

CSC

# Dimensions

October 2005

CAREERS IN CONSTRUCTION — CARRIÈRES EN CONSTRUCTION

English

Français



If you think it's all about hammering nails and pouring cement, think again!

The CSC's new website on careers in construction tells visitors that right up front. And then it gives them plenty to think about: What the work is like, where the jobs are, how to choose a career path, enter an apprenticeship program, earn while you learn, and much more.

You can take a virtual tour of construction sites, read testimonials from construction workers, and test your own construction IQ.

"The website is a one-stop-shop on careers in the construction industry, says CSC Executive Director George Gritzotis.

"There are many other sites about the construction industry, and some on careers in construction, but nothing that gives users everything from a sense of what the industry is and does to where the jobs are across the country. And if they can't find what they're looking for on our site, the link is there for them to go where they can find it."

**careersinconstruction.ca** has more than 600 links to other sites with information on the construction industry. It also features:

- job descriptions
- video clips of interviews with apprentices and others
- virtual tours of construction sites
- information on education and training requirements
- realistic information on job opportunities, working conditions, career paths, and earning potential
- opportunities for interactivity

The goal of the new CSC site is to promote greater interest in construction industry careers by:

- addressing the information needs of youth, students, parents, educators, counsellors, industry, and government
- co-ordinating existing information and links on careers in construction and avoiding duplication of effort
- providing a pan-Canadian resource with a consistent message about what it means to work in the construction industry

***www.careersinconstruction.ca "goes live" next month.***

## LMI showcased



"...Labour market information reports have been very valuable in forecasting shortages in different occupations and regions. A good example is the information generated by the Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information Program. The findings are being factored into the planning and costing of major construction projects, from Manitoba Hydro to the BC Olympics."

**Alan Nymark**  
Deputy Minister, HRSDC

Mr. Nymark made the remarks at a symposium hosted by the Conference Board of Canada and HRSDC on how sector councils are helping more businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness.

A select group of business, education, government and labour leaders attended the Sept. 26 event in Halifax. The CSC's Labour Market Information Program was featured as one of four case studies touting the benefits of sector councils to Canadian businesses.

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# Skills training on track

By George Gritziotis, Executive Director

Canada's political leaders are getting serious about the long-term sustainability of the Canadian labour force. News reports say skills training will replace health care as "the issue" over the next decade. It was top of the agenda at the premiers' annual meeting this summer, and promises to be a hot topic as Parliament resumes in a pre-election session.

That training to meet increasing demands for skilled labour in the future is a priority, is not news to those of us who work for the construction industry. Clearly, that train has already left the station. The real news is that the CSC is on it, and fueling the engine with products to ensure that this major, multi million dollar industry continues to pick up steam.

Our *Construction Looking Forward* forecasts for each province tell us that in many provinces, the construction industry is leading employment growth. The reports provide a window on what skills tradespeople will need, where and when.

The new construction careers web portal, being launched next month, is another way we're addressing the industry's future human resource needs. One of the main goals of the site is to recruit youth to the industry by providing them with the information they need to get started, including training and apprenticeship.

We're getting e-learning off the ground with targeted courses that address shortages and the need for worker mobility.

We're surveying supervisors who are nearing retirement to discover what types of training are needed to fill the looming gap in construction management. A certification process for home inspectors, occupational standards for operating engineers, career awareness initiatives – the common denominator with all of our products is they are driven by the need for a highly-skilled workforce.

Another common denominator for all of our work is that it is driven by ideas and not ideology. I say that because, given that most CSC Board members are from either a labour or a business background, it would be convenient for them to use the organization as a platform to advance their own respective causes. That's obviously not the case. The CSC Board of Directors – all experts in their fields and in the needs of the industry – had the foresight years ago to make skills development a priority. And to make the well-being of the construction industry their overall objective.

The CSC is well placed to be a major force in the coming drive for a highly-trained workforce.

I'm on the right train and in good company.



# Kudos for labour forecasts

An analysis of the major construction activity across Canada, and how that affects the number of workers available, has broken new ground in the field of labour market information for the construction industry.

The first edition of *Construction Looking Forward* was launched in July to a welcome reception from industry leaders who say it is a long-awaited and valuable decision-making tool.

