



MORE YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDED IN SKILLED TRADES AND TECHNOLOGY: SKILLS CANADA – ONTARIO AND ONTARIO COLLEGES SIGN AGREEMENT

(KITCHENER, ON – January 30, 2006) – Skills Canada - Ontario and the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to encourage more young people to consider a career in a skilled trade or the technology sector. This agreement will foster the development of activities and programs to address the needs of young people exploring their career choices and employers looking for skilled workers.

As Ontario's economy continues to grow and evolve, the need for a quality skilled labour force to respond to the needs of employers will become more crucial. In a few years, it is expected that 75% of all new job openings will require post-secondary education.

“This is a natural fit for Skills Canada - Ontario. An agreement with Ontario colleges will assist youth who are exploring their career opportunities in the skilled trades and technologies. Skills Canada – Ontario programs reach senior elementary and high school students during key career decisions. Colleges are the points of entry into pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training across Ontario,” said Gail Smyth, Executive Director of Skills Canada - Ontario.

The announcement follows recent corporate and government commitments at the federal and provincial levels about investing in skills training programs.

“It is critical that we produce more skilled workers for today's economy,” said Dr. Rick Miner, Chair of the Committee of Presidents for the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO). “Ontario colleges are pleased to be working with Skills Canada – Ontario to help promote these career options.”

About Skills Canada – Ontario

Skills Canada – Ontario is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting skilled trades and technologies as viable, first choice career options to Ontario youth. Through its partnerships in education, industry, labour and government, it is helping young people brighten their futures and industry to strengthen theirs. Through programs and initiatives, such as qualifying and provincial skills competitions, Skills Canada – Ontario supports the development of youth and the prosperity of industry in Ontario.

About the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario (ACAATO)

The Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario is the advocacy and outreach association of Ontario's 24 colleges of applied arts of technology, which are mandated to serve the career education and training needs of more than 200 communities across the province. Colleges contribute to Ontario's social and economic development through an accessible range of quality programs and services – literacy and basic skills, apprenticeship/trades, diploma and degree, customized training, applied research and continuing education. CON*NECT will serve as the point of contact between Skills Canada – Ontario and the association.

About CON*NECT

The Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CON*NECT) is the business marketing unit of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. It provides a single point of contact for employers to college system contract training programs and services.