

Construction careers are viable option for youth seeking work in the COVID era

By Robin McNamara - July 9, 2020



Ontario Construction News staff writer

Ontario's construction sector, which was deemed an essential service and therefore remained open for business during the pandemic, is well-positioned to attract a segment of youth who may have been thinking about careers in the hard-hit hospitality and restaurant industries.

That was one of the thoughts discussed in a half-hour podcast, entitled [Talking Trades – How to Attract Young People to Construction](#), that was released on Monday by the [Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario \(RCCAO\)](#). The podcast is the second in a nine-part series, called [Conversations About Construction](#), that is aimed at raising awareness about issues affecting the industry.

The podcast features Richard Lyall, a director of the RCCAO and president of the [Residential Construction Council of Ontario](#), in conversation with Jon Callegher, executive director of [Job Talks](#), a marketing and research agency that promotes the many benefits of careers in the skilled trades and produced a video called [Constructing a Career](#) for the [Ontario Construction Careers Alliance](#).

While the hospitality and restaurant industries are shedding jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction industry is still in need of workers and could provide attractive apprenticeship opportunities. According to Lyall and Callegher, the construction industry is in an ideal position to seize the moment and promote apprenticeships and the many benefits of a job in the skilled trades.

“A lot of people in the hospitality, and especially the food service area, are used to working with tools, the work is manual, they’re on their feet a lot and so they have a natural aptitude there,” says Lyall. “We know the hospitality industry is going to take a hit going forward so the young people who thought about working in that sector might want to consider switching to the construction trades.”

Callegher says a career in the skilled trades should appeal to young people because the jobs are interesting, they involve both mental and physical work, and individuals can see results of their efforts.

“These are jobs that allow you to be physically active and use your body and brain. In this digital age I can’t think of anything that is more important than to have a career that actually gets you moving.”

The podcasts cover a wide variety of topics related to the residential and civil construction sectors. Dave Trafford, host of the Weekend Morning Show on Newstalk 1010 in Toronto, leads the discussions. The first podcast, entitled [Hallway Medicine – Cures for a Pending Crisis](#), was released June 29. Seven more podcasts are scheduled to be released on Mondays over the coming weeks.

RCCAO is a unique alliance of construction labour and management groups whose members build the homes, transportation and water systems that are of critical importance to Ontario residents and businesses.

To listen to the podcasts, [click here](#) or go to www.rccao.com.