



Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce Newsletter

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

WINTER, 2010

DID YOU KNOW?

- Alberta could experience a labour shortage of approximately 77,000 workers between 2009 and 2019.
- Alberta's average hourly wage is \$23.80.
- There are about 4,800 Alberta job listings on www.jobbank.gc.ca.
- Employment increased by 13,900 people in December compared to November 2009, the second consecutive monthly increase.
- In December, full-time employment increased by 10,100 people and part-time employment by 3,800 people.
- Alberta's December unemployment rate of 6.7 per cent is the third lowest in Canada and is below the national rate of 8.5 per cent.
- Alberta's population was estimated to be 3.6 million as of July 2009. This is 91,795 more than 12 months earlier and the highest growth rate among all provinces.

A Message from the Minister

As the newly appointed Minister of Employment and Immigration, I would like to introduce myself and say how much I am looking forward to working with the many groups and individuals with interests in labour force development.

Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce, the Alberta government's labour force development strategy, was launched in 2006 primarily to address labour force shortages. Along with BETW, the Alberta government supported the development of nine industry-led workforce strategies.

We recognize we need to go even further by taking a longer, more strategic approach to labour force development.

The world's economy is changing and the current pause gives Alberta an opportunity to focus on building the skilled workforce we will need for the future economy. As we move to an increasingly knowledge-based economy, the jobs that companies offer, the skills that workers need, and the way that people advance in their careers will all change. We need to identify what those changes will be and how we can respond.

We must consider some important and emerging trends such as the connection between safe workplaces and competitiveness, the need to increase productivity through new technologies and learning, and the importance of finding ways to stimulate workplace innovation.

Given these trends, what are some of the strategies we are exploring for strengthening labour force development? Some examples of strategies include:

- Supporting stronger workforce participation and engagement of under-represented groups such as Aboriginal Albertans, youth and persons with disabilities
- Encouraging more employer investment in workplace learning and employee engagement;
- Developing our welcoming communities and helping immigrants integrate more smoothly; and
- Enhancing foreign qualification recognition, so that people can work in the jobs they are trained for.

Our thinking about labour force development is shaped by our ongoing consultation with industry and community stakeholders. We will continue to work with Albertans as our plan develops.



Minister Thomas Lukaszuk

This newsletter is developed by Alberta Employment and Immigration
Newsletter contact: (780) 415-9919

Government
of Alberta

Train your key staff in Employment Standards rules



Kate Young leads Employment Standards workshop.

An understanding of Employment Standards legislation can help your organization with Employment Standards claims.

Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I) assists employers by providing workshops on the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees under the

Employment Standards Code (Code).

The *Train the Trainer* program provides larger organizations, schools, colleges and industry associations with the skills and resource materials necessary to present their own workshops on the *Code*. Participants receive the facilitator's guide, the PowerPoint presentation and handouts.

Wages at Work is designed for employers, managers, supervisors, human resources and payroll staff, as well as the general public. Participants have the opportunity to become familiar with the legislation that affects their organizations and to add to their network of resources. Participants receive a comprehensive, easy to read manual that explains the *Code*. Topics covered by these

workshops include: payment of earnings, minimum wage, payroll records, statement of earnings and deductions, hours of work and rest, overtime and overtime pay, vacation and vacation pay, general holidays and general holiday pay, termination of employment, maternity and parental leave, employment of adolescents and young persons and self-employed/subcontractor relationships.

To arrange for one of these courses contact: Kate Young (for courses north of Red Deer), (780) 427-4200 or Kate.Young@gov.ab.ca or Brian Krueger (for courses from Red Deer south), (403) 297-5792 or Brian.Krueger@gov.ab.ca.

Canada and Alberta work together to support the unemployed

The Governments of Alberta and Canada are working together to develop a skilled, productive and adaptable labour force to support the long-term sustainability of the economy.

Through both short-term and long-term measures, both orders of government are prepared to respond to immediate needs as a result of the economic downturn as well as invest in longer-term training and employment needs to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce for the future.

Two initiatives announced in the 2009 federal budget are intended to provide earlier access to regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for those attending full-time training.

The first initiative is the *Extended Employment Insurance and Training Incentive*. Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I) refers eligible EI recipients for an extension of benefits while attending approved full-time training. Eligibility is based on the following criteria: an unemployed

long-tenured worker, who is receiving regular EI benefits and is in need of training to improve their employment potential or that will lead directly to employment.

The second initiative is the *Severance Investment in Training Initiative*. It supports unemployed long-tenured workers who have decided to use their separation money to finance their own training.

