

Electricity Labour Strategy

There is fierce competition for talent among the utility companies in British Columbia. Key jobs that are mission critical and hard to recruit include: power line technicians, finance managers, electrical engineers, front line supervisors, operator technicians. The electricity sector is notably impacted by the number of retiring long-serving employees with early retirement options imbedded in their pension plans. This coupled with the decline in university programs dedicated to power/electricity have caused a vacuum of new graduates with the necessary skills for these highly specialized roles. British Columbia (and the Territories) will be facing the largest skilled labour shortage within the next three to eight years.

Actions:

The Ministry will support the BC Working Group of the Electricity Sector Council to develop an education program targeted at Grades 10-12 that highlights career choices available in the electricity sector.

The Ministry will designate a labour liaison to work with industry and the Crowns to implement policy actions in the Labour Strategy.

Crowns and industry will keep government apprised of large project proposals that have significant labour impacts and implications on the ability to deliver on related business lines.

The Ministry will monitor compensation issues, as they arise with the Crowns, and facilitate discussion with the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC) as necessary.

The Ministry will work with the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) to have Economic Development facilitate an international recruitment mission to attract to critical roles identified, such as:

- Electrical Engineers
- Power Line Technicians
- Technicians/Technologists
- Front Line Supervisors
- Back Office Professionals

The Ministry will work with Crowns and industry to identify initiatives designed to increase labour availability in the sector, i.e:

- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI)
- HRDSC Innovation Fund
- Service Canada Labour Market Partnership Agreement (LMPA)

Government will advocate on behalf of Crowns and industry for a dedicated power engineering option at UBC and other institutions offering electrical engineering programs.

Government will consider in-house training, such as those programs offered at BC Hydro, for accreditation and certification through recognized education institutions.

Government will work with Crowns and industry to monitor apprenticeship completion rates in the electricity related programs.

Crowns and industry will adopt a best practice of supply chain management, encouraging small employers and contractors to deliver apprenticeship training by through shared resource development.

The Ministry will review the Red Seal program for potential barriers to labour accessibility.

Alternative and Renewable Energy Labour Strategy

This emerging energy sector provides an opportunity for British Columbia to be proactive in developing human resources in time to meet the upcoming demand. Requisite requirements for most of the occupations include some degree of electrical/mechanical and/or engineering competence. Occupations associated with these sectors include: business development specialists, engineers, designers, installers, operators and mechanics.

Actions:

Government will support renewable and alternative energy and energy efficiency associations in promoting careers in new and developing industries through government information campaigns, trade missions, etc.

Government will work in partnership with industry associations to promote the BC advantage: like BC's potential for Hydrogen, Ocean Renewable and Bioenergy.

The Ministry will build on the dialogue that began in April, 2006 with Alberta to enact the MOU on Energy Research, Technology Development and Innovation to promote efficiencies in research and development and look for economies.

The Ministry will host information sessions for the renewable and alternative industry reps in BC to meet with the Electricity Sector Council of Canada (the Sector Council responsible for their representation nationally).

The Ministry will work with the Ministry of Economic Development to determine a critical occupational shortages list, particularly in the areas of energy efficient building design trades people.

The Ministry will continue to sponsor an annual sustainable energy forum to share information between energy industry and stakeholders regarding current and future initiatives.

Government will work with industry and associations to identify suitable occupations for cross-over of Mountain Pine Beetle affected workers.

Government, in partnership with the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative, other Aboriginal groups and IPPs, will work to identify potential sources of labour in Aboriginal communities.

The Ministry as needed will review dated legislation such as the *Boiler Act*, in light of technological advances, to allow for more effective deployment of human resources.

Government will work with industry to identify trades training requirements for alternative sectors, leading to ITA designations and Red Seals, where appropriate, for example:

- Work with the Wood Pellet Manufacturing Association to develop training curriculum.
- Work with industry associations to develop new energy efficiency and conservation training, for example, Thermal Energy Comfort Association of BC, Canadian Home Builders Association of BC, to address consumer complaints regarding service standards.
- The Ministry will bring key parties together, including associations, employers, entrepreneurs and workers as required, to promote alternative and renewable energy sector networks across BC.

To stimulate job creation and skills training opportunities, government will examine the viability of a clean electricity procurement policy and continue to implement energy efficiency targets in its building stock.

The Ministry will create an inventory of training available in BC for renewable and alternative energy occupations.

Government will partner with Malaspina College to support the creation of a Green Building and Renewable Energy Technologist program.

The Ministry will work with AVED and Douglas College to expand the Building Environment Systems program.

Government will offer co-operative education placements for students who take programs related to energy, i.e. alternative, renewable or energy efficiency/power engineering.

Government will encourage energy education in public primary and secondary schools in energy supply/demand and efficiency and support the Ministry of Education in its curriculum review of the K-12 programs encapsulating energy and recommend additional sources of material.

The Ministry will engage university educators in BC to advance awareness of the variety of renewable/alternative energy and energy efficiency/conservation curriculum readily available for new teachers.

The Ministry will look for strategic opportunities to fund projects or programs that meet mutual interests and provide for economy of scale through the Collaboration in Energy Research, Technology Development and Innovation MOU with Alberta, that ultimately lead to job creation in renewable energy and energy efficiency technology in BC.

