

MARK FORSYTHE TALKS WITH DAWN SCHEL, A SUPERVISOR AT THE CAREER SHOP IN VICTORIA AND KERRY JOTHEN, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGIES IN VANCOUVER - CBC'S B.C. ALMANAC - SEPTEMBER 9, 2003

Forsythe: Unemployment is climbing in B.C. and right across this country. The latest Stats Can numbers put B.C.'s unemployment at 8.7 per cent. That's a per cent higher than last year, about 2 per cent higher than two years ago. Nationally our economy lost 19,000 jobs in August.

On today's open line we are talking jobs - what the trends are, how to search out a job and what can be done to create more.

Dawn Schel is in our Victoria studio. She's a supervisor at the Career Shop. It's a non-profit job resource centre in Victoria. Hello, Dawn.

Schel: Hello.

Forsythe: And in our Vancouver studio is Kerry Jochen. He's president and CEO of Human Capital Strategies and an independent human resources consulting firm. He's also worked with ITAC, the CEO, which was an industry training group. Welcome to our studios today, Kerry.

Jochen: Thanks, Mark.

Forsythe: If our listeners have questions about job market trends, or if you need suggestions on getting started with a job search and following up, give us a call now.

Perhaps you have a story to tell about how you found or created your own job. That's another trend as well - self-employment. Please do give us a call.

Kerry, let's talk a little bit about this conflicting information off the top here. On the one hand in the longer term there are jobs ahead. There's a labour shortage anticipated. But right now our unemployment is climbing in B.C. How do you describe the job market as you see it now?

Jochen: Right. Sort of.... I'd like to talk in terms of good news/bad news. The good news for the future, the coming years, is that there will be increasing opportunities over the next decade, 2011 to be specific, in a diversity of careers and industries - some increases because of economic growth, such as in construction and residential construction today and tourism, but also because of the increasing aging that we've heard about.

As you've probably heard, by 2010 we know that for the first time ever the number of people leaving the workforce will exceed the number entering the workforce.

Forsythe: The boomers retiring.

Jochen: Exactly. And it's not a theory. This is a demographic fact that will increase. And we have shortages today, such as in home building, construction, and some other areas.

So the good news is for the job seeker in the longer term and medium term. There will be more and more opportunities opening up in a lot of areas.

The bad news is that there will be an increasing...there will be increasing gaps, mismatches and shortages for employers and industries to deal with.

Forsythe: What do you mean by that? Gaps and mismatches.

Jothen: Well, shortages.... There are skill shortages where there aren't the people with the skills to do the job in some industries. But there's also mismatches where you may have people with the skills and have gone through some training, but the industry doesn't feel it's the right kind of training or the right kind of skills. So it's more of a qualitative gap, as opposed to quantitative.

The other part about the good news is that the opportunities, some 700,000 over the next ten years, both because of the aging and economic growth will be in both those types of careers where you need a university credential and in areas where you need trades training, apprenticeship and technical training.

There's a lot of stories out there now that perpetuate this myth that it's an either/or. The good news is that it will need highly skilled and educated people that go through university but also in trades programs. We need both...

Forsythe: They run parallel, do they?

Jothen: Exactly.

Forsythe: Yes.

Jothen: And the bottom line, just to finish on this overview summary, is the bottom line is that where you look at the jobs where more education and training is needed, they will grow more in the future, in the next ten years. The bottom line there is that we need more people in training and education at all levels.

Forsythe: Dawn Schel. She's with the Career Shop. It's a non-profit job resource centre in Victoria. In the here and now, Dawn, what do you tell people when you see the B.C. unemployment rate rising two percentage points in the last year? Where do you tell them to start looking?

Schel: Well, there always is the individual. It depends on what age they are, what kinds of experience they have. So, you know, sort of start with people where they're at, in terms of looking for work.

Yeah, it's interesting to listen to the stats and look at the comparison between the two, 'cause they did seem kind of contradictory. I would say I've seen pretty good evidence that, yeah, the unemployment rate has been rising. I saw more youths in my office in the last...in August than I did a year ago August looking for work.

So some of it is for youth in particular.... We're telling them get out for entry level, retail kinds of jobs. But for me there's always the other point of looking towards the future. Where is this job here, now, today going to take you towards that future sort of like ten years from now? There's going to be opportunities.

Forsythe: Do you ask them to think about further training at the same time that they're going after these first jobs?

Schel: That's often what I'm looking at is.... I mean I deal with a variety of people anywhere from people who've never even completed high school - and that can vary from, you know...I completed grade 7 was the least I've done - on up to people that have, you know, masters degrees.

So there's quite a variety of.... You know, often we're looking at.... It's about teaching people to be interested in lifelong learning. So: where else can I go? What else can I learn? What will this job teach me, but where is it taking me in the future as well? How can I use this as a building block to something else? Whether that's to further training or to education.

