

April, 2006

**TRAINING UPDATE
Careers Fairs and Recruiting**

Last week, from March 28 to March 30, the Ontario Construction Secretariat organized *Futurebuilding 2006* at the National Trade Centre on the CNE grounds. 16,000 students from schools in the Toronto area went through Hall D to see displays. Participants included several of the construction trade unions, the Toronto Construction Association, and representatives of three provincial ministries and some community organizations.

Local 506, with help from the LIUNA Canadian Tri-funds, had one of the more popular displays. Two secrets: energetic staff, and activities for the students. Staff included four instructors and four apprentices. The most popular activity was riding the Sizzor Lift up to near the ceiling to get a view of the whole show. Students also got to break off chunks of concrete from a block, using a chipping gun (usually identified by the students and their teachers as a jackhammer – not so). And some were “hung” in a body harness from a platform used in our Fall Arrest training.

The purpose of the event was to show people that there are opportunities in construction. Not just as Construction Craft Workers or electricians but also as construction project coordinators and estimators, and other careers promoted by the TCA. It was not an event organized for the purpose of recruiting individuals directly into construction.

The first of this series, before the Ontario Construction Secretariat came into existence, was Construct Canada '88 at the Metro Toronto Construction Centre. This came at a time when recruiting seemed like a good idea. /Then, in the early 1990's, came the downturn. During the early 90's Local 506, for example, shrunk in numbers, and didn't really revive until 1998.

Many of the building trades unions are like us – not facing a shortage and having little difficulty recruiting apprentices. But it's always useful to have young people consider a range of options for their careers.

We view these events as worthwhile public relations but not as part of our recruiting. I can say that the instructors and apprentices enjoyed the experience. And they coped very well with the lineups of students hoping to ride the Sizzor Lift or use the chipping gun.