

B.C. Federation of Labour
Moving Forward: Apprenticeship in the New Economy
April 18 – 19, 2010

Guest Speaker

Jim Sinclair, President, B.C. Federation of Labour

I am very pleased to have this unique opportunity for dialogue with key stakeholders in the apprenticeship system.

We're all here because we care about apprenticeship and skills training.

We care that apprentices get the best possible experience, both in the workplace and in their technical training.

We all want a highly skilled workforce, with a training program like the Red Seal that is respected around the world.

But we don't always agree on how we get there.

We can all talk to ourselves endlessly, but it's important that we talk to each other as well if we are going to find out what we agree on, besides our passion for skills training.

But we want to build a better relationship with employers.

The conference is called "Moving Forward: Apprenticeships in the New Economy."

The moving forward part is how we find better ways to work together, because we have a shared goal.

The "New Economy" reflects that our world has changed over the past few years – we've faced an economic downturn like we haven't seen in decades.

We've seen entire industries, like forestry, nearly wiped out because of tariffs and trade deals that don't work for BC.

So what do we need to do to make our training system better?

Well, we'd like to talk to you about that tonight and tomorrow.

And of course we won't solve everything here, but we can make a start, even if it's only a start building better relationships.

We need you to answer a few key questions while you're here.

What are we going to do about the looming skills shortage?

Hire more temporary foreign workers, or train up the unemployed or underemployed.

How are we going to use our dollars to make them work harder?

What will get more employers engaged in training apprentices?

Are the various levels of government setting the example by training apprentices in the public sector?

What about the colleges?

What examples are out there that we can use to improve BC's system?

What expertise do each of us bring to the table, and what role can we all play to improve training opportunities for family supporting jobs?

And most of all, where do we go from here?

These are all big questions, do doubt.

We hope some of our speakers and panellists tonight and tomorrow will help guide us through these questions.

Because we're all working on our own, and it could be so much better if we figured out how to work together on this.

Background Information

Examples of how we work better together:

1. CSTECH – Canadian Steel Trade & Employment Congress – 50/50 steel employers and USW – working together.

“CSTECH has been providing innovative and cost-effective training services for over 20 years. While it has developed much of its experience and expertise by helping the Canadian steel industry and its workers meet their evolving challenges over the years, CSTECH has worked with a wide range of industries both in Canada and abroad.

All of CSTECH's services have been developed with the very active participation of the industries and workplaces that CSTECH has worked with over the years. As a result, CSTECH's services provide relevant, practical and cost effective solutions to a wide range of workforce recruitment, development and training needs. CSTECH has been widely recognized for both its work and for the results it has provided to individuals, workplaces and industries. One example is the Conference Board of Canada Award for Innovation in Human Resource Development.

CSTECH currently offers a range of services, including:

- [Apprenticeship services](#) that effectively address the need for industries and workplaces to replace their current skilled trades as they approach retirement.

- [Essential skills services](#) that help to identify and remedy critical skills gaps in the current workforce.
- [Training services](#) that provide a wide range of classroom and computer based courses and learning management systems that can help ensure that skill levels keep pace with technological and workplace change.
- [Career awareness services](#) that assist workplaces in the recruitment and pre-employment training of new entrants to the industry.
- [Youth employment services](#) that provide financial assistance to workplaces hiring young workers.

(see attached power point from April 2010 Board meeting – in particular page 3 regarding their new agreement with HRSDC)

2. Alberta System – “Industry” is defined as workers and employers. In BC, industry is defined as employers. The Alberta Board of Directors is 50 percent business, 50 percent worker reps, ie. labour. In BC, we have one labour rep on the ITA Board. In Alberta, each trade has a trade advisory committee comprised of 50 percent labour/50 percent employers. Alberta has 12 regional offices offering services to employers, apprentices and stakeholders.

Statistics

Registered Apprentices:

BC – total registered apprentices (08/09)	35,343
Alberta – total registered apprentices (08)	70,415

Completion Rates:

BC – 2010	41%
Alberta – (08)	*77%

(During the 2007-2008 school year, 77 percent of apprentices who completed the first year of their program (including on-the-job training and work experience, technical training and examinations) went on to complete their apprenticeship within two years of the earliest completion date.)