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## ABORIGINAL APPRENTICESHIP BOARD OF ONTARIO: ABORIGINAL APPRENTICES

### BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO BRIDGE THE SKILLS GAP

APRIL 15 -16, 2014



(Sara Monture, AABO's Executive Director)

Welcome to Sudbury and thank you to our partners for joining us. Our goal over the next two days is to expand the networks that can and will link skilled Aboriginal workers with the construction trades. This event is made possible through the generous support of industry sponsors, the ASETAS, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.



Elder Julie Ozawagosh honoured us with a traditional smudge and opening words to encourage the building of partnerships while keeping in mind the needs of those who continue to struggle with issues that prevent them from reaching for a better life.



Networking with the Rock Stars



**TWO ROW WAMPUM WITH Leroy Hill:** Jock brought forward an old message for a new time encouraging stakeholders to embrace Aboriginal contributions to the modern world.

(Continued on Page 5)



### HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

With Ron Sarazin, Special Projects Coordinator, Gezhtoojig Employment and Training & Greg Williamson, Infrastructure Health & Safety Assn.

(Continued on Page 5)



2014 will see only modest growth largely due to on-going projects.

Annually approximately 10 000 apprentices are registered but less than half are completing. Why so low and what are the issues around completion?

#### Trades in Demand

- Boilermakers
- Construction Millwrights
- Electricians
- Floor Covering Installers
- Glaziers
- Painters & Decorators
- Plasterers / Drywall Installers
- Plumbers
- Refrigeration & AC Mechanics
- Roofers & Shinglers
- Tilesetters

Source: BuildForce Canada, Construction Looking Forward, 2014 - 2023

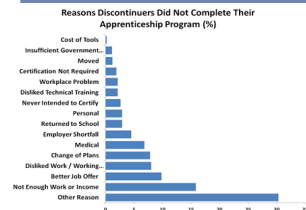
## COMPLETION COUNTS

With KATHERINE JACOBS, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH & OPERATIONS, ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION SECRETARIAT

Katherine Jacobs presented from a unionized perspective on the success rates of apprentices in the 25 construction trades. The construction trades:

- Need to create an early awareness of apprenticeships in secondary schools. Increased enrollment addresses the skills gap.
- Promote a positive perception of the trades.
- Work with Unions to develop labour relations and increase apprentice supports.

#### Why are Completion Rates Low?



Joint labour/employer training trusts have found the key to raising completions rates and building the skilled workforce.

The new strategic focus is on supportive public policy for apprentices. The investment in apprenticeship enhances innovation, productivity and social development.

An opportunity exists for all levels of government to embrace

#### Construction Apprentice Profile

- Average age of an apprentice is 29
- 40% of apprentices have children
- Half of apprentices have had more than three jobs prior to registering
- Half of registered apprentices were not aware of their current program when they were in high school

...No longer a transition from school to work

Source: Statistics Canada, National Apprenticeship Survey, 2007

and support apprentices through pre-defined levels of participation on all government funded projects.

Finally, active outreach to the people needed to fill the skills gap:

- Aboriginal Labour
- Women
- Youth

### A MESSAGE FROM THE UNION OF ONTARIO INDIANS:

A MADE IN CANADA SOLUTION TO THE SKILLS GAP:

EMPOWER ABORIGINAL YOUTH

Deputy Chief Hare advocated a Made in Canada solution to the skills gap by empowering Aboriginal youth to step into the skilled trades. Be mindful that they need the time to grow into themselves and gain the confidence to do the job. In time, address the need to change the language of Aboriginal apprenticeship to charge them with not being just members of a union but citizens with the power to steer economic development in their communities. Include youth in the decision-making process and show them that that especially in the North doing business with the mining industry can lead to benefit agreements for the community and personal sustainability.

## COLLABORATION: MORE RESULTS WITH FEWER RESOURCES

### Results of Round Table Discussions

#### What issues do clients have as they work through apprenticeships?

- Racism in the workplace
- Culture shock if first time out of community
- Addictions
- Lack of funding/EI Support
- A lack of basic skills in math and literacy and work ethics
- Training in a non-union environment & having an employer willing to register them as an apprentice
- A safe place to live
- Concern over a criminal record
- Reliable transportation and mobility

#### What supports can you (ASETAs, Unions and Industry) provide to apprentices?

- Financial support through bursaries and scholarships
- Set them up for success through mentoring and shadowing experiences
- Employment counsellors and referrals to outside agencies when needed
- Assistance with the application process
- Recognition of milestones
- Words of encouragement
- Networking for women apprentices
- Some unions provide tutor supports and financial assistance

#### How can stakeholders at the conference work together to promote completion rates?

This question was broken into two response sections looking at recruitment and completion.

