

For immediate release

Construction withstands impact of recession

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OTTAWA – Canada’s construction industry is emerging from the recession relatively unscathed, thanks to its pre-recession record levels of investment and the more recent government stimulus initiatives.

A preview of the Construction Sector Council’s (CSC) 2010-2018 scenario-based forecast says that though building and employment collapsed from October 2008 to July 2009, employment has been rising since August and will likely continue because of new infrastructure projects, renovation and maintenance work, and strengthening housing starts.

“Construction didn’t take the recessionary hit that some other industries took, and is well-positioned to lead other sectors out of the recession,” says George Gritziotis, Executive Director of the Construction Sector Council. “Government infrastructure projects provided a buffer to offset losses the industry would have felt,” he says. The 2010 CSC scenario assumes that 20 percent of the stimulus spending will take place in 2009, 50 percent in 2010 and the remaining 30 percent in 2011.

The preview shows a varied employment picture across the country with Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia reporting the greatest employment declines in 2009. At the same time, driven by major industrial, engineering and infrastructure projects, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador recorded employment gains over the first 10 months of 2009. Construction investment declined by less than 10 percent in 2009 and will rebound in 2010, surpassing the peak reached in 2008.

“Although construction has experienced a slowdown in varying degrees in some areas of the country, given the promise of the stimulus and the overall strengthening of the economy, it should regain momentum” says Tim Flood, CSC Business Co-chair and President of John Flood and Sons in New Brunswick.

Engineering construction in roads, bridges and other heavy construction and commercial and institutional building sectors where employment growth is strong through 2010, will create jobs and strong labour markets for concrete finishers, non-residential construction estimators and

managers, crane operators, heavy equipment operators and mechanics, ironworkers, trades helpers and labourers, and welders.

The oil sands and related development in Alberta and key utility sector projects will be driving work in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Manitoba for several key trades, including construction millwrights, pipefitters, sheet metal workers, ironworkers and welders.

“Recruiting and training need to continue to be top priorities,” says Bob Blakely, CSC Labour Co-chair and Canadian Director of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO. “We are working to meet the challenge of having enough skilled workers who can shift from a region of under-employment to one where opportunities are more plentiful.”

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) – a partnership between labour, business and government – is a national not-for-profit organization committed to the development of a highly skilled workforce that will support the future needs of Canada’s construction industry.

The CSC’s annual *Construction Looking Forward* national and regional scenario-based forecasts provide colleges, labour and industry with accurate information on labour supply and demand to support the future needs of the construction industry in Canada.

Visit www.csc-ca.org to read the 2010-2018 preview.

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