

BUILDING SASKATCHEWAN

*The Official Publication of
the Saskatchewan Provincial Building
and Construction Trades Council*



Spring 2012

STAFFING SASKABOOM

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A Message from Robert R. Blakely

President, Canadian Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Things are booming in Saskatchewan, so we should be happy and everything should be great, right? I wish it was so simple. The truth is that there are more issues for the Saskatchewan Building Trades Unions when things are hopping than there are when things are stalled. Sure there are jobs and money isn't tight, but the problems of lots of work need our laser-focused attention! If we just hold on and enjoy the ride we'll find to our everlasting chagrin that things won't be quite as nice when the world goes back to where it was in 'normal times'. What we do in boom times will predict what happens to us in those normal times. I hear people saying, "Hey, we're in Saskatchewan. It's going to be great here for the future, we're never going back to normal, this is the new normal!" Those of us who have ridden the rollercoaster know better and even if you assume that the ride will never end, unless we make sure that we are making the right moves we will pay a price. I'm not being a panic merchant, just someone who has seen the cycle played out a number of times.

The first, overarching issue is people - people with skills from somewhere else, people with some skills who will need more to be marketable, temporary foreign workers and, most importantly, apprentices who will be there when the current crop of tradespersons leave the scene. The Building Trades know that our value to contractors and owners is our ability to provide highly skilled tradespeople when and where they are needed. The truth is the people who have built Canada for the last 40 years are going to retire. We will need to replace them. Just to keep up with forecasted

retirements we need 20 per cent more apprentices on every job to manage the new demand created by more work.

We can't get 50 or 60 per cent of apprentices on the job all at once, so we need to be smart, and smarter than we've been in the past. Experienced tradespersons understand or need to understand a very important fact - today's and tomorrow's apprentices are the people we are counting on to keep the industry as well as our members' pension and health plan going! Well, there is some self-interest in this, then; we have a primary and very important role in the development of the apprentices. In the past (the veterans and baby boomers amongst us will remember this) the apprentices got to do dirty jobs and no one really taught them too much because they could take your job. That was then. Now, we have no realistic choice - the veterans are disappearing from our ranks and the boomers will follow shortly. This is a generational shift. We have a duty to our trades, our contractors, owners and our members to replace ourselves before we slide off to sunny winters in Arizona (or North Battleford as your whim takes you).

If you read anything about the generations there is much written about the 'kids' not having the drive and stick-to-it-iveness of their parents. Here are some real facts: if we present ourselves as proud tradespersons, professional, skilled, competent and open to sharing our secrets gained over the last umpteen years, young apprentices will respect us and ape our behaviour. If we are productive and ready to work, they will be. If we teach them how to work and work smart, they will do so. If we let them know that we think it is important to work all the hours that are set to work and that we see absenteeism as

dereliction of duty so will they. If we can show them how a professional approaches problems and solves them, they will have those skills for life.

This is a vital and solemn duty to make the young people who will build Canada for the next 40 years be the skilled professional people that we've been for the last 40 years. We have a chance to get it right - to mentor new apprentices to meet the standards that we aspire to - highly skilled, conscientious, and hard working. If we meet that standard, we know that the Building Trades will continue to be the first choice on industrial construction sites in Saskatchewan. ■

Robert R. Blakely
President, Canadian Building
and Construction Trades
Department, AFL-CIO

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President's Message



An open letter to employers and contractors

This magazine is directed at employers and contractors and focuses on the common challenge we all face: a massive increase in demand for skilled trades in the province as a result of demographic changes and increased construction activity.

Saskaboom is here and it's here to stay. We've had a boom for the last seven years and there's no doubt it's going to last into the foreseeable future. There will be ups and downs over the years, but the overall demand for skilled, hard-working tradespeople will continue to be high and, more likely than not, to grow over time. The Saskatchewan Building Trades are taking action now to ensure there is a supply of skilled labour to meet the coming demand in industrial and commercial construction.

A boom is great for employers and employees, and certainly better than when our members have had to look out of province for work. Now, there is a golden opportunity for Saskatchewan tradespeople to remain in the province and help build and grow Saskatchewan.

Still, a boom presents its own unique problems. Labour supply and cost overruns in a hot market are two key issues. We've always believed that because our members are highly trained, experienced and committed to what they do, they can help keep costs down on the job. Too often, cost overruns are the result of low quality workmanship requiring fixes and repairs, absenteeism and material wastage. Projects staffed with skilled trades workers have a better chance of ending up on time, on budget and with a high-quality product to turn over to the owner.

What we're doing to ensure an adequate and quality

workforce in Saskaboom is the theme of this issue. You'll read about our traditional work in training and upgrading, the hiring hall system that gives you instant access to labour and the ability to recruit workers from across Canada through our unique programs like the Travel Card program.

Our affiliates are working with counterparts in our international unions to bring in Temporary Foreign Workers from the United States who are ready, willing and have the skills to hit the ground as productive workers on Saskatchewan projects. And we're developing a workforce in Saskatchewan, with a key focus on bringing in new members including those from non-traditional groups such as Aboriginal people and women.

In all these programs, our first priority is to meet the needs of our contractors using our local Saskatchewan members. When that isn't enough, we bring in skilled workers from across Canada and the world. At the same time we are working to develop and expand a Saskatchewan workforce. Trades are becoming more known and preferred as a career of choice in the province, and we need to build on that.

We also bring a willingness to work in partnership with contractors, owners and our partners in government and education. Ensuring the best workforce is here, now and in the future, benefits us all and benefits our province. ■

Chuck Rudder
President
*Saskatchewan Provincial Building and
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Staffing Saskaboom

*By Terry Parker,
Business Manager, Saskatchewan Provincial Building
and Construction Trades Council*

The Saskatchewan Building Trades is working hard to ensure that, in the light of an extraordinary construction boom anticipated into the foreseeable future, there are skilled workers who can build first-class projects on time and on budget. That's the theme of this issue of *Building Saskatchewan* and we're going to look at how traditional trade union practices and some significant new initiatives we are undertaking are enabling us to meet labour demands. First, let's look at the demand.

The demand

The boom in Saskatchewan is well-known and has been in place for the last seven or eight years. The Saskatchewan Mining Association estimates that mining companies alone will invest \$50 billion over the next 20 years in extending existing properties and adding new ones, particularly in areas where Saskatchewan is a world-class provider of potash and uranium. The Bakken play in southeast Saskatchewan is pushing along major new oil and gas development, and it too requires skilled labour over the long term. While these areas get a lot of media play, there are also less well-known traditional industries facing major expansion, like the \$1.2-billion carbon sequestration project for SaskPower, as well as its ongoing expansions and upgrades as it readies to meet power demand from all

the new industry and all the ancillary power needs of new workers in expanding municipalities. And there are major new individual projects such as the Global Transportation Hub near Regina and the Childrens' Hospital in Saskatoon.