Forsythe: Let's go to our listeners. They responded right away with questions about future trends or perhaps some suggestions on how to pursue finding a job right now. Dawn can help you in that regard, and some of the larger trends, Kerry is going to help us there.

Cam is phoning us from Port Alice. Go ahead, Cam.

Cam: Hello. I... We have an organization up here. It's called North Island Economic Futures. I think it's run by UIC. They've done a lot of work in the North Island, 'cause the pulp mill where I work.... We're actually shutting down tomorrow. We don't know for how long. We only ran three months all year. So, of course, a lot of people are looking to try and find something else.

But what I was wondering about.... A lot of people have taken trades training through courses like, say, at BCIT, but the problem is trying to get on as an apprentice. That's where the problem is. I just wondered if you had any comments from your guests on that.

Forsythe: Kerry Jochen, I think you have lots to say about apprenticeship and the lack thereof right now in our province.

Jochen: Well, I think that it's a combination of factors. First of all, there's a lot of young people and parents that don't know about it as a career option. So you don't have many people in high school choosing that route and coming out.

On the other hand, employers in different industries probably need to step up to the plate more. But then they'll turn it around and say: if you offered more flexible programs in apprenticeship that met my needs, we might sign on.

So I think it's a combination of factors, and I'm hopeful that with this new industry training authority and some of the reform in terms of new flexible models that might be more responsive to the workplace that

you'll see more industries and more employers getting involved in apprenticeship.

Forsythe: Do you mean tax incentives for them to take on more trainees or perhaps a reduction of other costs [inaudible]?

Jothen: A lot of small businesses have talked about tax incentives. But there are other things around apprenticeship and the inflexibility of the model itself that they'd like to see changed so that they could....

A good example is homebuilders. A lot of homebuilders in the Lower Mainland have a skill shortage. They need framers. They don't need carpenters. And yet they can't put their people through a training program and get a credential in framing. Yet they're going to change that under this new model.

Forsythe: Dawn, is there anything you'd like to say about apprenticeship programs?

Schel: Well, certainly there has been a gap over the last...well, I think since ITAC closed. I see a lot of youth who are interested in getting apprenticeships. It's a hard slog for them to go around and try and convince an employer to take them on as an apprentice. They could use a lot of direction, I think, about who are the employers that potentially are out there that might be willing to take...if there was some way to get that.

But there is a good web site that's up: the learnandearn.bc.ca has some excellent information.

Forsythe: The learnandearn.bc.ca.

Cam, are you aware of that?

Forsythe: Okay.

Cam: It's worth looking into.

Forsythe: Yes. The learnandearn.bc.ca. What kind of apprenticeship would you like to pursue, Cam?

Cam: Oh, I don't know. Like I say, where I work is still more or less running. We are shutting down tomorrow for maybe a couple of months. We don't know. But I haven't really.... Till the mill goes down, a person can't leave, 'cause you're leaving all your seniority, your severance and everything. That's the biggest problem here is you're being...it's being held hostage, kind of.

Forsythe: That's the Doman mill, is it?

Cam: Yeah, Port Alice. We've only worked three months all year.

Forsythe: That's going to have a major effect on that whole North Island region.

Cam: It'll kill the whole North Island. It is the biggest employer, with nearly 500 employees.

Jochen: One area, Mark, that I think could be improved with apprenticeship is - mid-career people that have maybe been laid off or want to change direction, they have a lot of good experience - a pathway that makes it easier for them to move from another job into an apprenticeship, and maybe not starting from the bottom but recognizing that experience.

Another example is: immigrants. We have many immigrants who have some professional credentialed training, and they'd be quite keen to get into a trade. But again, there needs to be some sort of streamlined pathways for them.

Forsythe: Cam, thank you. Good luck to you and the other workers tomorrow and in the future.

We go to Simon, in Victoria. Go ahead, Simon.

Simon: I just have a couple of quick things here. I was the fish farmer who was blacklisted from the industry on the west coast, here. Since then, I've gone back, and now I'm attending the University of Victoria, Restoration of Natural Systems program.

I'm just curious as to what the future is for environmental restoration on the coast of British Columbia?

Forsythe: Environmental restoration as it relates to logging, or what, stream enhancement - that kind of thing?

Simon: Or watersheds, around cities, around towns. Every day there seems to be something going on with the environment. I'm just wondering if there's any leads there for work?

Forsythe: Kerry, in that field?

Jochen: Well generally, in the future it is an area that is growing faster than average. Generally, the whole natural and applied sciences areas - you know, 50,000 new job openings in the next decade. Within that environmental technology, technicians, engineers - those sorts of things - there is an increasing opportunity.