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Helping Boomers and Gen Ys work together

Top left to right
Kent McLeod, Kelly Josey and Sharon Pangman



Boomers and Gen Ys *Together: How to Boost your Performance* is a presentation developed by Employment and Immigration staff in Edmonton to help employers better understand the

multi-generational workforce. The presentation offers employers collaborative strategies to encourage these two generational groups to work together more effectively.

For more information on how

your organization can benefit from this and other workshops, please contact Sharon Pangman (780) 644-2872, Kent McLeod (780) 644-1481 or Kelly Josey (780) 422-5749 in the Edmonton region.

Canada and Alberta

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Eligible workers gain earlier access to regular EI benefits. To be eligible an individual must be an unemployed long-tenured worker, receiving regular EI benefits, in need of training to improve their employment potential and be willing to pay all training and living costs while training.

For information about applying for an EI claim call Service Canada at 1-800-206-7216 (press Option 1). For more information about these two temporary initiatives, go to www.employment.alberta.ca/CES/4337.html.

Alberta has delivered training benefits to EI clients since signing the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) in 1997. Federal funding support for non-EI clients was provided through the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement (LMA) in 2008. These agreements support the ongoing effort of the Government of Alberta to increase labour market participation of under-represented groups, as well as to assist low-skilled workers to obtain a better job.

Additional temporary funding to support workers hardest hit by the recession was made available

through the existing LMA and LMDA in May 2009. This new funding supports EI and non-EI eligible Albertans as well as employers and communities dealing with labour force adjustments.

For a recent example of the use of LMA and E&I funding to support Aboriginal clients see page 4. For more information on the 2009-10 Integrated LMA and LMDA Annual Plan go to: www.employment.alberta.ca/454.html.

New homes, new skills emerge from Piikani First Nations



Shown left to right: Karen Donahue (Area Manager Lethbridge), Ron Ingram (Contract Service Coordinator), Noelle Becker (Regional Director South) and Jim Swag (Manager Piikani Employment Services).



Two Piikani community members outside the hall where the official celebration took place.

In early October the Piikani First Nations community celebrated the completion of the first phase of a unique training partnership between the Piikani First Nation and the federal and provincial governments.

By the end of the project, trainees will have built a community building, community corrals, an addition to the training centre, and 10 to 12 modular homes for First Nations members in the community of Brocket, located between Pincher Creek and Fort MacLeod.

Funded in part under the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement, the 48-week skill training project involves 40 band members along with partnerships between the Piikani Employment Services, Ky Naak Ku Kaan Housing Corporation, Piikani Housing Department, Alberta Employment and Immigration and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

"The participants in the program are off income support and will secure employment with the skills they have learned," said Piikani Nation Chief Reg Crow Shoe.

"We have not seen a new home built in our community in over 15 years," Piikani councilor Adam North Peigan told a local newspaper after the opening ceremony. "This is a major, major step forward for our community."

Upon completion of the training program, trainees can challenge their apprenticeship entrance exam in one of four apprenticeship trades: carpentry, plumbing, electrical and welding. Graduates of this program will be able to find employment opportunities on and off reserve.

The project is one example of what can be achieved through the First Nations Training to



Ribbon cutting by chief and council members, as well as federal and provincial government representatives, marked the opening of the two new homes to the public.

Employment Program. The program provides unemployed or underemployed First Nations people (primarily living on reserve) with the skills needed for sustained employment in occupations with long-term employment prospects.

For more information, please visit www.employment.alberta.ca/fntep or call the Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753.

Program helps youth begin automotive technician careers

When Bob first came to Canada the only jobs he could find were minimum wage jobs in fast food restaurants. After completing the Integrated Training program through the Motive-Action Training Foundation, he was hired by an auto repair company and later became a journeyman auto service technician earning \$25 per hour.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity the program offered," he said. "Without this help I would not be where I am today."

Bob is just one of the many young people to benefit from the

Integrated Training programs, offered by Motive-Action Training Foundation.

Established in 1985, the foundation annually provides about 100 unemployed youth with automotive service technician experience and job maintenance skills. Funding is provided by Alberta Employment and Immigration and the Government of Canada.

The 24-week program includes 12 weeks of life management skills, essential skills and occupational skills offered at Motive-Action and up to 12 weeks work experience with an employer in auto servicing, auto body or heavy duty mechanics.

A goal of this training program is for the youth to become apprentices in their field of training.