The demand for labour doesn't just come from within Saskatchewan of course. \$100 billion in oil sands development has been pledged in Alberta, and Transcanada and Enbridge are planning major new pipelines to get products to refineries. Nova Scotia and British Columbia have a 20-year \$35-billion shipbuilding program for the Royal Canada Navy, and Vale is planning a new mill for its Voisey's Bay project and is actively advertising in Saskatchewan for thousands of skilled trades, both for the construction phase and the operation phase. Finally, The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the Canadian electricity system will invest \$300 billion over the next 20 years to maintain existing assets and meet market growth. In all, we are looking at the biggest construction boom in Canadian history.

The demographics

While this is generally great news for industry and the trades, there are demographics including retirements facing the industry. The Construction Sector Council of

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Canada estimates that between 2011 to 2019, 208,000 skilled tradespeople will retire, with only 110,000 new recruits entering the trades. As the *Globe and Mail* reported Feb. 16 2012, "As a result of these two competing forces – unprecedented labour force contraction running up up against equally unprecedented demand for skilled trades – the next seven years alone will see the economy coming up short by about 156,000 skilled tradespeople."

How does the Saskatchewan Building Trades Council and its affiliated unions help employers and contractors meet this future demand?

We build on the work we've historically done, working in co-operation with owners and contractors, governments and educational facilities. In light of high demand, we are finding workers from non-traditional demographics who need to have higher representation in the trades, and we need to examine new, creative opportunities to get the right person on the right job.

Traditional programs for staffing construction

Apprenticeship still acts as a major means of getting people into the trades.

Our members sit on the Board of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and trade boards working with employers and the government advising them on industry needs.

At the apprenticeship level, our unions provide training to enhance and further the training and skills level of working members. Our members spend millions of dollars on training and upgrades, whether its developing their own training centre or subsidizing members to get the training they need out of province or at private institutes.

The hiring hall is a traditional staple of connecting labour demand to supply. It's a one-stop shop where employers can find the skilled trades they need, fast. It's a benefit to both employer and employee to have a quick and easy way to get the right person on the job.

Looking within: developing the Saskatchewan Labour Market

While there are a number of programs that bring

skilled workers in from other parts of Canada, the US and the world, the Building Trades Council is committed to developing our labour market first.

Our first preference is to hire locally. As such, we work hard to develop trades skills among Saskatchewan workers. Getting Aboriginal people and women into the skilled trades is a key element of our strategy. They are traditionally underrepresented in trades everywhere, but we're finding more and more employers who understand the necessity of welcoming these groups into the workforce. We hired Lyle Daniels in 2011 as Labour Development Strategist, with a focus on developing more skilled Aboriginal workers in a growing and dynamic population. We've been working and will continue to work with SaskWitt (Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technology) to bring more women into the workforce. There is plenty of potential here before we go outside the province.

Outside the province

With the tremendous demand on skilled workers, bringing in workers from outside the province is an essential element of the Building Trades' work. One traditional method is the Travel Card Program. Most trade unions are national and international, and because the certification across North America is reasonably consistent, members from other provinces or states can easily move to Saskatchewan to work on construction projects.

This program helps skilled workers in high unemployment areas to work in areas of need, without having to permanently move to Saskatchewan. We are leaders in labour mobility. Unions will assist their national and international members with any administrative work necessary to get them here and working.

The Travel Card Program is our first priority in bringing in workers from out of province. That way, work goes to our members first, who are our first priority as trade unions.

The Saskatchewan Building Trades have also placed an emphasis on understanding and using the Temporary Foreign Workers' Program (TFW). Under this program, we are able to quickly bring in skilled union workers from the United States to work on specific projects who can then return to their home country when the project is done.

And, as with any of our current members, if required we provide training.

Summary

We recognize the pressures owners/contractors are under and we are working very hard in partnership with them to ensure a qualified, adequate skilled labour force in the future. We know that our top job is to provide highly skilled labour to our contractors when and where they need it. There is more information in this magazine about specific ventures we are undertaking, current and anticipated, alone or in partnership with employers, contractors, governments and education. Meeting the future labour needs of Saskatchewan serves all our needs and serves the needs of a growing, dynamic and prosperous province. ■

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Powering Growth

As Saskatchewan grows, the need for electricity grows, and SaskPower estimates that energy demand will grow 2.9 per cent a year for the next 20 years. Along with that growth will come the need for skilled tradespeople to build generation capacity.

“As a power company, we have built a 40-year leadership outlook which provides a strategic view of our challenges and options going forward,” says John McKenzie, Manager of Strategic Corporate Development for SaskPower. “Not knowing what the future will bring,

we have devised pathways which, if enabled, will allow Saskatchewan to meet its electricity needs responsibly and at a reasonable cost.”

Currently, the biggest and highest profile building project on the go at SaskPower is the Boundary Dam Integrated Carbon Capture and Storage Demonstration Project (BD3) in Estevan. This \$1.24-billion project will employ 800 skilled workers at its peak over the next two-plus years. At the end, this cutting edge clean coal project is expected to reduce the emission of carbon dioxide by 90 per cent, effectively eliminating

one million tonnes a year of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere while generating 110 megawatts of clean power. SaskPower is a valuable partner of the Saskatchewan Building Trades for both industrial construction and maintenance work,” says Terry Parker, Business Manager with the Saskatchewan Building Trades. “Building Trades members have been fixtures on SaskPower construction sites and we intend to continue to offer the highest skilled, hardest workers available.

“This is a unique project because our engineers took a fully integrated



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view, optimizing the ability to remove a large percentage of carbon dioxide, while maximizing the efficiency of the removal. This was accomplished by replacing the existing turbine and making modifications in design to optimize the chemistry used to reduce the gases,” McKenzie says. “Coal is critical to the power needs of this growing province. We have a huge supply of it, but we need to find a way to reduce the harmful effects of coal-burning to the environment, particularly on the scale SaskPower uses it.” Coal provides about 50 per cent of SaskPower’s energy output.

