



# SLAAMB Creates Centre for Aboriginal Apprenticeship Research

New life is being breathed into northern Ontario's economy with the creation of the Centre for Aboriginal Apprenticeship Research (CAAR), a new program offering a unique apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training model to the surrounding First Nation communities.

Produced by the Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board (SLAMMB) in partnership with Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority Hostel, Confederation College and the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, the program encourages First Nations to consider apprenticeship training and provides local opportunities. The program also affords apprentices the opportunity to learn and work

in their own community and contribute to the creation of new facilities in Sioux Lookout including the Meno-Ya-Win Health Center and Hostel.

Sioux Lookout area, located approximately 400 kilometres northwest of Thunder Bay, encompasses a region of over 200,000 square kilometres, 24 First Nations and six native organizations. Employment and training opportunities have always been a concern as many of the communities are accessible only by air. CAAR will combat this problem by offering not only accredited apprenticeship training in the Sioux Lookout centre but also pre-apprenticeship training allowing participants to access training in the comfort of their own homes through web-based training, and video conferencing coupled with online coaching. Once participants have progressed in their training they will then have to travel to Sioux Lookout to the centre to enrol in the formal apprenticeship program.

As well as training new apprentices the CAAR will also assess the skill levels of community members who have been operating in the construction field without proper certification. Its goal is to provide the necessary training to help them achieve their Certificate of Qualification.

Each run-through provides apprentices eight weeks of in-class training focusing on math skills, WHIMIS, first aid and trades exam preparation.

Overall the project is a breakthrough idea that may offer solutions to assist remote First Nations workers looking to gain trades certification. Currently the program reaches out to each community to promote the project among youth and students. Every year the numbers of skilled trades workers in Canada are dwindling as an aging workforce enters retirement. Programs like CAAR help to fill the gap and ensure that Canada has a strong trades workforce.



# Apprenticeship Feature

## An Electrifying Opportunity

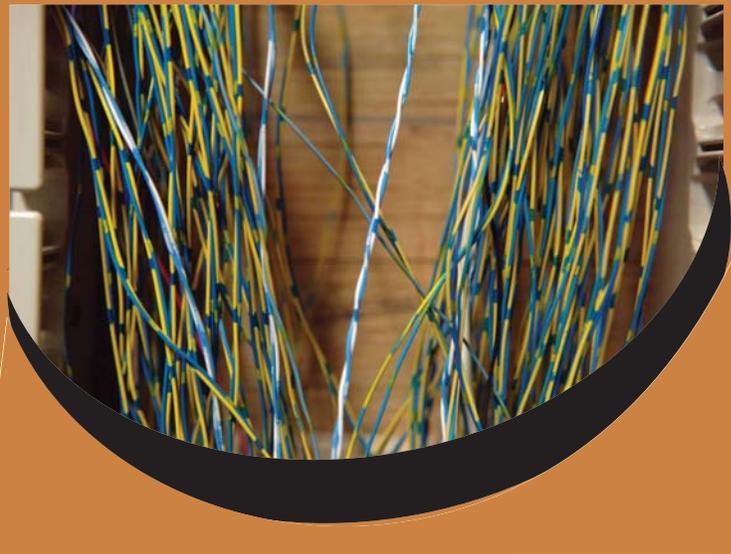
Ever since Benjamin Franklin's famous experiment of flying a kite in a lightning storm, electricity has played an integral part in our lives. From keeping our houses warm to powering our entertainment devices, electricity fuels our day-to-day lives no matter where we live. In the middle of the night when the power goes out, who are you going to call? Certainly not the Ghostbusters! Your local electrician has the tools needed to get you up and running again.

In general terms electricians design electrical systems, layout wires and test systems to make sure they operate correctly and troubleshoot problems when systems don't react as expected. At any time of day an electrician could be called in to repair power systems, replace wiring or troubleshoot dangerous situations. Electricians can be found in houses, commercial buildings or at power generating stations keeping systems running smoothly.

Generally there are two types of electricians: residential and commercial/industrial. Many electricians work with inde-

pendent electrical contractors and are exposed to a variety of situations including residential, commercial and industrial types of work while others may work on their own in the residential sector.

One thing is for certain: with every new house or building built there will always be a need for the skills and expertise of a certified electrician.



## GET WIRED !

## An Electrician's Life

### Work Environment

An electrician's work is never done! At any time of day or night electricians can be called in for maintenance or repairs in emergency situations. With the nature of the work electricians can work anytime and anywhere electricity is needed: inside, outside, down low, up high and in old and new buildings. They can be exposed to extreme weather conditions and must follow strict safety rules to prevent injury from electrical shock, cuts and falls. The work can be demanding with tradesmen bending or stooping, standing or kneeling for long periods of time. A 40 hour work week is standard for most electricians though many work overtime.

### Skills and Requirements

What does it take to be an electrician?

- You must be good working with your hands.
- Math skills to calculate voltage, amps and power.
- Comfortable working at heights or up on ladders.
- Good physical condition and stamina to carry heavy equipment and supplies.
- Problem solving skills.

### An Electrician's Duties:

- Install, maintain and troubleshoot electrical systems.
- Understand electrical definitions and read electrical blueprints.
- Install data, video and cable wiring.

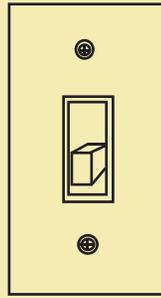
- Work with electrical switches, wires and light fixtures.

