



MEDIA RELEASE  
For Immediate Release  
December 10, 2007

## **BC Launches New Industrial Electrician Apprenticeship Program**

Kamloops (December 5, 2007) – It was back to school for a new group of students as BC's first class of industrial electricians in training hit the books at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops and North Island College in Campbell River. The 32 students started the first year technical training component of the new Industrial Electrician apprenticeship program in mid-October and will return to their workplaces in mid-December to undertake the on-the-job segment of the program.

The competency-based program, which includes an extensive assessment of practical skills in the workplace, is an exciting and innovative approach for electricians who work directly in heavy industry such as solid wood, pulp and paper, oil and gas, and mining across British Columbia. With the launch of this program and new trade classification, British Columbia now boasts two electrician credentials – the traditional construction electrician and the new industrial electrician.

“This new program is designed to meet the specific electrical needs unique to the industrial setting,” notes Brad Smith who is a Maintenance Manager at Catalyst Paper in Campbell River. Industrial electricians need to be knowledgeable about industrial electrical equipment and associated electrical and electronic controls and are typically employed at large-scale industrial facilities such as pulp mills, hydroelectric dams, mining and smelting operations, and shipbuilding and repair across BC.

Across the province, employer demand for industrial electricians is high and this program will help meet on going needs for qualified employees. It also provides prospective apprentices with another trade classification in which to pursue a career.

While industrial electrician apprentices are in the classroom, skilled electricians already employed in the industry will be trained in workplace assessment to evaluate students' practical skills. These assessors will follow comprehensive standards to determine that the new apprentices have successfully demonstrated the learning outcomes of the program in the workplace. This workplace assessment approach is a change from the traditional time-based credentialing model currently employed in many trades.

“This program is an exciting new step forward for BC's apprenticeship system,” said Kevin Evans, Industry Training Authority CEO. “It demonstrates true stakeholder collaboration with employers, organized labour, post-secondary institutions, Resource Training Organization (RTO) and the ITA all working together to set a new standard for apprenticeship training in the resource sector in British Columbia.”

“The formation of an industry training organization in the resource sector has been a tremendous opportunity for our industry to take leadership of our training needs,” said Doug MacLaren, RTO CEO. “This level of partnership between stakeholders will be the standard for resource apprenticeship training in BC on a go forward basis.”

*Resource Training Organization (RTO) was established in 2007 to oversee the management and development of apprenticeship training for the resource sector in BC. RTO is funded provincially by the Industry Training Authority of BC.*

For more information please contact:  
Doug MacLaren, CEO RTO  
(604)455-0075  
dmaclaren@rtobc.com