



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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**INDUSTRY TRAINING PLAN AIMED AT MEETING GROWTH
DEVELOPED BY BC'S SHIPBUILDING AND REPAIR INDUSTRY**

***SIGNIFICANT DEMAND FOR SKILLED WORKERS EXPECTED
OVER NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS***

Langley, BC – In order to respond to a demand for skilled employees resulting from an aging workforce, changes in technology, and increased industry activity, the West Coast Shipbuilding and Repair Forum (WCSRF), the Resource Training Organization (RTO), and the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development have developed a long-term industry training plan. The RTO and WCSRF developed a comprehensive training strategy designed to align with the federal government's national shipbuilding policy which is estimated to bring several thousand person years of work to Canadians.

Research on the industry indicates that employers anticipate sustained demand for repair and refit services in BC, while demand for the construction of new vessels continues to increase on an exponential scale. Growth scenarios for the broader transportation and equipment manufacturing industry suggest the average annual growth in output and employment will outperform the economy-wide average through 2015.

Industry consultation and research identified Rigger, Shipwright, and Marine Fitter/Fabricator trades as industry priorities in terms of anticipated skill shortages which are looming. The development of these apprenticeship training programs will ensure the skilled employees required to maintain the industry's viability in BC and continued contribution to the provincial and national economy.

The importance of this initiative was underscored by Captain Alex Rueben, Chairman of the RTO and founder of the WCSRF, who commented that, "program development is key to expanding and building trade skills in sectors such as Shipbuilding and Ship Repair that are increasingly important to fueling the eventual recovery of the BC economy." He added that "through vehicles such as RTO, industry and labour have the ability to provide leadership to the apprenticeship system that in itself is a key driver to economic prosperity."

Industry leadership and involvement in the apprenticeship system is critical and benefits by creating opportunities for apprenticeship training and providing valuable industry information for the apprenticeship programs. "The message from this industry is loud and clear. BC has a significant opportunity to enable this sector to continue making a valued and important contribution to the economy. RTO actively supports and drives any initiatives that ensure this will happen. A skilled employee base for our industries is our key mandate" noted Doug MacLaren, CEO of RTO.

The Resource Training Organization (RTO) was established in 2007 to oversee the management and development of apprenticeship training for the Province's resource sector, including the shipbuilding and repair industry. This project confirms the necessity of industry leadership in the apprenticeship system thereby ensuring industry's ability to address future labour demands.

- 30 -

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