### Types of Electricians

**Residential Electrician** – These tradesmen are responsible for replacing and upgrading electrical services, wiring new interior lights, outlets, switches, landscape lighting, pool and spa circuits and hooking up appliances. They are also called in to troubleshoot electrical problems.

**Industrial/Commercial Electrician** – These tradesmen do much of the same jobs but in a commercial or industrial setting and often at higher voltages.

# Switch on Your Career



Mark Kohoko didn't start out planning to be an apprentice electrician for Hydro One; he was already three months into a horticultural technician program when the opportunity to enter the skilled trades presented itself. "I went to a career fair with my dad and talked to the people at CUSW, signed up and have enjoyed it ever since," says the fifth year apprentice.

Mark is one of the many apprentices learning the hands on skills needed to keep Ontario's hydro systems in tip-top shape. As well as being a part of one of the major suppliers of electricity in Ontario he is also part of a new stream of young skilled workers coming in to replace an aging workforce. Within the next few years Hydro One will see approximately 40 per cent of its workers retire



leaving many empty positions. "Everyone says skilled trades are the way to go because there is a shortage," says Mark, adding "Everyone in the industry is now retiring so there are a lot of gaps to fill."

Travelling to the various Hydro One stations including Sarnia, Nanticoke, Windsor and Niagara Falls, Mark works on the high voltage switches and breakers that make up Hydro One's systems. "We're working on stuff that's 40 or 50 years old so we're repairing and modifying," he says.

Alongside a crew of six to 20 people Mark experiences all types of weather from blazing heat to biting cold winds and snow. While some work is done on the relays and terminal racks in the control rooms, the majority is outside. Being up in a man lift in the middle of winter is all in a days work for an electrician for Hydro One.

Thanks to the Joint Apprenticeship Council, a mediating organization connecting union apprentices to opportunities at Hydro One, Mark and many other apprentices get the opportunity to gain hands on experience with guided instruction. "You get the benefit of going to school without having to sit in a class for four or five years at a time," says Mark.

As a part of the union Mark is also backed by CUSW's support team which provides benefits and tutoring support. "It's just nice to have that backbone, someone there to support you with benefits or mediation or tutoring."

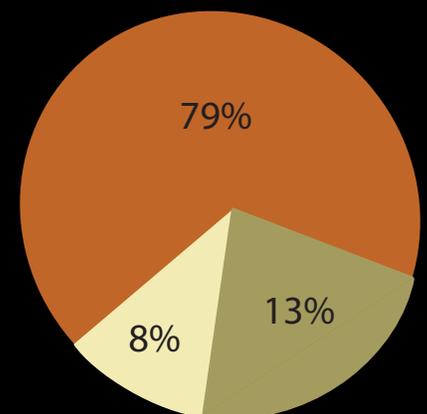
## The BUZZ on Electrical Work

Ontario is facing a skilled trades shortage! So much so that the government of Ontario is focusing \$1.5 billion to expand training programs and encourage youth to consider apprenticeship.

Baby boomers heading towards retirement will leave a significant gap in the future workforce. Approximately 17 per cent are eligible to retire in 2010 with another 37 per cent retiring in 2014.

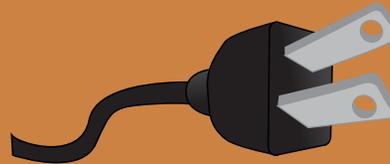
Currently television, radio and web ads are promoting the skilled trades to today's youth in the hopes of bringing a surge of fresh young apprentices before the shortage is unmanageable.

Many businesses are also reporting difficulties retaining trained electrical workers as well as finding them making the problem a double strain.



As reported in the Ontario's Workforce Shortage Coalition report "The Challenge Ahead: Averting a Skills Crisis in Ontario", companies are reporting that 13 percent of them are having difficulty hiring electricians while 8 percent are having difficulties retaining them.

# Working to Keep Electrical Workers Safe



A law passed by the government of Ontario in 2007 is working hard to protect electricians and homeowners alike. Effective January 1st, 2007 a law requiring all electrical contractors to be licensed by the Electrical Contractor Registration Agency of the Electrical Safety Authority was passed.

This law makes it illegal for homeowners to hire anyone who isn't licensed to perform electrical work no matter how minor the job. In order to

be eligible a worker must be 18 years of age (in the case of an individual), a certified master electrician or be a contractor employing one designated master electrician, have a place of business in Ontario, have at least 2,000,000 insurance coverage for public liability and property damage and must be registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. As well as these restrictions applicants must not owe money to the ESA or be in default of filing a return with the Minister of Finance.

done and numerous electricity related fatalities.

Master electricians and contractors can contact the Electrical Contractor Registration Authority of the Electrical Safety Authority (ECRA of the ESA), the regulating body, to apply for their licensing.

As well, homeowners can visit [www.pluginsafely.ca](http://www.pluginsafely.ca) to locate a licensed electrician, ensuring their own safety as well as the safety of anyone working on units in the future.

The enactment came following years of complaints of unsafe work being

For more information about the regulations visit [www.esasafe.com](http://www.esasafe.com).

## Apprenticeship Resources

**Construction Sector Council of Canada**  
[www.csc-ca.org](http://www.csc-ca.org)

**Government of Ontario - Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

**Careers in Construction**  
[www.careersinconstruction](http://www.careersinconstruction)

**Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's Apprentice Trades**  
[www.apprenticetrades.ca](http://www.apprenticetrades.ca)

**Tradeability**  
[www.tradeability.ca](http://www.tradeability.ca)