The detailed assessments of demand for 38 trades and occupations in every province, up until the year 2013, were put together using a forecasting model developed by senior economists and data from labour market information committees in each province. The committees are now preparing the 2006 edition, and annual updates are planned.

Below are some of the comments about *Construction Looking Forward* published in the trade and mainstream press:

*"The data is extremely helpful since it allows owners and developers to understand one of the critical components required for large engineering projects, that is, the current and projected availability of construction trades."*

**John Markowsky**  
Manager, Major Projects, Manitoba Hydro  
Winnipeg Free Press, July 2005

*"It will allow a young person who is looking to get into the industry to make an education decision, allow educators to allocate their resources, governments to form policy at federal and provincial levels and contractors to develop human resource plans."*

**Keith Sashaw**  
President, Vancouver Regional  
Construction Association  
Vancouver Province, July 2005

*"For the first time, we have a sophisticated forecasting tool to help us with planning – and that's good news for the construction industry, and for the Ontario economy."*

**Patrick Dillon**  
Business Manager, Provincial Building and  
Construction Trades Council of Ontario  
Daily Commercial News, July 2005

*"These projections are an excellent starting point for analysis that can be refined with any updated information that may become available to decision makers."*

**George Gritzotiis**  
Executive Director, Construction Sector Council  
Halifax Herald, September 2005

*"It is hoped the information will help provincial governments build better training strategies, policies and programs to ensure the right trades are being promoted and beefed up. It will also help specific regions do their own planning while not working in isolation."*

**Frank Armstrong**  
Reporter, Business Edge Magazine  
July 2005

*"The federal and provincial governments have to get together and time their projects so they don't happen all at once. Then you don't have such a big drain on your trades at any one time, which ensures steadier employment for everyone."*

**Wayne Peppard**  
Executive Director, B.C. and  
Yukon Building Trades Council  
Vancouver Sun, July 2005

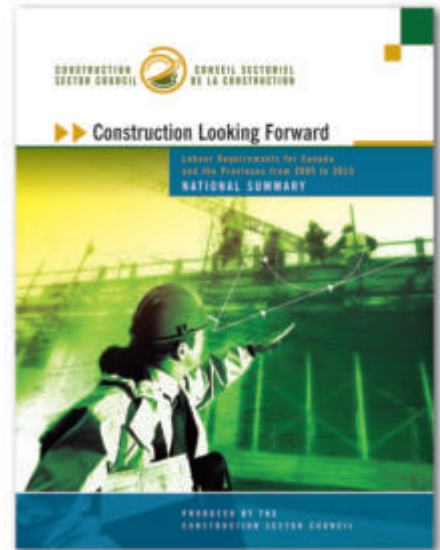
*"Our goal is to help the industry manage risk by meeting workforce requirements. We need to have the right skills, at the right time, in the right place. The data in this report will be used as a starting point to address the shortages that we see."*

**Brad Anderson**  
Construction Owners Association of Alberta  
Canadian Press, August 2005

*"While industry and governments will still have to come up with the answers, at least with the CSC work, we now have a much better idea of the questions. The data allows the industry to determine what skills will be needed when and where."*

**Rob Bradford**  
Executive Director,  
Ontario Roadbuilders' Association  
Daily Commercial News, July 2005

*"The new forecasting tool will keep us a step ahead of labour market changes in the industry. It provides crucial information to help*



*keep projects on time and on budget, to guide human resources planning and policy, training curriculum, career planning and more."*

**Neil Tidsbury**  
President,  
Alberta Construction Labour Relations  
HR Reporter, August 2005

*"It's a groundbreaking initiative for the industry. It highlights the need for investment in training to add skilled workers to replace retirements, and to meet the growing needs of many trades for a higher proportion of certified workers."*

**Richard Lyall**  
President,  
Residential Construction Council of Ontario  
Daily Commercial News, July 2005

*"If a shortage is expected in a particular region and a particular trade, our training institutions and our policy makers will know it and they can deal with it ahead of time."*

**Gérald Nadeau**  
Director of Apprenticeship and  
Occupational Development,  
Government of New Brunswick  
NB Times and Telegraph, September 2005

*"The construction industry is all about using tools to get the job done. But one new tool relies on numbers instead of muscle, and is more about the road ahead than the latest project."*

Journal of Commerce, July 2005

**Construction Looking Forward reports of each province, and a national summary report, can be found at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).**

# Wanted:

A steady supply of highly-skilled workers to maintain one of Canada's major, multi-billion dollar industries.