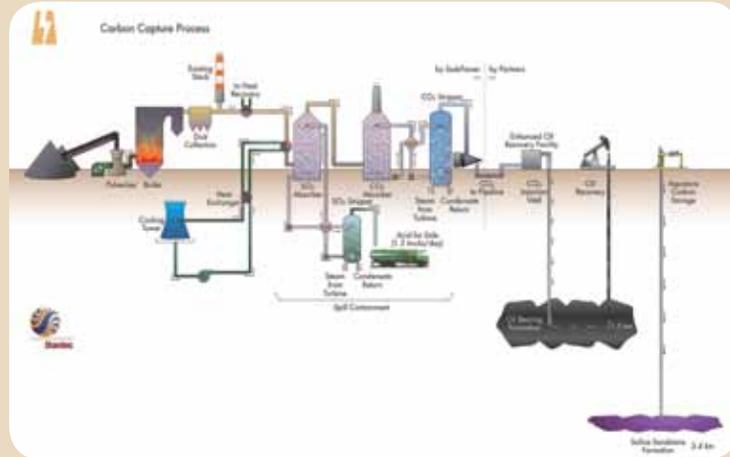
The project is a demonstration project, funded by SaskPower and the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada. “There is a learning curve to a project like this. We hope what we will learn from this project will allow us to reduce costs in the future and develop even more efficient technology.”

The process will remove 90 per cent of the carbon dioxide gas, which will then be compressed and transported to depleted oil wells, facilitating enhanced oil recovery. The use of CO2 in this way brings many economic and energy benefits to Saskatchewan. As the technology develops, we are also examining the option to store the gases underground in deep saline aquifers where scientists have shown carbon dioxide can remain geologically secure.

Another benefit of this project is that it is expected to lead to the development of sound regulation and policies not only for Saskatchewan but for Canada.

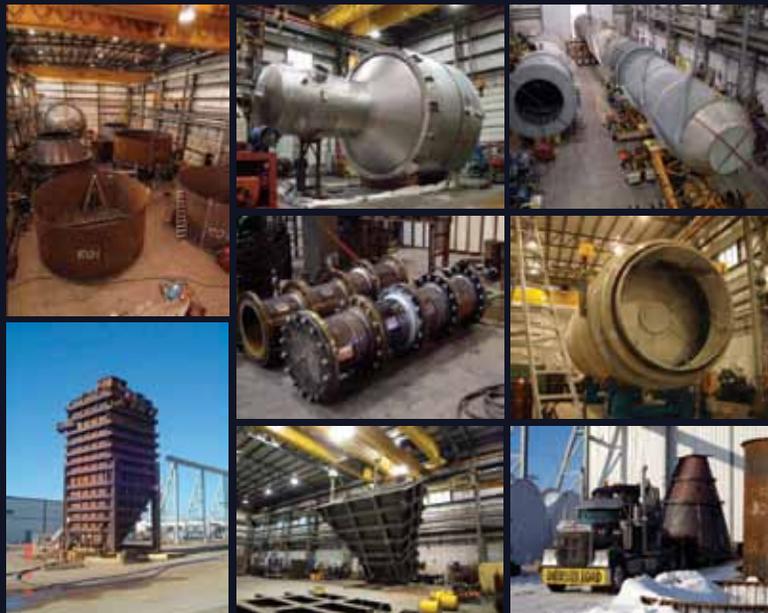
“This is a new area for everyone, particularly on a scale like this,” McKenzie says. “What we learn here and do here we hope to be able to share with other coal-burning energy suppliers, and hopefully lighten the environmental load for everyone.”

For more information on this project, please log on to saskpower.com and click on to Carbon capture and storage demonstration on the home page.



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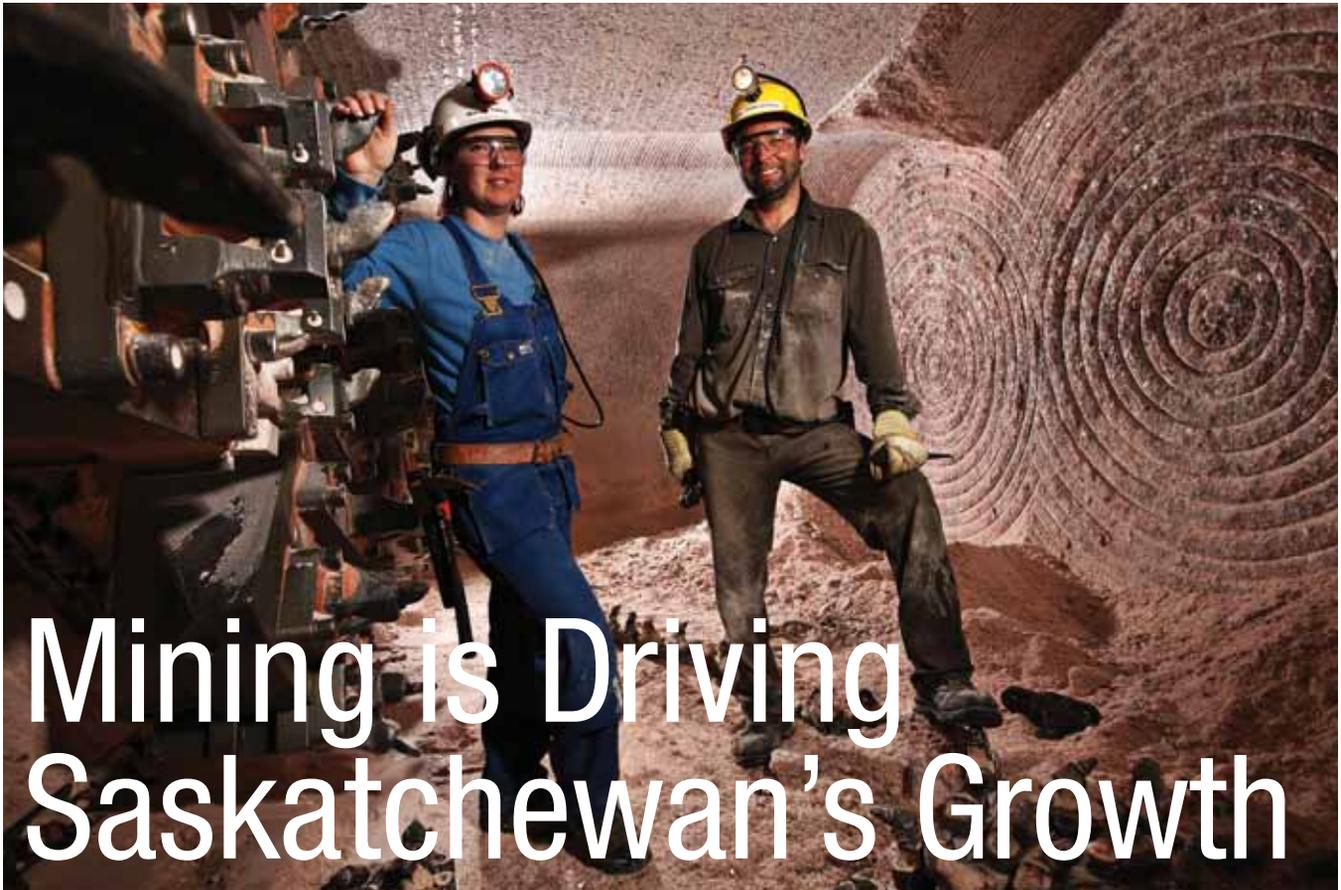
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“Saskatchewan is poised to see \$50 billion in capital investment injected into the provincial mining industry in the next 20 years,” says Pam Schwann, executive director of the Saskatchewan Mining Association (SMA). Mining is currently a \$7.7-billion industry in the province, accounting for 12 per cent of the provincial economy and one in 16 jobs. *Last year alone, non-residential building permits increased in Saskatchewan 118 per cent, from November 2010 to November 2011.*

