

CSC

# Dimensions

February 2004

## Access to construction education and training is about to get a whole lot easier

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) is now developing a distance learning engine that will allow employer and labour groups, construction safety associations, education and training institutions, and many others to develop and offer web-based, interactive education and training.

The **CSC Distance Learning Engine** will provide the construction industry with a standard learning platform to develop, deploy and manage e-learning through the Internet or CD-ROM, allowing users to access construction education and training anytime, anywhere.

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## CSC projects get green light

The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development has approved four CSC projects which are being implemented over the next four years.

The development of national occupational standards for operating engineers; a national certification and accreditation program for home inspectors and building officials; a computer-based safety program for pipeline construction; and an awareness campaign that promotes the ironworker trade to Aboriginal youth are among the CSC's priorities.

The funding for these projects, which comes from the federal government's Sector Council Program, also covers CSC infrastructure activities.

## Click *Dimensions*

Getting useful information to you in a timely and efficient way is key to the effectiveness of the CSC. That's one of the reasons we hope you will take advantage of the ability to 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 news and information on Canada's construction workforce.

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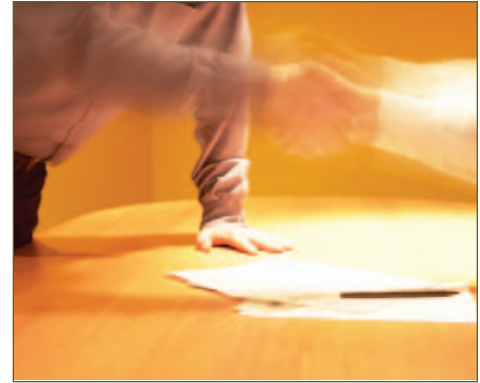
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# Bringing people and resources together

By George Gritziotis, Executive Director



The work of the Construction Sector Council (CSC) is paying off. I'm not talking about money – although it's good news that our government funding for the next four years has been increased. What I am really talking about is the knowledge dividend.

Consider that our network of partners has grown significantly; our board of directors is busier than ever, and our staff complement is growing to reflect the increased demand for CSC products and services.

Clearly, we are playing a key role in bringing together people and resources to help address human resource issues that face the construction industry.

The more partners we have, the better the quality of service we can provide to the industry.

A good example is our on-line pipeline construction safety training project which has brought together labour and business groups, construction safety associations, and provincial and federal levels of government all working toward the same goal. What the project shows is that together we can develop a highly skilled workforce and a safe workplace environment that contributes to organizational productivity and individual prosperity.

One employer group – the Pipeline Contractors Association of Canada – has provided the services of an industry safety expert to help get the project off the ground and running.

The more partners we have, the better the quality of service we can provide to the industry, as there is a larger pool of information and experience to draw from. Nobody knows this better than members of the CSC board who have been actively promoting the work of the CSC at construction industry and government events.

The upshot of all of this interest in our activities has been more requests for information and involvement in CSC projects. As a result we now have 10 full-time staff, including project managers, an economist, and a communications coordinator.

We are getting the message out there about what we have to offer the industry. From apprenticeship to advanced career training, from partnerships to a new awareness of our industry among young people, the knowledge dividend is paying off with results.

In each issue of *Dimensions*, we'll be reporting on our progress. Watch this space for more results.

# A boost for building inspection

You're about to sink thousands of your hard-earned dollars into a house. You want a home inspector who is both accountable and highly qualified. But the difference in standards and qualification levels across Canada may make it difficult to decide if the inspector you've chosen fits the bill.

That's one of the reasons the CSC is developing a national program to improve the level of professionalism, increase customer confidence, and ensure a level of consistency in the building inspection trade. The Canadian Home Inspectors and Building Officials Certification and Accreditation Models project will also address the challenge of an inadequate supply of skilled labour brought on by the aging workforce.

"The goal is to provide greater worker mobility, a wider variety of job opportunities and a bigger pool of

qualified personnel available to the construction industry," says George Gritziotis, CSC Executive Director.

The CSC is working with the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors, the Alliance of Canadian Building Officials, and the First Nations National Building Officers Association to get the project off the ground over the next 18 months. Other key players include the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

An important feature of the program is the development of national certification and accreditation models, so that the occupational standards developed by the Canadian Home Inspectors and Building Officials in 2001 can be applied across Canada.

"The goal is to provide greater worker mobility, a wider variety of job opportunities and a bigger pool of qualified personnel available to the construction industry," says George Gritziotis, CSC Executive Director.

## Privacy protection

The federal privacy act, which took effect on January 1, 2004, has implications for how the CSC uses what the act deems "personal information". As required under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, the CSC has developed a privacy policy. We invite readers to consult the policy on our website at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org), or contact the CSC for a copy, at the address, fax or phone number on the back of this newsletter. Also contact our office if you wish to be removed from any CSC mailing lists.