Forsythe: That's encouraging. Fifty thousand over what term?

Jochen: From 2001 to 2011, in the natural and applied science area.

Forsythe: Simon, you had another question too?

Simon: Yeah, just in regards to the future. Like, for myself, I'll be finished up in school in December, taking a two-year diploma program. I'm just curious as to anybody who could give me any information, where I could go about applying for environmental jobs?

Forsythe: Dawn Schel, would you be able to help him get started on that?

Schel: Well, there's always the Yellow Pages to start with.

Forsythe: Find out who works in that field.

Schel: Yeah, finding out who works in that field and approaching them directly.

There have been fewer jobs available through the government, the provincial government, but I have known people, fairly recently, to be hired federally, to work in some of those natural resource, either management or restoration, kinds of systems, as well as, I think, some municipalities are starting to look at that as well. As well, there are other businesses that are running.... I'm just thinking of a company here, that I know in Victoria, that does restoration of former mining sites.

Some of it is about getting out there and finding out what are the companies that are doing some of that work and getting out there and actually going and making direct contact with them as much as possible.

Forsythe: Simon, in your program, do they not let you know what job prospects there are or what companies are most active?

Simon: Yeah, a lot of the issues right now are revolved around the government initiatives - whether or not the government's actually going to go ahead and do a lot of these things. In the past, students have been able to get jobs through contracts, usually through the government, but right now, I'm sitting high and dry as far as my future's concerned.

Forsythe: Is this a field where you can also survive as a contractor? You contract not necessarily the provincial government but perhaps to other companies that may be doing one-offs?

Jochen: Well, it's not a panacea, but one of the largest growth areas is self-employment. In Stats Canada last week, in their labour force survey, I noticed 79,000 increase across Canada in self-employment, year over year. It was the single biggest category of growth.

Some may argue that some of that is forced, but it is increasing.

I'm an example of it. I left government two years ago and am self-employed now.

I think the other thing is: the listener may talk to some of the industry associations, professional associations. There's some good Web sites nationally and provincially in terms of some environmental industry associations - and whatnot. They may give him a start.

Forsythe: Simon, thank you for your call. Appreciate it.

Kelly is next, from Quesnel. Hello, Kelly.

Kelly: I've just got a quick question for you. I went from working the forest industry here in Quesnel. I'm self-employed, and I'm fairly new in the self-employment program, but in the last 18 months, I now employ seven full-time people.

My question is: why is it that the employment, the unemployment rate is so high? Why is there such a turnover for, like, filling these positions? It seems like a lot of these people that are looking for work, when they actually do get a job, they're not willing to put in a hundred per cent. It's like they're there just to collect a cheque.

Forsythe: Kelly, what kind of work are you talking about?

Kelly: Building maintenance.

Forsythe: Building maintenance?

Kelly: Yeah. Janitorial.

Forsythe: And what do you pay?

Kelly: Between 10 and 14 an hour, which is a good rate for that type of work.

Forsythe: And you're finding it hard to keep people?

Kelly: Yeah. It seems like they don't want to do the jobs.

Forsythe: Dawn, any thoughts on what Kelly is saying?

Schel: I've heard that fairly common remark from a lot of employers. I can't remember where I heard this one remark about, you know, employers hire for skills but they fire for personality.

I think that sometimes it's also the personality fit on the other side. Like, I need a job so I start working. I think Kerry alluded to it earlier: that kind of mismatch that sometimes happens with people.

Some of it might be.... I think people get into positions and find out that's not where they want to be, or they're not really clear when they start working for somebody what it is that they're willing to give or how long it is that they're thinking that they would want to be working for that particular employer.

I mean, I hear it a lot from employers, particularly about there's high turnover: "I can't keep people."

It sounds like a good salary rate for that type of work, for sure.

What it is would be hard to get at.

Jochen: Yeah, there's a lot of good - whether it's with your company or just generally - self-help information in terms of creative strategies around recruiting and retention of people: how to keep people and motivation. Part of it is money.

The other thing, as Dawn said earlier, in terms of finding people for some of these more entry-level jobs, it depends where you're recruiting from. Obviously, a mid-career person with a large mortgage - \$10 to \$14, you know, is not very relevant. But there's a lot of good basic jobs in some of the top growth areas are retail trade, tourism, and

hospitality, for example. There's some very good entry-level jobs, and some of the employers provide a good career path and stepping stone.

One other thing. One of the biggest growth areas, looking ahead, is in management and supervisory jobs. I think that companies and individuals need to be looking ahead in terms of what kind of development, what kind of training, what kind of experience people could go through to fill those jobs from within, rather than recruiting from outside.

Forsythe: Kelly, in Quesnel what do you find happens to the people who don't stay with you? Do they find other work where they get better pay, or what are you saying?