“This growth in our industry means a significant demand for contract and permanent skilled workers now and in the future,” she adds. “Potash and uranium lead the way in new projects across the province, north and south, but coal and gold are also major producers. The future of Saskatchewan is very bright as far as its mineral prospects are concerned.

Saskatchewan has a number of advantages in terms of developing mineral resources for the world.



“We’ve got what the growing world population wants and needs; we have strategic commodities such as potash, uranium and gold; and we have large, world-class deposits,” Schwann says. “Plus we’re a safe, stable environment and we have world-class expertise in what we’re doing.”

Recruitment and retention of skilled labour is a critical issue, however.

A report by the SMA and the Mining Industry Human Resources Council in 2011 estimated that the mining sector alone needs to go

from hiring 1,730 new trades and undesignated occupations in 2013 to 4,890 in 2021. The report notes this increase has to be managed in light of an aging population and workforce. It concludes:

“... to ensure that the Saskatchewan mining industry is able to meet its forecasted labour market challenges over the next 10 years, it will need to continue efforts to attract key talent groups, and to co-ordinate workforce planning efforts among employers and other stakeholders.

All stakeholders must work together to close the talent gap. Common goals include: attract key talent groups, including First Nations and Metis peoples, new Canadians, and workers from other sectors and other provinces; retain the aging workforce and re-engage retirees; and support education and training initiatives to increase the number of individuals who choose a career in mining once they leave school.”

“SMA agrees with the findings of the report, which is very helpful



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in guiding our human resources strategies over a long timeline,” Schwann adds. “We support the work that many groups are doing to ensure a skilled workforce to meet the growing future demands of the mining industry. The mining industry in Saskatchewan wants to work in partnership with these groups to meet this human resources challenge. This unprecedented talent challenge may require new innovative training programs.”

In the north, Saskatchewan miners work closely with a number of

partners, including Aboriginal communities, to develop a local skilled workforce. Residents of northern Saskatchewan occupy most journeyman and apprenticeship positions at these mines. In the north, mine operations purchased \$916 million in goods, \$361 million from northern businesses. Of the 3,615 employees at northern mines in 2010, 46 per cent were from northern Saskatchewan, with an annual payroll of \$90 million. Cameco is the number one industrial employer of Aboriginal people in Canada. ■

Pink gold is driving the boom in Saskatchewan mining.

Saskatchewan companies control over 30 per cent of existing global production of potash, and three of the top 10 potash mining companies are Saskatchewan based – Potash Corp at number one, Mosaic at number three and Agrium at number nine.

The key markets for potash are China, North America, Latin America, India and other Asian developing countries. “While these countries are growing economically and have a rising middle class, their amount of arable land is constant and sometimes shrinking. Increasing yield per acre to feed their populations is critical, and potash is the critical element in chemical fertilizer,” says Pam Schwann.

Saskatchewan currently has 10 potash mines for the three companies, and each is expanding existing properties and developing new ones. In addition, new companies are carrying out work to develop new potash mines in Saskatchewan. They include BHP Billiton at Jansen, Boulder, Young and Melville properties; K + S Potash Canada north of Moose Jaw; and Vale, Western Potash, North Atlantic and Encanto are in the province exploring different properties.

SMA estimates global demand growing at a forecasted rate of three to four per cent a year and global inventories are low right now.

“While prices will fluctuate, miners are used to that and manage their operations accordingly,” Schwann says. “However, miners think in decades, not hours, and we’re confident we will have a safe, profitable business for decades to come.” ■

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Unions Integral to Trades Training



Saskatchewan is facing a skills shortage and training gap that could become a skills crisis.

The Saskatchewan Building Trades are filling that gap with robust in-house training programs. Union facilities are overflowing with apprentices learning the trade and journeymen upgrading their skills. As a result, workers are more skilled and bring those extra skills to the workplace, making for a high-quality and efficient workforce.

Union collective agreements provides for funding based on each hour worked to be set aside for training. That could include covering the cost of a two-week refresher program offered at a third party facility. Training such as that helped operating engineer David Orge achieve his Red Seal (a profile of David, who won this year's Garth Ivey Scholarship, appears on page 31). Other trades, like the plumbers/pipefitters and sheet metal workers have their own purpose-built, year-round training centres in Regina and Saskatoon (a profile of the plumbers/pipefitters new \$3.5-million facility in Saskatoon appears on page 23. No government funding went into this facility; it all came from the union).

Trade unions will also support their members to attend training programs offered at post-secondary facilities across the province, mainly SIAST, or with Alberta (NAIT/SAIT) or Manitoba (Red River College), depending on which facility offers the most relevant training.

As with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Commission and post-secondary facilities, more and more unions are developing distance training, using the Internet and digital media to provide training that allows members the maximum flexibility to upgrade their skills and learn continuously.

"It's not just skills training unions

provide," says Terry Parker, Business Manager for the Council. "Unions provide occupational health and safety training, which includes programs on preventing drug and alcohol use on the job; supervisory training; and quality assurance and quality control training. Our focus is on anything our members need to know to do better work in a safer environment." ■

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Saskatchewan's Unionized Building Trades and Contractors

A Future Source of Labour:

Aboriginal Communities and Their Population Boom



*Lyle Daniels,
Labour Development Strategist*

A huge potential source of future labour is from Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan.

