

DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

LATEST NEWS >

Skills Training | Professional Services

April 20, 2009

Merit Canada welcomes Harper's reaffirmed commitment to apprenticeship training

Edmonton

The President of Canada's largest open shop construction association says an April 9 statement by Prime Minister Stephen Harper reaffirming the government of Canada's commitment to apprenticeship training is welcomed by Canada's construction industry.

In Edmonton, Stephen Kushner who is both president of Merit Contractors Association of Alberta and CEO of Merit Canada stated, the "statement by the Prime Minister that the government of Canada is actively moving forward with the Apprenticeship Completion Grant program comes at a critical time for our industry.

"While construction is not immune from current short term recessionary impacts, demographic forecasts show there is a clear need for more skilled construction workers in the near future."

The federal plan to move forward on the grant program, originally announced as part of the federal budget in January, aims to encourage upwards of 20,000 Canadian apprentices to complete their training.

This initiative complements concerted efforts by federal and provincial governments and industry to increase the construction industry's human resource capacity. In Alberta, these initiatives over the past decade have resulted in record numbers of apprentices starting up a working relationship with employers.

Since 1998, Merit has offered an association-financed program that reimburses one-hundred percent of tuition fee costs for apprentices being trained by member companies. In 2008, over \$2.1 million in tuition fees were reimbursed for over 3,100 apprentices who successfully completed apprenticeship training classes at a technical institute or college.

Mr. Kushner added, "This initiative goes hand in hand with the commitments made in federal and provincial budgets for infrastructure-related construction. Work opportunities are critical for apprentices because hands-on training with an employer constitutes 80% of the training needed to earn a journey person credential.

The Apprenticeship Completion Grant program will help encourage apprentices to complete their technical training and place the industry on a stronger future footing. "

DCN News Services



500 Hood Rd, 4th Flr., Markham, ON. L3R 9Z3
Phone: 905-752-5408 | Fax: 905-752-5450
Toll free: 800-465-6475 | Toll free Fax: 888-396-9413
E-mail: dcnonl@reedbusiness.com

© [Reed Business Information](#) a division of [Reed Elsevier Inc.](#) All rights reserved.