Kelly: For the most part, from what I've experience so far, is: they're dependent, one way or another, on the system.

They come to work. It's not a rocket-science job. It's pretty straightforward. The training is pretty basic.

But I find that they come, they work for a while, and then, for whatever reason, they don't like it. There might be problems with me, or whatever the reason being, but they go back to what they were doing previously. For the most part, it's relying on the system.

Forsythe: Okay. Well, thanks for the snapshot.

Good on you. You started your own business there, too, after leaving one sector. You are an example, I guess, of self-employment, again, that Kerry was talking about.

Brian is joining us now from Vancouver. Your question, Brian?

Brian: Actually, it's more a comment, to be quite honest with you. One of the things I'm really astounded by is that the federal government's various departments are coming up with the conclusion that we're going to be having a serious labour shortage over the next coming years.

I mean, this report that came out yesterday is not the first, and yet Human Resources Development Canada, which has billions of dollars to spend, has a little tiny, little program, called Skills Canada which is a really phenomenal program that goes out into the schools and promotes trades to kids, gives them an opportunity to compete. This program this year is seeing a budget cutback of roughly 40 per cent. I find it really, really surprising and, frankly, short-sighted that the federal government, knowing that we're going to have this kind of a labour crisis - particularly considering we already have a skilled trade labour shortage - that the federal government is looking to cut its budget from \$4 million to \$2 million for this program.

I'm really interested in hearing what your guests have to say about this.

Forsythe: Kerry and Dawn?

Jochen: Well, Skills Canada is a great program nationally and in B.C. It's all about awareness and promotion of trades and technical careers. I really applaud it.

I'm not sure of the details of the cuts that you're referring to, Brian, but I certainly echo that it's a very important program. It's also, in terms of what we need to do in the long-term, of averting shortages in the trades, one of the areas is working in the high schools to really turn around the attitudes of parents, educators and the young people themselves, in terms of the trades opportunities and technical careers. That's number one.

And we've little other examples of success, like Brian's Skills Canada: what's called the secondary school apprenticeship program. But there's only a thousand kids in it throughout B.C. How could that be expanded to 10,000 over the long term - and get more kids into apprenticeship?

But Skills Canada - same thing. I think we need more of that. I know that, nationally, HRDC provided \$12 million to Skills Canada and the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum to promote the trades across Canada.

Forsythe: Dawn, have you come into contact with this program?

Schel: Yes, I have, and I have come in contact with a lot of local organizations as well. Some of the local associations here in Victoria are certainly trying to promote the trades, in lots of different ways.

I mean, we at the Career Shop have also been approached to find ways in which we can continue to promote the trades.

I don't know if the caller saw the Maclean's Magazine a couple of months ago? It was talking about how to make plumbing sexy.

And I think that B.C. Business had one, you know, last year about how to make the trades really attractive to young people.

I mean, there's been a lot of concern. Again, I'm not aware of the cuts or what are the cuts are to Skills Canada, but it's an excellent program.

Forsythe: Brian, have you been part of this yourself?

Brian: I am. I am a member of the national technical committee for something nefarious. It's public speaking, but it's one of the skills that people need to have, you know.

I've been a part, now, of two national competitions and two provincial competitions. The first one I was involved in was at B.C. Place.

Actually, just as a small aside, I was very surprised that we had the Skills Canada event at B.C. Place. We filled B.C. Place for a week, and then two weeks later, there was an open-line show about the shortage of skilled trades in Canada. Nothing was ever mentioned about Skills Canada.

It's really unfortunate because for the price of \$4 million.... One of your guests just mentioned that of the \$12 million, roughly four of it, roughly, is allotted to Skills Canada. Frankly, every year the kinds of expertise and the hundreds of very expensive people gladly volunteer their time for the federal government to promote skills, to develop the

youth, to develop the economy and to ensure that we have skilled trades, in the future. I find it astounding that the federal government is taking this incredibly shortsighted position.

Forsythe: Okay. Well, you're raising awareness on the program now and what could be happening to it soon. I appreciate your call. It is time for a news update, Brian. Thank you very much.

Forsythe: We're talking about jobs and job prospects for the future, trends that are coming over the next ten years or so. We're also talking about the here and now, job opportunities that exist in B.C.

The unemployment rate is going up. It's at 7.7 per cent in Vancouver and a little bit lower in Victoria, at 7.2. But in some of our more rural regions, like the North Coast-Nechako, it's over 12 per cent there; 11 per cent in the Kootenay region; 11 per cent, roughly, in the Cariboo as well.

If you have questions about finding a job, Dawn Schel can help you there. She is the supervisor at the Career Shop, a non-profit job resource centre in Victoria. And looking at the longer term, with Kerry Jothen, president and CEO of Human Capital Strategies.

