

Employment in the bridge and road construction industry

by Stella Shepard

Trades

“**R**oad and bridge construction on PEI is slated to receive approximately **253.5 million dollars** over the next five years,” says **Joe Murphy**, Manager with the **PEI Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association**. “This will enable the government to rebuild more than 700 km of roads. It will also result in more job opportunities in this industry on PEI.”

Joe says the infrastructure dollars are coming at the right time. “Last year, there would have been a labour shortage because so many tradespeople were working in western Canada. Now the western Canada boom is slowing down and more tradespeople are returning home. The trades people who are returning will be searching for employment.”

Jobs in the industry

“Experienced heavy equipment operators are very, very important to the construction industry,” says Joe. “This position is in demand.”

Other positions include:

- Truck drivers
- Crew supervisors
- On-site managers
- General labourers
- Mechanics
- Surveyors
- Engineers
- Bookkeepers
- Administration staff
- Flaggers

Kings county company profile

Kings County Construction has been a familiar landmark in Montague for about 60 years. **Jack Annear** worked for the construction company and later purchased it. About 45 years ago, his son **Harry** began working at the company and eventually took it over.

Harry’s son **Mike** began working for the company in his early teens. He’s now the project manager. His nephew **Luke** is now the fourth generation of the Annear family working for the company.

“Our company is a civil contractor,” says Mike. “We build roads and do municipal work such as sewage and water. We also work on golf courses, landscaping, construction, and snow removal.”

“There is an endless amount of work in the construction industry on PEI. But the obstacles in the way are the funding and the red tape. Last spring there were announcements for municipal projects, but the funding for the projects is still not in place.”

“In general, we are hesitant but optimistic about the announcement of millions of government dollars slated for this industry.”



Mike Annear of Kings County Construction is relatively optimistic about the road and bridge construction industry on PEI. “It’s good to hear that the government is concentrating on infrastructure construction again,” says Mike. “We hope that will translate into more jobs.”

Staffing

“Staffing looks more promising this year because of experienced trades people returning home from western Canada,” says Mike. “Last year when we were trying to fill positions there was a lack of skilled workers to choose from.”

“We have about 70 employees during our peak season of April to November. About 12 people work with us year-round. Our hiring numbers will be up from last year. We will be probably be hiring about six new people this summer.”

“Road and bridge construction work is seasonal, which makes it challenging when hiring. Some of our staff have been with us for 30 years. Some move on to other jobs while some return to work with us during the peak season.”

The industry

“The construction industry experienced major growth about 15 years ago,” says Mike. “Large projects like the Confederation Bridge tend to grow the industry. But in general, I think the industry is almost at its maximum. Some PEI construction companies are searching for construction work in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. The companies have outgrown the amount of work tendered on PEI.”

According to a February news release, the provincial government has tendered approximately 20 million dollars worth of road and bridge construction for the 2009 construction season, and there is more to come. “The work will be taken on by Island companies,” says Minister of Transportation and Public Works **Ron MacKinley**. “This work provides a very important boost to Island businesses at a time of economic uncertainty.”

For more information about the **PEI Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association**, call **894-9514**

or visit <http://www3.pei.sympatico.ca/pei.roadbuilders>



For more information about **Kings County Construction**, call **838-2191**. Visit the website at www.kccpei.com

For more information about the government tenders, visit www.gov.pe.ca and search **tenders**

www.employmentjourney.com