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Manageable growth for BC's construction industry over next nine years

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VANCOUVER -- With a few exceptions, BC's construction industry will grow at a manageable pace for the next several years, thanks mainly to mining and utilities-related projects, and a modest housing recovery.

A new forecast scenario released by the Construction Sector Council, *Construction Looking Forward: An assessment of construction labour markets for British Columbia from 2011-2019*, says new mining, pipeline and port expansion projects will drive growth until 2015.

Those, along with the construction of several major hydroelectric projects means some trades will see double-digit employment growth between 2011 and 2015. But during the same period, as government stimulus projects wind down, trades heavily involved in road, highway and bridge work will likely see reductions in employment.

“Along with high levels of in-mobility at this time, we will need to continue to focus on training and recruitment to ensure we have the workers required in BC,” says Manley McLachlan, President-CEO, British Columbia Construction Association.

From 2016 to 2019, the industry will again face some employment losses as major projects begin to wind down and residential investment slows. But these losses will be partly offset by retirements from the aging workforce.

“Industry needs to continue to focus on attracting new workers even during periods of limited employment growth. Many of these new workers will be first time new entrants to the labour force and others from outside the industry. Training programs will likely need to expand and adapt to prepare these new workers for the job site.” says Tom Sigurdson, Executive Director, British Columbia and Yukon Building and Construction Trades Council.

During the 2011–2019 period, 31,000 workers exit the workforce due to retirements, and this raises the total labour force requirement to 32,600 workers. Two thirds of these requirements will be filled by an expected 22,400 new entrants to the workforce, leaving a gap of 10,000 workers that will need to be recruited from outside the local construction market to meet labour requirements.

Each year, the CSC compiles nine-year labour forecast scenarios for each province following consultations with industry leaders, including owners, contractors and labour groups, as well as governments and educational institutions.

The national and regional scenario-based forecasts are released annually and are available online at www.csc-ca.org. Forecast data is also available at www.constructionforecasts.ca. They allow for instant access to residential and non-residential construction investment data, as well as details on the supply and demand for more than 30 skilled trades over the next nine years – all broken down by province and region.

The CSC is a national industry/government partnership funded by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program. It is committed to maintaining and developing a highly skilled workforce – one that will support the future needs of the construction industry in Canada.

MORE INFORMATION --

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