Paula has been waiting in Kimberley to pose a question. Hi, Paula.

Paula: Good afternoon, Mark and Kerry and Dawn. I had a question with regards to education and what the job trends are in, basically, teaching in elementary, junior and high schools.

Jothen: Generally, certainly, in the next decade it's one of the top occupational areas, career areas. You know, it's in the top five or six in terms of education, generally. I don't have the figure, right in front of me, in terms of breaking that down, in terms of levels, but it's at both the post-secondary and the K-to-12 level.

You have, particularly, colleges and universities looking at attrition and tremendous shortage that they're facing in terms of faculty.

Forsythe: What about the public school system where we have so many schools closing, right now, and actually, teachers losing jobs that.... That's the short term, but how long might that last if you have a backlog of people who are laid off and they're first called back?

Jothen: I can't answer that. I think that the growth in terms of the numbers I'm looking at are more at the post-secondary level, although there is quite an aging factor in terms of the public education system as well. That retirement that will increase over the next decade may sort of cancel out some of the reduction in the size of the system.

Forsythe: Paula, when are you thinking of becoming a teacher?

Paula: Well, I'm thinking of changing careers. I'm an ecologist, and I love teaching and sharing just a love of nature. I thought of going into that, maybe next year. I think it's a two-year degree, because I already have a degree. So it would be in two or three years that I would start teaching.

Jochen: According to my numbers, for example - this is federal and provincial government numbers - elementary and kindergarten teachers: 10,000 openings to 2011.

Paula: Throughout Canada?

Jochen: No, this is in B.C.

Forsythe: That's what they're anticipating?

Jochen: And out of the 10,000, 9,800 are due to retirement.

Paula: Is this mostly urban or rural?

Jochen: I don't have a regional breakdown.

Schel: My understanding.... Certainly, I'm not a hundred per cent, specifically, know about B.C., all of B.C. If you look at anybody applying for teaching positions, often it's difficult to find positions in Victoria or Vancouver, but it's easier, often, to find positions in rural areas.

Certainly, I've worked with a fair number of young people who've finished their teaching degrees and are now working all over B.C., as well as in the north - you know, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Inuvik - or who are working in other parts of Canada or other parts of the world.

A teacher I know in the United Kingdom said that as far as she knows, there's a global shortage of teachers.

Some of it depends on where it is that you really want to be.

I met a young woman the other day who actually was teaching in Ontario without a teaching certificate because they were desperate for somebody to teach.

Forsythe: Paula, are you mobile?

Paula: I'd like to stay in B.C., but we'll see. All right. Thank you very much.

Forsythe: Okay. Wish you well in your deliberations, there.

Jim is next, from Kelowna.

Jim: I just wanted to express the challenge that I've had trying to find somebody appropriate to work. I have a heating, ventilation, refrigeration company here in Kelowna, and I've gone through the employment office route, but I don't find anybody, that they've sent to me, really wants to put in the effort. Maybe their expectations are too high.

I can offer four different trades for training, but the people they send, or some of them, have come out of prep school, [inaudible], which is now usually the standard for starting their apprenticeship. But the hand skills are not there, and the motivation's not there.

I don't know how to make the match. I'm willing to train somebody, but out in the Okanagan we can't always offer 40-hour workweeks. Somebody has to be willing to kind of roll with the economy here.

Forsythe: You have to do that as the building is done, or is this ongoing maintenance that you're describing?

Jim: It is more of a service-oriented industry. We go.... It's more of a seasonal operation when you're in the service.

Forsythe: Kerry, do you have any suggestions for him?

Jochen: Well, I don't know if there's other companies in the vicinity that are experiencing similar challenges or if there's an industry association or collective where you can perhaps pool some of your effort, to try to attract people.

Also again, I mean, this doesn't help you right today, but if the people aren't coming out with some of the skills and hands-on experience from training schools, perhaps [you could] work with those institutions to make it more relevant for what you need.

Forsythe: Jim, have you tried that? Have you tried to talk to the colleges that are training or the technical schools who are training these young people - this is what I need?

Jim: Well, at one point, I did go through the school many years ago, and I found it was excellent training. I have nothing against that.

One of the other routes that I tried was the trades branch, and some of the guidelines that they had outlined for me almost makes it prohibitive for a one-man company to take on a first-year apprentice. It turned out that their guidelines were suggesting that I pay just about \$2 less than what the journeymen make here.

I don't know what that rate was based on or if it was in Vancouver or union rates, but we don't have that luxury here in the Okanagan.

Jochen: Now, that's a good example - very poignant - of what I was talking about earlier. If we want more businesses to participate in apprenticeship, it's got to be opened up and be more flexible.