“Right now, the median age for non-Aboriginal people in the province

is 41.4 years and the median age for Aboriginals is 19.6,” says Lyle Daniels, Labour Development Strategist for the Saskatchewan Building Trades. “There’s a huge population boom happening here that, if properly developed, could be a great source for local, highly skilled tradespeople.”

Most of Daniels’ work is educational, particularly in high schools on reserve, explaining the advantages of the trades to students ready to graduate. “There’s a lot of advantages for First Nations youth to get into trades,” he says. “First, you can keep your home on the reserve. All

tradespeople are used to leaving home for the job site, working a number of days in, then returning home. A job in the trades meets the lifestyle needs of First Nations people who want to preserve their family and community connections and culture on the reserve.

“Secondly, students can start work and start getting paid, right away. It’s a common myth that education for First Nations people is free. The education budget has been capped since 1996 while the population has increased significantly. So, instead of going to college or university for three years and coming out with no job and a mountain of student loan debt, the apprentice starts making money immediately,” said Daniels. The average apprentice, Aboriginal or not, works 10 months of the year and attends school for two months.

Daniels finds some misconceptions about the trades from both First Nations’ leaders and contractors. “Some worry about a seniority system, but the trade system doesn’t work on seniority. You get the most qualified people for the job, not the longest-serving.”

“Similarly, First Nations’ leaders have limited information how the Building Trades work. When they hear about the hiring hall system, and the direct relationship between employer and unions, in which they work in partnership to get the right people on the job, they’re impressed. Partnership is a key word for all First Nations people, developing opportunities and eliminating barriers.”

Daniels has been with the Council for a little over a year, and he has been making progress, signing Memoranda of Understanding with two Tribal Councils, Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs and File Hills/Fort Qu’Appelle, geared to increasing opportunities for Tribal Council members to be employed in the union building trades. ■

For more information on opportunities for First Nations and Métis people in the trades in Saskatchewan, please contact Daniels at 306-359-0006 or email him at ldaniels@saskbuildingtrades.com.

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Women in Trades

The number of women in construction trades has doubled in the last five years.

“Unfortunately, it’s gone from two per cent of women in trades to four per cent, so we have a ways to go,” says Valerie Overend, Executive Director of Saskatchewan Women In Trades and Technology (SaskWITT).

“Still, there’s room for optimism for getting more girls and women into traditionally male-dominated occupations. Women only constituted five per cent of the engineering workforce in 1970. That’s gone up to 20 per cent in 2000. I think we can do the same with women in trades, but we are just starting a bit later.”

She notes that the increasing demand for skilled tradespeople is making employers more conscious of the value of bringing that demographic into the workforce.

“A lot of work has been done for some time to recruit and retain more women into the trades.”

There are three broad strategies that are in place for girls and women. The first is focused on students, from kindergarten to Grade 12. Kindergarteners get hands-on tools use at 16 different activity stations using tools from 16 trades. Working with SIAST, one-week summer camps for Grade 7 and 8 girls are held across the province (Girls Exploring Trades and Technology). They

are taught by female instructors from a variety of trades to build go karts, seeing how basic skills can be applied in a practical yet fun manner. A complementary program was designed for Aboriginal girls. A number of other programs are available through schools and partners like SIAST.

The second strategy is to recruit adult women into the trades. A variety of short courses are offered to give women exposure to the different trades and the skills required to practice them, as well as work placement.

The third strategy is focused on the workplace and a key part of that is the Checklist of Strategies, an 81-page document designed to be used with employers, unions, associations and HR managers in a facilitated workshop that gets them focused on the issues they need to look at in order to get more

women tradespeople. The checklist looks at effective practices for recruitment, selection, orientation, retention, career development, training, and health and safety.

“The Checklist has proven to be a very useful, practical tool for employers and unions to drill down into specific actions that will increase the number of women in trades,” Overend says.

Overend, a carpenter by trade, is also a strong proponent of trades unions. “For 30 years I’ve seen tradeswomen outside the union getting less pay or benefits than men. The advantage of the union is that it looks at pay according to skill level by certification, not by gender or race, and the union can protect women from unfair practices on the job.” ■

For more information, please log on to www.siastr.sk.ca/witt, or email Overend at saskwitt@myaccess.ca.

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Apprenticeship Numbers Important in Economic Boom

All journeypersons in the Saskatchewan Building Trades start as apprentices, and as the economy booms apprenticeship is increasingly important to meeting skills demand.

“We’ve almost doubled the number of apprentices in our program since 2005,” says Joe Black, Chief Executive Officer of the Saskatchewan

Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. “We had 5,436 apprentices in Saskatchewan at June 30, 2005, with 2900 training seats; and 9,442 apprentices at June 2011, with 5826 training seats. We expect to have 9,800 apprentices for 2012. The booming construction business is one of the major drivers of that growth.” Approximately 65 per

cent of the apprentices in 2011 are employed in the construction sector.

“Industry wants people who can hit the ground running. With a solid background as an apprentice they are ready to work under the supervision of more experienced tradespeople,” says Black.

The Commission works very closely



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with high schools to promote careers in the skilled trades. A series of six brochures have been developed as well as their website to encourage young high school graduates to pursue careers in the skilled trades. The provincial government recently announced a commitment of \$400,000 over four years that will allow the Commission to more than double the number of \$1,000 scholarships available to high school graduates entering the skilled trades, from 40 to 100.

SIAST is a significant provider of apprenticeship technical training, which consists of the classroom work that reinforces workplace training. As well, the Commission is developing online training in conjunction with Manitoba Apprenticeship, SIAST and Red River College in Manitoba. This will allow apprentices to receive more of their formal education at home or on the job site. "Apprentices will be able to choose between online or on site, or a combination of both," Black says.

As a result of the population boom in the Aboriginal community in Saskatchewan, the Commission reports 13.5 per cent of its apprentices are Aboriginal.

"We work closely with many employers and employee organizations like the Trades Council and its affiliates to ensure the training we provide matches the needs of the workplace," Black notes. "We have an excellent relationship with both employers and employees who sit on our advisory committees to ensure open two-way lines of communications.

"I consider the Saskatchewan apprenticeship system to be the best in Canada, because of industry involvement at both the employer and employee level."

