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For Immediate Release

## **B.C. industry training partners join forces to stress “Now’s the Time” for apprenticeship**

**May 28, 2009: Vancouver, B.C.** – A broad coalition of organizations with a stake in the province’s industry training system has come together to deliver the message that, with the downturn in the economy, now’s the time for an intensified focus on the training of apprentices.

“B.C. lost nearly two-thirds of its trades apprentices to the recession of the early ‘80s,” says Kevin Evans, CEO of B.C.’s Industry Training Authority (ITA). “With labour shortages still on the horizon, the province cannot afford to let that happen again.”

The ITA and its partners today launched an information campaign called “Now’s the Time” to reinforce with employers the business case for taking advantage of the current recession to retain and hire apprentices, and to encourage apprentices to catch up on their technical in-class training.

Close to 5,000 of B.C.’s second-year apprentices have yet to take any in-class components of their training required for trades certification.

“When the economy was booming, many apprentices were staying on the job and postponing their technical training,” Evans says. “This period of slower economic activity is exactly the time when employers and their apprentices should be skilling up to be ready for the better times ahead.”

The “Now’s the Time” campaign stresses that while the recession is temporary, future labour shortages are not. The province’s demographics are leading to an increase in retirements that, by 2015, will result in an estimated shortfall of more than 110,000 skilled workers.

Joining the ITA in delivering the “Now’s the Time” message to employers and apprentices are partners that include: the B.C. Chamber of Commerce; the Business Council of British Columbia; the Independent Contractors Business Association; the Vancouver Board of Trade; the B.C. Construction Association; the B.C. Roadbuilders; the B.C. and Yukon Building Trades; the Automotive Training Standards Organization; the Residential Construction Industry Training Organization; Hort Education B.C.; the Transportation Career Development Association; the Resource Training Organization; the Piping Industry Apprenticeship Board; Propel; the Trades Training Consortium of B.C.; Camosun College; the College of the Rockies; Northern Lights College; Selkirk College; Vancouver Community College; and Thompson Rivers University.

Says campaign partner John Winter, President & CEO of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, “Despite increased unemployment rates, the recession is not diminishing the existing skills gap. In fact, ensuring our province’s successful rebound from the economic downturn makes finding the workers with the skills necessary to answer B.C.’s needs all the more imperative.”

The Industry Training Authority is the provincial crown agency responsible for overseeing B.C.’s industry training and apprenticeship system, providing a skilled workforce for industry and career development opportunities for British Columbians.

For more information on the campaign and its partners, visit [www.nowsthetime.ca](http://www.nowsthetime.ca).

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**Media Contact:**

Lisa Dooling, Executive Lead, Communications and Marketing  
Industry Training Authority  
Tel: 604-671-8710

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