Government will partner with industry to target key strategic value positions (e.g. power engineers and other highly qualified personnel) that could shift at retirement into the renewable/alternative energy and energy efficiency/conservation sector.

The Ministry will actively seek leveraged funding opportunities for three new university chairs in Power Engineering, Ocean Renewable Energy Research and Development, Advanced Bioenergy Technologies.

Oil and Gas Labour Strategy

This sector has seen unprecedented growth in the number of oil and gas workers employed in British Columbia. Accurate labour market information specific to BC has proved problematic however, a recently completed survey of the major exploration and production companies based in Alberta, with operations in BC, suggests that the occupations most in demand for this type of work include: operators, engineers, geosciences professionals, speciality business service professionals, technicians and technologists. Due to the high volume of service sector work associated with oil and gas production, many trades jobs are also in demand.

Actions:

Establish the Centre of Excellence as a province-wide advisory body to provide strategic direction for oil and gas education, training and research and act as a hub for coordinating cross jurisdictional discussions on innovative industry models and responses to specific short and long-term labour market demands.

The Province will continue to support and develop joint solutions with the government of Alberta in an effort to harmonize policies and regulations to ease cross-migration burdens and assist in creating a more agile workforce.

The Province will support the devolution of the LMDA from the federal government to the provincial government and advocate for a sector study to be undertaken annually on behalf of the oil and gas sector in BC.

The Province will partner with industry, educational partners and the sector council to develop and deliver promotional materials for educators and citizens of BC to increase awareness of opportunities in the energy sector.

The Province will partner with the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) and its partners to ensure that labour market information flows between the sector and constituents in Aboriginal communities. In addition, the Province will identify gaps in labour market support for Aboriginal people and work with the AWPI to form partnerships to address solutions.

The Ministry will work in partnership with other ministries and organizations to explore options for utilizing labour pools impacted by Mountain Pine Beetle infestation.

The Province, in partnership with other governments, sector councils and industry will develop a foreign worker recruitment strategy for the oil and gas sector in BC.

To create more awareness of career opportunities in the oil and gas sector and to encourage more British Columbians to pursue a career in the oil and gas industry, the Ministry will work in partnership to ensure a comprehensive marketing and promotional campaign is developed to advertise the long term career benefits, transferability of skills and current opportunities in the oil and gas sector for the general public. The Ministry will continue to sponsor regional job fairs in partnership with industry.

The Province will work to harmonize efforts between Alberta and BC to ensure industry understands talent pool composition in order to maximize effectiveness.

The Province will work with the various education partners to develop a targeted campaign that caters to K-12 in the BC school system. Information guides for career counsellors in the schools, colleges and universities will be produced in tandem.

Work with partners to encourage expatriates and skilled workers to locate in BC.

The Province will partner with the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative and its partners to assist employers to access the potential workforce in Aboriginal communities.

Funding agreements will be sought between ministries to develop communication tools to allow workers to access employers/employment opportunities.

Establish the Centre of Excellence to provide province-wide planning and coordination for oil and gas education, training and research.

Increase apprenticeship and trades training in general, and expand programs to address specific skills shortages as they are identified.

Better inform entry-level recruits about the industry's viable, long-term career paths including the high level of transferability of skills to other industry by building on existing web-based curriculum maps and information that show the skills required for each job, where to acquire those skills and the resources available.

Develop and implement a workforce literacy initiative focussed on resource extraction and processing sectors to improve basic literacy skills on the job.

Partner with industry, associations and service providers to promote initiatives and programs that provide a safe work environment for oil and gas workers.

Bring together industry and education and training providers to share research and training (including business development and management skills).

Government will work to strengthen arrangements among industry, educators and Aboriginal organizations for increased investment in skills development and employment access for Aboriginal people.

The Province will establish working relationships with the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative and the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agencies in order to identify training and development needs and to assist medium to large sector employers to prepare their workplace for Aboriginal workers.

Partner with the ITA, Northern Lights College and Aboriginal groups to seek effective deployment of mobilized training on reserve and in remote areas.

To maximize the available Aboriginal workforce, utilize benchmark labour market information to create culturally appropriate training ladders for upgrading and skills development.

Develop targeted programs for women that increase their participation in training and development in the sector.

Develop a 'Women In Trades' initiative, with a focus on engaging young women in high school.

Develop and implement a mentoring program focussed on women who have been out of the labour force for more than five years.

The Province will explore the social, physical and cultural infrastructure requirements that keep employees in regions and will form partnerships to affect improvements.

Government will partner to ensure ongoing improvement efforts to provide a safe work environment for all oil and gas workers.

The Province will seek out local service providers to establish holistic support mechanism for new recruits in the communities, including Aboriginal workers, new immigrants, youth and women.

The Province, in partnership with the organizations like the BC Housing Commission and local governments, will continue to work to develop integrated solutions to the housing challenges in N.E. BC.

The Province will work in partnership with local service providers and stakeholder groups to promote diversity and create welcoming communities.

Government will partner with industry to ensure training is available using up to date equipment that utilizes leading edge technology.

The Ministry will offer support to the Province in its research and development of skills training tax credits and flexible retirement policies with an emphasis on older worker retention.