

Challenges for Labour Market

Posted by SEAN CHASE, Pembroke Daily Observer

February 3, 2010

The County of Renfrew and the Labour Market Group has completed a joint survey to identify skilled labour issues in the Ottawa Valley.

The six-month online survey inventoried current and future skilled tradesperson and apprentice needs by businesses and organizations. It also provided data on shortages in key occupations around the region.

The inventoried trades were grouped under five sectors that included construction, industry, motive power and technical standards and safety. Local manufacturers also participated in a roundtable to examine specific challenges they faced.

Mitch Wilkie, economic development manager for the county, predicts that increasing shortages in skilled tradespersons might motivate local industries to explore options such as sharing staff.

"Ottawa Valley companies will need increased exposure to provincial and federal programs that support skilled trades training and development," said Mr. Wilkie.

He added companies may have to re-examine hiring policies in an effort to make skilled tradespersons accessible and shared among businesses. He suggested manufacturers may need to stagger production or scheduled maintenance shutdowns as skilled workers move between plants.

The next step for the joint effort is to create an industrial profile for the Ottawa Valley outlining the opportunities for skilled tradespersons. The profile will be marketed both locally and internationally using promotional and multi-media tools that will be available for use on websites maintained by community partners.

"Promotional videos can help by showcasing the Ottawa Valley as a great place to live and raise a family, with plenty of job prospects for those with needed skill sets," said Matt LeMay, executive director of the Labour Market Group.

Mr. Wilkie is hopeful that when the new Algonquin College campus is built in Pembroke an expanded skilled-trades training component will be included in the plans. The group contends they want to address job shortages and the next generation of workers may be the answer.

"We're going to be developing these multimedia tools and I think these will be useful with the next generation," he said. "The most important thing is finding out where the local demand lies."

Other community partners in this venture include the Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation, Algonquin College, Enterprise Renfrew County, The Ottawa Valley Manufacturing Consortium and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

For more information, contact Matt LeMay at 613-735-4292 or Mitch Wilkie at 613-735-0091.