*Access to education and training is about to get a whole lot easier...*

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### Pipeline Construction Safety Training (PCST)

The computer-based safety training program for pipeline construction will also be made available through the CSC's distance learning engine. The PCST platform is being developed in a way that allows course content to be easily shared across construction sectors and trades. PCST is expected to be available in April 2004.

The CSC has been working with the pipeline construction industry to create interactive safety training that satisfies workplace health and safety regulations and provides a basic standard of awareness for all facets of pipeline construction. The initiative responds to the industry's need for a consistent, Canada-wide safety standard for pipeline construction that facilitates contractor and worker mobility.

Courses include work preparation, hazard recognition and control, environmental recognition, urban and rural hazards and controls, operational hazards and controls, vehicle and equipment operation and emergency response. Modules have been tested with pipeline construction workers and safety experts in various locations across Canada and feedback has been very positive.

### Gold Seal E-Learning

The CSC will also be making available construction management and supervisory courses which are Gold Seal recognized through the CSC's Distance Learning Engine.

"The CSC has big plans for distance learning," says Terry Brown, General Manager, Greyback Construction Ltd., and a member of the CSC Board of Directors. "We are securing and developing the appropriate technology, and will be initiating and piloting high-quality industry courses, so that we can bring the bricks and mortar to your doorstep – or should I say laptop."

# CSC recruits Aboriginals to fill ironworker shortage

The Construction Sector Council has launched a two-year initiative to address the shortage of skilled ironworkers in Canada and provide job opportunities for Aboriginal youth. “It’s a win-win situation,” says Robert Blakely, the CSC’s labour co-chair and Director of Canadian Affairs for the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. “The program addresses the expected shortage of skilled ironworkers while providing the opportunity for young Aboriginal men and women to learn a trade they can be proud of and where they earn a good wage.”

The CSC will partner with the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council of Canada to get the project underway.

“It’s the right program at the right time,” says Roy Mussell, an Aboriginal Human Resources Development Council of Canada Board Member and Manager of the Sto:lo Nation Human Resources Development Council in British Columbia.

“Aboriginal communities are the largest untapped labour pool in the country and historically, there has been a strong Aboriginal presence within the ironworker trade.

“The Aboriginal population is growing faster than any other segment of Canadian society, with more than 50% under 15 years of age,” he adds. “By 2006 we will have a working population of 920,000, most in Western Canada.

Among other things, the program will identify best practices to

encourage Aboriginal youth to enter the ironworker trade. It will also provide a clearer picture of the career opportunities within the trade, as well as mentors and role models to foster pride in the profession.



## Essential skills strategy

Essential skills, as defined by the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, include: reading text, document use, writing, numeracy, oral communications, problem solving, decision making, job task planning and organizing, significant use of memory, finding information, working with others, computer use and continuous learning.

In November 2003, the CSC hosted an essential skills workshop in Ottawa and more than 65 key industry, government, and practitioner representatives attended. The workshop raised awareness of essential skills activities within the construction industry and identified industry needs with respect to essential skills. Over the day and a half the participants identified issues, possible actions and a role for the CSC. This information will now be translated into an essential skills strategy for the construction industry.

## Check out our website

Get the latest on the CSC by logging on to [WWW.CSC-CA.ORG](http://WWW.CSC-CA.ORG). You'll find background on the Construction Sector Council, updates on our current projects, news releases, research reports, a list of our partners, and much more.

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

Canada

**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, business, and government. 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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# A large workforce. A lot of questions.



**W**hy does a multi-billion dollar industry – one that represents almost 12 per cent of Canada’s GDP, and employs one million Canadians – need a Labour Market Information (LMI) program?

Because the challenges facing today’s construction industry, booming as it may be, are complex, and changing.

To start with, many of the industry’s present workforce will retire over the next 10 years, and their considerable skills and knowledge will leave with them. The average age of Canadian construction workers is over 45, and many of the young people needed to replace them are not aware that construction can be an excellent career choice.

For industry this translates into an urgent “need to know”. To find out exactly what information industry needs, the CSC hosted a series of 15 sector-specific regional focus groups. We asked questions like, “Is it hard to find young, qualified people? Do you lose skilled workers to other industries? How important is skills upgrading? Would information on training be useful?”

The LMI program will be an important tool to help industry answer these questions by developing a diverse and reliable series of products under one “roof”. Much of the information will come from industry itself – labour and business groups, owner associations, contractors, and training deliverers in each province.

