

CSC

# Dimensions

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## Skills and learning ... labour and business working together, for a better future, today



### A message from the Co-chairs

Welcome, to the Construction Sector Council (CSC), and our first newsletter.

The issues facing our industry, our workforce, and the economy at large, are enormous. Human resource challenges demand that business and labour work together, along with government, to pool resources and make a tangible difference.

Thanks to the support and participation of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and the CSC's joint business and labour network, these challenges will be met. Federal funding for sector councils, like the CSC, doubled this year. In today's world of dissolving boundaries and rapid change, it's an idea

that makes good sense. As Minister Jane Stewart said, "For Canada to be successful in the 21st century we have to invest in our people, people who will shape tomorrow... Sector councils are a uniquely Canadian solution..."

There is a great deal at stake: the future of our workforce, the direction of our industry, and the stability of the economy. But if we work together towards the same goal — for the Canadian construction industry to have the most skilled and professional workforce in the world — we will create the solutions we need.

**Timothy Flood**  
CSC Business Co-chair

**Robert Blakely**  
CSC Labour Co-chair

### A word from the Executive Director

I'd like to begin by saying how excited I am to be heading up an organization like the CSC for a no-nonsense industry that demands action today. The CSC represents a significant step for the construction industry. That is, the coming together at the national level of industry leaders to address human resource challenges, and, most importantly, the resolve of labour and business leaders to work together to solve these challenges.

We will obtain the widest possible involvement and best depth of knowledge, expertise, and experience from the people, like you, who form the construction industry. Toward that end, we hope that you will be able to provide us with your invaluable input and support.

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# Move over ATMs ... get SMART



Imagine a gas pipeline construction project in a remote part of Canada. Imagine the number of skilled workers you will need to make that project a success. And then imagine the volume of safety and other certification documents these workers will need to bring with them, and the time it will take to process them, in order to get the project rolling.

If the very thought gives you a headache, then consider that all they really need may be a single, digitized card, that stores all that information. The Skills Data Card Project, currently being piloted by the CSC, aims to do just that.

“The potential for companies to save hundreds of hours, and to make the workplace more user-friendly to our workforce, is huge,” says Don Oborowsky, the President of Waiward Steel Fabricators Ltd. in Edmonton, where the Skills Data Card is being piloted, “There’s also a safety issue — with fewer chances for error, and the most up-to-date information being stored on the card, we can be sure we have the right worker for the right job.”

The Skills Data Cards are scanned on small readers at the worksite, saving time, and reducing the bulk of job-related information individual workers need to carry around. Workers would just swipe their cards, like they do at an ATM, and everything from demographic data to payroll information to job qualifications and training history would be entered automatically.

A preliminary pilot test of the system was carried out at the Dofasco Steel Plant in Hamilton with good results. A more comprehensive pilot will now take place at the 18-acre plant of Waiward Steel, to test the technical functionality of the card in a practical setting, and also to determine if the card can be rolled out for wider industry use. ■

## Aboriginal Ironworkers Awareness ... Future Workforce

The International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental & Reinforcing Ironworkers Local 97 presented a proposal to develop a career awareness campaign for Aboriginal youth to the Construction Sector Council Board of Directors. The CSC Board expressed its support for the project and tabled it for discussion at the next Board meeting in December, 2002.

CSC will be working with the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC), Local 97, and HRDC on this initiative. ■

# Pipeline Construction ...

## Setting the Standard for Safety



By its very nature, pipeline work implies moving around, especially with a major construction project where workers move both from province to province, and from contractor to contractor.

But whether you're working on a large gas pipeline project on a remote site or a natural gas project in a residential area — safety is extremely important.

Which is why most jurisdictions offer their own health and safety programs. The idea behind the Computer-Based Health and Safety Program for Pipeline

Workers is to pool the expertise of all of these jurisdictions, including unions, employer groups, and provincial safety associations, and create a standardized core curriculum which can then be adapted to suit individual needs.

“We want to know what training is out there now, what technical support is available, and what might be the most appropriate technology before we proceed with any kind of product with our industry partners” says George Gritziotis, CSC Executive Director. “We know from our industry discussions that there is a lot of good stuff going on, and

we want to bring it all together as part of our baseline program.”

The first phase of the 24-month project is underway. The CSC will interview employers, trainers, learners,

union representatives, provincial safety organizations, federal departments associated with safety, and learning content providers, to get a fix on what's needed, what's available, and how e-learning technology can be used to create a consistent, Canada-wide health and safety standard for pipeline construction.

“We want to make it easier for workers and for contractors to move from one project or province to another, but more importantly, we want to reduce the chances of workplace injuries and accidents,” adds Robert Blakely, CSC Labour Co-chair.