I know for one person or a very small shop, there are rules like: how many journeypersons you have to have, that dictate how many you can bring in on as apprentices. There's wage rates, that you just talked about. There's all those sorts of rules that a lot of people in industry are hoping that this new apprenticeship authority will change, to make it easier for you and other companies to participate.

Forsythe: How far along is that?

Jochen: Well, they've just hired their board of directors. Oh sorry. The board of directors were just appointed by government in August. They're now.... They've started recruiting the CEO. Once they get somebody in place, then I think you'll start seeing real things happening.

Forsythe: Will they want to hear from people like Jim in Kelowna, do you think?

Jochen: Yes. Yes. Definitely.

Forsythe: Take note, Jim. Thanks for posing the question.

Ray is next, to the north, at Kamloops. Hi, Ray.

Ray: Good afternoon. How are you today?

Forsythe: Very well, thank you. Do you have a question or a comment for our two guests?

Ray: Yes. I'm with the school of trades and [inaudible]. I'm owner of a truck-driving school in Kamloops. One thing that we're finding now is that.... You know, it's a different career, of course, and it's not for everyone. But truck drivers are in such high demand that it's very difficult for us to find enough employees in that field.

The one thing that is interesting is that for the second time in a row Census Canada revealed that more Canadian males make a living as truck drivers than any other single occupation in Canada, which is, you know, large numbers.

Forsythe: And you can't keep up to the demand.

Ray: Well, both in British Columbia and Alberta, you know, it's hard to find.... People would like to move, you know - that's the first thing. We advise people to do.... You know, are you prepared to move for your work? And because we're not a truly designated trade, it is a lot more difficult get the federal and provincial governments to listen to us as a whole.

Forsythe: The kind of truck driving jobs you were describing.... Are they long haul or is it around a community in particular?

Ray: It's a combination of both. It's.... Of course, in-town jobs are most coveted and would usually go to the more senior, experienced individuals. The entry-level truck drivers would, you know, have to take the long haul and pay their dues and get their two or three years' experience.

Then, of course, the oil field.... Right now they can't even find enough workers. We've talked to a few companies that virtually have job openings of 40 to 60 drivers or employees.

Forsythe: Dawn? Kerry? Is word getting out that there's a huge gap here in the labour pool?

Kerry: No. I mean I think this is part of what I'd say is both the young people and job seekers is: we need to do a better job - schools, colleges, government, industry associations - on getting the word out of where the growth is.

Truck drivers, on my list, is number four in the top openings - 14,000 over the next ten years.

I know a company that is helping somebody recruit truck drivers from Eastern Europe into Alberta to fill this need, because they just can't find them.

One of the things we haven't touched upon here is on one hand there's skill shortages now and increasing in the future. On the other hand we've got skills wastage. We've got literally tens of thousands of people represented in first nations young people, the fastest growing cohort, in terms of immigrants with skills and credentials that can't work in their trade or profession, and in terms of persons with disabilities and others that are willing to work, and many of them are able, and with the right supports and the right strategies with industries and government and others working together and educators....

I think employers need to look more at tapping that sort of talent pool, if you will, going down the road.

Forsythe: Dawn, I think you wanted to say something too about getting the word out on opportunities like this.

Dawn: Yes. Some of it is getting the word out about the opportunity. Then the other pieces, I was going to say.... So give me your name and number, and then I can tell the youth that I work with or other people who are looking where those jobs are located, 'cause sometimes it's also.... I might be aware. I can pass the information on. But I don't necessarily have the direct line to somebody who's hiring. Like, how do you find those positions is the other piece of it.

Also, I mean I see youth every day who are moving to Victoria because they like it here, but the reality might be that they have to live elsewhere and sort of looking at how...what.... Why would I move, and what's attractive elsewhere?

Forsythe: That's what Ray is saying. Are you prepared to move?

Ray, your pipeline.... Does it just go back and forth between you and the people who are looking for drivers? Or is there a more concerted, organized effort to get word out about this?

Ray: Well, again, we're just one organization in British Columbia and in Canada. The one thing that.... I've worked in industry for 25 years and have worked in both British Columbia and Alberta, so I have a lot of contacts in logging and oil field, etc. So we get a lot of calls from the companies, and I make calls to the people that I know that own companies. We're able to work with those companies on recruiting for those firms. But we just don't have the resources to train the numbers that are needed.

The one thing that Kerry did mention is vital in our industry is that we don't want to have like assembly lines or licensing mills, because, again, Kerry did touch on.... The skills or the qualifications wouldn't be there. So if the employers don't think, after you even have your education, that you were trained well enough to work in any field, then you will have problems getting employment.

With us, you know, we try to work with industry and we're members of the British Columbia Trucking Association. You know, I discuss things with Paul Landry, who's the president. We try to, you know, look what's best for the industry.

