



A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOME (CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS)

Pilot program for women helping province fill skilled trades' labour shortage

Victoria, BC (March 10, 2006) – Women who are currently unemployed, or are seeking a better job can take advantage of new 12-week trades training programs in Victoria, Campbell River and Duncan that will help them enter the construction trade and apprenticeship programs. Twenty-four training positions are available for the pilot program in 2006, thanks to a funding from a the Province's new Empowered to Work mentoring project, announced today by Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services and Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues.

In addition to providing women with technical skills training, equipment, job placement and support, the new *HardHats Employment and Mentoring Program for Women Entering the Trades* (operated by GT Hiring Solutions) will also match women participants with successful women mentors in the construction industry. Mentors and HardHats female program coordinators will assist participants with industry and trade information, problem solving, dealing with conflict and challenges on the job site in addition to providing support, encouragement and advice on career advancement.

Funding for the new program, which is provided by the Ministry of Community Services, will also take care of HardHats tuition, supports for participants to and from the college, parking at the college, daily lunch during the training period and safety equipment (steel toed boots, rain gear, hard hat, work gloves and safety glasses.)

"Our government is committed to expanding opportunities for women in B.C.'s robust economy," said Ida Chong. "However, we recognize women often face challenges in launching their careers, especially if they lack experience and training, have been away from the job market, or are new to Canada. Empowered to Work gets at the heart of those challenges, by matching women with experienced, successful mentors who will guide and encourage them as they find their way in the workforce – whether that's the trades or another career path."

The HardHats program at Discovery Community College in Campbell River provides hands-on practical training in addition to Occupational First Aid Level 1, WHMIS, Shop and fall safety and Traffic Control Certification. Trades' training includes Mechanical/Power Tools, Measuring & Math Skills, Forms & Foundations, Framing, Roofing, Exterior Envelope, Interior Finishing as well as weekly site tours and industry guest speakers.

M.J. Whitmarsh, C.E.O. of the Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC, represents hundreds of construction employers across the province. "The demand for job-ready employees with safety training and basic technical skills is growing fast," said Whitmarsh. "HardHats gives them the workers they need to get the job done on the worksite."

The HardHats course which started at Discovery Community College on March 6, 2006, is already full and GT Hiring Solutions is exploring the possibility of holding more courses later this year. For more information, candidates in the Courtenay area can call Mike McLaughlin or Judy Nolan toll free at 1-866-334-2228 or 250-334-9823. Candidates in the Campbell River area can call Sheilagh O'Brennan and Linda DeWilde Osing toll free at 250-286-4231. For more information on HardHats and GT Hiring Solutions, visit www.gthiringsolutions.ca.

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