



## The NETCO Minute

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NETCO is jointly sponsored by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Canada and the Canadian Electrical Contractors Association (CECA) to address workforce development for Red Seal electrical trades. [www.netco.org](http://www.netco.org)



### Apprenticeship Training Critical to Ontario's future

Kevin Christie feels very lucky to be trained and mentored by the best in the business.

"My apprenticeship has been a very rich and rewarding experience," says Christie, a 5th term apprentice with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 353.

When it comes to electrical work, he has learned how important proper training and oversight is to ensuring work is done safely and correctly. Not only does the apprentice benefit from developing the necessary skills but for contractors, businesses and taxpayers, it pays off as well.

That's why the contractors in the Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association (GTECA) have invested so much in the Toronto Joint Apprenticeship Council (JAC). The program, operated by GTECA and the electricians of IBEW Local 353, ensures each apprentice receives the most complete education available anywhere.

"The young men and women that graduate from the JAC six-year electrical apprenticeship training program are the "best of the best" in their trade," says Kelly Burke, President of Ampere

Ltd., a GTECA company. “The precision, workmanship, and the level of pride of JAC graduates is far superior.”

“I’ve talked to a lot of non-union apprentices at trade school about the level of support and the learning opportunities I’ve had, and I get amazed stares. The non-union apprentice is set up more like a lone ship at sea,” agrees Christie.

“Professional sports teams spend millions of dollars on marquee players to ensure their team is at the top of their game. But society often discounts the importance of the men and women that build, maintain and operate our electrical systems.” says Burke. “This is despite the fact that our dependency on reliable power and robust power infrastructure is ever increasing.”

IBEW Local 353 has four dedicated training facilities in Toronto, Mississauga, Barrie and Oshawa. The buildings contain classrooms, shops and computer labs for apprentices and also licensed members who want to upgrade their skills.

“Six full-time counsellors in Toronto provide ongoing support to the apprentices throughout their training,” says Erik Hueglin, Director of Apprenticeship for the Toronto JAC. In 2018, 366 new pre-apprentices and apprentices were enrolled in the program.

“Our apprentice completion rates far exceed industry standards because we select good candidates and provide the support they need. When it comes to wiring our schools, homes, hospitals, airports and other key infrastructure it is imperative that we have well trained workers for the future who can do the job safely and effectively,” said James Barry, Executive Chairman of the IBEW CCO.

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**Check out the blog from ECAO/IBEW CCO on our website by clicking here!**

<http://www.netco.org/blog/changes-to-apprenticeship-model-and-compulsory-trades-make-promotion-essential/>

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