He adds that the need for skilled tradespeople isn't confined to Saskatchewan and Alberta. "Newfoundland and Labrador has major projects in oil and mining and Nova Scotia has a multibillion-dollar shipbuilding program for the Royal Canadian Navy," Black says. ■



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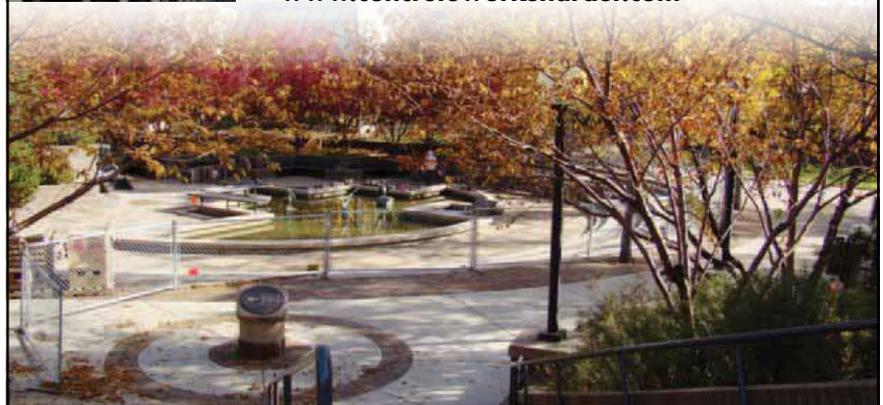


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Temporary Foreign Workers

The Saskatchewan labour market has fundamentally changed in the last five years. Employers accustomed to filling vacancies from a large pool of local qualified and experienced candidates now find their workers coming from across Canada and increasingly, the world.

The Saskatchewan building trades are changing practices to keep ahead of labour shortages. In addition to the highly successful traveller program that brings journeymen from across Canada to Saskatchewan work sites, the building trades are also leaders in bringing temporary foreign workers to Saskatchewan job sites.

Recent economic turmoil south of the border means that there are thousands of journeypersons in every trade who are looking for work. Many are willing to bring their skills to Saskatchewan. Because the building trades unions are *international*, workers in locals with high unemployment in the United States can be quickly brought to Canada. In fact many affiliates in Saskatchewan already have lists with 100 or more skilled and experienced tradespeople ready, willing and able to come to Saskatchewan.

“This is something that the Saskatchewan building trades are devoting a lot of time and effort to,” says Terry Parker, Business Manager for the Saskatchewan Building Trades. “Two of our affiliates – the Ironworkers and the Insulators – already have temporary foreign workers from U.S. locals working in Saskatchewan. Our other affiliates are ready to go.”

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program is operated by the federal government and allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers to meet their labour needs when there are limited qualified Canadian workers or permanent residents available. Employers are required to seek a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) from Service Canada affirming that they are experiencing a labour shortage.

When assessing an application for a LMO, program officers consider whether the employment of the foreign worker will fill a labour shortage and whether the wages offered to the foreign worker are consistent with prevailing rates. If Service Canada determines that employers and unions have made reasonable efforts to hire or train Canadian citizens or permanent residents then the LMO will be approved allowing the Building Trades to bring in workers from the United States to work for employers on Saskatchewan projects.

As part of the program the employer makes an offer of employment to a Temporary Foreign Worker and provides a guarantee of work and wages to that worker for the duration of his/her work permit. The employer still has the ability to layoff or dismiss the employee if necessary. It is up to the foreign worker to arrange for a work permit to work in Canada. Generally, it is easiest for citizens of the United States to obtain permits to work in Canada.

The TFW Program is best suited for large industrial construction projects where single employers have a demand for a large number of workers, possibly across a variety of trades or skill categories. There is no minimum length of time that a TFW can work in Canada.

There are three federal government departments involved in the recruitment of TFWs to Canada: Service Canada/HRSDC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

“The Building Trades are involved in programs like this so that we can fulfill our role of meeting our contractors’ labour needs with high-quality, hard-working journeypersons,” Parker continues. “We can handle the process from start to finish including finding the workers and making sure that all the necessary paperwork is complete.” ■

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A New UA Training Centre

*By Ken Busch, Director of Training,
UA Local 179 JTC*

Our organization set up a Joint Training Committee in 1969 and opened our first Training Centre in Regina that year. A satellite Training Centre was opened in Saskatoon (2005) and it was apparent from day one that a larger centre was needed. In June 2011, a new Training Centre was opened to serve the training needs of our members.

The \$3-million, 9,000-square-foot training centre at 334 Robin Way includes a 2,500-sq.-ft. welding shop set up for pipe welder training. The



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second shop is the pipe trades training shop. Simulated piping systems are used for starting points for piping projects that will ensure our apprentices are the very best trained pipe trades' apprentices in the practical and theoretical aspects of their trade.

Remedial training is offered during the week; all apprentices attending trade school are required to attend. Ninety-seven per cent of our apprentices are very appreciative that someone cares about their personal skills development.

The new school has two good sized classrooms for a combination of theory and practical training and further understanding of trade-related matters. Each classroom can accommodate some practical training. Each class has as part of its décor various piping systems installed in the ceiling space of the room. It is a very unique way to assist our members to further develop their skill sets. This also helps them to fully understand piping systems and how they work and to show proper piping practices.

The new Training Centre also contains a rigging and multipurpose piping trades training structure. The structure will be used to certify pipe riggers as well as to provide a structure for many types of practical piping projects. Pipe riggers will be trained in hand rigging as well as crane rigging.

Other training that is offered includes: gas service and troubleshooting hands on; carbon monoxide courses; Piping Foreman Course; and Shop Steward Courses to name a few. The new centre



includes an administrative office that co-ordinates the courses we provide across Saskatchewan for our membership.

