

August, 2007

TRAINING UPDATE

Juggling Priorities

In the July Training Update, we mentioned the Training Structure Infrastructure Program. Our application was successful and, with funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as well as a considerable investment by the Labourers' 506 Training Fund, we will be acquiring a number of pieces of equipment. This equipment will help us in equipment training, and in training of workers in Demolition, Masonry, Cutting & Coring, Masonry – we could list all the sectors in which members of Local 506 work. This program will mean improved apprenticeship training as well as better journey person upgrading.

Some examples: our new Zoom Boom and Skid Steer Loader will allow bigger intakes for equipment training and, with more availability for hands-on practice, hopefully a better success rate as well. The GPS/Total Station will allow us to train members in the most up-to-date technology for layout. Excavator simulators and a full-size excavator will mean better identification of individuals to work as operators for demolition contractors. Up to now, our training of workers in Cutting & Coring (or Sawing & Drilling) has required borrowed and rented equipment; now we will have our own. We have tube & clamp scaffolding, which will improve our training in scaffold use and erection.

However, the additional equipment needs to be housed. Along with an existing problem of not having enough space for training, especially of apprentices, this means we will be investigating a limited expansion of the Training Centre.

Also, ordering the equipment, taking delivery, incorporating the pieces in existing training programs – and designing new training in some cases – will require staff time. This when we're facing a major need to train dozens, perhaps hundreds of workers in Asbestos to meet Ministry of Labour requirements to pass the new test for work in Type 3 Asbestos removal. And this when we need to train more apprentices – we have a shortage for the first time in three years. We are in the process of setting up and/or reactivating training committees for several sectors such as Precast and Masonry. And there is no reduction in the need for certification of equipment operators, swampers, and others.

These are good problems, perhaps. We're busy; that's good. But we have to juggle our priorities for the next several months, in order to make the best use of staff time.