

Merit Contractors of Saskatchewan Support Budgets Training Initiatives While Raising Warning Flag

New Seats for Apprenticeship Training are Welcome But More Must Be Done

March 20, 2013

Today Merit Saskatchewan Executive Director Karen Low offered praise for the Saskatchewan Budget released in Regina.

“The Merit Contractors congratulate Premier Wall and the government for once again balancing the budget and helping ensure that the Saskatchewan economy stays on track. We are also encouraged by government plans to develop the province’s public infrastructure, a prime economic driver”

But she also noted that big challenges lie ahead.

“We were pleased to see Finance Minister Krawetz draw attention to what we believe is Saskatchewan’s most pressing economic challenge, labour and skills shortages”.

She went on to single out several new initiatives that could help address the problem.

“We have long encouraged the government to put a greater emphasis on training and apprenticeship. The 300 new apprenticeship training seats, support for industry-driven skills training, increase for the Provincial Training Allowance and support for First Nation and Metis skills training programs are helping to move us in the right direction”.

On January 31st the Canada School of Public Policy released *Labour Shortages in Saskatchewan*. It concluded that if immediate action isn’t taken skill and labour shortages will slice Saskatchewan’s economic growth. It warned that at the current rate Saskatchewan’s workforce could be short by as many as 120,000 workers by the year 2020.

Ms. Low noted, “In the construction sector skill shortages can lead to delays and higher costs. Over the long run they hurt economic growth and the ability of governments to pay for social programs. Today’s budget began to address those problems. We will continue to work to ensure that this remains a top government priority”.