



Building bright futures

## Canadian Apprenticeship Forum

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# Background

- In April 2008, the Electricity Sector Council completed a Situational Analysis of the *Powerline Technician Trade in Canada*
- *The Powerline Technician Trade in Canada: Emerging Practices and Training Delivery Matrix* was the result of the Electricity Sector Council's research. This additional research was completed in April 2009

# Committee Members

- NB Power Distribution and Customer Service
- Hydro One
- Manitoba Hydro
- Nova Scotia Power
- PowerTel Utilities Contractors Limited
- ENMAX
- IBEW Local 636
- BC Hydro
- Electrical & Utilities Safety Association
- Power Workers Union
- Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship
- Cambrian College
- HRSDC

# Objectives – 2008 Situational Analysis

- Assessment of the current Canadian Powerline Technician workforce through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and review of published literature
- Identification of recruitment and retention best practices
- Provide an overview of regional and provincial differences in apprenticeship programs
- Share findings and recommendations at a national industry symposium (held May 21, 2009)

# Methodology

- The research included in depth interviews with twelve respondent groups:
  - Powerline Technicians: 1-5 years, 6-15 and 15+
  - Directors of Apprenticeship
  - Students
  - New Canadians
  - Engineers
  - Red seal representatives
  - Union/labour
  - Employers
  - Trainers
  - Committee members
- A comprehensive literature review preceded all qualitative interviews

# Key Findings – 2008 Situational Analysis

- Since 2001 registrations for the Powerline Technician trade has grown by approximately 12%
  - Significant growth in the age group 20-24 and 25-29
  - Withdrawal rate remains low at about 5 to 9% per year
  - Continues to be male dominated
  - Ontario/Quebec have half the Journeypersons followed by Western Canada and then Atlantic provinces
- Experiencing “demographic time-bomb”
- Need to train leaders to be coaches and mentors
- When analyzed by region there are clear trends in the trade across regions

# Observations – 2008 Situational Analysis

- Different job title descriptions
- Very little relevant/useful information available on-line
- Life long learning and career planning
- Traditional forms of training
- Coaching and mentoring challenges
- Passive employer – we need to become sector of choice

# Characteristics of Powerline Technicians

## 1–5 years experience

- High expectation from the training
- Familiar with computers and technology
- More mobile and likely to move across provinces
- More flexible in terms of working in rural/urban areas
- Prefer specialized training task-skilling

# Characteristics of Powerline Technicians

## 6-15 years experience

- Tendency to be over confident about skills
- Transitioning to family with children
- Less likely to be open to a move if dual income household
- Monetary benefits become increasingly important
- Work environment influences choices
- Prefer specialized training and task-skilling

# Characteristics of Powerline Technicians

## 15+ Experience

- Not as technically savvy
- Concerned about change in value of the trade (importance of wages vs. team work)
- Strong commitment to safety
- Concerned about competency levels of new recruits
- Prefer comprehensive training (not task-skilling)
- Advancement is a concern – growing need for certification to transition to supervisory and manager positions

# Recommendations- Situational Analysis

## In April 2008 the Committee prioritized the following recommendations:

- Develop a nation-wide course and training schedule for ongoing skills development
- Strengthen standardized qualifications for instructors
- Develop a well-defined career path into the trade
- Create new technical courses
- Increase enrollment by encouraging people to become Powerline Technicians
- Start an outreach program to engage women, Aboriginals and new Canadians
- Promote Red Seal in the Powerline Apprenticeship Certification process

# Objectives – 2009 Emerging Practices and Training Delivery Matrix

- Create a matrix of training standards across all regions and provinces that :
  - Identify all training requirements
  - Produce a gap analysis of the existing standards against the National Occupational Analysis
- Create a repository of emerging practices in the areas of recruitment, retention and training

# Training Delivery Matrix - Key Findings

- The most significant gaps for apprentices are in areas related to soft skills
- Ongoing Refresher training activities are significantly lower, compared to the apprenticeship period

# Findings- 2009 Emerging Practices

- **Recruitment**

- Engagement strategies
- Leverage employee referral programs
- Create a comprehensive screening process to measure the most relevant skills

- **Retention**

- Work environment
- Emphasis on career planning and life long learning

- **Training**

- Investments in in-house resources for training
- Partnerships with external resources
- Training infrastructure for instructors

# Additional Information

- To obtain copies of “*Situational Analysis of the Powerline Technician Trade in Canada*” and “*The Powerline Technician Trade in Canada: Emerging Practices and Training Delivery Matrix*” reports please visit the Electricity Sector Council Web site at [www.brightfutures.ca](http://www.brightfutures.ca)