

CWB Group's national welding program seeks to bridge skills gap; attract youth

TORONTO, ON, May 19, 2015 - Today, The CWB Group, Canada's national welding certification body, has launched Acorn, the first ever national end-to-end welding program in Canada. Acorn is an innovative program that incorporates education, training, and assessment to create the highly skilled, in-demand welders, fitters, supervisors, inspectors and engineers Canada needs.

"Canada's continued economic prosperity will require welding professionals, so investment in skills development has never been more important," said CWB president Doug Luciani. "We are confident that working with government, educators, and industry, we can ensure the Canadian welding industry remains a global leader."

As billions of dollars of infrastructure, shipbuilding and energy projects get underway from coast to coast to coast, skilled welders are in high demand. But the average age of the most skilled welders is approaching 60.

With a looming shortage of qualified welders, training and assessment of skills has never been such a critical issue. To support this, The CWB Group, through the CWB Institute and Canadian Welding Association Foundation has been working closely with industry and educators. At its annual National Educators Conference, being held on May 25 and 26 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, welding teachers of all levels will begin to receive the Acorn training and certification needed to move this process forward.

Through the development and dissemination of specialized curriculums, ACORN ensures existing welders gain access to the cutting edge training employers are demanding.

"Acorn's industry-specific courses will ensure that welders have the skills we require when they step on the shop floor," said Mike MacSween, Executive Vice-President – Major Projects, Suncor Energy. "Through the Acorn assessment process we can easily verify actual skill levels – regardless of where they received their training." The program will also provide high-school-age youth with hands on experience they can apply toward interesting, well-paid careers in the welding industry. The program utilizes current pedagogical tools such as 3-D printing, a mobile application, and even textbooks with augmented reality, to ensure students remain engaged and get the best possible education.

"Working with community partners like The CWB Group to provide these kinds of opportunities assists in setting students up for success by enabling them to develop and practice the skills employers need," said Nancy Britton, Coordinator of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning at the Toronto District School Board. "This type of learning exposes students to careers in skilled trades and technologies as a viable pathway choice. Acorn can help combat the 13 per cent youth unemployment rate by exposing youth to rewarding well-paying careers in the welding and joining industry."

Welding in Canada contributes more than \$5 billion to the Canadian economy and employs more than 300,000 individuals.



About CWB Group and CWA

The CWB Group is a not-for-profit organization that is nationally responsible for the certification of welding companies and qualification of welders, ensuring Canadian code and standard compliance, and best practices are met by all welding establishments and educational institutions across Canada. For over 65 years, the CWB has been at the forefront of maintaining public safety while administering various CSA standards, certified welding companies, consumables and qualified welders.

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