The one thing we don't ever want to do is just start pumping out drivers with little or no training hours, because that's going to affect the safety on our highways.

So with our industry we need to increase the curriculum. We need to increase the numbers of contact hours the students spend in the truck and make a product that is an entry-level safe driver that can go on to further training within one of those companies.

Forsythe: Well, maybe you've turned a few heads this afternoon, Ray. Thank you.

Ray: Okay. Thank you very much.

Forsythe: We're getting calls now from all over. Denise, you're next, in Coquitlam.

Denise: Hi. I'm wondering.... I think it's logical.... I have a desire to be an event planner, and I'm thinking with the Olympics coming, doesn't it kind of make sense to go along the lines of hospitality? Am I right? Or am I wrong?

Forsythe: An event planner with the impending Olympics. Good question. Kerry, what do you think?

Jochen: I think generally hospitality and tourism is a big area, growth area, with the games, and not just the games in 2010, but there's a lot of events that will lead up to that coming into town. I think event planning is a very good option.

Forsythe: We don't have too many already? Or will that demand just grow?

Jochen: I think it will grow, but I mean I don't have numbers in front of me. But I suspect that this is an area that will keep growing as part of a broader trend.

The thing that I didn't mention.... In all these numbers, they don't include the impacts of the games and these big projects like the convention and exhibition centre and RAV line and all that, so those big construction projects will really.... They'll increase further the numbers that I'm talking about in terms of tourism, in terms of retail, transportation, construction and even manufacturing.

Forsythe: And perhaps event planning [inaudible] trade and convention centre [inaudible].

Jochen: Exactly. Within hospitality and tourism.

Forsythe: Denise, why would you like to work in that field?

Denise: Well, I've just moved back here to B.C. I was living in the States for four years. I've just come back, and I just love this place so much. It's just wonderful to be home. I'm enthusiastic, and I'm going back into the job market. It's kind of like at my age it's silly to say, but what do I want to be when I grow up? That really is what draws me. I just wanted to confirm. I kind of had an idea it was a good idea, but now, you know, just more confirmation that I am getting...going on the right track here.

I think that being a people person.... I've worked for veterinarians, and I've been, you know, in front office a lot and really enjoy dealing with people and do a good job and don't get upset easily and know how to handle people who are upset. I just think that's a niche that I would fit really well into.

Forsythe: How do you learn how to become an event planner?

Denise: I stopped by the David Lam campus of Douglas College, and I went into their resources, their career resources office - not as a student there, but just thought, you know: what do they have to offer? And sure enough, in this career guide of where you can take the courses it says that there aren't a lot of people in it, and there will always need to be people in this.

I think there was a small day course...about an eight-week course at Vancouver College. That's so far the only one that I've found that seems feasible to me.

Jochen: Well, the numbers agree with you. I just found it. There's only a small number. In 2001 there were about 1,200 event planners in B.C. But there's projected to be 560 openings over the next ten years, so it's got double the growth rate of the average employment market.

Forsythe: You're on the right side of the curve, Denise.

Denise: Hey.

Forsythe: Good luck.

Schel: It sounds like she's got the right attitude.

Forsythe: Yes.

Denise: Thank you. Once again, NPR doesn't even compare to CBC with some things, you know. I enjoyed NPR there, but I love CBC radio now that I'm back.

Forsythe: Nice of you to say that. Thank you very much.

Dawn, what do you encourage people to do. Sounds like she's hooking up with her passion there, doesn't it?

Schel: Yeah, it certainly does. And for me, that's a lot of the question that I ask people. What do you want to be when you grow up? What are your dreams? What are your hopes? Where is that you really feel that you shine best? How can you connect to that in some way, especially in work?

That really can make a lot of difference to people. As a young man said to me yesterday: I want to be able to get up in the morning and jump in the shower and feel like I'm happy to go to work.

Forsythe: Let's go back to Vancouver Island. Lindy is at Courtenay.

Lindy: Hi Mark. Good afternoon.

Forsythe: Do you have a question?

Lindy: I do. It's probably for Dawn. I'm still in...a stay-home mom, and I've been here for 11, 12 years. It's time for me to go back to work. My youngest is now in grade 2. So I'm going to go out and look for a job. But I would like it to be flexible hours. I would still like to have something that allows me to be home in the afternoon and maybe school holidays off and things to spend time with my kids.

I was wondering how I could make that seem attractive to an employer.

Schel: How you can make it sound attractive to an employer?

Lindy: Yeah, that I just want a part-time position that I want to have flexible hours.

Schel: What area did you say that you're in?

Lindy: Well, I've been home for 12 years, so I'd be going back into the workforce, and I was in administration.

