

# Encouraging people to consider a career in the trades

by Heidi Riley

TRADES ON PEI

“A skilled trade can be more than just a job. It can be your career,” says **Tracey Gormley**, Executive Director of the **PEI Residential Construction Sector Council (PEIRCSC)**.

The PEIRCSC represents homebuilders, renovators, plumbers, electricians, and other residential construction tradespeople, businesses, and organizations.

The PEIRCSC is encouraging people to enter the Residential Construction sector by choosing a trade, getting the necessary training, and eventually earning their Red Seal.

## Is home building staying strong on the Island?

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)** reports that 788 houses were completed on PEI in 2007, up from 721 the year before. CMHC forecasts that housing starts in Atlantic Canada will decline in 2009 due to current economic conditions.

“In spite of the faltering economy, there is still a great deal of housing construction on PEI,” says Tracey. “Residential construction is one of the largest contributors to the PEI economy.”

“When I talk to employers in the industry, they tell me they are booked and have contracts for jobs well into the future,” says Tracey. “In the last few weeks, I have received several calls from Americans who are looking for qualified tradespeople to build summer homes on PEI.”

“Construction jobs have really changed,” says Tracey. “Years ago, construction slowed dramatically in the winter, but now many people work year-round.”

## More training needed to keep up with changes in the industry

“There is a growing trend towards more energy efficient housing,” says Tracey. “With geothermal heating, ICF (Insulated Concrete Foundations) and other innovations, there is a greater demand for tradespeople who are skilled at installing these new systems.”

“Another new trend soon to arrive is the **Tech Ready** program. It teaches builders, renovators and subcontractors to do the wiring to accommodate today’s new smart homes that use up-to-date energy efficient technologies,” says Tracey. “This training is in demand.”

“There is a constant need for skills upgrading. Tradespeople who keep up with these new

trends by spending time and money on training will benefit by having more work. The PEIRCSC wants to help skilled trades people access training that will keep them up-to-date.”

## About the PEIRCSC

The PEIRCSC has over 600 members. The main goal is to address labour issues such as:

- wages
- industry training
- human resource and business information
- workers leaving for jobs out west
- short-term seasonal or contract work
- shortage of skilled labour
- workers reaching retirement age and attracting enough workers to replace them.

Tracey encourages employers and skilled trades people to join the PEIRCSC and to visit the website to post job openings and get information about upcoming training courses.

**A Labour Market Supply & Demand Study** to find out more about residential construction work on PEI and the number of trades people available to do the work will be available soon. One of the questions the survey asked skilled trades people was if they felt they had enough training to do their jobs. “We can use this information to talk to Holland College about training needs,” says Tracey. “We know that one great need is computer training.”

## Surveying people in the construction labour force who have left PEI

### What?

The PEIRCSC is now doing a survey of tradespersons who have left PEI to pursue trades jobs in western Canada.

### Why?

“We want to find out why they left PEI,” says Tracey. “Were they looking for higher wages or were there other reasons such as lack of benefits or full-time year-round work? We also want to know what it would take to bring them back to PEI.”

### How?

Skilled tradespeople who want to share their opinions are welcome to fill out the survey. Go to the Residential Construction Sector Council website at [www.peircsc.ca](http://www.peircsc.ca) and follow the link to the survey site.



Tracey Gormley, Executive Director of the PEI Residential Construction Sector Council, has created a calendar promoting skilled trades. The calendar features Island trades people and information about training and certification. It is available at the PEIRCSC and at local building supply stores.

For more information, visit [www.peircsc.ca](http://www.peircsc.ca) or call 367-3366.



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