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CONSTRUCTION FOUNDATION OF BC LAUNCHES GRANT PROGRAM TO UPGRADE HIGH SCHOOL SHOP CLASSROOMS

VICTORIA, BC – Students in some British Columbia high schools will soon have improved facilities for skilled trades training, thanks to a new initiative from the Construction Foundation of BC (CFBC). Starting today, BC high schools and school districts with a demonstrated commitment to skilled trades training are invited to submit applications for grant funding to refit and upgrade their ‘shop’ classrooms.

“BC is facing a serious shortage of skilled workers, and something needs to shift in the way things are done,” remarks Don Nishimura, the Chairman of the CFBC Board. “Today’s youth need a chance to explore all their career choices equally before they graduate from high school. Better equipped shop classes mean schools can provide a stronger introduction to the skilled trades, and we hope this will help boost awareness that BC’s construction sector is a great option and a place to build a rewarding career.”

Grant funds will be raised by the Foundation through a new campaign, launched exclusively for the purposes of upgrading high school trades training facilities. For the 2014 inaugural round of funding, the Foundation is working to raise \$2 million, primarily from industry in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector. These funds will provide a number of grants, with a minimum of one school being selected in each of four regions of the province (North, Southern Interior, Vancouver Regional, and Vancouver Island).

Applicants for the funding must identify specific needs and demonstrate a proven commitment to the trades. Successful candidates can receive grant funding for a range of capital improvements, such as equipment and facility upgrades.

“We have heard clearly from BC students, parents, teachers, and construction employers that something needs to be done to improve the training experience in high schools”, noted Abigail Fulton, Executive Director of the Foundation. “This initiative aligns perfectly with the Foundation’s commitment to increasing awareness of the opportunities in our sector and helping to train the journeypersons BC needs for tomorrow.”

BuildForce Canada estimates that BC will be short 30,500 skilled workers by 2021. Currently, only 1 in 32 BC high school graduates enter the trades: BC needs that number to be as high as 1 in 5 in order for skills shortages to be met.

The successful grant recipients will be announced at a Foundation Gala dinner in February 2014, and fundraising will begin in the New Year.

Learn more about this initiative at www.constructionfoundationbc.ca/shopclass



The Construction Foundation of BC is the philanthropic arm of the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA). Established in 2012, its goal is to support the advancement of BC’s construction sector through education and research, and to take action on charitable initiatives which benefit the future strength of the industry.