



Canada experiencing a decade of labour shortages

Courtesy of The Ottawa Citizen

Canada is experiencing at least a decade of labour shortages across the construction trades, with insulators and steamfitter-pipefitters among those in highest demand, according to reports from the Construction Sector Council.

Up to 320,000 additional workers will be needed to replace an aging trades workforce and to keep up with billions of dollars in major new projects from now until 2019.

It's a startling statistic, prompting industry to work closely with post-secondary training institutions to get more people in the trades.

At SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary, the launch in January of a new insulator trade program is a direct response to anticipated shortfalls in that area - one of the two hottest trades in demand, says Larry Rosia, dean of SAIT's School of Construction.

"As with all the trades right now, there seems to be a shortage of them and this one is rising to the top," he says.

"There's going to be a need for them in the next few years, so - we're trying to ramp up and really work with industry

to make sure their employees have the opportunity to be trained in this area."

Charles Shuttleworth spent 25 years working in carpentry in B.C. and Alberta before deciding to go back to school to become a steamfitter-pipefitter. He sees tremendous potential in expanding his skill set; the second-year apprentice will be much more employable when he finishes his training.

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"Because of the high demand, I know that when I finish here I've got job offers from all over the province," Shuttleworth says. "It will open a lot of doors for me. The demand on the mechanical side in industrial applications is very strong."

It's a three-year apprenticeship program at SAIT, including on-site working hours of about 1,500-1,800 per year plus three segments in school for each of those years. Each segment is about a two-month block; the remainder of the term is spent working alongside a journeyman before writing the exam to earn a ticket and become a full journeyman.

The experience of working in the field is as important as the theoretical training, since learning a trade is such a hands-on practice. "If you're coming out of high school, you're looking at three years minimum," says Shuttleworth.

"Typically, they want the younger guys to work in industry for a while and get familiar with the safety aspects of the job site before they actually jump into the trade."

He advises younger students to get familiar with the different types of trades and try one out.

"It's not for everybody," he says. "There are elements of danger and you're outside in the elements and it can be dirty and physically demanding, so there are some people it may not suit very well. One shift in an industrial setting and you'll know if it's for you or not."

Shuttleworth is eager to start working as a journeyman. He's already fielded several offers and is looking to industrial hotbeds of activity such as Fort Mc-Murray in northern Alberta and other areas where major projects are slated to get underway.

Alberta alone accounts for 157,000 of the projected worker shortfall up to 2019, largely because of \$193-billion on the books in major projects right now, according to Alberta Finance and Enterprise reports, says Rosia.

It's not always easy to keep up with the fluctuations in demand for various trades, particularly in energy-rich provinces where the cyclical nature of the industry can quickly change some of the top trades in demand, he adds.

"One of the challenges that we face - is providing our students and equipping our learners to compete in today's changing marketplace," Rosia says.

"Another role for us is to provide industry with the workforce they need to be successful, but it takes us four years to put out a journeyman, so for us to get ahead of these shortfalls is always a challenge and something we strive to work with industry to accomplish."

Rosia says post-secondary institutions across Canada are working closely with industry organizations such as the Alberta Resource Chamber, the Construction Owners Association, the Canadian Construction Association and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers to keep ahead of demand.

There are pockets across Canada where activity is particularly intense. Looking at the number of large-scale industrial projects in each province provides a strong indication of where the trades will be most in demand.

"Those are the kind of numbers that really drive the skill shortages here," Rosia says. "The challenge is that all the sectors are looking for people."

Up to 320,000 additional workers will be needed to replace an aging trades workforce

Hard Hat Nation

Courtesy of The Financial Post

Look out over most Canadian cities and you see construction cranes dotting the skyline, dozens of them and maybe more if you live in Vancouver or Toronto, the epicentre of a building boom that has been gaining steam for the better part of a decade.

Primarily the activity is around condos but there's also hospitals, roads, sports stadiums and office towers — not to mention Alberta's oil sands.

As the rest of the world grapples with the European financial crisis and sluggish growth in the United States, the cross-country construction boom has been Canada's ace in the hole, providing the key economic building block that has been so lacking around the world: jobs.



