

**April, 2005**

## **TRAINING UPDATE**

### **Regent Park**

One of the examples of “the best-laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley” to quote Robbie Burns (Ode to a Mouse) is the area of east Toronto known as Regent Park. Plans are underway, over the next decade plus, to demolish the whole area which was built in the 60’s on ideas now considered outmoded. The plan is to build a mix of housing in the area in a much more open design.

The first part of the project is the demolition of the 51 Division police station. The Downtown East Community Development Collective, a consortium of community agencies in the area, negotiated with the major demolition contractors to assure that some of the work would be done by residents of Regent Park and homeless individuals living in the area. The strategy of tying construction contract to employment of local residents is frequently employed, for example by aboriginal groups in northern areas of the country.

As the demolition contractors are signatory with Local 506 and their workers are our members, it has been the responsibility of Ambercroft to make sure that these individuals are trained and ready to participate. Eight candidates have completed a two-week training program here. Some had previous construction experience.

While most have barriers to successful full participation in our programs (for example, lack of transportation), it is hoped that this opportunity will provide a start on the road to success. Other programs may follow (perhaps involving other unions) as the reconstruction of the area proceeds.

### **Grandparenting Underway**

The first members of Local 506 have received their Certificates of Qualification as Construction Craft Workers. Most of the applications have been processed fairly smoothly. Only a few applicants have been short of the required 3,000 hours. A few have been uncertain about the Attestation of Competencies. Most experienced Labourers have no trouble demonstrating the range of skills expected to certified journeypersons in their trade. A few are short in one two areas.

Where there are gaps, we are developing training programs to fill them. The most common gap (still only applying to small minority of the applicants) is Plan Reading. We will be developing a short program to bring applicants to a reasonable level of skill. It won’t qualify the individuals to take on the Layout responsibility at job sites but will mean they are comfortable with interpreting plans. And, they will have the option of upgrading by taking more advanced training, including our On-line Blueprint Reading course.

The January, 2005 Training Update contains more information Grandparenting.