

February, 2012

John Leech Promotes Tech Careers on Radio NL-Kamloops

ASTTBC Executive Director was on the Jim Harrison show in Kamloops promoting technology education and careers and calling for the BC Government to develop a technology education plan for the province. “The provincial government is to be congratulated on developing the BC JOBS PLAN. The PLAN helps provide focus and a clear direction for the province,” said the Executive Director. Leech was part of a small group who met with Premier Clark and Minister of Jobs, Tourism & Innovation, Pat Bell prior to the release of the plan. Both Premier Clark and Pat Bell were open to suggestions from the approximately 25 associations at the meeting. “I took the opportunity to talk about technology education and careers and to ask that education decision-making and programs align with labour market demands. At the moment there is no strategic, province-wide oversight of technology education,” said Leech.

On Radio NL John Leech expressed concern that Thompson Rivers University cut the Telecommunications Technician and Computer Automated Systems Technician programs in 2011... at a time when the Cariboo and for that matter all of BC needs technicians and technologists. “ASTTBC learned of the decision when the lab equipment was flying out the door and staff had been cut. There was little we could do at that point to assist TRU deal with the low enrollments they were experiencing,” lamented John Leech. “Kwantlen Polytechnic Institute cut a couple of technology programs in the early to mid 2000, another decision taken without reference to the broader needs for technologists and technicians in BC and limited consultation with ASTTBC.”

Leech went on to say, “I have since talked with leaders at TRU and have a commitment that TRU will work with ASTTBC and others to define the need for technology education in this region with the intent of rolling out an action plan tied to the BC Jobs Plan.”

John Leech called on the BC Government to lead an initiative to build a plan focused on our common interests around technology education and careers. “We must come together as a community in BC to map out the future for technology education and then provide the direct funding needed to ensure sustainable technology education programs,” said Leech. “I know Premier Clark and Ministers Pat Bell Naomi Yamamoto (Minister of Advanced Education) see the need for technologists, technicians and technical specialists and want to see viable technology programming throughout BC.” ASTTBC will continue to serve as a champion for technology education and careers.