The growing demand for skilled workers in today's construction industry can't be solved with a simple want ad. But it can be partially solved with affordable, accessible quality training.

That's why the CSC is working to make e-learning available industry wide. Two courses are now up and running:

- *Pipeline Construction Safety Training* teaches the pipeline worker how to respond to worksite health and safety issues by taking the user through the entire pipeline construction process from beginning to end. This course meets and exceeds the Canadian Petroleum Safety Council IRP16 standards.
- *Communications, Negotiations and Conflict Resolution* is the first in a series of courses for managers, supervisors and estimators that the CSC is moving to an

e-learning format. It has been accepted for accreditation by the Canadian Construction Association's Gold Seal Accreditation Board.

Copies of the courses can be purchased in bulk quantities for distribution.

**Demos of CSC e-learning courses can be found at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).**

**Next up:** *Construction Law and Project Management*, expected to be ready for distribution next summer.

## How to become a supervisor

The CSC recently conducted a survey, through our website, to analyze the skills required by construction industry supervisors, and to find out what key supervisory training programs are being used.

The survey is part of a scoping exercise to get a better handle on the skills and knowledge supervisors need to perform their duties. It's the first step toward making it an accessible and attractive career choice, and to developing a national approach to training.

With the aging workforce, many supervisors are planning to retire in the near future. According to the last Census, almost 30% of supervisors are over the age of 50. In addition, because the construction industry relies on a mobile workforce, consistent standards of training need to be developed across the country so that credentials will be recognized as they move between provinces and territories.

## You have new mail

Did you know you can receive *Dimensions* newsletter electronically? Just log on to the CSC website to subscribe ([www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org)). Each time a new issue is ready, you'll receive an e-mail with a link to the latest on human resource issues in Canada's construction industry.

The CSC would like to acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program.

Canada



**The CSC 2005 Annual Report will be published later this fall. Send an e-mail to [info@csc-ca.org](mailto:info@csc-ca.org) if you would like to receive a hard copy. Watch for it on our website too.**

## About us

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is a national organization committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce — one that will support the needs of the construction industry in Canada both now and well into the future. Created in April 2001, it is a partnership between labour and business. At the heart of CSC's mandate is the need to address human resource issues through partnerships within the construction industry.

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# New research tackles key workforce issues

Two critical issues facing the construction industry have been addressed in separate research reports published by the CSC earlier this year.

“*Working Mobile*” is a timely first step to addressing the industry’s growing need for a workforce that can move among provinces and industries to keep pace with the demand for skilled labour. The report examines the barriers to mobile work in the industrial construction sector, and how to overcome them.

The need to use fully the skills of the Canadian labour force by standardizing the process for recognizing foreign credentials was the driver behind “*A Study of the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign-Trained Worker Credentials in the Construction Industry*.” The study details how the construction industry deals with foreign credentials and recommends how to begin improving the process.

A third report developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council is now in production: The “*A Study of Aboriginal Participation in the Construction Industry*” profiles the existing Aboriginal construction workforce with an eye to opportunities for increased participation of this important source of labour for the industry.

*All CSC research papers can be found at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).*



## Operating engineers’ standards benefit workers and employers

The men and women who operate and maintain the heavy equipment on construction sites now have National Occupational Standards (NOS) that clearly define what skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs well. The CSC has been working with the Canadian Operating Engineers Joint Apprenticeship Council over the past two years to develop the 29 operating engineer occupational standards.

Industry leaders, like Jay Corder, Assistant Executive Director of the Pipeline Contractors Association of Canada, are pleased with the initiative: “Contractors can now be assured that operators are trained according to the same standard no matter where they are from,” he says. “For example, an operator in British Columbia will have to meet the same standard as somebody who trains in New Brunswick.

“...and there are other more obvious benefits such as a good skill level, better productivity, better work environment, better safety...”

Derm Cain, Canadian Director of the International Union of Operating Engineers, says the standards will create more career opportunities for operating engineers, and a sense of pride and professionalism in the work they do. “Operating engineers are vital to most construction projects and they normally require specific skills. The standards are testimony to that. Anybody who reviews them will gain a new respect for the person in the crane or the bulldozer.”

