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For Immediate Release

Edmonton – Canada’s Building Trades Unions praise Prime Minister Harper and the Government of Canada for supporting Helmets to Hardhats

Today’s announcement by Prime Minister Harper and Minister Blaney means a great deal to the construction industry and large industrial construction clients. It means Canada’s construction workforce will be complemented by the transitioning Canadian Forces Veterans who have the valuable skills our industry needs. Canada’s Building Trades organizations are leading the program to transition those interested Canadian Forces Veterans into our skilled trades.

The Helmets to Hardhats Program and the Building Trades have a track record in the United States of integrating military professionals into the best paid, most respected technical jobs in the construction industry. The program also will assist in placing veterans who are interested in supervisory and engineering roles as needed by our industrial partners.

Joe Maloney, International Vice President for the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Chairman of the Canadian Executive Board of the Canadian Building Trades says “this program is a game changer for young veterans – we aim to place as many of the transitioning military professionals as possible each year. This is a cross promotional venture – good for the Military and good for our trades. We look forward to continuing our working relationship with the Government of Canada on this venture, the Government of Canada has really stepped up to the plate for Canada’s Construction industry”

Robert Blakely, Director of Canadian Affairs, for the Canadian Building Trades says “he is encouraged by the participation of the Government of Canada and also Transcanada Corporation, a key player in Canada’s energy market. Blakely says “the Prime Minister is showing leadership with Canada’s Veterans and labour market policy with this announcement. In addition, Transcanada’s participation is a reflection of the partnerships we have developed with them on other issues.” Blakely says Canada’s construction industry is key beneficiary of economic activity in the energy industry and Helmets to Hardhats ought to assist with the provision of skilled trade labour to these important engines of our economy. Finally, Blakely indicated this program will give Canadian Forces veterans, serving reservists and disabled veterans opportunities for challenging, well paid careers in one of Canada’s most dynamic industries.

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About the BCTD

The North America-wide BCTD AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labour - Congress of Industrial Organizations) coordinates activities and provides resources to 15 affiliated trade unions in the construction and manufacturing industries. It has 386 state, provincial and local councils in Canada and the United States. In Canada, the BCTD represents 400,000 skilled trades workers.

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