Saskatchewan Partners with IBEW to Deliver Union-Led Apprenticeship Training

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Today, the Government of Saskatchewan and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) signed a letter of intent (LOI) to expand apprenticeship training in Saskatchewan by offering training that is to be union-led and delivered by the IBEW.

“Saskatchewan has attracted over $40 billion in new investment in recent years, and this requires a strong and talented labour force to build,” Premier Scott Moe said. “By expanding apprenticeship training options in our province with the IBEW, we are ensuring Saskatchewan people are provided with the high-quality training they need to be first in line for new opportunities, and are prepared for long, rewarding careers.”

The LOI signed between the Government of Saskatchewan and IBEW will allow the IBEW’s local unions in Saskatchewan to sign into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Immigration of Career Training to begin offering construction electrician and power line technician apprenticeship training in 2025. Training will be offered to IBEW members and non-members and be responsive to the training needs of workers. The MOU will also provide support for the offering of training for future opportunities in nuclear power generation.

“Premier Scott Moe and his government are truly setting a remarkable standard for Saskatchewan's future through their exceptional commitment to enhancing the training of electrical workers across the province," IBEW Canada International Vice President Russ Shewchuk said. "Their strategic partnership with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers stands as a testament to their visionary leadership. This partnership exemplifies how excellence in workforce development can create unparalleled opportunities for skilled professionals and build a stronger, more resilient electrical industry. Premier Moe’s dedication to investing in top-tier training not only enriches individual careers but also significantly strengthens Saskatchewan’s economic vitality, highlighting both his leadership and the outstanding caliber of the IBEW.”

Government funded union-led apprenticeship training is currently available in other Canadian provinces with high learner completion rates. This new training pathway will create more opportunities for people in Saskatchewan to get the skills they need to find employment in the trades and create a high quality of life.

"With Saskatchewan growing at its fastest pace in more than a century, we are implementing collaborative approaches to prepare Saskatchewan people for the jobs our economy is creating," Immigration and Career Training Minister Jeremy Harrison said. “IBEW-led training in other provinces has delivered exceptional results with a high rate of success, and we expect this training will show similar results here in the Saskatchewan to build an even stronger skilled trade labour force which will support our strong and vibrant communities.”

“The IBEW is excited to start training Saskatchewan residents for upcoming work in the electrical industry," IBEW Local 2038 Business Manager Jeff Sweet said. "With a focus on good paying, long term careers building and maintaining all future projects, we mean to ensure Saskatchewan’s workers are prepared with top-notch instruction and hands on learning.”

“We are pleased to have this partnership in government that will allow the IBEW to develop a highly skilled workforce right here at home," IBEW Local 529 Business Manager Murray Palmer said. "Electricians are in demand across the country, but if we want to attract investment for new projects we need to ensure that we can provide the construction workers needed to build them. If we give these good opportunities to young folks that are already living here, they can support their families and keep the benefits in the community.”

“The electrical grid in Saskatchewan requires a lot of maintenance and needs to be built out to provide power to residents year-round regardless of the climate," IBEW Local 2067 Business Manager Tyler Holmen said. "We have proven that our members can do this job safely and efficiently due to the high standard of training they receive. Now we can ensure that apprentices in the power line construction and maintenance industry will continue that legacy and keep good paying jobs right here in the province.”

The need to train more skilled workers is highlighted by recent Statistics Canada economic statistic releases.

Last week, Statistics Canada data showed continued building permit value growth in Saskatchewan, increasing 47.5 per cent year-over-year growth in July 2024 compared to July 2023 to a value of $257 million (seasonally adjusted). This places Saskatchewan second in terms of percentage change among the provinces.

Statistics Canada's latest GDP numbers indicate that Saskatchewan's 2023 real GDP reached an all-time high of $77.9 billion, increasing by $1.2 billion, or 1.6 per cent. This places Saskatchewan second in the nation for real GDP growth, and above the national average of 1.2 per cent.

Private capital investment is projected to reach $14.2 billion in 2024, an increase of 14.4 per cent over 2023. This is the highest anticipated percentage increase in Canada.

Saskatchewan’s economic growth is supported by government’s recently released *Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy: The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy*, a roadmap to build the workforce needed to support Saskatchewan's strong and growing economy, and *Securing the Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan's Investment Attraction Strategy*, a plan to increase investment in the province and further advancing Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goal of $16 billion in private capital investment annually.

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