

North Shore Industrial Training Committee looks into employer's training needs

Survey indicates employment will increase

By Dave Chmara

A 12.5 per cent employment increase is projected for Marathon, Manitouwadge, Terrace Bay and Schreiber during the next two years according to a report released by EDUCO Consultants for the North Shore Industrial Training Committee.

The report is based on surveys which were sent to employers in the area earlier this year.

The North Shore Labor Market and Training Needs Assessment - 1989, lists 788 job openings as identified by those businesses that responded to the questionnaire that will become available over the next two years.

Of the 482 questionnaires mailed, 280 businesses responded which represents a workforce of 4,950 - or 79 per cent of the areas workforce.

The survey grouped businesses into five categories: retail, light industry, heavy industry, services and tourism.

Although 51.5 per cent of the areas businesses are retail, they account for 14.5 per cent of total employment.

And while heavy industry makes up 2.1 per cent of the areas businesses it accounts for 53.9 per cent of the areas workforce.

Light industry is expected to employ an additional 405 people (150 pipefitters, 107 welders/machinists, 43 laborers) over the next two years while heavy industry is expected to hire 186 more people (104 miners, 16 heavy duty mechanics).

The retail sector is expected to hire 95 additional employees (25 sales clerks, 21 management), tourism another 58 (28

waiters/waitresses, 17 cooks) and services 44 (13 office workers, 8 emergency medical attendants).

Labor force won't meet heavy industry's needs

Although most businesses surveyed felt the local labor supply will be adequate to meet their company's needs over the next two years, respondents in the heavy industry sector feel it will not be adequate to meet their needs.

Specifically, they felt the local labor market for miners, heavy duty mechanics, management and production operators lack the human relations, technical, management and academic upgrading skills required to meet their future employment needs.

Literacy in the workplace

Of those businesses responding to the survey, 10 per cent indicated concerns about literacy in the workplace.

An expressed interest in learning more about how the North Shore Industrial Training Committee could help employees with literacy skills was shown by 12.5 per cent of the businesses surveyed.

Marilyn Murphy, co-ordinator of the NITC, said they are currently looking into existing literacy programs. "The first step is to know the needs and the next is to fill the gap," Murphy said.

"At present, we don't have any specific course in mind. We're looking into the other programs out there" to see how they can accommodate the needs of employers.

Change means upgrading

All categories of businesses indicated they would be experiencing change either in the form of services, technology or product lines over the next two years.

With this change, they also indicated skills upgrading would be required. While many businesses said they provide on-the-job training, others indicated an interest in receiving information about one or more training programs in the North Shore area.

Training programs available in the area are offered by: NITC, Ontario Skills, colleges, high school co-ops, Canada Employment Centres, Futures, and apprenticeships.

Perhaps, but not necessarily, because the study was conducted by the NITC, employers - 20 per

cent of them - expressed the greatest amount of interest in finding out more about the training programs offered by the NITC.

Employers noted that fall and winter are the most popular seasons for training and on-the-job training during the day and evening courses were the choices of many employers.

The survey results indicated in-house training and Canada Employment Centre programs are the most widely used and most satisfactory training strategies.

Training priorities

Certain training priorities for the next two years emerged from the survey results.

For light industry, human relations and management training for management personnel and office workers, technical upgrading for welders/machinists, drivers and heavy equipment operators were identified.

For heavy industry, technical training for electricians, heavy duty mechanics and miners were noted and technical skill upgrading was identified as being required for the industry as a whole.

For tourism, human relations and technical training for waiters/waitresses and cooks was identified and for the services sector, management, human relations and technical training for management personnel was noted.

And for the retail sector, human relations and management training for managers, office workers and sales clerks was identified and technical upgrading for sales clerks and maintenance/repair workers was also noted.

Courses by NITC

By Dave Chmara

With the Training Needs Assessment now completed, the NITC is on its way to providing training in some of the areas employers indicated.

Beginning this September, for the second time this year, the NITC will be conducting a basic cooking program. The first time the course was offered, it was held at the Terrace Bay High School.

This time it will be held at the Schreiber Legion. Marilyn Murphy, co-ordinator for the North Shore Industrial Training Committee, last week said they were just two or three people short of being able to start the course, but she expects it will begin any time now.

Mary Burnett, owner of the Serendipity Gardens Cafe, will once again be instructing the course.

Murphy said early next year, the NITC will determine if there is sufficient interest to offer an advanced cooking course.

"There are about 10 courses going on now or about to start" for which the NITC has purchased the training, said Murphy.

Three people - one from Terrace Bay, one from Schreiber and another from Geraldton - are currently taking a heating, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics course in Thunder Bay. The NITC purchased seats in the program for the three students. This program began last April and is expected to last about one year.

One student is taking advantage of an underground hard rock mining course which is being taught in Red Lake. This seven week course for which the NITC purchased the seat, began September 1.

Murphy said another three students have gone to Thunder Bay to take additional training. The Terrace Bay student is studying to be a mill-right, another from Schreiber is taking a heavy duty equipment program, and a lady from Marathon is taking a welding course.

The NITC is also going to be offering a basic welding program in Marathon.

"We already have enough students (10) for the course which is scheduled to begin September 30," said Murphy.

This course is being taught at the Marathon High School on Saturdays. "The students come from a wide range of fields including auto repair, construction, the mines and mills," commented Murphy.

Another program being conducted in Marathon is an automated

office skills course. This 80 hour course will mainly teach office workers how to use computers, their applications and software, fax machines, typewriters, photocopiers and other office equipment. Ten people will be taking this course which Murphy hopes will begin October 3.

If enough people are willing to take the course, the NITC is considering offering a computer office accounting program in either Terrace Bay or Schreiber.

"This would probably be of most interest to business people. it will be an 80 hour course with an introduction to computers and software. We're hoping to be able to offer the course this fall although we don't yet have an instructor or all the students yet," said Murphy.

In Manitouwadge, five or six people will be taking on-the-job training. They will learn five different jobs in the sawmill operation and the course will begin this fall and continue into next spring.

"When offering these programs, we looked at how businesses responding to the training needs study prioritized the training they felt would benefit them the most," said Murphy.

"The NITC then matched the available resources (programs, facilities, instructors) with the needs indicated."

Murphy said the NITC is trying to offer a wide range of programs to meet employer's needs.

"We're trying to spread the training around the various communities although it's hard to do this for specialized training so in some cases people are sent to Thunder Bay," Murphy said.

She added that in the future more courses will be offered outside Marathon.

One surprising result of the training needs assessment survey was the number of businesses that indicated they would like to see training to upgrade managerial skills, noted Murphy.

"We'll be trying to offer an office managers course in Marathon. This would be for people with office experience who want to advance."

Murphy noted this course might start in January and be offered in the evenings, but the NITC is taking applications now.

At the present time, the NITC is working on courses for the next fiscal year.

"This has to be done by the end of September or early October. If anybody has any suggestions for

courses they'd like to see offered, they can call the NITC with their ideas," Murphy said.

For the past year, Murphy has been working mainly out of her home in Marathon. But, a new office is being built by the Confederation College office at the Marathon High School. It will initially be open afternoons and in the future will be open longer.

Marilyn Murphy can be reached at 229-0569 and the number at the new office is 229-1517.



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