While the savage housing collapse in the United States has left employment in the construction down 6.7-million from its 2008 peak, the number employed in Canada has soared to a record over the past two years. Even after a 20,100 give-back in October as the labour market softened overall, employment in the sector stood at 1.257-million, just above the previous November 2008 high.

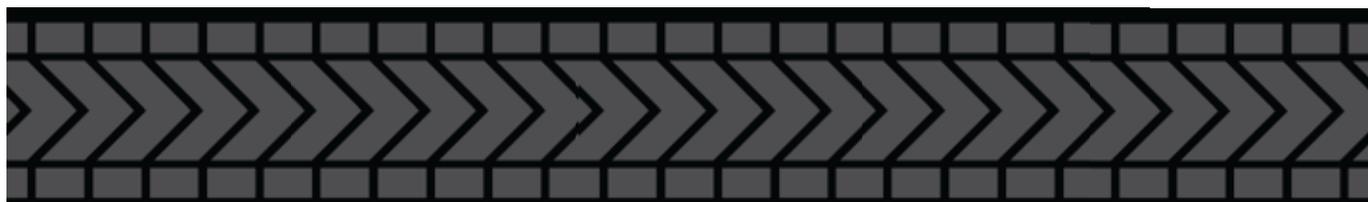
The boom, supported by low interest rates, has helped spur a virtuous cycle of job creation and consumer spending that has allowed the domestic economy to push ahead despite international turmoil.

"The great thing about construction is that it's so local," said Helmut Pastrick, chief economist for Central Credit Union 1, the main trade association for credit unions in British Columbia and Ontario. Unlike sectors like, say, banking or shipping where operations are often spread across a large geographically area, construction is much more focused, so the economic benefits stay local as well.

That goes especially for labour, which can't be outsourced and provides one of the few sources of well-paying jobs to unskilled or unqualified workers such as immigrants, a key factor to the health of communities given this country's traditionally high immigration rate.

And unlike most other manual labour, it's relatively well-paid. Due to labour shortages and high turnover, employers are willing to loosen the purse strings to keep valued workers. That means some take home \$150,000 -plus a year.

For an immigrant from Guatemala or Somalia or Portugal, it's a ticket to middle-class life and a future, as it was for successive waves of new Canadians going back more than a century.



The MHCA Welcomes New Members !

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, November 25, 2011 • 8:00 am – 12:00 noon
Winnipeg Convention Centre — Pan Am Room (2nd Floor)
Keynote Speaker:

Mr. Bob Silver

- » Co-Chair of the Premier’s Economic Advisory Council (PEAC)
- » Chancellor at the University of Winnipeg
- » President of Western Glove Works

Bob will reflect in his role as Chair of PEAC, on the northern visions and economic and social opportunities associated with the broad ‘Churchill, Canada’s Northern Gateway’ Vision.

Awards & Membership Presentations to follow.

\$35.00/person No of tickets: _____



Groundbreaking



CHAIRMAN’S GALA

‘A Night to Remember...Mardi Gras Style!’

Friday, November 25, 2011

- Cocktails: 6:30 pm
- Dinner: 7:30 pm
- Tables of 8 and 10

Silent Auction & Raffle – proceeds supporting Variety, the children’s charity of Manitoba

\$175.00 + GST / person (all inclusive)

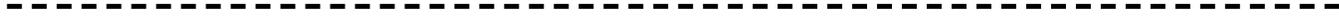
No. of tickets _____

Delta Winnipeg:

- Room rates starting at \$119.00/night
- Reservations: 1-800-311-4990
- Block Code: 1111MANI_002



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Company: _____ Contact person: _____

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Fax this form to Christine at the MHCA office @ 204-943-2279
For more information call 947-1379 or email at christine@mhca.mb.ca



Supply Shocks: Permanent Damage?

