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Pre-Apprenticeship Electricians Program: Preparing for the future

By L.M. VanEvery



If you've ever thought about becoming an electrician, there's no better time than the present. According to George McDonald, instructor for the Pre-Apprentice Electricians program at the **Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre (OSTTC)** in partnership with the Electrical College of Canada, the population of electricians is aging and we're facing a shortage. "It's left a huge hole to fill," he says.

George is encouraged that the earning potential will draw people to the trade. "An electrician can make as much (money) as an accountant," George states. Including overtime earnings, it's not out of the ordinary for an electrician to earn \$100K.

The first **OSTTC** program started in September 2010 with 12 students which is the class limit. They attended in-class instruction for 12 weeks instructed by McDonald who is a retired electrician. George admits that the first couple weeks of in-class training are tough, but soon the class learns they have to focus and do the work. "It becomes very enjoyable after they're focused," he says. "Then, it's great."

Referring to learning to be an electrician, George says it's all about good habits, forming them and keeping them. "The best part of being an electrician is learning," says George. "I think learning is a privilege." **OSTTC** then finds the student a placement for two months. The program is all about preparing the student for working in the field. "It's about trying to create with the program as a sound electrical base which makes employers desire the student," George states. "Students can go on the job and be useful the first day," he says. "(After graduation), everyone could totally wire a whole house from top to bottom correctly and to code," George says.

Deciding to enroll in the program is the single biggest step and most difficult step to take in becoming an electrician. "Because it's now," he says. Although the program is 360 hours, these hours and overtime hours can be included in the 9,000 hours it takes to complete an apprenticeship. George states that it takes about four years from the first stage to the end of the apprenticeship.

Once a student is hired by an employer and registered as an apprentice, they are given the services of an apprenticeship counselor who guides them through the steps needed to fulfill the requirements of their apprenticeship.

George assures people who are considering the program that there are so many fields one can specialize in once they become an electrician. Technology has really opened up the field to include jobs like robotics in the automotive industry to process control in the manufacturing industry. The first program run the **OSTTC** included all males but George hopes the next program draws the interest of females as well. It's a trade where both genders can succeed equally. "There's so much potential in the field and so much opportunity," says George. The next program starts in January 2012. For more information about the Pre-Apprenticeship Electrician program, contact **GREAT** today.