##### Recruitment

- Promotion - Job Fairs
- Educate high school counsellors
- Employer workshops
- Trade Marketing
- Stress the need for skills and the importance of a driver's license

##### Completion

- Cultural Education
- Essential Skills Supports especially in Advanced Computer Skills
  - o Relate math to real-life situations rather than the abstract
- Networking - Getting to know the players in trades
- Transportation Funding
- On-site and continuing education
- Addressing Attitudes
- Encourage Aboriginal recruitment percentages on large construction projects

Trip to United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 800





## NETWORK LIKE A ROCK STAR

*Effective business networking is the linking together of individuals who, through trust and relationship building, become walking, talking advertisements for one another.*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THOSE WHO NETWORKED LIKE A ROCK STAR AND WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO TAKE ONE HOME WITH YOU!!!**



### The Two Row Wampum with Leroy Hill

Conference delegates were honoured to listen to Leroy bring an old message for a new time that encouraged stakeholders to embrace Aboriginal contributions to the modern world. Leroy spoke of an Iroquoian cultural model for building good working relationships by looking back at the longevity and influence of the Two Row Wampum and Friendship Belts. Different groups can work together for a common cause by adhering to the principles of having a good mind, peace and respect for each other's sphere of influence. ASETAs, unions and industry must come together to strengthen their commitment to empower and provide opportunities for Aboriginal men and women in apprenticeships in Ontario.

### HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

**With** Ron Sarazin, Special Projects Coordinator, Gezhtoojig Employment and Training & Greg Williamson, Infrastructure Health & Safety Association

A snapshot of the Line Crew Ground Support Program in partnership with Cambrian College:

- Involvement with local Chambers of Commerce
- Get involved with construction associations and raise your profile
- Bring in employers to talk to interested program applicant's before final in-take so they know what employers are looking for and what is expected of them.
- Build relationships with unions
- Make a commitment to a client's job readiness, it's not just their reputation
- Overlap in-takes to encourage peer mentoring between classes
- Safety certifications that are transferable within the Construction Industry

## DAY 2



Gina Gasongi Simon, Apprentice Construction & Maintenance Electrician & Shawn Recollet, Journeyman Electrician, Hydro One, CUSW



### Provincial snapshot panel

(Back) Dan DeLeary, Ian Harper, Rhéal Gélinas  
(Front) Mike Dix, Jason Dashney, Dawn David

## STATS FOR THOUGHT

**97 % of Accidents** occur between Days 1 - 3 for young workers. Get them to day 4, you have them for 30 years.

- LOCAL 800, PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS, SUDBURY

### 39 % Skill Gap

Between 2014 -2023,

95 600 workers will be needed in Ontario

58 000 are available

37 600 GAP IN SKILLED LABOUR

- Katherine Jacobs
- Ontario Construction Secretariat

## THE APPRENTICE CORNER

*"My new career in the skilled trades is an exciting alternative to earn as you learn. It's like being given a set of wings that enable you to see beyond the horizon at all the employment opportunities available to you."*

- Gina Gasongi Simon, Apprentice
- Construction & Maintenance Electrician, Hydro One, CUSW

## The Year Ahead

### Looking Forward:

WITH SARA MONTURE, AABO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Drawing from the information presented in the facilitated discussions, four major themes emerged:

1. Increasing awareness:
  - There is an immediate need to educate industry and other stakeholders of the ASETAs and the valuable services provided.
  - There is also the need to increase the ASETA community's knowledge of the employment and union recruitment process.
2. Mentoring - developing and implementing a mentoring system for new and existing apprentices.
3. Reaching out to youth to encourage a career in the trades.
4. Raising the AABO profile

There are currently five regional steering committees active across the province. We will turn to these established networks to address our identified themes over the coming year.

Spare 14-4-24 4:45 PM

**Comment [1]:** Is this title in the right place? Should it be over the looking forward box?

Also, the highlighted capital letters should not be capitalized.

### The Link Committee - A Panel Discussion Moderated by Jennifer WhiteEye, AABO Co-Chair

A mixed panel consisting of: Jason Dashney, Surespan Wind Energy; Dawn David, Akwesasne Aboriginal Management Board; Danny Deleary, Walpole Island First Nation; Mike Dix, Ironworkers Local 721; Ian Harper UA Local 67/Technical Trades Academy; Rheal Gelinas Carpenters Local 2486. The panel reflected on the opportunities, challenges and hopes for Ontario's economic growth.

There are many upcoming projects in Northern Ontario; Southern Ontario is also quite busy.

The renewable energy sector will remain relatively stable over the next two years as government policies remain uncertain. Maintenance opportunities exist for carpenters, millwrights and operating engineers.

There are many big projects on the horizon across the province. It is important for the unions to maintain apprentice intake during the slower periods to be ready for the busy times ahead.

Future pipeline and pumping station work will need approximately 300 welders in the Timmins area.

As area apprenticeships are completed, it opens the door

for new apprenticeship spots.

The goal is to negotiate Aboriginal involvement in upcoming projects and how to grow economic development opportunities for workers who are not mobile.

It stands that opportunities exist for people who are mobile and who really want to work.

Aboriginal communities still face the challenge of limited capacity even when opportunities present themselves and the skilled trades just are not present.

