

# PEI Construction industry update

by Gloria Welton

The construction industry employs about **4,700** people on the Island, according to the October 2010 Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey. Many of these positions are full time, year-round.

This sector includes the construction of:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Roads & bridges
- Institutional
- Industrial and heavy construction projects
- Renewable (wind) and non-renewable (oil/gas) energy projects

## Construction Association of PEI (CAPEI)

There are about **500** construction companies on PEI.

“Some of the bigger projects this year across the Island are the new Holland College Centre in Alberton, the Convention Centre in Charlottetown, Summerside senior apartments, Prince County Hospital Dialysis Centre, the new school in Souris, and manors in Charlottetown and Summerside,” says **Ross Barnes**, Executive Director, CAPEI.

Ross says that the jobs that are more difficult to fill are in **Masonry, Plumbing, and Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning**. “Most construction companies are always looking for good people and are willing to train. Filling labourer jobs is still difficult. This job is a great place to start and work your way into other positions as you gain experience.”

CAPEI has about **168** members. For a complete list, visit [www.capei.ca](http://www.capei.ca) and click **membership**.

## Residential construction

The **PEI Residential Construction Sector Council (PEIRCSC)** brings together business, labour and educational stakeholders to share ideas, concerns and perspectives about human resources and skills issues. They help ensure that workers and those seeking employment are well prepared for the challenges of the evolving labour market.

“Currently there is demand for **Carpenters, Electricians and Plumbers**,” says **Tracey Gormley**, Executive Director of PEIRCSC. “Residential construction has been strong this past year and is not showing signs of slowing down thanks to development in communities such as Stratford and Cornwall.”

## Canadian Home Builders' Association-PEI

The **Canadian Home Builders' Association - PEI local** was formed in 2009 and plans to give Island builders the opportunity to build new homes according to the National Building Code of Canada. Presently, Charlottetown and Summerside have adopted the National Building Code and the town of Stratford has recently adopted the National Building Code.

## Roofing company manager talks about the industry



**Jean Allain**, Branch Manager of **Atlantic Roofers Limited**, is President of CAPEI. “It is great to be involved with the Construction Association and to talk with other companies about issues in the industry. Labour force concerns include keeping the balance between being competitive in pricing and wages, having local training options, how to work best within various systems used by employees, Employment Insurance, and more. The association allows for a great line of communication between companies and is a great source of information and support for contractors.

“In our business we have a long-term vision that seems to work for us. My uncle **Arthur Allain** has owned the company since 1972 and has many more locations in the Atlantic provinces. I have been with the company for 26 years and my father **Henry Allain** was in this business for over 30 years and retired in 1997. I became manager of the Island branch after his retirement.

“We have **15** employees on PEI and very little turn-over. Some staff have been with the company for up to 32 years. We try to be fair yet expect a good week's work when work is available. We offer good wages and benefits. It might rain through the week but staff will work on the weekends to make up for lost time. When possible they will be rewarded for their weekend work.”

Jean says he is often asked to speak to students about his career. “I tell them that you can't expect to earn top dollar over night. You have to start at the bottom and work hard for what you want.

“During one of my presentations, I was asked if I have any regrets about my career choice. I did make some bad choices in my life but I love what I do and I have no regrets about the road that I took to get here. I had to make a lot of sacrifices such as moving from New Brunswick and dedicating many hours to making this work for myself and my family.”

## Best way to get into a trade

Jean says the best way to break into any trade is to start as a labourer and get a feel for the work. A good percentage of roofers start as labourers.

“When I interview people I ask them to be honest with me. I will give them a try if they let me know of their plans to stay. If they are interested and I see potential in their work, then we will invest more time and training to help them work their way into the trade. Many employers in the trades offer the same opportunity.”

For more information about **Atlantic Roofers Limited**, contact **Jean Allain** at 368-1011 or e-mail [jallain@atlanticroofers.com](mailto:jallain@atlanticroofers.com)



# PEI Road & bridge building update

by Heidi Riley

Road builders and heavy construction companies on PEI are responsible for road & bridge building, paving, heavy construction, water line, sanitary and storm sewer construction, and may also handle demolition and snow plowing. Also included are companies which supply goods & services, such as makers of culverts, equipment sales & service, concrete delivery, and engineering companies.

