

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Atlantic Workforce Partnership Supports Skilled Trade Apprenticeship

White Point, NS (April 29, 2013) – An initiative to create a common, regional approach to apprenticeship announced today by Atlantic premiers will mean greater mobility and a stronger labour force that supports Atlantic Canada's growing economy. Through this initiative, Atlantic Canada will lead the nation in its approach to harmonize apprenticeship programs.

By aligning hours and training required to attain certification, apprentices have greater mobility to move forward in their careers, and Atlantic employers have access to the workforce they need. These improvements and other workforce initiatives will make sure students and apprentices have the support they need to be successful and employers have access to the labour they need to grow their businesses.

The Atlantic Workforce Partnership was created by the Council of Atlantic Premiers. Through the Partnership, premiers are working together to strengthen the region's labour force and create jobs by making Atlantic Canada more attractive to new and growing businesses.

Currently, the completion requirements and curriculum delivery for a number of trades vary across the region and the country. Common training and required hours will address interruptions in workforce entry, improve the transfer of skilled labour across provinces, and ensure the region has experienced and prepared apprentices ready to meet upcoming opportunities.

As part of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership, the provinces will bring four trades affecting 20 percent of apprentices into alignment within the next 24 months. Premiers also identified a goal of harmonizing additional high volume trades that meet key labour market demands covering an additional 40 percent of apprentices in the following 24 months. Changes will be phased in starting in 2014.

The first four trades to be aligned are Cook, Instrumentation Technician, Bricklayer and Construction Electrician. In addition to work being done to align these trades, other supports for apprenticeship will include expanding alternative training delivery and building a common information technology platform.

Atlantic Canada is home to hundreds of major investment projects that will result in thousands of jobs and billions in revenue. Coordinated apprenticeship and improved training ensures that Atlantic Canadians are prepared to fill these new jobs. Alignment of apprenticeships over the next 48 months will ensure that labour market demands within the region are being met.

Provinces will be introducing measures that will support the use of apprentices on major projects and government operations. Furthermore, Atlantic governments will amend hiring practices to increase the number of apprentices within their workforce.

Aligning apprenticeship is only one step in a series of initiatives that the Atlantic Workforce Partnership is pursuing to ensure the Atlantic provinces are working together to continue to grow the economy. Building on a successful model established in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Atlantic provinces are supporting immigration and attraction through events to recruit internationally, and are working together to provide online training supports for small- and medium-sized businesses. More than \$2 million is being invested, with over 20,000 workers in over 1,000 businesses taking advantage of this free online learning. Over 20,000 courses are available, including human resources, purchasing, and marketing.

Atlantic provinces are jointly engaging Atlantic Canadians interested in coming home to work. The first of these missions was a job fair in Toronto earlier this month. Over 100 vacant positions with 14 companies from Atlantic Canada were advertised as part of the event and 750 candidates were pre-screened prior to arrival.

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