resource sectors. For a look at it, CLICK HERE

ITA PROGRAM NOTES

Major welder update
ITA released a major update in September of the print modules for BC Welder Training Program Level C. The work relied heavily on dedicated efforts by the Welding Articulation Committee of B.C. and consultation with the Resource Training Organization. For more on this, CLICK HERE

Plumber assessment
Changes to assessment guidelines for ITA’s Plumber Program took effect September 1, in an update to previous guidelines issued in October 2009. For more information, CLICK HERE

Dairy program changes
New program profiles and an outline have been published by ITA for a two-tiered, progressive credential Dairy Production Technician Program. For more information, CLICK HERE

Check for more OPSNs
ITA publishes other Official Program Standards Notifications as they occur. They’re online, CLICK HERE and should be read against related program profiles, CLICK HERE

Certifying crane operators
Certificates of qualification are being issued to challengers completing exams and practical assessments for seven crane operator occupations that are apprenticeable trades in B.C. Available since July, the exams were developed jointly by ITA and the BC Association for Crane Safety.

Crane operators must be certified by the end of February under a WorkSafeBC requirement. For details, CLICK HERE

Funding help for employers
Business and non-profit employers with fewer than 50 employees can access up to $5,000 in funding for employee training under the Workplace Training for Innovation Program. The provincial initiative helps employers bring new abilities to their operations and workers improve their skills.

Funding is available until January 31, 2011. Details, CLICK HERE
Ministry changes temporary supports as economy strengthens

Seeing signs of a strengthening provincial economy, the B.C. Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) is making some changes to apprenticeship financial supports introduced last fall in response to the economic downturn. The supports were put in place temporarily to help apprentices completing classroom training during the downturn.

Partial assistance with apprentice tuition will be discontinued effective January 1, 2011. Apprentices not eligible for Employment Insurance benefits at a higher rate, will be eligible for MHSD living supports of up to $300 weekly.

Apprentices continue to be eligible for ministry funding to assist with incremental transportation, dependent care and disability costs necessary for participation in classroom training. To be considered for this financial assistance, apprentices must apply within four weeks of the start of ITA-approved classroom training.

For more information, call Enquiry BC: 604-660-2421 from the Lower Mainland, 250-387-6121 in Victoria or 1-800-663-7867 elsewhere in the province.

MHSD provides more than $300 million annually to help BC job seekers obtain employment and acquire job skills and training. This includes financial supports to apprentices for completion of classroom training.

The MHSD changes don’t impact apprenticeship and related funding by ITA and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

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Report covers major renovation in trades training

A report released in September describes ITA progress in implementing earlier recommendations by the Office the Auditor General of B.C.

A Major Renovation: Trades Training in British Columbia is on Page 33 of the September 2010 OAGBC Follow-up Report.

To download the complete Follow-up Report in PDF format, CLICK HERE

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Board members reappointed

Four appointments to the seven-member ITA Board of Directors, that expired in September, have been extended by the B.C. government. They are: Chair Frank Pascreta, two more years; Directors Jack Carthy, one year; Directors Jack Davidson and Suromitra Sanatani, three years each.

Province invests $5.2M in access to training

The province has invested $5.2 million for 2010/11 to help nearly 1,000 unemployed and low-skilled British Columbians “access the tools they need for future success,” said Moira Stilwell, Minister of Advanced Education Minister and Labour Market Development.

Her announcement covers the second year of the Employment Skills Access (ESA) Program, which involves post-secondary institutions, industry and other community partners.

The goal is to provide skills training for unemployed individuals to prepare them for entry or re-entry to the labour force.

Of the total, $1.5 million will fund general employment or job-specific training at British Columbia Institute of Technology, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Royal Roads University, Simon Fraser University and the University of Northern B.C. Another $3.7 million will go to a labour market consortium of 15 colleges and universities to deliver training responding to regional client and labour needs.

Funding for the ESA Program is provided under Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

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ITA performance reports

ITA publishes detailed monthly performance reports tracking numerous indicators related to its annual service plan and related strategic goals.

For complete reports back to the beginning of 2007, CLICK HERE