

“LNG Skills Needs Keeps me Awake at Night” – Minister Rich Coleman



ASTTBC met in 2013 with Minister Coleman to talk about ASTTBC initiatives, notably technology education and careers. Pictured are: Dave Rutherford, AScT, BCLS, CLS ASTTBC President (left), Minister Coleman, John Leech, AScT, CAE, CEO ASTTBC

Minister of Natural Gas Development and Deputy Premier, [Rich Coleman](#) (MLA for Fort Langley-Aldergrove), was guest speaker at the recent ICBA CEO breakfast, and ASTTBC was a guest. Speaking to a few hundred at the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of BC, the Minister stressed the significant long term economic benefits for British Columbians as a result of LNG and called on industry and other stakeholders to 'step up' and contribute in two ways: (a) sign up for BUY BC, as much of the work associated with LNG development will go to BC firms; and, (b) contribute to the BC Labour Market Information database.

Minister Coleman stressed that companies will not invest in BC if we have labour challenges. "Minister Coleman outlined the current investment of a few billion dollars by several firms in the lead-up to making the much bigger 'go or no go' decision, which would mean upwards of \$20 to \$30 billion investment per project. This is 'BIG stuff', and as the professional regulatory body responsible for qualifying BC's technologists, technicians and technical specialists we must engage," said ASTTBC CEO John Leech.

ASTTBC has been actively pursuing a number of initiatives, some under contract with the BC Government, to help meet labour market demands by adapting its professional regulatory model to provide a more equitable model for assessment of applicants for certification and registration. ASTTBC is actively promoting technology education and careers to assure a sustainable supply of Technology Professionals. "ASTTBC is on track to address LNG project skills needs," said Leech.

ASTTBC has taken a lead role over the past 8 years in promoting technology education and careers. Framed by a two-day conference in 2005, ASTTBC has invested over \$1million since the conference promoting technology education and careers and the contribution of ASTTBC-registered Technology Professionals. "It has been a long and steady effort to get stakeholders on side with the importance of technology education and the considerable contribution ASTTBC members make to the growth and development of this province," stressed Leech. Noting that the BC Government now references 'technical skills' in addition to trades in the BC Jobs Plan, John is pleased that ASTTBC's work is paying off. These initiatives support Government's commitment that BC residents 'come first', and that every consideration will be given to training for BC residents as a matter of top priority.

ASTTBC has also been working to support and assist immigrants looking to make BC home. ASTTBC has remodeled its professional certification program by embracing a competency-based assessment process. Using a state-of-the-art software program developed with the support of Economic and Services Development Canada over several years, ASTTBC provides a vehicle where anyone from anywhere in the world can go on line and complete a self-assessment against the Canadian technology competencies in all fields in which ASTTBC registers technologists and technicians. Further, they can do this at no cost! ASTTBC now accepts electronic applications for technologist and technicians and manages all of the application process on line.

In addition to the Technology Registrations Canada software, ASTTBC has developed other supports and initiatives to better understand foreign credentials and to assist Internationally Trained Technology Professionals (ITTP) as they build their careers and settle their families in BC. Examples include:

- Video vignettes of ITTPs who talk about their experiences and provide tips and hints on settling in BC
- e-profile LOG to assist ITTPs build a career program and track development
- Web site with valuable career information
- Mentoring program to assist ITTPs learn about the BC work environment
- Database of foreign credential assessments which will be posted to help ITTPs understand how they compare with BC standards well before they decide to come to BC
- Review of Philippine credentialing which included a visit to the Philippines by an expert team of 10 from BC and other provinces. A similar review will follow for India this year
- ITTP Leadership Forum to help guide ASTTBC initiatives

First Nations also fits into the equation as ASTTBC reaches out to First Nations communities and people to promote technology education and careers. Through the First Nations Careers Council, a group established by ASTTBC in 2008, First Nations and other members of ASTTBC are attending career fairs, offering bursaries and providing mentoring. ASTTBC's initiatives are timely as First Nations will benefit from technology skills as they engage in the development of BC's resources and the governance and management of their communities.

"ASTTBC will continue to do its part," says CEO John Leech. "ASTTBC has a 'can-do' attitude and approach and embraces change with ease. ASTTBC recognizes and moves when opportunity is presented or requires action."