Once the first phase is completed, a curriculum will be developed and piloted, ready for the final phases of product launch and evaluation. Eventually, the generic aspects of the pipeline safety program will be used in other construction sectors. ■

“A standard, core curriculum, that takes advantage of the learning curve of the new computer-based training methods, is a good place to start.”

- Timothy Flood

CSC Business Co-chair

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Over the coming months and years, we'll be identifying solutions — programs and projects that deal with critical human resource issues, as identified by the industry itself. Forget the ivory tower — we intend to be busy on the ground floor, seeking out the best practices of the construction industry and sharing them across the country.

We've already started. In our first twelve months, we drew up a 5-year business plan, kicked off four major new initiatives, and put the systems in place for a comprehensive web site. We're also getting the word out by promoting the activities of the CSC throughout the country at various construction industry events.

With this first issue I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank our Co-chairs and the members of our Board of Directors, whose leadership and commitment have been outstanding. Without their commitment and involvement, the CSC would not become the kind of truly representative organization I am hoping for, a national partnership organization for innovative human resource products and ideas

unique to the construction industry.

I welcome you all to our inaugural newsletter entitled “Dimensions”, and to a dynamic future for the construction industry. We've designed this newsletter with you in mind. Let us know what you think. ■

**George Gritziotis**  
Executive Director

## Gold Seal

The Construction Sector Council is proud to announce that it has entered into a partnership with the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) to develop accredited Gold Seal courses for delivery in an e-learning platform.

It is anticipated that the initial pilot will provide four to six courses in co-operation with a number of construction and educational bodies across the country. Ideally, the initiative will see courses developed in four major regions and will have bilingual content as well.

We believe that this project will provide much flexibility for potential candidates to acquire the educational courses they require for certification under the Gold Seal Program. ■

## Extreme apprenticeship ... attracting tomorrow's boilermakers

Anyone who works in the boilermaker profession knows it demands a high level of technical skill and a broad base of knowledge and expertise, and that the work might involve anything from placing the reactor dome at a nuclear power plant to helping in the construction of a hydroelectric power station.

Unfortunately, most people outside the profession don't know that, and that includes many young people who may not be aware of the boilermaker trade as a viable career option.

One of the key objectives of the CSC is to improve the image of the trades within the construction industry, both to promote the industry in general and to secure the kind of skilled workforce the industry will need in the future. To become a boilermaker journeyman you must complete at least 4,500 hours of on-the-job apprenticeship training, so the time to start is now.

The CSC is working with the Boilermakers National Training Trust Fund and other key stakeholders to develop a boilermaker career awareness campaign aimed specifically at young people.

"We know that there's a skills shortage coming up in the next three to five years, so whatever we do now is critical," says Bruce Ashton, National Coordinator of the Boilermakers National Training Trust Fund. "We want to let young people know this can be an exciting career, in an exciting industry. That's what we're aiming for."

This initiative will be an integral part of the CSC's workplan. It will help parents, teachers, guidance counsellors, and policymakers learn more about the career prospects as a boilermaker. The campaign will be developed in a way that can be adapted by other trades that are facing similar image issues.

The 24-month boilermaker project will begin in the fall of 2002. ■

### About Us

The CSC is a national organization comprised of labour and business leaders mandated to address the current and future human resource needs of the construction industry. The CSC was created in April 2001 as the result of a partnership between the Canadian Office of the Building and

Construction Trades Department and its affiliates, as well as the National Construction Labour Relations Alliance, and HRDC, through its Human Resources Partnership Directorate.

The Board is comprised of senior leaders from the construction industry and includes nine labour representatives and nine business representatives. Over the coming months, the Board will be tackling a number of complex issues facing the industry including the critical skills shortages in many trades; labour demand and supply; inter-provincial mobility and the impact of information technologies on the construction industry. ■

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The CSC would like to acknowledge the support of HRDC.

### Forecasting supply and demand...

It's hard to pin down the labour market. But the questions come up anyway.

How many workers will you need next month, or next year, or in five years? What kind of skills will they need? Where will they be working?



At the heart of the CSC's workplan is a program that will help. The construction industry Labour Market Information (LMI) program will enable you to answer these questions, and make decisions based on reliable information.

An important part of the program is the design and development of a national construction industry workforce projection system to enable the industry to assess their training needs, develop and target training strategies and to project the movement of trade labour from province to province.

Demand-side data will come from selected contractors and the expertise of quantity surveying companies. Supply-side data will come from Statistics Canada, unions, and other construction groups. The information will then be organized into labour supply and demand projections.

"What makes this program the driving force behind our workplan is that better labour market information is good business for everyone," adds Timothy Flood, CSC Business Co-chair. "Increased productivity, better job security, more informed labour negotiations, even better immigration planning — these are just some of the positive spin-offs of the LMI program".