

POWER WORKERS' UNION PRESENTATION
to the
WOMEN IN NUCLEAR CONFERENCE
May 30, 2006

The Power Workers Union represents 16,000 people in the electrical generation, transmission and distribution industry. Our members include trades, operation, technical and administrative classifications. Trades classifications in the nuclear industry include but are not limited to Control Maintenance Electricians, Mechanical Maintainers and Nuclear Operators.

It is no secret that trades classifications in the nuclear industry are male dominated. The shortage of female trades workers can be attributed to a number of different reasons. In part it is due to the lack of knowledge of the trades made available to young women and men while they are still attending high school. This lack of knowledge is due to teachers and guidance counselors not having the information to pass on to students and also to parents who want their children to become doctors or lawyers and don't talk about other career opportunities.

The high schools in Ontario have fallen down when it comes to promoting and explaining the trades. Employers have fallen down by hiring persons already trained and not having comprehensive trades training programs for new persons entering the trades. Government has fallen down by not promoting skilled trades and instead assuming the market would take care of itself.

Instead of accepting the status quo the PWU has actively promoted the trades with our employers and the public. We have taken a number of initiatives to ensure educators and young people are aware of the different opportunities in trades within the nuclear industry.

PWU Initiatives

Trade Up for Success

Trade Up for Success is a joint initiative with our employers, Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation Hydro One. The PWU developed this initiative because we believe that young people do not know the different career opportunities available when they finish high school. They are not aware of the requirements for these positions and careers. They do not know how to apply for these opportunities. The largest hurdle to be cleared was and still is the misguided belief that a job in the skilled trades is menial and "smart people" should strive for something better.

Since its inception Trade Up for Success has spoken to over 200,000 young people. We attend trade shows, job fairs and high school career days throughout the province.

Joint Training/Apprentice Committees

The PWU has negotiated joint committees with Bruce Power to oversee the training of new apprentices and trainees in trades positions. These new hires will, as part of this new initiative, be trained for and achieve a Certificate of Qualification from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This is the first time these classifications have been recognized as trades under provincial legislation. At Bruce Power the selection of these new apprentices is made jointly. At Ontario Power Generation the selection of new hires is done solely by the employer and the training is still not recognized in provincial trades legislation.

Diversity Committees

The PWU have long recognized the need to recruit minorities and women into non-traditional roles. We have negotiated and take part in committees and groups that promote the entry of women into trades classifications with our employers and educate people in the non-traditional roles for women in the work place.

Job Vacancies

The PWU have consistently negotiated with our employers for more opportunities in trades and other classifications.