

MOE SIHOTA TV SHOW, September 16, 2003

Transcript of Kerry Jochen's Remarks

JOTHEN: No, if you look ahead over the next ten years, about one-third of the openings in BC will be in trades and technical areas. That's over 200,000 new openings, but the degree to which young people participate in the trades in high school and the degree to which employers and workers participate in apprenticeship and the trades doesn't reflect that growing demand. And I talked to 6 or 8 employer representatives today. There's a shortage of skilled people and they fear that it will get worse obviously in the coming years.

JOTHEN: Well, I think employers and industries need to step up to the plate and I think they will, and I think they are. A couple of groups that I work with, one that invited me here, the BC Construction Association, and the Canadian Home Builders Association of BC both are taking action on doing things in this area. In fact, they're working together. They've created a joint skills council in Victoria here, a sort of a clearing house for jobs and training. But, also provincially they've both got pilots and a number of new models that they're developing, and they both take the position that... "Let's preserve and build on and strengthen the existing trades, but also there's room for new models and new ways of doing things and we can work on both those tracks." So there are examples of where they're doing that and that's examples of employers stepping up to the plate. Not every employer, but some of those leadership bodies.

JOTHEN: Just his [a caller's] focus on the youth; I mean I think that's critical. You talked about being 25 and exploring careers. I think that's important, but we've got to get them into the trades when they're in high school and when they're younger, and industry's got to work with schools, government's got to work with schools. We've got to bolster the school careers and trades programs. That's where it starts. And industry is willing to partner with them on that.

JOTHEN: One thing is a lot of employer groups and myself have advocated some sort of national or provincial human resources investment tax credit. I think that's one thing. The other thing is making it easier for employers to participate and for individuals to get into apprenticeship. In terms of some of the rules, and I'm not talking about safety, but some of the rules and administrivia. Also, using the website and the 1-800 number. Those sorts of things. I think we need to use state of the art technology for employers to get involved.

JOTHEN: Let me dispel a myth, because there's been a lot of "the sky is falling," and doom and gloom. I don't mean tonight, but the fact is if you look at the number of apprentices signed up in BC, today, it's the highest in about ten years. It's higher than when I was CEO of ITAC and it's higher than before ITAC. It's actually over 17,000, I mean, I don't understand why it sounds like everything is going downhill yet the numbers are going up.

JOTHEN: BC construction employers are optimistic about the future. It includes the 268,000 person years of employment from the Games and other projects concurrently, and I just want to give you three websites. One is the Construction Association in Vancouver: www.construction-jobs.ca, lots of good information. The Homebuilders are doing a lot of neat new things: www.chbabc.org. And also for those that are concerned about their futures as apprentices and have questions you've got that 1-800 number: 1-866-660-6011.