Unions are looking to industry to implement the adjustments needed to bring and retain Aboriginal people into the trades and likewise industry is looking to the ASETAs and unions to send them well-trained and work ready apprentices.

The need to re-build the capacity of skilled trades is very real and this is a prime opportunity to get Aboriginal workers into skilled trades.

#### The Hot Issues:

- Reduce average age of apprentices as a solution to youth unemployment and the skills gap
- More outreach to youth to address barriers
- Capacity building
- Environmental stewardship

## HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

WITH John Bonin, Manager, First Nations and Metis Affairs, Union Gas



Owned by Spectra Energy, Union Gas values its relationships with Aboriginal communities and its 1.4 million customers nationwide. The company credits its success to the 4 E's - Economic Development, Employment, Education and Environment. Union Gas services 17 First Nations and pays communities in lieu of taxes as a means of powering economic growth. Job opportunities are available within the company and interested parties are encouraged to view the company website for current listings.

## YOUTH PERCEPTION OF THE TRADES

WITH EMILY ARROWSMITH, RESEARCHER, CANADIAN APPRENTICESHIP FORUM



Baby boomers are retiring and the demand for skilled trades is not being filled. The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) undertook research to determine underlying factors.

Emily presented the findings from three surveys given to youth (13 -17 years), parents and educators.

Youth Perceptions of Skilled Trades:

- Stereotypes prevent women from applying
- Negative view of the trades
- Reluctance on the part of parents and educators to present and encourage the trades as an option for students coming out of school.

Youth Perception of Apprenticeships:

- Active and Hands ON
- Require different skills & knowledge
- Skilled trades are in demand

- Use of math and problem-solving skills
- Less debt than university and better chance of employment at the end of training.
- Negative perceptions are apprenticeships are for those not good in school and that the trades are undervalued as being only for non-academics.
- Apprenticeship ranks at the bottom of post-secondary options after college and university.

Many trades need math and science. Basic computer skills are no longer enough. Trades are more and more using equipment with digital instrumentation.

The research is available on the CAF website. ([www.caf-fca.org](http://www.caf-fca.org))

## SKILLS ONTARIO

WITH ASHLEY PSZENICZNY

Skills Ontario works to promote the skilled trades in schools. They also work with Aboriginal communities to provide relevant, Aboriginal-focused programming. Some of their initiatives across the province include:

- Networking events at high schools
- Presentations to Employment Centres, Ontario Works offices and Band Councils
- Summer Camps
- Participation in the Ontario Technological Skills Competition
- Cardboard Boat Races
- Partnered with Wasaya Airways to facilitate outreach in fly in



communities.



# ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

A Panel Discussion - Facilitated by John Wabb, AABO Co-Chair

The discussion opened with a congratulatory acknowledgement on the success stories and the efforts of the ASETAs to get apprentices to journeyman status.

Bill Clark presented Aecon’s strategy to take education to remote communities through video learning and their collaboration on the Remote Learning Centre. He sees the challenge in educating the internal corporate culture on the benefits of investing in and developing Aboriginal engagement strategies.

Victoria Sedgewick with TransCanada highlighted the ever changing landscape that the energy infrastructure company works in and the need for awareness of Aboriginal issues. It is important to measure Aboriginal participation as an integrated part of the Request

for Proposals’ process and work with the prime contractors to make it happen. The success stories make it all worthwhile.

The company takes a proactive approach to positive and sustainable Aboriginal relations through a cultural awareness program for employees and recognizing the importance of mentoring and supporting youth who are willing to relocate from their communities. They also sponsor scholarships through Indspire which are not being fully taken advantage of.

Brian Pelletier, International Union of Operating Engineers

Local 793 emphasized their priorities to be union members and encouraging Aboriginal youth to become members. Again work ethic and life skills are critical: instill in youth

how critical it is to get up and show up. Be a role model to one person and let them pay it forward. In time the results will show themselves. It is a challenge though to implement change because you need to follow the protocol of the organizations in place to develop a strategy.



(Victoria Sedgewick, Brian Pelletier, Bill Clark)

### Final Remarks from Sara Monture:

Although the conference may have ended, our work is just beginning. Over the last year, I have seen a welcome increase in industry participation and it is the perfect time to develop meaningful partnerships: partnerships that will result in a career in the skilled trades for an Aboriginal person.

Stay involved! The regional steering committees meet on a regular basis and act as the link between the Aboriginal supply of labour and construction industry demand. - Nya:weh

### JULE OZAWAGOSH, ELDER

Closed with praise for the passion demonstrated by the people in attendance for the work done and the work to be done over the next year.

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO BRIDGE THE SKILLS GAP



ONTARIO **POWER**  
GENERATION

**CUSW** | THE CANADIAN UNION  
OF SKILLED WORKERS



IBEW Construction  
Council of Ontario

**OPTC**  
Ontario Pipe Trades Council



**TransCanada**



**uniongas**

A Duke Energy Company



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MINISTRY OF **ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**