

For Immediate Release

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## **Industry Training Authority announces expanded services for trades education system**

Trades apprentices and the trades education system in B.C. are receiving more support through expanded services and regional outreach, announced Advanced Education, Skills and Training Minister Melanie Mark and the Industry Training Authority (ITA) today.

This September, ITA is bringing the total number of Apprenticeship Advisors to 20 across the province, with new advisors in the Prince George, Terrace/Kitimat, Abbotsford/Mission, Chilliwack, and Vancouver/Richmond regions.

These advisors will help build knowledge and awareness of the B.C. apprenticeship system and provide guidance to apprentices and employer sponsors on processes and policies relating to the apprenticeship journey.

The addition was made possible through funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, which is committed to making sure more people in B.C. can access skills training and complete their apprenticeships.

“New Apprenticeship Advisors means more support for aspiring trades training students closer to home. This new investment means more British Columbians will be able to access high-paying 21st century jobs,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. “To remain competitive, B.C. will need the best skilled labour force and professionals that are industry-ready on day one. Investing in these new advisors is essential to making sure trades students are set up for success in our province.”

Through an understanding of their specific regions, the advisors will also build relationships with local industry members and apprenticeship sponsors and identify opportunities to remove barriers and boost success rates of apprenticeships.

“ITA Apprenticeship Advisors play an important role for supporting the development and training of our skilled trades,” said Darrel Wulf, Maintenance Manager, Port Hardy Processing Plant, MOWI Canada West. “We appreciate and rely on their support within the trades training system and look forward to this relationship continuing in the future.”

ITA has also created a new region—North Vancouver Island—which is being staffed by existing advisor Shannon Hanson, who previously supported North Vancouver and the Sea-to-Sky region. The Sea-to-Sky region is now being staffed by existing advisor Chris Klar.

“We’re delighted to have this group of dedicated professionals, who have all been involved in the skilled trades and community building for many years, collectively bring a range of valuable experience, and deeply understand the needs and challenges of our varied stakeholders,” said Shelley Gray, CEO, ITA.

Training providers such as colleges will also benefit from increased Apprenticeship Advisors who will help current trades students navigate the apprenticeship system as well as assist experienced workers (challengers) in their journey to achieving credit for knowledge and skills they already possess.

“ITA’s continued support enables the apprentices in our trades program to be successful in their career path,” said Randy Kelley, Director, Applied and Technical Studies, University of the Fraser Valley. “We’re looking forward to working with the new Apprenticeship Advisors to further the work we’re doing to elevate trades education in the region by increasing awareness of the skilled trades, improving access through innovative program delivery, and guiding students during their apprenticeship journey.”

There are over 70,000 job openings expected for skilled trades professionals throughout the province in the next decade, and ITA’s Apprenticeship Advisor program is one more way to ensure apprentices are supported to complete their skills training so they can enter the workforce and enjoy long-lasting, well-paying careers in B.C.

Joining the team at ITA as of September 9 are:

**Dave Coleman and Kristen Emel: Prince George**

Dave has 24 years of experience in the trades training system, including time with the Roofing Contractors Association of BC, the Construction Industry Training Organization, the Construction Industry Training Authority, and the Roofing Contractors Association of British Columbia.

Kristen has almost a decade of management experience focused on community development and relationship building for non-profits throughout Northern B.C., including the YMCA and the Special Olympics. Kristin specializes in initiating new programs and services aimed at enhancing rural communities.

**Michelle Owen: Terrace/Kitimat**

Through the BC Construction Association and Coast Mountain College, Michelle has worked in trades employment assistance and training, matching individuals with employment opportunities and supporting them in maintaining work in the skilled trades once employed.

**Kyle Kozak: Abbotsford/Mission**

Kyle is a Red Seal carpenter with a focus on trades training, having instructed carpentry programs at Open Door Group and Ace Trades and Technical Group. He has worked as a carpenter on a range of construction projects.

**David Seynard: Chilliwack**

After completing a Bachelor of Business with an extended major in Human Resources, David worked as an employment advisor for non-profit organizations and private educational facilities. David's most recent experience has been with the Squamish Nation Training & Trades Centre, and for the past four years, he has assisted Indigenous people find employment, predominately in the construction industry.

**Julie Sawatsky: Vancouver/Richmond**

Julie Sawatsky is a Red Seal carpenter and has gained expertise working in the construction industry in residential, commercial, and renovations, both private and union, along with instructing. She has been active in women in trades organizations, volunteering her time to mentor youth, women, and other marginalized workers.

**About the Industry Training Authority (ITA)**

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia's skilled trades system. ITA works with apprentices, employers, industry, labour, training providers and government to fund training, issue credentials, support apprenticeships, set program standards and increase opportunities in the trades. For more information, visit [itabc.ca](http://itabc.ca).

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