

## **Ron Svajlenko:**

I chair local 222 and CAW in Oshawa and at one time, going back to 2003 we had 2250 tradespeople who I worked with inside that facility. By June of this year, we're going to have 700. Obviously, that's a carnage situation for us. I'm sure everybody's witnessed the auto industry's troubles in the papers – there hasn't been much good press lately. But this is more of a symptom that's affecting the entire industrial base inside of Ontario. We have seen 200,000 jobs disappear in Ontario's industrial base.

In the steel industry, in the factory that I did my time in, has no apprentices. At our highest point, in General Motors, we probably had 150 apprentices. Right now, I have 24 left who have almost completed their time and GM has been very clear in stating that they don't intend to have any more apprentices.

It leads us to a situation where we see so much of the industrial base degraded. So many opportunities for apprenticeship that once existed inside those factories are now gone. We are now questioning what type of shift needs to happen (at least from my end of it) to have apprentices in the communities we have today.

General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and a number of large industrial manufacturers in our area had a lot of opportunity to take apprentices. They had a lot of money, they had the need for people, and they weren't afraid to spend. With those types of situations drying up for us, we're looking for the next step to involve apprentices. We are going to get into a situation where we have a shortage of skills. This is different from a labour shortage. Just like the bricks and the mortar, we can't produce in industries and we can't repair utilities unless we have those tradespeople.

So, what we had discussed amongst ourselves inside my particular group in the union and with various coworkers, we could perhaps see a situation where, instead of indenturing an apprentice to one particular factory, there could be an opportunity to share that individual, to put him into a number of different areas, where there was a centralized control to move the apprentice from one environment to another to avoid putting a huge financial burden on the employer sponsor. This would allow some of the smaller manufacturers, smaller industries, and smaller contractors to participate in the program where previously they would not be able to bare the burden of an apprentice. There is no doubt that the changes taking place require some sort of shift in our thinking because we've lost these large employers who at one time had great amounts of money to spend training apprentices. My comment or my direction to the talents in this room is to reconsider how, in certain areas in the business, we take apprentices and see whether the government could take a more active role in setting up, in at least administering, not necessarily a higher financial burden, but in administering a situation where those types of people who would enter electrical, mechanical, whatever the apprenticeship is, where they move through a number of different workplaces. It also gives us an opportunity in a situation like this where we see a down economy where we can perhaps spread the number of areas and the timing of people through, and still maintain those apprentices and complete them in apprenticeship. That is my suggested focus.