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Ontario Launching Mobile Skilled Trades Classrooms

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NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Launching Mobile Skilled Trades Classrooms

Interactive Trades & Tech Trucks will bring simulators and hands-on activities to nearly half a million people across the province

July 25, 2023

TORONTO – The Ontario government is investing \$5.4 million to design and build three mobile tech classrooms that will travel across the province and teach students and young people about the skilled trades. The classrooms, built and operated by Skills Ontario, will feature hands-on learning stations and simulators for electrical systems, welding, crane operation, auto-painting, tire and brake work, heavy machinery and more. Over three years, they will let nearly half a million people explore the skilled trades and will help tackle the labour shortage the province faces in a critical industry.

“By 2025, one in five jobs in Ontario will be in the skilled trades. These are rewarding, well-paying careers that you can build a family and a life around,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. “That’s why our government will continue to invest in cutting-edge programs that give students the chance to experience the 144 trades and life-changing opportunities available to them.”

To help deliver the Province’s ambitious infrastructure plans, including building 1.5 million homes by 2031, Ontario will need over 100,000 new skilled trades workers this decade. These three 12-metre-long Trades & Tech Trucks will travel across the province, providing students an opportunity to explore the skilled trades and speak with industry members, while learning about local training opportunities, colleges and employers.

“Since rolling out our first Trades & Tech truck last year, our mobile classroom has provided thousands of students with hands-on learning experiences,” said Ian Howcroft, CEO of Skills Ontario. “This program ignites an awareness of opportunities in

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the skilled trades and tech field that inspires more young people to pursue these careers. We want to thank and recognize Minister McNaughton and Premier Ford for the leadership and investments they have provided to build the skilled workforce of tomorrow.”

“I recently announced that starting in September of 2024, all high school students will take at least one technology education course to create pathways to exciting jobs of the future,” said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. “Ontario’s new mobile tech classroom will support 150,000 students every year in learning those critical skills that will set them up for success in a good-paying job.”

The province helped launch the Trades & Tech Truck pilot program in 2022. The first truck reached over 40,000 students and young people, visiting more than 50 events across the province from Toronto to Ottawa and Thunder Bay.

This project is funded through the government’s Skills Development Fund, an over \$700 million initiative, which supports ground-breaking programs that connect jobseekers with the skills and training they need to find well-paying careers close to home.

Quick Facts

- The new mobile classrooms will be fully operational by the summer of 2024 and will accommodate 150,000 visitors a year.
- 1.3 million people are working in skilled trades-related occupations in Ontario.
- In 2021, about one in three workers in Ontario with an apprenticeship or trade certificate were aged 55 or over and nearing retirement.
- In total, there were 93,866 apprentices active in Ontario as of July 2023.
- Through its first three funding rounds, the Skills Development Fund has supported 596 projects, to help over half a million people around the province take the next step in their careers.
- The Ontario government launched the new \$224 million capital stream for the Skills Development Fund on June 30 to support the building of new training centres and the renovation or expansion of existing ones.

- Ontario’s Skills Development Fund is supported through labour market transfer agreements between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.

Quotes

“Investing provincial dollars to design and build mobile tech classrooms is exactly the out-of-the-box thinking Ontario needs to attract the next generation to the skilled trades. By bringing the trades directly to students, parents and teachers, Minister McNaughton is embodying the ‘all hands on deck’ approach required to close the skilled trades labour shortage we are facing.”

– Frank Notte

Director of Government Relations, Motor Vehicle Retailers of Ontario

“This latest investment by the Government of Ontario into the Skills Ontario mobile tech units will provide the all-important initial exposure to our youth by bringing hands-on learning stations and leading-edge simulators directly to their doorstep. This is a wonderful initiative and a great investment into the future of the province.”

– Jonathan White

International Representative – CSO, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

“Today’s announcement is important in supporting people who are interested in exploring opportunities in the trades and finding a fulfilling and rewarding career path. Recruiting a new generation of trades people will allow us to build the homes, roads and infrastructure this province desperately needs, while opening up a door to a rewarding career and financial security for more of Ontario’s young people.”

– Mike Gallagher

Business Manager, IUOE Local 793

“Mobile Tech Classrooms serve as a catalyst for opportunity while working to advance accessibility, education and promotion of rewarding careers in the skilled-trades. LiUNA looks forward to continuing to work together with Minister McNaughton and Skills

Ontario to invest in a comprehensive skilled trades strategy, attract talent and highlight skilled trades as a viable, first choice career path through the continuation of outreach, education and hands-on skills development programs.”

– Victoria Mancinelli

LiUNA Director Public Relations, Marketing, Strategic Partnerships

“These mobile tech classrooms are another example of Premier Ford and Minister McNaughton’s commitment to showcase the skilled trades to all corners of Ontario. UA Local 787 HVACR supports the Ontario government’s policies and investments to bring the best out of Ontario’s trades and to attract today’s generations into tomorrow’s promising future of building Ontario.”

– Andrew Tarr

Business Manager, UA Local HVACR 787

“The Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario supports the Government of Ontario’s investment in building and deploying mobile training trailers with Skills Ontario. The skilled trades offer a lifelong career opportunity and the more people that can learn about jobs that exist within the sector, the better our province will be for it.”

– Marc Arsenault

Business Manager, Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario

Additional Resources

Media Contacts

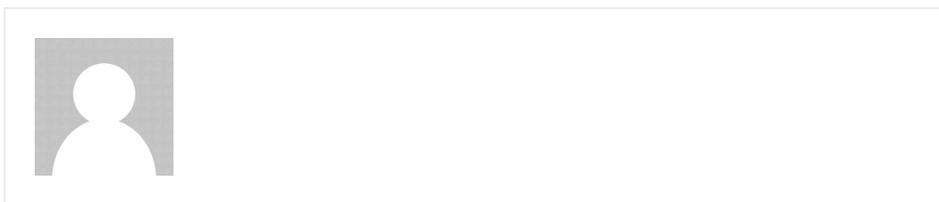
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