*Operating engineers’ NOS can be found at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).*

## University honours CSC Board Member Pat Darrah

Patrick Darrah, a major force in the development of the New Brunswick construction industry – and a major force behind the CSC – has been awarded a doctor of science honouris from the University of New Brunswick (UNB).

Dr. Darrah has been the executive director of the Saint John Construction Association since 1969. The UNB Alumni Association describes him as “a positive force in labour relations and an extraordinary negotiator,” as well as “a leader in pioneering workplace health and safety in the construction industry.”

In a letter of congratulations, CSC Executive Director George Gritziotis wrote that “the Construction Sector Council is proud to have you as a member of our Board of Directors, not only because of the major role you have played in numerous municipal and provincial developments, but also for the knowledge and commitment that you bring to our work.

“We could not agree more that you have demonstrated outstanding service to the construction industry.”



*Dr. Patrick Darrah receives an honorary Doctor of Science at UNB Saint John's Fall 2004 convocation ceremony.*

# Certification process in place for home inspectors and building officials

Professionals who work in the property inspection industry now have a process for becoming officially certified as competent practitioners. Home and property inspectors inspect and provide advice on the condition of homes and small commercial buildings, while building officials review plans and inspect city buildings to make sure they comply with the building codes.

A national certification program means their performance will be judged against an approved standard, leading to pride of workmanship for the inspectors, and consistent, high quality inspection services for property owners.

Over the past two years, the CSC has been working with the Canadian Home Inspectors and Building Officials, an umbrella group representing the industry, to develop national certification and accreditation criteria for both job categories. The Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors and the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials Association are now working to set up certification authorities.

*Charts of the certification process can be found at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).*

## *New in construction training* **Bachelor of Construction Science and Management**

The call for qualified professionals on the front lines of the construction industry is being answered with a first-of-its kind college degree program for construction managers.

Forty-three students are enrolled in the Bachelor of Construction Science and Management degree program, beginning this semester at George Brown College in Toronto.

The Toronto Construction Association, the driving force behind program, worked with the Ontario General Contractors Association and the college to develop the curriculum in an effort to help ensure that Ontario's increasingly specialized and complex construction industry has access to the highly skilled professionals that it requires.

"Clearly the industry has been in serious transformation," says Temple Harris, President of the Toronto Construction Association. "New technologies and new management techniques are being introduced all the time. These initiatives require people

who are very sophisticated in understanding the science of construction, but also the science of management. And it's clearly the combination of those two key skills that are desperately needed out in the marketplace."

What's also clear is that the construction industry is 100% behind the program and its students.

Half the tuition costs for all the first-year students have been covered by a number of leading construction firms — a gesture that Keith Gillam, Chairman and CEO of Vanbots Construction Corporation says "... indicates just how committed the industry is to the program and to its graduates."

Over the course of four years, students will learn how to successfully manage a construction project by studying building sciences as well as practical business and managerial subjects, including how to negotiate, how to organize and how to improve interpersonal skills.

John Wills, a teacher with the college's faculty of technology, also gives full marks to the industry for the initiative.

"We'll deliver on the education, but the brains behind this comes from the contractors who have been working to get it off the ground for four years."

Wills doesn't foresee any problem filling the 50 allotted spaces each year: "We managed to attract 43 committed students this year, even though we didn't get official approval until April. That means we could not advertise in our calendar or tell the high schools until after their deadline date for applications to colleges and universities.

"That's a story in itself!"

To enter the program, students need a high school diploma, with at least a 65% average in six required OAC credits, which much include English and Math. They are not expected to have any previous background in the field of construction.

About 400,000 people, some six percent of Ontario's workforce, are employed in the construction industry. Over the next 10 years, the growth rate for construction in the Greater Toronto Area is higher than the estimate for all industries in the region.

### **About George Brown College**

Established in 1967 by the Ontario Government, George Brown is now one of the largest and most diversified colleges in Ontario. It has three campuses in downtown Toronto and annually enrolls more than 12,000 full-time students in more than 150 programs, ranging from one-year certificates to four-year bachelor's degrees. More than 45,000 continuing education students also enroll in more than 700 courses. Educational offerings are aligned with economic growth sectors: business and financial services, health sciences, hospitality and tourism, construction, engineering, community services, and creative and performing arts.