

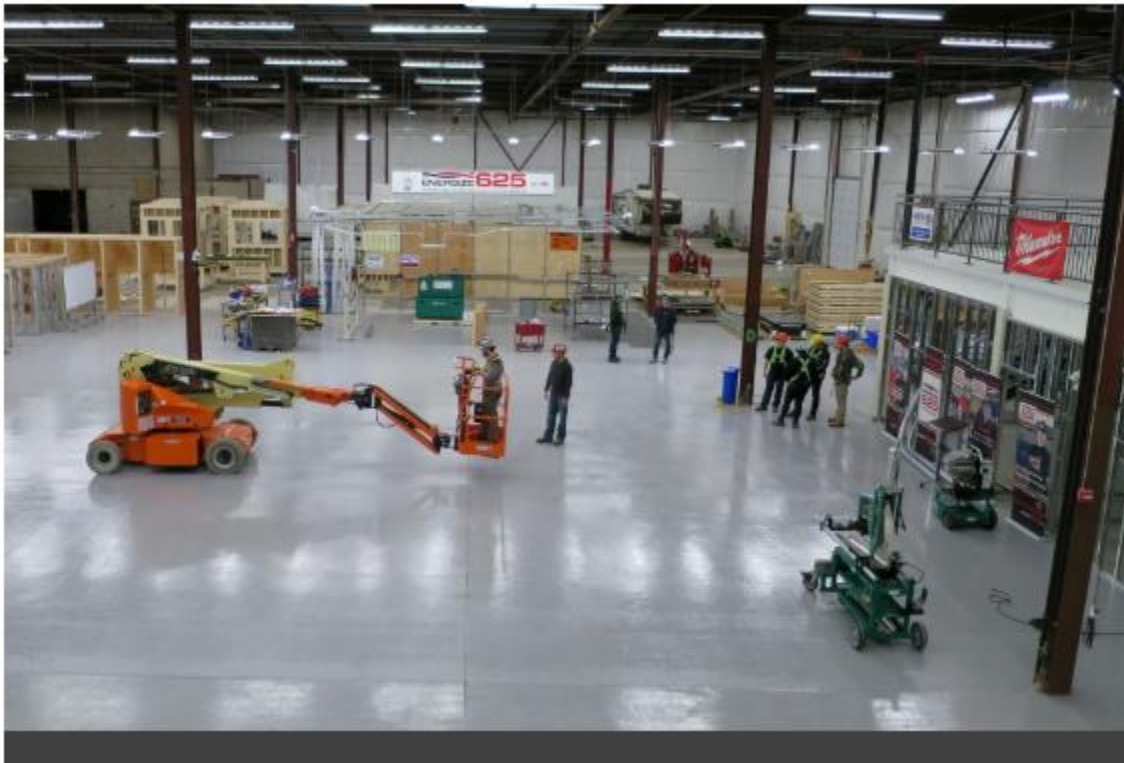


The NETCO Minute

News from the National Electrical Trade Council, 14th Edition January, 2020

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

IBEW 625 Training Centre sees rapid expansion



IBEW Local 625's investment in a state-of-the-art training facility has paid off in a big way over the past year with the launch of three major training programs.

As a recognized technical training provider for the province of Nova Scotia, IBEW 625 is now offering in-house level training for construction electricians. Additionally, there is a new Work Ready program for union members which consists of five different safety courses. This past September, the doors were opened to trainees in the 35-week entry-level core program.

"It was a lot of work getting all of this up and running," Training Director Blair Mikkelsen said in an interview, "but now we're seeing it all come together."

IBEW 625 is the largest partner in a multi-union training and office complex outside of Halifax. The IBEW local invested \$2.5 million to overhaul their training facility, a project that created 4 classrooms, 2 workshops and a large multi-purpose space. The local also has offices in the building, alongside the Mainland Building Trades Council and three other building trades unions. The partner unions enjoyed a collective win recently with a federal grant from the Union Training Innovation Program (UTIP) for a scissor lift and boom lift, to be owned jointly. IBEW 625 also secured UTIP funding for 4-inch and 2-inch conduit benders along with a supply of conduit.

Operating support for the IBEW 625 centre comes through the IBEW Local 625 Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee under collective agreements with signatory employers; from the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA); from contractors for the Work Ready Program (per hour basis); and from tuition fees. Local 625 manages more than 200 apprentices -- Nova Scotia's largest electrical apprentice group -- as well as providing a wide range of refresher and upgrading courses for journey-level union members. There's enough activity to keep the training centre humming, with two full-time and seven part-time instructors currently on the team.

One recent innovation, developed with the NSAA, is an inter-provincial refresher course for construction electricians who have previously not succeeded in passing their Red Seal exams. The course is open to both union and non-union electricians. "Local 625 is a valued partner in the Apprenticeship System in Nova Scotia" notes Marjorie Davison, CEO of the NSAA. "They show their dedication through regular dispatching of apprentices on job sites and supporting their success through training, skills refreshers and exam preparation. At our last annual industry day, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency presented 625 Training Coordinator Blair Mikkelsen with the Apprenticeship Award of Excellence in recognition of his long-standing contribution to electrical apprentices in the province. NSAA is grateful for Local 625's continued engagement."

"In our first group, we had new and long-term apprentices of all ages," Mikkelsen said. "Of those who re-wrote their exams, more than half were successful. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency thought that was very successful, but we know we can improve our results."

Blair Mikkelsen has been Training Director for the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee at IBEW 625 for nine years. He has served as a Board member with Skills Canada Nova Scotia, and in 2019 he won the Apprenticeship Award of Excellence from the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency. The award goes to "exceptional individuals who have demonstrated ingenuity, engagement and leadership in advancing the apprenticeship training and the trades qualifications system and the strategic goals of the agency."

The Apprenticeship Agency has posted a brief [video](#) on Blair and IBEW 625 training.



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