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HARD HATS COME IN PINK, TOO

Local High School girls inspired by women in the Skilled Trades

For Immediate Release (Port Elgin, ON): Everyone loves winning a door prize, a gift basket perhaps, or a framed print. But, at the recent “Skills Work!® For Women” Networking Dinner, pink hard hats, construction gear and aviation snip sets were among the raffle items most coveted by the female high school students in attendance. This unique event brings together secondary school girls and tradeswomen, who enjoy a casual dinner followed by interactive, rotating discussions about career options available in the skilled trades and technologies. Skills Canada – Ontario has been running such networking events across the province since 2000.

“Women are sorely underrepresented in industries that are already experiencing dire shortages of skilled workers,” says Executive Director of Skills Canada – Ontario Gail Smyth. “While our mandate is to promote careers in the skilled trades and technologies to all young Ontarians, we also see value in targeting young women specifically and helping them to discover the world of possibilities that await them in over 150 skilled trades and technology careers.” The 57 girls who attended from ten schools from across the Grey Bruce area were treated to a fun evening of networking and information-gathering; collecting the tools – both literal and figurative – that will assist them in their future paths. Each attendee received a gift bag and the chance to win one of 45 draw prizes, including a \$200 welding helmet raffled off to those who indicated an interest in that field. As in past years, participant evaluations were all positive. “This was an amazing learning experience,” said one. “I learned a lot and had all my questions answered.” noted another. Happy faces and exclamation points decorated the evaluation forms.

Among the tradeswomen in attendance were a brick and stone mason, boilermaker, carpenter, plumber, horticulturalist, hairstylist, and herdsperson, and electricians, millwrights, and welders, most of whom have volunteered as Skills Work!® mentors for several years. Sponsors for the event were the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, local business people and industries, including Women in Nuclear/Bruce Power.

Skills Canada – Ontario is a not-for-profit organization that promotes careers in the skilled trades and technologies to young people in Ontario through a variety of competitions, programs and events. Through partnerships with education, industry, labour, and government, Skills Canada-Ontario is helping young people brighten their futures and industry to strengthen theirs. Skills Canada – Ontario will host the 22nd Ontario Technological Skills Competition (OTSC) on May 2-4, 2011 in Waterloo. For additional information please visit www.skillsontario.com