



Joyce Savoline

Savoline urges businesses to hire immigrants

By MELANIE HENNESSEY
The Champion

Regional Chair Joyce Savoline is calling on Halton businesses and municipalities to hire immigrants, giving them a chance to earn Canadian experience in their field.

Ms Savoline recently attended a panel discussion with the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)

and representatives from surrounding regions and cities, looking at labour market integration for newcomers to the country.

"It's difficult sometimes for people from other countries to gain employment with no Canadian experience," she said.

Such is the case for many skilled individuals, like doctors and specialists who have to go through rigorous and lengthy

testing procedures to qualify for practicing in Ontario. Many end up taking on jobs they are overqualified for just to support their families.

"We want to eliminate the cumbersome processes at different levels of government and make a clearer path to employment," Ms Savoline said.

She added the Region will encourage

local organizations to take immigrants on through internships.

"It (internships) allows them to have the ability to say, yes they've had experience."

Ms Savoline estimated that hiring an intern for four months would cost a company about \$10,000.

She said the Region has taken on a female engineer intern, which has proven to be a positive experience for both parties. "I'm hoping the local municipalities will do the same," she said.

TRIEC's goal is to improve immigrants' access to employment in the Toronto region so they can put their skills, experience and education to work locally.

Elizabeth McIsaac, TRIEC project manager, said the organization works with employers so they can better understand how to work well with immigrant employees and use the skills they bring to the table.

"Immigrants who are coming to Canada are more highly educated and skilled than ever before in the history of immigration in Canada," she said.

She added that many immigrants are easily dismissed because they don't have Canadian experience.

"That doesn't mean they're not skilled," she said. "It's worth taking a second look at to see what you might be missing."

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

Region to get new works commissioner

Halton Region will soon have a new commissioner of planning and public works.

Peter Crockett will join the Region's staff August 9, coming from the City of Hamilton where he was general manager of public works.

Prior to that, Mr. Crockett held a series of management positions with Peel Region.

"Mr. Crockett brings a range of experience, including public works operations and transportation planning, to the Region," said Halton CAO Brent Marshall.

"This combination of skills and experience will ensure Peter is a valuable addition to Halton's management team as well as an effective leader within the planning and public works department."

Mr. Crockett will take over for Acting Commissioner of Planning and Public Works Jane Clohecy.

Funding to aid pregnant women who are at-risk

The federal government recently delivered a funding boost to the Region to help at-risk pregnant women.

Health Canada put \$58,200 toward the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program in Halton, an initiative that focuses on improving expectant mothers' health.

The funding will be used to open two new group sites, one in Oakville and the other in north Halton, in addition to the current Burlington site.


The money will also help recruit high-risk pregnant women in Halton and increase awareness of the program in the region.

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