

# POWERING UP THE FUTURE

2008 Labour Market Information Study



## Electricity Labour Market Information For Labour Organizations

The electricity industry is fundamental to Canada's social and economic life. However, the reliable supply of electricity that Canadians have come to rely upon is under pressure. ***Under current trends, there will be an insufficient supply of workers to meet the growing demand for electricity. This gap will exist at all levels of the industry, from engineers, through technicians and technologists, to trades people.*** The Electricity Sector Council (ESC), in partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), has commissioned a Labour Market Information (LMI) study to better understand the problem. The condensed and full version of the study is available electronically at [www.brightfutures.ca](http://www.brightfutures.ca). The following are some of the highlights from the study:



- 1 Aging Workforce.** Like Canada's general workforce, the electricity workforce is aging. Between 1997 and 2008, both the young workers cohort (ages 15-24) and the senior cohort (age 55+) have grown. However, the senior cohort has grown much more rapidly. Moreover, many of the senior cohorts, who will shortly retire, are seasoned managers and skilled technical people.
- 2 Retirement.** Retirement is a serious and impending issue for the electricity industry. The ESC projects an annual retirement rate of **6.2%** by 2012, and the report shows that **28.8%** of the current electricity workforce is expected to retire within the next four years. All electricity business lines will experience significant retirements and require large numbers of new staff. Electricity transmission faces the greatest challenge, and will see an increase in retirements of over **750%** by 2009 and more than **900%** by 2012.
- 3 Eligible for Pension.** High numbers of employees are eligible for pension. In 2006:
  - **8%** were eligible for full pension
  - **33%** were eligible for partial pension
- 4 Vacancy Rates.** In 2008, employers had vacancy rates higher than the national average of **2.6%**.

| Group                                    | Vacancies | %   |
|--|-----------|-----|
| Managers and Supervisors                 | 132       | 2.2 |
| Engineers, Technicians and Technologists | 405       | 3.1 |
| Trades                                   | 821       | 3.5 |

**5 Diversity.** The electricity workforce is largely Canadian born, and mostly male. If electricity companies want to remain competitive in both the local and the global markets, they will need to tap into these under-utilized sources of labour.

| Group (2006)            | Electricity Sector | All Sectors |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Current workforce total | 100%               | 100%        |
| Immigrants              | 12.8%              | 21%         |
| Visible minorities      | 7.9%               | 8%          |
| Aboriginal              | 2.9%               | 3%          |
| Female                  | 25%                | 51%         |

**6 Declining Enrolment.** With the exception of British Columbia, enrolment in electrical engineering programs declined in all provinces. Across Canada, enrolment declined **10%** between 2003 and 2005.

**7 Apprenticeship Programs.** Encouragingly, enrolment in electricity-related apprenticeship programs (2003 to 2005) increased in Power Line Technicians (**21%**) and Electricians (**15%**). However, enrolments experienced a sharp decline among Stationary Engineers (**-32%**) and Power System Operators (**-32%**).

## **8 Strategies to Help Close the Gap:**

- Mentoring and training programs for existing staff so that they can move into positions left vacant by retirees
- Foreign credential recognition programs to increase integration of foreign-trained workers into the sector
- Closer links between industry and educators
- Marketing and promotional activities directed to youth, females, visible minorities and recent immigrants
- Recruitment strategies to encourage students to choose careers in the electricity sector
- Encourage students to transfer course credits into an electricity-related discipline.