



Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong Brings Apprenticeship to the Forefront

“We’re very excited. We have some really good workers. they’re really keen,” says Marie Seymour, Executive Director of Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong Training and Employment Centre for Treaty 3 Area. Marie is optimistic about the Youth Apprenticeship Program being organized in the area to promote skilled trades as an opportunity for youth. An effort that began in early 2006, Shooniyaa recognized the need to move on apprenticeship within Treaty 3, a region encompassing approximately 140,000 square kilometres and providing service to 24 First Nations. The demand for skilled workers is high and continues to increase daily as the pool of skilled labourers empties.

In an area less than abundant with employment opportunities Marie is hopeful that promoting apprenticeship will open the eyes of the youth to skilled trades opportunities in industries like mining. However Marie says the youth face other challenges as well, “Even though the individual is interested, we’ve found that they really don’t want to leave the reserve under any circumstances. They feel that this is where they’re comfortable and it’s getting over that hurdle.” Apprenticeship provides an ideal opportunity as participants can stay within their community and only have to leave for part of the time. “Our youth need other options. This is an option our youth can consider so they can earn some money while still going to school, they can use that skill, it’s very employable for them so that they can stay within Treaty 3,” says Marie

Another issue is dealing with employers who may not be inclined to hire First Nations people “Employers still have this mindset that First Nations people aren’t the first ones to be hired. It’s getting over that, and making it a comfortable place for people to want to work is going to be a challenge.” With Aboriginal populations on the rise and the number of skilled workers on the decline it only makes sense for First Nations to fill the gap.

Shooniyaa has already embarked on the task of bringing



skilled trades to the forefront. Youth apprenticeship coordinators and workers have been placed throughout Treaty 3 to provide support to the First Nations they serve. According to Marie the emphasis of the project so far has been on education and promotion including a Youth Apprenticeship Camp entitled Trades in your Community. The camp, run in August 2008, was aimed at Grades 7 and 8 students, and focused on carpentry, electric and plumbing trades. “The big thing we have coming up for this fiscal year is two of these youth apprenticeship camps,” says Marie. One will be an introduction to apprenticeships while the second will focus strictly on mining to incorporate current partnerships. “The mining camp is going to be quite elaborate because it’s in partnership with Mining Matters.”

Marie says the next phase is going to be focused on creating and adding to partnerships with employers. Already Shooniyaa has gained the support of Abitibi, Guardline Trucking Industry and Goldcorp and are hoping to establish more partners. “We’re going to be doing things like hosting breakfasts, lunches, for employees, so that when these students do get interested and want to start taking the next step there’s going to be a place for them to actually apprentice,” says Marie, adding, “There’s no sense in getting everyone excited and not having (employers) on board.”

Apprenticeship Feature Not Your Average Trade

Have you ever wondered who keeps the rides at an amusement park running? How about who builds the large automated machines used in automotive factories? A millwright goes by many names depending on what industry they're employed in but their job is always the same: keep machines running. Millwrights are responsible for installing, repairing and maintaining stationary industrial machinery and mechanical equipment. Would a millwright by any other name be as effective? Of course! Often called a construction millwright they are also employed as industrial mechanics, maintenance millwrights, plant equipment mechanics or treatment plant mechanics.

Some millwright jobs are multifaceted involving the installation of many types of equipment. Some are involved in the construction phase of a plant and are in charge of installing machinery and mechanical equipment. Most major industrial plants, mining operations, or manufacturing facilities will employ a millwright to inspect and examine equipment to keep all systems up and running.

With the incorporation of new technologies millwrights are also often called upon to maintain and repair "smart" machinery. This calls for them to be equipped with specialized computer knowledge to deal with the machine's programmable logic controls.



The Life of a Millwright

Work Environment

While millwrights work most often indoors in plants or factories there can be some outdoor work depending on the industry. The work is physically demanding as tradespeople deal with heavy equipment and must be able to work well as a team, alongside other tradespeople like electricians, steamfitters or welders.

Types of Millwrights

Industrial Millwright – These tradespeople often have contracts in industries like nuclear, automotive and steel manufacturers. They often have additional training in steel fabrication, machining, and more.

Construction Millwright – These millwrights generally are employed by contractors. Most millwrights start out as construction millwrights.

Are you the Right Fit?

Do you have the physical stamina to work with heavy machinery? Do you have an aptitude for all things mechanical? As with most trades, in order to be a millwright you must be at least 16 years old and have a minimum Grade 10 education, though some require Grade 12.

Communication skills and problem solving are key as well as working with others. With the emergence of newer technologies millwrights are called on to have advanced computer skills.

Those who think they would like to become a millwright should focus on courses in math, science, mechanics and technical drawing.

Where will it Take You?

