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VICTORIA - BC Building Trades celebrates transformational investment into trades training system

For the first time in more than two decades, the Government of British Columbia is making a historic \$241 million investment in the province's trades training system — a transformative step toward strengthening B.C.'s skilled workforce.

The need for this investment has never been greater. Over the next decade, British Columbia must recruit and train tens of thousands of skilled workers to meet growing labour demands and deliver major, nation-building infrastructure projects across the province.

“This investment sends a clear message that skilled trades matter to the future of British Columbia,” said Al Phillips, President of the BC Building Trades and Business Manager and Financial Secretary for UA170. “By working together, we can ensure B.C. has the highly skilled workforce needed to build the projects that will define our province for generations.”

In 2003, provincial funding for trades training was reduced by 20 percent and a new deregulated training model was introduced. The changes led to declining apprenticeship completion rates, reduced access to technical training, and thousands of apprentices falling short of earning their Red Seal certification.

In response, BC Building Trades unions stepped up to fill the gap. By allocating between \$0.35 and \$1.50 from every construction hour worked toward training, unions have massively subsidized the trades training system. Today, BC Building Trades unions invest more than \$30 million annually and sponsor over 6,000 apprentices across their training system.

Union training centres are the cornerstone of B.C.'s trades training system, delivering high-quality, industry-driven education aligned with workforce needs. Strategic investment in these institutions will recognize their proven success and ensure the long-term capacity required to meet British Columbia's expanding labour demands.

“While we are celebrating this historic investment, we know that maximizing the impact of this funding will require directing investments to the training providers best positioned to deliver results at scale. The BC Building Trades will continue working with government to ensure funding flows directly to non-profit building trades union training schools,” said Brynn Bourke, Executive Director of the BC Building Trades.

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Background

The BC Building Trades and affiliated unions are the leading providers of trades training in the province with over 6,000 registered apprentices and nearly 10,000 learners in our system. Apprenticeships – from classroom-based and on the job training, to mentorship and one-on-one support – are at the core of what our affiliated unions do. There are over a dozen union training schools in BC. They recruit, assess, sponsor, train and employ apprentices. This wrap-around support system leads to the highest completion rates in the industry.

For more information, visit: [College of the BC Building Trades – Your Journey Starts Here](#)

Established in 1967, today the BC Building Trades represents 19 craft construction unions and more than 50,000 unionized construction workers in BC. These highly skilled workers account for approximately 50 percent of the non-residential construction labour workforce. We work with construction companies to leverage the most out of development for all stakeholders, to advance the economic prosperity of the province, to put local workers first and to ultimately build a better British Columbia.