**Joe Murphy**, Executive Director of the **PEI Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association**, says 2010 was the second good year for government capital budgets for road and bridge work. However, 2011 may be a challenging year for the industry.

“With federal funding programs expiring, the provincial Capital Budget in 2011 is reduced to \$37 million, a reduction of about \$20 million,” Joe says. “This will mean fewer projects and less employment.”

About **99** companies are part of the Association. These companies employ both year-round and seasonal workers.

## Road building company employee talks about the industry



**Corey MacFayden, Island Coastal Services**

**Corey MacFadyen** is the Assistant Superintendent/Director of Human Resources for **Island Coastal Services**. This is one of the largest earth moving/civil construction companies on PEI.

“Last year’s federal stimulus package was very much directed towards infrastructure improvements, such as road building, sewer and water, etc.,” says Corey. “At our peak work period last year, we had more than **250** people on the payroll. It was our biggest year to date for the amount of work and staff numbers. Now that the fund has expired, our typical staff numbers will return to about **180** to **220**.”

### Job titles

- Labourers: entry-level & general
- Labourers with specific skills such as pipe laying or landscaping
- Autobody Technicians, Welders, & Painters
- Heavy Equipment Mechanics
- Heavy Equipment Operators specializing in excavators, backhoes or bulldozers
- Class 1A & 3A Truck Drivers
- Construction Supervisors/Foremen
- Engineers & Engineering Technologists
- Land Surveyors
- Accountants & Accounting Technicians.

### Jobs hardest to fill

“It is most difficult to find good Labourers,” says Corey. “We are willing to teach new hires the skills they need to advance if they are willing to work.”

### Advancing through education & learning on the job

Corey’s employment history with Island Coastal is a great example of starting at the bottom and working your way up. During high school, Corey was in the academic stream but wanted to also experience the co-op program. He was given a work placement at the Island Coastal equipment shop, where he started by sweeping floors and doing equipment maintenance. As he learned more about the business, he eventually became a Heavy Equipment Operator.

After graduating from Holland College with a Business Diploma, Corey spent the next four years working with the Federal Government. He then returned to Island Coastal as Director of Human Resources. Along with hiring and firing, Corey also does cost estimates for new jobs, supervises job sites, and monitors employee issues.

### How do you get started in this field?

“Getting a job as an entry-level Labourer is a great way to get started,” says Corey. “Many companies are willing to train people who show an aptitude and willingness to learn.”

### Qualifications needed

“When someone applies for a job with us, we find that work history/experience in the agriculture and/or construction industry tend to be a strong asset. An individual who grew up on a farm and is already accustomed to manual labour and working with machinery seems to be a good fit. Being a Labourer, Carpenter’s Helper, or Masonry Helper all seem to provide comparable experience.

“When we hire Heavy Equipment Operators, training in a school setting is not a requirement, but can help in some instances. Island Coastal needs high quality, efficient staff because our customers expect a little more from us.”

For more information about Island Coastal, visit [www.islandcoastal.ca](http://www.islandcoastal.ca)



For more information about construction and road & bridge building:

**The Canadian Home Builders Association - PEI:** contact **Lori Pearce**, Executive Officer at **1-902- 886-3445** or e-mail [chba.pei@gmail.com](mailto:chba.pei@gmail.com)  
Visit [www.nbhome.nb.ca/Regions/PeiEn](http://www.nbhome.nb.ca/Regions/PeiEn)

**Construction Association of PEI:** [www.capei.ca](http://www.capei.ca)

**PEI Residential Construction Sector Council:** [www.peircsc.ca](http://www.peircsc.ca)

For a list of PEI residential construction employers, click **members**.

**2010 Career Directory** and a **Fair Wage Guide** gives details on construction job options for PEI and wage ranges. Click **Research & Resources**.

**Apprenticeship Branch of the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning:** call **368-4460** or visit [www.apprenticeship.pe.ca](http://www.apprenticeship.pe.ca)

**Masonry Industry Association of Atlantic Canada Inc.:** [www.miaac.ca](http://www.miaac.ca)

**PEI Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association:** <http://www3.pei.sympatico.ca/pei.roadbuilders>

The **PEI Trucking Sector Council** offers monthly **Careers in Trucking** information sessions followed by **TOWES Assessments**  
Call **566-5563** or visit [www.peitsc.ca](http://www.peitsc.ca)