Schel: Right. I think a lot of the trend that I've seen, and Kerry can talk about this as well, is about part-time work is often one that.... Some employers, you know.... When people come in and say: no, I want full time only, and that's all I want, sometimes they're like: well, I don't have full time. So I mean I think even to say: I am available part-time hours, these are the hours that I'm interesting in working, this is the conditions under which.... That's clear. So that can also be attractive.

So some of it might be looking in your area where you live - whether or not there's an employment resource centre there. If they could give you some assistance with doing your resume, or who are the employers that would be more likely to be looking for somebody with the kinds of skills that you have, but also who might be looking at part time.... I mean, some of it is looking around and sort of brainstorming: what are the possibilities?

I think the clearer you are.... This is what I have to offer; these are my skills; these are the kinds of hours I'm interested in working. I think there are employers out there who are looking for people. They can only afford to hire somebody part time.

Forsythe: Is this a trend, Kerry?

Jochen: Yes. I think generally what I'd call non-traditional work hours and what not in terms of part time, in terms of telecommuting, self-employment - a lot of different ways.

With this individual, some times, with some organizations you can go to them. You may have somebody else in mind, and you can pitch to them that you'd like to job share and the two of you share the job.

Or in another case it may be you could do the work at home, telecommuting part of the time. You may save the company some office space and what not, and it might be more conducive to your lifestyle to do some of that at home. It might help both.

It is a trend, and there are some creative ways if you have thought about it and the company is open to it.

Forsythe: I hope that helps, Lindy.

Lindy: It sure does. Thanks a lot.

Forsythe: Mark's next up from North Vancouver.

Mark: I only caught part of your discussion as I was driving back to my shop. I'm in the millwork business. Over the years I've actually trained.... I've trained dozens of guys literally in my field.

What I found was that it's an awful lot of effort on my part to do it, you know - a lot of costs involved. What I found overall was that the government regulations, the tax liabilities.... What I found is that everything's structured to make me not want to train people and not to give people an apprenticeship, training them in my field - I do fine millwork - give them a chance to learn something that's just a beautiful thing to do and to help them move on in a career. It just doesn't.... It ends up not being worth my while.

Forsythe: What needs to be there to make it worth your while?

Mark: Well, you can imagine, my specialty being millwork I'm good at the hands-on stuff. But as soon as you get people hired on you've got the WCB you've got to deal with. You've got UIC deductions. You've got.... As soon as you hire someone you've got to have a paperwork staff to take care of it all, and suddenly.... You just wanted one guy to help you, for example, but now you've got to have two people - someone to do the paperwork.

You forget.... You know what I'm saying? Why would you want to even start if all you really wanted was to share your skill and provide more product and again, increase your bottom line. And then again, as soon as you increase your bottom line, as soon as you start making money, then they just tax it away from you. You know, your family allowance changes from, you know, two hundred bucks to whatever...one hundred and fifty bucks. Suddenly, because you're making money, you stop getting the little perks that our society tends to offer.

Forsythe: This is a recurring theme on the program, Kerry.

Jochen: Definitely. Some companies add to what this gentleman's just said - that on top of all that, after the training, they lose the people. They go on elsewhere.

One of the things that I find is almost unanimous across different industries. The B.C. Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Homebuilders Association, Canadian manufacturers have called for some sort of human resources tax credit system across Canada or just in B.C. But we have research tax credits, we have manufacturing equipment tax credits and other ones, and everybody's saying: human resources, human capital, is the most important resource. It should be reflected in our tax system. A lot of companies are saying that.

Forsythe: Mark, others are thinking like you are right now, from the sounds of things, and simplifying things for potential employers.

Someone has phoned in a question, and maybe Dawn, you can help here. A caller is wondering if there are any programs to help people with disabilities start their own business. Do you know of any in particular?

Schel: Let me think. There's a couple of different programs through HRDC, and this is where I'm not sure 100 per cent of the details. But they could check with HRDC what's called the Opportunities Fund. My understanding of that is that one of the possibilities that they do is that they can help people with disabilities in terms of self-employment. So if they checked with either their local HRDC office as to who is running the Opportunities Fund or who does the applications for the Opportunities Fund in their area....

Forsythe: Good suggestion. And that can lead to training and further schooling, too, I believe - can it?

Jochen: Yes. And also Pacific Coast Savings in Victoria.... I'm sorry....

Schel: Coast Capital?

Jochen: Coast Capital, yeah. I know the gentleman there. But they help persons with disabilities in terms of getting their business started and getting loans and stuff.

Also, the person should check with the Ministry of Human Resources provincially. I know that in the very near future they're going to be mounting some new programs for people with disabilities around entrepreneurship and starting a business.

Forsythe: Well, thanks very much to both of you. Great information this afternoon that you've shared. Thank you.