By Peter Hall, Vice-President and Chief Economist of Export Development Canada

Exogenous shocks are the bane of economic forecasters. When negative, they are everyone's enemy. These are the unpredictable events that can radically alter an economic outlook, and 2011 was hit with significant ones. In the opening days of this year, just as global economic momentum was rising, political turmoil rocked North Africa. Just weeks later, Japan was hit with a devastating earthquake and tsunami. Now, Thailand is beset with severe flooding. Will the impact of these events prove temporary, or will there be more lasting effects?

Known as the 'Arab Spring', political upheaval in Tunisia, Egypt and then Libya was a bolt out of the blue. Fears of possible regional contagion and a severe interruption of global oil production sent WTI crude prices soaring from USD80/bbl to as high as USD114/bbl in April. Well-regarded rules-of-thumb suggest that this price shock erased nearly 0.5% from global growth during the 5-month price spike.

Then disaster hit north-east Japan in March, causing massive damage to infrastructure, energy generating capacity and manufacturing facilities. Disruptions in auto, machinery and high-tech production reverberated worldwide through a series of key supply chains. At one point, the interruptions were severe enough to lower global auto production by 30%. According to IMF estimates, the tsunami caused a 0.5 to 1 percent second-quarter drop in US GDP.

Prior to these shocks, economic momentum was rising in the US and Europe. However, by the second quarter of 2011, US growth tumbled to just 1% and the EU managed to eke out only 0.6%. With little capacity in these economies for significant additional policy stimulus, the negative turn of events damaged already-frayed investor and consumer nerves.

However there is reason for renewed optimism as late-breaking indicators suggest that the global economy is beginning to recoup the lost output that resulted from these two significant events. Oil prices have eased back sharply from their peak and will likely post a more modest average increase for 2011 of USD15/bbl. This is bringing needed cash-relief to businesses and consumers across the planet, which should be immediately evident in increased spending. At the same time, manufacturing activity in the automotive sector is fast returning to pre-tsunami levels in the US and Canada. A bounce-back is evident in international trade, factory orders and industrial production figures. Also,



the volume of all freight carried by trucks, railroads and containers at ports across the US is rising.

Not all indicators are as upbeat: consumer and business surveys across the US and Euro zone continue to reflect appalling confidence levels. The escalating debt crisis in Europe is having a pervasive impact on financial conditions and overall confidence. Squabbles in the US over public debt and the subsequent downgrade of the US Sovereign rating hasn't helped. The recent meltdown in confidence threatens to turn 2011's supply shocks into a more permanent demand shock. Recovery from these setbacks may well be just in time to avert a more serious global setback.

The bottom line? This year's multiple supply shocks hit the world at a particularly vulnerable moment. They could cause us to lose our collective nerve. But they also illustrate a remarkable resilience that has served the world well in the past three years, and will likely see us through the current turmoil.

EASTBOUND PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE BYPASS OPENS TO TRAFFIC

Opening Marks Completion Of Phase One of Upgrades: Ashton

Major improvements to the Portage la Prairie eastbound bypass on the Trans-Canada Highway have been completed for this year and the route is now open, allowing traffic to flow smoothly, Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Steve Ashton said today.

"Upgrades made over the summer and fall are part of the progress to date on our Highway Renewal Plan and will improve traffic flows for families, enhance safety and accelerate our infrastructure renewal," said Ashton. "We have invested nearly \$2.3 billion at the halfway point of our commitment of \$4 billion over 10 years and, since our Highway Renewal Plan was introduced in 2007, over \$248 million has been invested in Highway 1."

The work was done on the eastbound lanes and included breaking up the old concrete into small pieces, installing an aggregate base overlay and then putting down new asphalt pavement. The eastbound lanes were closed starting on July 25.

Next summer, a final layer of asphalt will be applied to the same lanes to complete the project. However, a future closure of the eastbound lanes of the Trans-Canada Highway is not anticipated, Ashton said. It is planned that at least one lane of traffic will be open at all times when the final asphalt work is completed.

The estimated total cost, once the work is all done next year, is on budget at \$11.6 million, said the minister.

He added, in 2011, about 1,100 kilometres of highway will have been improved as part of Manitoba's Highway Renewal Plan.



BORLAND CONSTRUCTION INC.

