

Island company expands and has workers at projects across Canada

by Patricia Roy

Trades

Ron MacDougall, owner of **MacDougall Steel Erectors Inc.**, worked for companies erecting steel structures for several years before he and his wife **Gloria** began a steel fabrication and erecting business out of their home in Cornwall.

The company now has three departments: **MacDougall Steel, MacDougall Erectors** and **MacDougall Media**, which started two years ago. "The Borden-Carleton plant opened in 1998 and now we have five crews out on five different projects in Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon and Atlantic Canada," says Ron.

The raw material for the steel fabrication comes from Ontario and the Eastern Seaboard. "It arrives here in raw beam form," explains Ron. "Then we take it and fabricate it for specific policies and shapes."

Three expansions

MacDougall Steel Erectors Inc. has expanded its plant three times since its construction. The last expansion, which doubled the plant's capacity, occurred this spring. "We also increased the number of workers with each expansion and we now have close to **100** employees," says Ron.

The economy has slowed the demand for steel a little, but Ron says the company keeps its share of the market by providing full service. They fabricate and erect the steel structures using their own employees.

Staff and training provided

The company employs engineers, estimators, administration and accounting staff, project managers, sales personnel and iron workers. They also have eight to 12 detailers, who use Xsteel, SteelCad, and AutoCad programs to produce drawings of each component of the steel structures. "Right now we train our own iron workers," says Ron. "We recently spoke with Holland College about offering Iron Worker training. We also do all of our own safety training."

Challenge to other businesses

Ron says they have had to look to other provinces to find workers, and responses to their ads have often been from people in countries half way around the globe. "We have great workers here on PEI, but we need to provide the training they need. So, I would like to put out a challenge to other businesses on the Island to get behind local educational facilities offering training in the trades so that we do not have to outsource work."



Ron MacDougall, owner of MacDougall Steel Erectors in Borden-Carleton.

Jobs hard to fill

"It is very difficult to find qualified experienced staff for occupations such as **estimators, project managers, quality control, iron workers** and **welders**. We never seem to have enough qualified welders and other trades workers who are willing to travel to job sites for six weeks at a time."


He says the slowdown in the economy has affected Islanders working in western Canada but has not increased the number of people looking for work at the Borden plant. "Many workers are back on the Island but are not applying because they expect the same wages here as they made back there. It is not realistic."

Advice for job seekers

"For labourers, no previous training is needed to work at MacDougall Steel," says Ron. "As long as they can do the work. But for specialized trades such as welders, they would need to take a welding course."

"I would really encourage young people to seek training in the trades, such as the great welding course at Holland College and the new Iron Worker program which will be offered through the college in 2010."

 For more information or to drop off a résumé at the plant, call **855-2100**.

 Job seekers can also apply on-line at **www.macdougallsteel.com**

For more information about the new **Iron Work** program planned for Holland College Georgetown Centre, call **1-800-446-5265** or visit

<http://mediaroom.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/e/media/press/press.shtml?4485>