About 90 per cent of program graduates find employment in their field of training. Automotive service industry jobs are still plentiful despite the current recession.

Integrated Training programs are provided to unemployed adult Albertans in the Calgary region.

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(See Program Helps Youth)*

HR workshops offered to Calgary employers



Workshop participants brainstorming attraction and retention strategies.

Alberta Employment and Immigration, Calgary Regional Partnerships and Alberta Finance and Enterprise are offering a five-part series of workshops on the best ways to attract and retain skilled and talented employees.

Each workshop in the series draws upon current publications the Alberta government has developed for employers such as:

- Finders & Keepers: Employee Recruitment Strategies
- Make a Good Match: Employee Selection

Strategies

- Skills by Design: Employee Development Strategies
- Better Balance, Better Business: Employee Work-Life Balance Strategies
- Beyond Pay and Benefits: Employee Retention Strategies

This year 16 employer workshops are or have been offered to employers in High River, Okotoks, Airdrie, Cochrane and Strathmore.

Employer workshops receive great feedback from participants. Attendees of the recent Beyond Pay and Benefits workshop decided to implement new strategies that included: interviewing new hires after three

months, conducting exit interviews, regular celebrating of successes and frequent communication with employees to understand generational differences.

In March 2009, a Train the Trainer workshop on the employer workshop series was offered to 15 staff and third party contractors from other regions. Each region across the province received copies of all the workshop materials. Both Central and South regions have plans underway to deliver the entire workshop series.

For more information on these workshops, please visit www.employment.alberta.ca/CES/2450.html. Information on registering for these workshops is available from Calgary Regional Partnership website www.calgaryregion.ca/crp/business/employmentinitiatives.aspx.

Raising the essential skill level among staff

The Workplace Essential Skills Training (WEST) program benefits employers and employees by providing employed Albertans with the essential skills necessary to fully participate at work and contribute to a highly productive workplace.

Essential skills include reading text, use of documents, writing, working with numbers, oral communication, thinking skills, working with others, computer use and continuous learning.

Alberta Employment and Immigration has heard of many success stories arising from the 14 WEST pilot projects. One story that stands out concerns a 20

year old masonry labourer. According to his employer, the labourer had good practical math skills on the job. For example, he was able to look at the size of a wall and quickly determine the number of bricks needed for the task. The masonry company hoped to retain the labourer and wanted him to train as an apprentice. This would mean the worker would see a salary increase, receive a formal recognition of his skills and would have greater opportunities for promotion.

Once the labourer became a participant in a WEST project, an assessment by the training provider determined his math skills were at grade six education

completion. As part of the WEST project, the employee was provided with flexible one-on-one tutoring focusing on math skills. Once the concepts were grasped, he successfully passed his apprenticeship entrance exam. The employer observed how his new apprentice's self-esteem and self-confidence rose. With possibly over 40 years left in the workforce, learning one simple set of skills changed one man's life.

The WEST program is currently being evaluated to determine outcomes and its overall success. The evaluation is expected to be complete by March 2010.

Staff Development Resources



Hire and Train an Apprentice

Learn more about the benefits of hiring and training apprentices, and developing the skilled workforce necessary to ensure the continued growth of your business.



Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)

This resource provides details on the Registered Apprenticeship Program, a unique initiative for employers willing to help high school students learn the skills of a trade while earning high school credits.



Skills by Design

Skills by Design is a toolbox for employers looking to invest in their company's future by sharpening the skills of their workforce. The publication builds the case that any business, no matter how small, should have the tools and know-how to do regular inspections, maintenance and enhancement of employee skills. It explains the why to, how to and what to do of employee skills development, featuring ideas and practical advice.



Let's Talk

The conflict resolution methods presented in this guide are helpful for employees and employers. It contains information on how to handle situations internally and where to get outside help.

To find these and other resources please visit the Employment and Immigration website at www.employment.alberta.ca/BI/2532.html or call the Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753.

Program Helps Youth

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Integrated Training programs are competency-based occupation-related training programs blending occupation-related skills, work experience placements and employment preparation skills training.

These programs help to build close links between training providers like Motive-Action Training Foundation and em-

ployers. Integrated Training programs are ideal for unemployed Albertans including youth, Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and unemployed and marginally employed newcomers.

More information on Motive Action and other Integrated Training programs, such as Youth Programs,

Occupational Skills Training, and Immigrant Training and Employment Programs and Services, can be found under the "Employment Training and Career Services Directory" link on the E&I Calgary Region website at: www.employment.alberta.ca/calgary.