

Human Resources Update

A publication of CCA's Human Resources Committee

At the CCA Annual Conference in Puerto Rico, March, 2007, the Human Resources Committee discussed concrete progress made in the previous months.

Meetings with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration resulted in reforms to the Foreign Worker Program aimed at fast-tracking the process in certain areas of the country. In the March 19th federal budget, the federal government announced that it will introduce a new immigration stream whereby skilled temporary foreign workers already in Canada will be able to apply for permanent residency without having to leave the country. Legislation covering new apprenticeship tax credits (i.e. the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit and the Apprenticeship Grant) is now in place.

Priorities for 2007-2008 will continue to be driven by labour and skill shortages. Efforts must be made on a number of fronts:

- Firstly, the industry must continue to aggressively **promote construction as a career of choice** to Canada's youth and to traditionally under-represented groups such as Aboriginals and women. CCA participates in national initiatives to attract youth and others to the construction industry

through its participation in the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) and the Construction Sector Council (CSC).

- Secondly, the industry must **increase its support and use of proven industry training methods such as the apprenticeship training system**. This is achieved by working hard to enhance and improve that system but also encouraging more construction employers to hire apprentices, particularly those in the first two years of their apprenticeship.
- Thirdly, the industry must also push for the **expansion of uniform, national training and qualification standards such as the Red Seal Program** and the complete **elimination of barriers and disincentives to labour mobility**; and
- Canada's **immigration system must be reformed** to target and facilitate the entry of foreign construction workers on a temporary and permanent basis.

Front-Line Supervisors

The Puerto Rico meeting produced a very lively discussion of the critical role of **foremen** and **supervisors** – not only in the management of projects but also as mentors, as trainers and as journeypersons necessary for the hiring of apprentices. Skill shortages in this category are starting to have a real impact on job cost and quality. A project being led by the Construction Sector Council will move the industry one step closer to addressing this problem by developing a national occupational analysis – in effect a generic job description. Representatives from the four major construction subsectors are meeting with foremen and supervisors across Canada to map out the specific functions and responsibilities of the position, and the skills and competencies necessary to excel at the job. The results of the project, due in late 2007, will form the foundation of training and certification which will be key to attracting, hiring and keeping the best workers in these jobs.

Details on New Federal Apprenticeship Incentives

Now that the apprenticeship measures announced in the May 2006 Federal Budget have been enacted, the Federal Government has posted very detailed information on-line explaining step-by-step how to claim/apply for both the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit and the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant including FAQs and other information.

For the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit, see
www.cra-arc.gc.ca/whatsnew/apprenticeship-e.html

For the Apprenticeship Incentive Grant, see
www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/trades_apprenticeship/AIG/index.shtml