



**For Immediate Release
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Merit Contractors Provide Apprentices with Tuition Refunds 300 new construction apprentices will receive \$2500 over four years

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan - As students across Saskatchewan begin a new school year, the Merit Contractors Association of Saskatchewan is pleased to announce that over the next year, more than 300 new construction apprentices will see their tuition fully refunded by the association.

"Merit Saskatchewan is proud to provide a tuition bursary to all apprentices employed with one of our member companies," said Karen Low, Merit Saskatchewan's Executive Director. "As classes begin this week, we hope that both students and parents will keep our tuition refund program in mind as just one more reason why the construction trades are a great career option."

According to Low, tuition can now cost as much as \$780 per year for a construction apprentice. By taking advantage of Merit Contractor tuition refunds, most apprentices who successfully complete a typical four-year apprenticeship will save well over \$2500.

The Saskatchewan apprenticeship system is widely renowned as one of the most effective training models in Canada. Typically a new construction employee is sponsored by their employer, and attends school for approximately eight weeks each year over a period of about four years. Their classroom training is supplemented by on-the-job experience when they return to their paid jobs for the remainder of the year.

Low believes there has never been a better time to enter the Saskatchewan construction sector.

"The current and future demand for skilled trades in the Saskatchewan construction sector is enormous," said Low. "There are good wages, good benefits and, for Merit employees, tuition refunds."

In fact, in a recent wage survey, Merit Contractors found that first-year apprentices in the open shop construction sector are now making 21% more than they did in 2010.

"There were 58,000 people working in construction jobs in Saskatchewan in July," said Low. "That's an increase of 23,000 from 2007."

“In a time of acute skilled labour shortages, Merit Saskatchewan is serious about doing our part to attract new employees to the industry. Our Education Bursary Program is one more incentive for any young, hard-working man or woman to join one of our member companies.”

To find out more about Merit Saskatchewan’s Education Bursary Program, new and prospective apprentices are urged to visit meritsask.com.

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