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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development

### **NEW STRATEGY ADDRESSES B.C.'S LOOMING SKILLS SHORTAGE**

VICTORIA – By 2019, British Columbia will have over a million job openings. Ensuring the province has the skilled workers in place to fill these jobs and flourish economically is the key goal of a new provincial strategy titled Skills for Growth: British Columbia's Labour Market Strategy to 2020, released today by Regional Economic and Skills Development Minister Ida Chong.

“If we want to maximize our economic potential, B.C. not only needs a highly skilled workforce, but also one with the right skills to match market demands,” said Chong. “Skills for Growth outlines our strategic approach to ensuring we have enough workers, with the right skills, in every region of the province.”

Over the next decade, B.C. is expected to be one of Canada's economic leaders, with a more than 25 per cent increase in provincial GDP by 2017. As a result of this economic growth, employment is projected to increase by an average of 1.8 per cent per year, creating 450,000 new jobs by 2019. As well, approximately 676,000 additional jobs are expected to be lost due to retirements. That means a total of about 1.1 million jobs will be available by 2019. Currently about 650,000 young people are in our education system, which means that the growth in job openings is expected to outpace the number of workers.

In response to these challenges, Skills for Growth targets three priority areas aimed at building B.C.'s workforce over the next decade:

- Increasing the skill level and success of people currently in British Columbia so that by 2020, B.C.'s labour market has a population with the necessary skills to pursue economic goals and capitalize on emerging opportunities.
- Attracting and retaining top talent from across Canada and around the world, highlighting the fact that B.C. is a welcoming environment that is internationally recognized as one of the best places for newcomers and their families to live, work, study and invest.
- Improving productivity by creating a culture of innovation that leads to productive workplaces.

“Over the next decade, we know that over three-quarters of our job openings will require a college diploma, trade certificate, university degree or higher,” said Chong. “Skills empower British Columbians with more options, helping them rise higher in their chosen profession, provide more for their families and enjoy more success in their lives.”

The Skills for Growth strategy was developed in consultation with employers, post-secondary institutions, labour, industry associations, government and other stakeholders. The strategy is designed to be the starting point of a co-ordinated effort to bring all stakeholders together to help meet British Columbia's future workforce needs.

The Skills for Growth strategy reinforces the work of the Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development to strengthen connections between communities, employers and post-secondary institutions to ensure each region of the province has the skills required to drive regional economic growth.

For a copy of Skills for Growth: British Columbia's Labour Market Strategy to 2020, go to: [http://www.workbc.ca/labour\\_market\\_statistics/skills\\_for\\_growth.htm](http://www.workbc.ca/labour_market_statistics/skills_for_growth.htm)

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