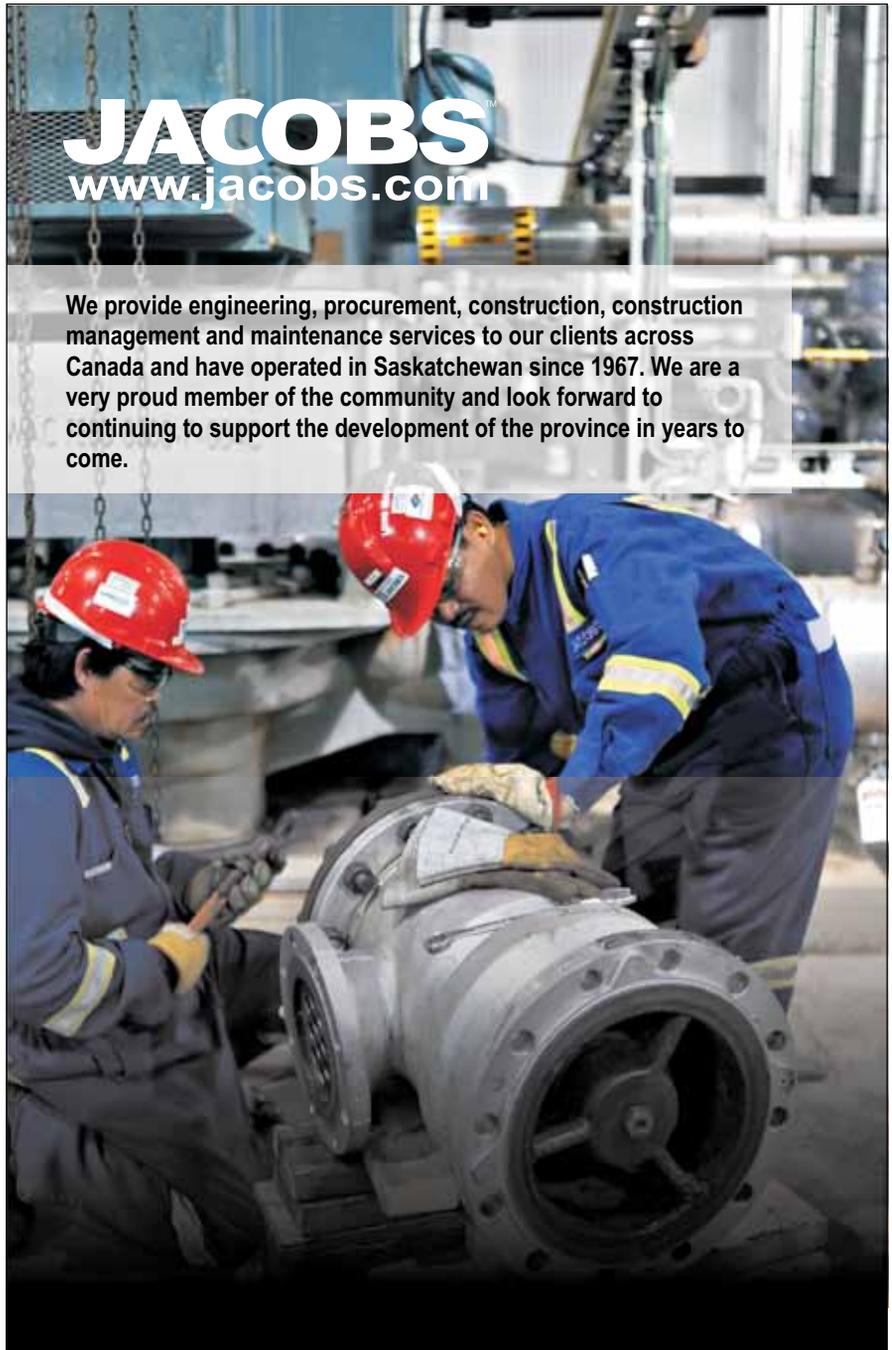
Our union is a training union. We've scheduled training programs across the province since 1969 and our facilities are operating seven days a week.

We're very proud of our new facility

The public system provides a very good basis for starting out, but our intent is to get all our members to the maximum of their skills and abilities.

and of the services we will be able to provide to our members. The cost comes entirely from us, so we custom built it to serve the on the job needs of the UA membership, contractors and clients in Saskatchewan.

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At this time, plans are underway to construct a new 25,000-sq.-ft. facility in Regina, which will be the new home of Local 179 as well as the Joint Training Committee.

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MEMBER PROFILE

Jeff Sweet, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2038

Jeff Sweet has been an electrician for 10 years, after 10 years as a journeyman chef.

“I prefer the building trades,” Sweet says. “The hours are better, allowing me to spend more time with the family, and the job offers more diversity in what you’re doing. I also like the mix of tradespeople on the job I get to work with.” Sweet and his wife Allison live in Regina and have three girls, aged eight, five and two.

Right now he’s on the job at the Upgrader in Regina, working for Chemco. “It’s a major project and a key part of the development of energy in Saskatchewan.

Sweet is recording secretary at IBEW 2038 and, having worked in open shops as an apprentice, by far prefers working in a union shop.

“In the open shops, you can find yourself treated differently from other workers, particularly if it’s a family-owned operation. In a union shop, everyone is treated equally. Plus, you have rights as a union member that you don’t in an open shop, and I find the safety standards higher and taken more seriously in a union shop.

“I also like the camaraderie of being in a union and the ability to see familiar



faces in different jobs.”

Sweet studied at SIAST in Moose Jaw and takes courses online to upgrade his skills. “People outside the trades don’t appreciate the intellectual aspect of keeping your skills up. Technology is changing, regulations change and you have to stay on top of your game. Yes, it’s still a physical job, which I like, but brainpower is more important than muscle power.”

Working in the trades on major projects also gives Sweet exposure to

other skill sets. “You get a chance to work with a cross-section of qualified workers and you have the chance for a lot of cross-pollination, which makes work more interesting. And in a union shop, you work co-operatively, not competitively.”

Looking ahead, Sweet is happy that there is so much work in Saskatchewan. “It makes it easier to have a family life and a good paying job at home, instead of having to travel to another province to find work.”



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MEMBER PROFILE

David Orge, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 870, and Garth Ivey Memorial Scholarship Winner

David Orge is this year's winner of the Garth Ivey Memorial Scholarship, awarded to the student who received the highest marks of any affiliated union member on the interprovincial examination (Red Seal). David is a crane operator and a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 870.

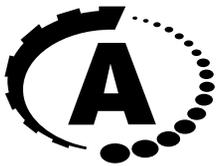
"Getting the Red Seal gives me more opportunity in the field, and now I can operate any type of crane," Orge says. "Plus it gives me the option of working in another province without having to write their provincial exam." Orge works for Sterling Crane out of Saskatoon and has just finished working on the Allan potash mine. He moved on to the Colonsay potash project in early 2012.

Prior to writing his exams, Orge took a two-week refresher course at the Western Trade Training Institute, which his union local paid for. "I'd also like to say that without the advice, teaching and the confidence of the people at Sterling Crane (Saskatoon and Regina) I couldn't have achieved such a high mark."

The Saskatchewan Building Trades pays for the scholarship of \$1,000 which Orge used to upgrade his new truck. It is named in honour of Garth Ivey, a journeyman electrician by trade who began his work in the union movement in 1971. He was a proud member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2038, first holding the position of Recording Secretary and then of President until he was named

the Business Manager of the SPB&CTC in 2002. Garth passed away in 2005 after battling mesothelioma, a cancer that is caused by asbestos exposure. A top priority in training is workplace safety and the safe handling of products on the job. With new products and processes on the workplace a constant issue on the job, training helps to ensure all staff on the job are up to date on workplace safety.