Here are some of the products and services that are, or will soon be, available through the LMI program:

- Canada-wide information on the supply of and demand for skilled workers
- Province-by-province economic forecasts on trends that will affect the industry – a regional network of LMI committees will help ensure that forecasts reflect regional realities
- Quarterly national and provincial/territorial labour market bulletins
- A career opportunities information portal on the web
- 12 research reports on labour market issues and trends – four reports have been completed and will be available on the CSC website:
  1. Future Labour Supplies for the Construction Industry
  2. Emerging Trends in Management, Supervising, and Mentoring in the Construction Industry
  3. Training Canada’s Construction Workforce: Meeting the Industry’s Needs
  4. The Impact of New Technology on the Construction Labour Market

## Focus on boilermakers

The Boilermaker Career Awareness Strategy is taking shape.

So far, elements of the campaign include branding and messaging, a national website ([www.boilermaker.ca](http://www.boilermaker.ca)), school curriculum information, a network of supporters including speakers, and a list websites that provide career information.

The aim of this project is to raise awareness of the boilermaker trade to those who may be headed for a career in construction. The plan is to make students aware that boilermakers are highly paid, can learn on the job, have a flexible workplace and often work in an entrepreneurial environment with significant opportunities for career advancement.

## Get smart... get the card

Publication of the new CSC booklet – *The Smart Way to Hire* – culminates our work on this ground-breaking project that will allow construction workers to carry information on their skills, training and certification history on an electronic card. Among other benefits to the construction industry, this portable data base expedites the hiring of workers onto the job site.

The booklet is a guide for buyers of construction, contractors and labour groups on the implementation of smart card technology.

Contact the CSC for a copy, or check it out online at [www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org).

## Wanted: operating engineers for work – anywhere in Canada

You aren't likely to see this posting anywhere.

Why not? Because of barriers to worker mobility, and the lack of national training standards to develop tomorrow's crop of operating engineers.

The CSC is working to change that through its "Mobility and Accessibility of Operating Engineers Initiative". The goal of the project is to make it easier for qualified engineers to move from province to province, creating more job opportunities, and increasing the pool of skilled labour for major construction projects Canada-wide.

Operating engineers are vital to most major construction projects, operating and maintaining cranes and heavy equipment. But as Dermot Cain points out: "Various licensing and other provincial requirements vary from one province to another, making it difficult for operating engineers to move about. For operating engineer contractors, mobile, qualified workers are key components to the successful completion of their projects." Cain is a CSC Board member and Canadian Director of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

Industry labour market studies suggest that there may be a shortage of skilled operating engineers as many retire over the next 10 to 15 years.

We will be establishing national occupational standards, and developing training programs that reflect the computer-based, interactive learning expectations of today's young people. One of the CSC's goals is to promote the operating engineer profession as an attractive and stable career choice.

The project is being carried out in three main phases:

- The development of national occupational standards and competency profiles
- The development of national assessment tools
- The creation of an information exchange, so that training materials can be researched, developed and shared

## What's new in construction training

There are not many places where you can keep both feet on the ground and work a tower crane 1,000 feet above a construction site.

Welcome to virtual reality training.

It's not a kid's game like Xbox or Playstation. It's more like your first day on the job. A very tough and dangerous job if you don't know the ropes.

Perched in a tower crane 1,000 feet above the construction site, you press on the gas and pick up the load of lumber. The wind comes up. The cab starts to shake. The load swings dangerously close to that concrete wall and the hydro lines.

Disaster.

Then the lights go on and you get a chance to do it over again.

It's all in a day's work, or rather a day's training, at the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario (OETIO) in Morrisburg, where a 3-D virtual reality crane simulator is among the institute's state-of-the-art educational equipment.

"You learn the hazards first-hand, without the risks," says Michael Gallagher, Business Manager of Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers.

He notes that 85 per cent of accidents are attributable to human error. "While putting someone in a real crane for training is expensive and potentially dangerous, the simulator provides the visual, audio and touch sense of reality."

Located along 160 acres on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, the OETIO is a top-notch facility that emphasizes skill development and safety through its rigorous curriculum.

A typical course lasts six weeks and the student/instructor ratio is 6 to 1. During the first two weeks, students learn the theory of heavy equipment operation which involves everything from how to prepare equipment before operating it to providing proper maintenance. For the next four weeks they get an average of seven hours "seat time" per day on a machine, including



mobile, tower and overhead cranes, tractor-loader-backhoes, excavators and bulldozers.

The institute graduates about 300 crane and heavy-equipment operators each year. Within the next decade, the crane and heavy equipment industry in Canada will need 1,000 new operators a year. The OETIO intends to help make sure it gets them.

For more information on the OETIO, visit [www.oetio.com](http://www.oetio.com).