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In a recent presentation by the Petroleum Human Resources Sector Council (PHRSC) the next few years through to 2015 were dubbed as the period of Challenge, Choice and Change. Challenge is relatively straightforward including items such as technology, cost management, social license and demographics. These are items our Industry and our companies face now and in the near term. Choice falls to the workers – those existing and those coming into the workforce. Where do they put their hat; what do they believe in; and in our specific Industry's case what does our industry look like to these potential job applicants? Even internally do we poach workers from each other and drive up costs? Change refers to how companies look to position themselves to serve the interests of the new workforce through enticements, wholesome work-life balance conditions and retention policies. The work path forward for Human Resources in the next few years will be one we have not seen before as it will be a combination of boom economics and a human mindset unlike that of its previous work forces.

A newser from early March: A coalition of nineteen Alberta business associations and groups is encouraging the federal and provincial governments to work with industry to address the labour shortages descending on western Canada. The Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages (ACALS) includes representatives from every major sector of the Alberta economy – all of which are being increasingly impacted by labour shortages.

The Alberta government is forecasting there will be 114,000 more jobs than people to fill them in coming years, a trend which is increasingly evident across Western Canada. This shortage of labour will slow economic growth, costing jobs and reducing government revenue to support vital government social and economic programs such as hospitals, schools and roads. ACALS is asking the federal and provincial governments to engage quickly with employers in developing and implementing new strategies to help overcome the expected shortage.

Over the past few years, government and industry have effectively worked together to ensure Canadians are given the first chance to benefit from these opportunities. These initiatives include:

- Supporting training and outreach initiatives such as apprenticeship.
- Actively recruiting workers across Canada, seeking to employ Canadians who have the necessary skills and who are prepared to come to Alberta.
- Pursuing continuous improvement and maximizing the productivity of business operations to make the best use of existing staff.

Despite these ongoing efforts, there remains a shortfall of available workers domestically to fill the needs of the growing economy.

ACALS recommendations include:

- Change the point system of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) to place greater emphasis on labour demand and validated employment offers.
  - Expand opportunities to transition temporary workers to permanent immigrants such as the Provincial Immigrant Nominee Program and the Canadian Experience Class.
  - Change National Occupation Codes (NOC), used in both the permanent and temporary streams, to reflect employer needs and recognize a broader range of existing skilled positions.
- Reform Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) processes to recognize employer pre-qualification, cross-industry based shortages of workers, and streamline the application and approval process.

Some of CAPP's thoughts: We have grouped possible steps into two broad categories: immigration and worker mobility issues; and longer-term branding, education and training measures. Over the same period, other players in the resource sector and governments

have increased their focus on the workforce challenges we face going forward. Encouragingly, the Federal Government has become somewhat seized with the issue and is signaling limited flexibility on the immigration mix and significant openness to innovation on Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) programs. A complicating but manageable development is that the Federal Government has decided to eliminate core funding for the Petroleum Human Resources Sector Council (PHRSC), which has done valuable analytical work on our current and future labor shortage. Upstream Oil and Gas Trade Associations on the Council Board are working through how best to maintain those capacities of the PHRSC most needed by our sector.

The Government of Canada has completed Strategic Reviews of 13 federal departments and as a result, the sector council program will have reduced funding. Operating (core) funding will be phased out by March 2013; however, sector councils will have access to \$30 million of project funding for labour market information, national occupational standards and certification programs.

The funding cuts will impact all sector councils differently. However, the Petroleum HR Council is well positioned to continue helping industry develop a sustainable, skilled and productive oil and gas workforce. The Council has developed a high level of credibility with industry and many other partners over the past 10 years. Over the past year, we have been developing a business sustainability plan to improve our valuable work that benefits industry workers and employers. We will review our strategic plan over the next few months and ensure our projects and services are sustainable and remain relevant to our stakeholders.

The Upstream Oil and Gas Trade Associations are working together to map out a workforce strategy in the next few months with the intention of determining the new role and funding model for the Petroleum HR Council. There is no doubt that the near future will elevate human resources needs and Industry responses to a new level. The competition will be fierce across companies, across Industries, across geographic locations – all looking for you or yours.

*From the Thursday Files*

*Be a frequent father not a frequent flyer. Work where you can live.*

- ***Job Advertisement for Vale (Inco) Mining***