



ASTTBC Unveils Plan to Prevent Skill Shortages

VANCOUVER – “BC must fill more than 8,000 new job openings for technologists and technicians by 2020 – every job an opportunity for young BC adults! But our economy faces costly skill shortages, because *technology* career opportunities have been overlooked and under-promoted.”

Introducing a “**Strategic Plan for Technology Education and Skills in BC**”, John Leech, Executive Director of the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC, told MLA’s, industry and education leaders that “Technology has become BC’s second-fastest growing career sector, employing more workers than Forestry, Mining and Oil and Gas combined.”

ASTTBC urges BC’s Education and Jobs ministries to join forces and resources with the technology professionals, technology-reliant employers, and Science World. The 40-page report today called on government to put the same effort into attracting BC students to college technology programs that the province has in promoting trades training and university degrees. “Technology is now the backbone of every industry. At least 150,000 British Columbians are now working in high technology occupations. More than 8,000 new positions will appear within eight years. What’s more, with half of our current membership over 45 years of age, retirements will soon open up thousands more extremely valuable and rewarding technology careers?”

The ASTTBC plan proposes that Science World take a lead role in creating a Science and Technology Leadership Board, mandated to attract boys and girls into science and technology studies, and to promote technology careers. “Today’s youngsters are already immersed in technology, daily using computers, smart phones, robotics and games. These students and their parents need to know they can build great careers using and advancing technology, within engineering, architectural and design teams. This generation of capable young women and men will keep BC’s tech sector healthy and expanding.”

The year-long ASTTBC study was drafted by Kerry Jothen, CEO of Human Capital Strategies, following ASTTBC’s call last year for greater focus on “STEM” studies, courses in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, to cultivate a Science and Technology Culture in the province.

“Forestry, mining, natural gas, technology and transportation – five of the BC Jobs Plan priority sectors – depend heavily on the productivity of technology professionals. ASTTBC wants to support the growth of these and other sectors in BC, and to ensure that sufficient numbers of young people, women, Aboriginal people and New Canadians, enter these careers,” the report notes.

BC Technologists Unveil Plan To Prevent Skill Shortages 2

Executive Director John Leech declares that a world of career opportunities is open to capable students who choose Diploma and Certificate technology programs at BCIT and Community Colleges. “Ask any of our 10,000 members - when it comes to the workplace, a diploma sometimes trumps a degree,” Leech smiles. “Now BC technology professionals need to start replacing ourselves! About half of ASTTBC's members are above 45 years of age. Their wave of retirements threatens businesses, utilities and public services with shortages of skilled employees. Our Province needs an expanding, healthy knowledge economy. For motivated young adults, that’s a bonanza of jobs.”

BC's Jobs, Skills Training and Labour Minister, Pat Bell, and Advanced Education and Technology Minister John Yap, welcomed the report. Minister Yap termed the document “significant - it provides information of interest to all concerned with technology education and skills in our province.”

Government ministers and MLA’s and the NDP legislative critics for Education and Skills Training received copies of the Strategy, along with officials from BCIT, Kwantlen, Langara, the Vancouver Board of Education and Industry Canada. Officers from FortisBC, Stantec and other industry and public sector employers of technology professionals also welcomed the report.

“Bottom line, far too few students currently enroll in post secondary courses and programs leading to applied science careers,” ASTTBC speaker John Leech noted. “Practically all occupations now demand skills in advanced technologies. Technology occupations are now BC's second-largest employer. New occupations appear constantly in technology-rich work. This report presents a ‘team approach’. We call on educators, employers and post-secondary institutions to develop and promote technology programs welcoming to qualified secondary students. An integrated educational approach, involving all stakeholder groups, will open doors – open eyes – and meet BC’s workplace needs!”

- END -

Full report for download... [click here](#)

Photos, captions from official release... [click here](#)

For further information contact John Leech, AScT, CAE at (604) 230-5827

About ASTTBC:

Everyone needs safe drinking water, electricity, natural gas and telecommunications reliably delivered to our homes, schools, workplaces and businesses. We all need well-designed and maintained communities, roads, transit, traffic regulation, fire protection and telecommunications, for protection as well as for entertainment. We need medical equipment competently operated and maintained, and society’s wastes safely dealt with.

*ASTTBC - **technology professionals...** Qualified. Registered. Accountable. Our members are technologists, technicians and technical specialists, who help design, build, and keep society’s systems humming. Look us up, at www.asttbc.org”.*