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## SOLD-OUT APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE OFFERS SUGGESTIONS FOR TACKLING SKILLED TRADES SHORTAGE ISSUES

**Leading experts advise “One-size-fits-all” approach no longer works**



Thomas Cochren (CAF-FCA) and Donna Wilson (MANOC) address conference delegates

**OTTAWA, ONTARIO** — Over the past few years, the issue of skills shortages across Canada has loomed over many industries, including those linked to the skilled trades. In an effort to shed more light on these and other important issues related to apprenticeship training in Canada, the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum — Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) recently hosted a sold-out biennial apprenticeship conference “**Apprenticeship – A Winning Formula**” in Montreal, Quebec from June 4-6, 2006. The apprenticeship conference was a resounding success. Over 460 delegates from across the country convened to discuss top-of-mind issues, and network with other members of the Canadian apprenticeship community. Many [conference presentations](#) are now posted on the CAF-FCA Web site in the language in which they were

originally presented. [2006 Conference Pictures](#) are also posted on the site.

Throughout the conference, one key overarching theme kept recurring: if industries wish to sustain and contribute to economic growth, a number of different measures must be collaboratively undertaken. Among the suggestions:

### Hire more first year apprentices

In 2004 the CAF-FCA conducted research on the perceived barriers to accessing and completing apprenticeship training in Canada <sup>1</sup>. The study identified ‘cost’ as a perceived barrier to apprenticeship training for employees and apprentices alike. As a result, the CAF-FCA undertook research into The Return of Apprenticeship Training Investment for employers. One major preliminary study finding reveals that for every dollar employers invest in an apprentice, they accrue \$1.38, or a net return of \$0.38 over the life of an apprenticeship. This is positive news for employers who may have been hesitant to hire apprentices because of preconceived notions about the cost/benefit of apprenticeship training.

Although a final report of the CAF-FCA study will be released in the fall, the organization is also planning to develop a tool which would enable employers to calculate their own return on apprenticeship training investment. Furthermore, into the future, the organization will continue to examine the issue by focusing on cost-benefit research involving apprentices and training institutions. The CAF-FCA hopes that this information, together with other regional initiatives, will encourage more employers and young people to participate in apprenticeship training.

### Improve how internationally-trained worker credentials are recognized

According to a conference presentation on Credential Recognition of Internationally Trained Workers in the Construction Industry led by the Construction Sector Council, the mining industry will be short 81,000 employees in the next 10 years, the automotive industry will need 30,000 skilled workers in the next five years, and the manufacturing sector will require an estimated 400,000 workers due to retirements in the next 15 years. Part of the solution to the shortage of skilled labour involves looking at previously untapped sources of labour: Aboriginal people, women, and internationally-trained workers to name just a few. The Credential Recognition study identifies a number of obstacles that must be overcome before the internationally-trained worker labour pool can be tapped.

### **Employ different management approaches when dealing with different generations of workers**

Keynote presenter Dr. Linda Duxbury, Professor of the Carleton University School of Business and Director of Research at the Centre for Research and Education on Women and Work has identified four different generations of workers in the workplace today. Each one has a unique set of formative influences (events or ideologies that shaped their generation during their formative years), core values (personal values), and work values. Therefore, each generation has their own expectations about the employment relationship. Dr. Duxbury advises employers who wish to successfully compete for and retain human resources both locally and internationally to investigate what motivates each generation, and then find ways to meet their individual needs.

### **Business, labour and other groups encouraged to work in collaboration**

Evidently these and other proposed solutions cannot be carried out unilaterally. Many initiatives require a greater collaboration between business, labour, and other interested groups. Conference delegate Wayne Peppard, Executive Director, British Columbia & Yukon Territory Building & Construction Trades Council noted: "We continue to believe that bringing together the training communities from across Canada is an integral part of the ongoing communications that will define our goals and contribute to a common agenda. Recognition of the issues and concerns that we face can only be successfully addressed if we maintain an open dialogue. CAF-FCA is at the center of that dialogue in its efforts to provide a venue for the diverse interests represented by our regional training agendas."

The CAF-FCA's next apprenticeship conference is scheduled June 8-10, 2008 at the Conference Centre in scenic Victoria, British Columbia.

For more information about the CAF-FCA's new mission, vision and direction, please read: *Leadership Through Research, Discussion and Collaboration - [Highlights Report](#)*. Or, visit our Web site at: [www.caf-fca.org](http://www.caf-fca.org).

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<sup>1</sup> *Assessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada – Perceptions of Barriers*, , January 2004

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