



MEDIA RELEASE
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BC Offers Inaugural Oil and Gas Rig Technician Trades Training Program

Kelowna (June 25, 2008) – Responding to the demand for BC-based training for Oil and Gas Rig Technicians, the Resource Training Organization (RTO) launched the inaugural offering of this new trades training program in Kelowna. The first group of 24 students started their technical (in-class) training component at Okanagan College on May 5th and completed it on May 30th. Upon completion of this level of the program, students returned to continue the on-the-job component of their apprenticeship. Interest in the program has been so high there is a wait-list and second session of the program being offered, starting on August 5th.



Increased use of technology, changing drilling techniques, growing safety requirements, and skill shortages have driven the demand for the new program which was launched in Alberta, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. “The work these individuals undertake is

increasingly complex and can be dangerous without appropriate training and certification,” noted Wayne Wetmore, Senior VP with Enform. “This program addresses a real need in the industry and will ensure enhanced safety performance as well as improved efficiencies, which just makes good business sense.”

The training program also provides a new apprenticeship opportunity for British Columbians. It is delivered in partnership with Enform, Western Canada’s premier oil and gas training organization, and Okanagan College. Each of the three levels of the program culminates in a recognized trade credential. There are currently 378 apprentices in the program in BC.

“This program is another example of the BC apprenticeship system responding directly and flexibly to industry and employee needs,” said Doug MacLaren, RTO CEO. “Our mandate is to deliver effective training which will have a positive impact on the BC economy and this new trade is an excellent example of this put into practice.”

The oil and gas industry is a key component of the British Columbia. Drilling rigs alone contribute several thousand jobs. In 2007, there were 838 drilling wells completed in BC. With strong natural gas prices, industry expects activity to be even higher in 2008.

While drilling in BC occurs primarily in the Peace River area, research conducted to determine program delivery location indicated that most drill rig employees do not live in this region. Employees will travel wherever their rig is drilling and work 12-hour shifts over 14 days, after which they have 7 days off. "Drilling is a lucrative career option, particularly for someone who enjoys travelling," said Cindy Soderstrom from the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors. "Employees from across the province can continue to live at home and enjoy the lifestyles these areas have to offer, even though these areas aren't necessarily where industry activity happens." Kelowna and surrounding areas has one of the highest concentrations of drilling rig employees found in BC. It is a natural choice to locate the Rig Technician technical training.

"This is a tremendous example of how partnerships can help meet the needs of students in the region, and help answer employer demand for skilled workers," says John Haller, Okanagan College's dean of Trades and Apprenticeship. "We're pleased to be engaged with RTO and Enform in this training initiative."

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.

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