

October 27, 2009

Skills training

## Ontario passes bill creating College of Trades

School will help province compete in tomorrow's economy, minister says

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Ontario has passed legislation that will create the College of Trades, a move the province believes will help modernize the current apprenticeship system.

"Establishing the College of Trades recognizes the sector's professionalism and will help Ontario produce the skilled workers we need to compete in tomorrow's economy," John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, said in a statement. "The skilled trades are more important to Ontario's future than ever before."

Bill 183 passed today, Oct. 27, at Queen's Park and it will allow the college to be established and implemented in phases with a 2012 target date to be fully operational. The province believes the college will encourage more people to work in the trades, raise the industry's profile and give industry a greater role in governance, certification and training.

The hopes of some construction supporters of the college and the government is that the self-regulating body will professionalize the trades and will better serve everyone involved in apprenticeship, from employers to apprentices.

"If we get this right, it will be something tradespeople will be proud of," said Pat Dillon, business manager of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, at a recent Building Trades convention. "We want to hear principle-based arguments going forward about the college."

The college will be organized into four divisions, representing construction, services, industrial and other occupations. Kevin Whitaker, the college's implementation advisor, recommended the phasing in of the college, starting with the appointment of adjudicators to the apprenticeship-journeymen ratio and compulsory status review panels. The building trades have advocated for any work by the panels to tackle the construction industry first since there are compulsory tradespeople and apprentices already registered.