Mining and Forestry
Automobile Building and Supply
Food and Food Processing
Breweries
Aerospace
Mechanical Construction
Pulp and Paper
Pharmaceutical
Steel Production
Nuclear and Fossil Power Stations

How Much Can You Earn?

Millwright journeypersons can expect to make between \$25 and \$35 an hour. Apprentices will make a percentage of the journeyperson's rate, usually 60 per cent in their first year and go up in wages at each level of apprenticeship.

Millwrighting: The Right Choice for You?



“In high school I took all the machine shop and welding classes and construction and automotive so I knew pretty much right away I was going to be in a trade, I just didn’t know what trade,” says James Hill a 27-year-old native of Six Nations of the Grand River territory.

Like many young people entering the workforce, James didn’t enjoy the ho hum of a regular work week. “I can’t be in one spot for too long or I get bored of it fast,” he says. After a little online research James decided that millwrighting would be a good fit for him. With varying work environments and a multitude of tasks to be completed James has no trouble keeping the spice in his work life. “I decided to become a millwright because I like working with my hands, I like to experience new and different things and this is the trade that I found that will let me do that,” he says.

Millwrights across Ontario can be found in numerous trades including automotive, manufacturing, construction, industrial plants and even at amusement parks keeping the roller coasters and rides up and running. As a first year millwright apprentice James says he can be anywhere from a food processing plant to a factory that manufactures cement.

“I’m not doing the same thing everyday. One day I could be in welding, one day I could be pipefitting, another day I

could be doing machinery moving so it gives me a lot of different things to look at in the millwright trade,” he says.

Through a 22 week pre-apprenticeship course at the Centre for Skilled Trades in Burlington, Ontario, James learned the basics of millwrighting and got a taste of what he would encounter in the trade. The centre was also able to set him up with his current apprenticeship at Versatile Millwright, a millwright contracting company based out of Milton, Ontario.

Millwrights are one of the many trades in high demand of skilled workers. With an increase in the numbers of aging skilled workers heading to retirement Ontario will need a surge of new talent to fill the gaps left. James says that’s one of the reason he got into millwrighting, “There’s a lot of opportunity for it now, there’s a lot of people that I work with saying how they’re going to be needing tradespeople so that’s one reason, because the opportunity is there.”

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While as a millwright James could get a position as an automotive millwright mechanic, a millwright in a food processing plant or within a pharmaceutical processing plant he says he thinks he’ll continue work for a contracting company to continue to experience all the facets of the trade.

“Today I was doing some pipe fitting but I could be doing anything from fabrication welding, pipefitting or machinery moving,” he explains adding, “I like that I’m able to work with my hands and it changes up all the time.” Whether it’s inside in a clean plant or outside in the winter or summer James says he’s always up for the challenge.

Dig in With a Career in Mining!

From miners and mechanics to geologists and engineers, Ontario's mining industry is ripe with opportunity. Many are surprised to find out just how big Canada's mining industry is and who it affects. Across the nation mining affects varying industries and helps to promote economic growth in the communities affected.

So what does mining contribute to Canada's economy? Canada produces nickel, copper, gold, zinc, platinum, palladium, cement, stone, sand, gravel, gypsum, salt and many more. Mined mostly in Sudbury, Ontario, nickel is the most valuable mineral, used in batteries and the production of stainless steel products, followed by gold,

copper, and platinum.

To produce all these commodities Ontario employs approximately 400,000 people directly and indirectly across the province including a large number of Aboriginal People making it the largest private sector employer of Aboriginals. But like many industries mining is facing a shortage. Efforts to retain current employees only provide a band-aid solution forcing the industry to seek fresh skilled workers. It's estimated that over the next ten years Canada's mining industry will require up to 92,000 new workers to cover a predicted 40 per cent loss in retirees.

The future of mining is further hampered by the lack of educational programs. While the price and demand for metals dipped so too did the numbers of institutions providing

training for metallurgists, and chemical and electrical engineers. With the current increased demand and high prices of commodities there is an increase in mining activity and training institutions can't turn out skilled workers fast enough. Shortages across the board for all industries means competition for workers will be high.

Are you ready to dig in and join this integral industry? There are over 120 different types of jobs in the mining industry in 12 specific career paths including: Electrical Engineer, Electrical Technologist, Geologist, Health and Safety Worker, Mining Engineer, Mineral Process Engineer, Mineral Processing Operator Technician, Supervisor, Surface Miner, Surveyor, Instructor, and Underground Miner. Dig in and see if a career in mining is right for you.

Apprenticeship Resources

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario
www.aabo.ca

Construction Sector Council of Canada
www.csc-ca.org

Rock On! - Careers in Mining
www.rock-on.ca

Mining Matters
www.pdac.ca./miningmatters

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's Apprentice Trades
www.apprenticetrades.ca

Tradeability
www.tradeability.ca