DIVISIONAL MANAGER, SEWER & WATER

Our client, Borland Construction, requires a Manager of its Sewer & Water division. As one of the most established and largest heavy construction companies in Manitoba, Borland is a multi-faceted and versatile heavy construction contractor with a long history of success in a wide range of construction projects from tunnel works and sewer renewals to city street reconstructions and airport runways.

Based in Winnipeg, the Divisional Manager will be responsible for taking full ownership of, and complete responsibility for, the P&L of the Sewer & Water business unit. This is a senior-level position within the organization, responsible for leading the division's day-to-day operations and growing the business within this well-established, aggressive, and diversified heavy construction company. As a key member of the management team and reporting directly to the President you will provide leadership in both project management and functional operations. A key component of the role is developing, managing, and growing relationships with public-sector clients, partners, staff, and management.

Ideally, you are a senior manager with a successful track record of leading a heavy civil operation, preferably sewer and water, and growing its P&L. Alternatively, you are an experienced Project Manager ready to step into a more general management role. Your strong planning and project management experience comes with a solid history of developing winning bids, organizing the operations for effective project delivery, and successful project completion. Key to success has been your ability to apply a long-term view and incorporate that perspective into planning and project management. Your well-developed technical skills in estimating, contracts management, and underground or other heavy civil construction services work have been instrumental in allowing you to provide effective hands-on mentorship to your team. High stress tolerance and making tough decisions under pressure and time constraints is part of your DNA, made easier by your outstanding ability to organize and set priorities. Developing lasting relationships comes naturally to you, in both professional and social settings. Gold Seal certified (or eligible) would be an asset.

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Candidates are invited to submit their expressions of interest, in confidence, to: resumes@waterfordglobal.com

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SAFE Work Workshops

WCB Basics:

The workshop provides an overview to WCB operations and return to work programs required to support injured workers and manage claims.

Information will include:

- 1) Basic operations of the WCB
- 2) Rate setting
- 3) Decision making
- 4) Reporting injuries
- 5) Dispute resolution
- 6) Return to work programs

WCB Basics: **Thursday, December 8** 8:30 – 4:30

Location: Burntwood Hotel, Nickel Room, Thompson, Manitoba

Who should attend?

- WCB Administrators
- Safety Reps
- Other personnel who manage WCB matters and/or return to work programs
- Union Reps
- Return to work Coordinators

Please direct questions or registration to Bonnie, 1-800-362-3340 ext 4501 or email bmarchan@wcb.mb.ca

RSVP Deadline: Thursday, December 1, 2011

Space is limited and will be allocated on a first come first serve basis.



WORKSAFELY MHCA

Construction Safety Excellence™

Training Schedule

Register by:

- » Email: safety@mhca.mb.ca
- » Fax: 204-943-2279

Cancellation Policy:

The *WORKSAFELY* policy states cancellation must be made at least two business days in advance, otherwise full course fee charge will apply.

OCTOBER 2011	
October 3-4	COR™ Leadership
October 5	COR™ Principles
October 6-7	COR™ Auditor
October 11	Safe Work Procedures
October 12	Prime Contractor
October 13	Back Injury Prevention (1/2 day AM)
October 13	Fatigue Management (1/2 day PM)
October 14	Safety Administration (1/2 day AM)
October 14	Toolbox Talks
October 17-18	Train the Trainer
October 19	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 day PM)
October 20	COR™ Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)
October 21	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
October 21	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
October 21	First Aid 1 - CPR

NOVEMBER 2011	
November 10	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
November 10	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
November 14-15	COR™ Leadership
November 16	COR™ Principles
November 17-18	COR™ Auditor
November 21-22	Train the Trainer
November 23	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 Day PM)
November 24	COR™ Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)

Construction Safety Officer	
October 7	CSO Prep Course
October 28	CSO Exam

COR Training	
December 5-9	Thompson, MB

REMINDER:
WORKSAFELY requires at least six people registered to deliver the course.

Customized training is available for your specific requirements.
 Call the *WORKSAFELY* Office at (204) 947-1379 for more information.