"On behalf of the Council and its affiliates, I want to congratulate David on receiving this year's scholarship," says Building Trades Business Manager, Terry Parker. "We're all confident that he will continue to excel in the trades." ■



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"Chemco customers have been very satisfied with the quality and productivity of our trade union workers," says Brian Small, Labour Relations Manager of Chemco.

Chemco grew from a 10-person electrical company in 1963 in Edmonton to a peak of 2,500 employees in 2010, capable of undertaking large industrial projects yet versatile enough to provide the services required by small industrial contracts. 2011 was a milestone year for Chemco. It transitioned from a private company to an employee-owned organization



with many owners throughout the company. In July, Chemco opened an office in Saskatoon, giving Chemco a permanent presence in the province.

"Working with trade unions helps us maintain a competitive advantage," Small says. "They provide education

and upgrade training, safety programs, quality assurance and quality control programming, supervisory training and drug and alcohol programming. This is an enormous enhancement on what the public education system provides." Like most of his staff, Small is a member of IBEW and has been since 1968.

Growth in Saskatchewan led to the creation of a permanent office here. Chemco spent three and a half years at Cory potash mine, is working on the K3 potash project at Esterhazy and has upward of 600 people at the Consumers Co-operative Refinery in Regina. They continue to be active in Alberta working for Syncrude, Suncor, Shell Scotford, Dow, Envirofuels, and at Keephills and Sundance Power Plants as examples.

In recognition of Chemco's leading role in the industry, it received the Best Practices Award in 2011 from the Construction Owners Association of Alberta. The award honours "companies and organizations who have provided outstanding leadership in developing, implementing and improving industry best practices, which have led to measurable advances in project, company or industry performance."

"Our reputation is our business," Small concludes. ■

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CONTRACTOR PROFILE

Aecon Industrial Western

The Saskatchewan office of Canada's largest publicly traded construction company works with unionized, skilled workers.

"We treat them as partners," says Ron Doepker, Saskatchewan Operational Manager of Aecon Industrial Western. "We have good harmony between our out of scope supervision and union members. Aecon's largest asset is our people who work together as a team."

There's a lot of work coming ahead for Aecon in Saskatchewan. In November 2011 it announced that its Lockerbie and Hole Eastern Division had signed a letter of intent with the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc. for a major project to install the interior of a new process mill at the Potash Corp mine site near Rocanville, Saskatchewan.

The scope of work for the project includes the installation of all utilities and equipment for the new mill, including the process piping, electrical, mechanical, instrumentation, HVAC, and all processing equipment in the mill, where potash ore from the nearby mine will be processed. This project will create approximately 800 jobs at the construction site. Site preparation is expected to begin in early 2012 and this portion of the project is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2013, ready to turn over to Potash Corp. for commissioning.

Among its many other projects is a site preparation contract for BHP Billinton at Jansen as well as a major brownfield project employing 450 people at the Consumers' Co-operative Refineries Limited (CCRL) revamp project in Regina.

Aecon is one of Canada's largest and most diverse construction and infrastructure development companies, providing services to private and public sector clients from coast to coast.

Aecon has also been recognized as one of the Best Employers in Canada. "We're very proud of this accomplishment and want to ensure we are also one of the best employers

in Saskatchewan, which I think we are," Doepker says. "At the end of the day, we want the best people on the job, to do it safely, productively and efficiently for our clients." ■

Aecon Industrial

Aecon Industrial provides a complete range of services to the oil & gas, petrochemical, pulp & paper, mining, and power generation sections. Our experienced team plans, manages and constructs projects of all sizes using cost-effective solutions to complete client projects on time and on budget. The company offers superior scheduling, quality control, risk management and a leading edge safety program.

Our team provides best in class construction management and industrial services including:

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BUILDING SASKATCHEWAN

The Official Publication of
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Spring 2012

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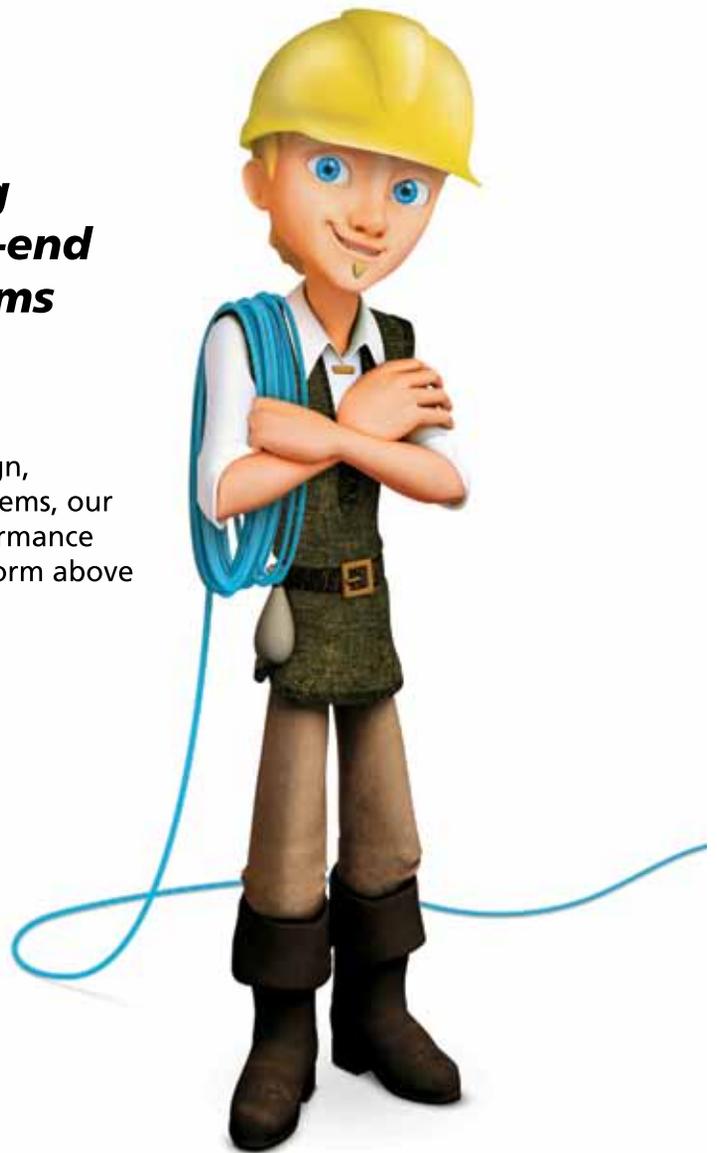
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