

MERIT NEWS

April 2009



Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia - 216-30 Damascus Rd, Bedford, NS B4A 0C1
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MERIT CONTRACTORS CONSTRUCTION TRADE AWARD \$1,000

Following up to the announcement in the January/February Merit Talk, our annual scholarship has been established.

Who is eligible?

This award is open to an employee of a Merit member company or a relative of an employee of a Merit member company, or a student who has participated in the Building Futures for Youth program and who is entering or continuing in a construction related certificate, or diploma program, or apprenticeship program at any NSCC campus on mainland NS.

How do you apply?

Forms are available online (www.awards.nsc.ca), at your Campus Centre for Student Success or by emailing awards@nsc.ca. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

What is the deadline?

Applications for 2009 must be received or post-marked no later than **Friday, June 26, 2009**.

Contact?

If you have questions or for more information, please contact Dennis Chaulk of the NSCC Foundation at (902) 491-2181.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia's 2009 Annual General Meeting to be held on June 19th at the Old Orchard Inn, 153 Greenwich Rd South, RR 2 Wolfville, NS. Details to follow.



TUITION REFUND PROGRAM

Merit is pleased to announce, effective May 1st, 2009, our tuition reimbursement will be increased from \$250 to \$300 annually for eligible apprentices returning to block training in their respective trades.



**Special Offer Available
to Merit Member Companies
& Their Employees**

*Group Discount Rate of 50% Off
The Current Catalogue List Price
(except items marked NET)*

*or for
Even Greater Savings Choose From
Commonly Used Office Products
Available on a Short List*

Free Delivery Throughout NS

To Start Saving \$\$\$ Today, contact:

Marty Eggenhuizen
Account Manager

Phone: 1-800-463-1005
Fax: 1-800-667-1005

meggenhuizen@basinstationery.com
(Quote #21 or Present Contact Card)

**COMPULSORY CERTIFICATION
FOR
BOILERMAKERS, STEAMFITTERS
& PIPEFITTERS**

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development announced March 17th, 2009 that the Boilermaker Trade and the Steamfitter Pipefitter Trade have been designated as compulsory certified trades.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

It is important that our records remain current with your company's correct contact information. We appreciate your assistance in keeping us informed of any pertinent changes.

If you are aware of any adjustments we should make or if you wish to change the contact person or contact email address we have in our files, please complete the attached form and return by fax to the Merit office.



MEDICAL REIMBURSEMENT PLAN

Did you know MRP takes comprehensive, cost-effective group coverage one step further by allowing you to strengthen your coverage with valuable tax savings?

For further information, contact Mercon Benefit Services at 1-877-263-7266.



WEBSITE UPDATE

We are presently updating the Merit NS website to better serve our members and their employees. We hope to have the changes and updates completed in the near future.



ANTI-MERF REGULATIONS NOW IN FORCE

Last June the Alberta government passed labour legislation providing new rules for dealing with unethical union organizing tactics like “Salting” and bid subsidy schemes called MERF’s an acronym for Market Enhancement Recovery Funds. Most of the new rules went into effect September 15, 2008.

As of September 15, unionized contractors were prohibited from contributing to MERF funds. At the same time it also became illegal for MERF funds to subsidize unionized contractors.

While most of the new rules took effect in September, the government took additional time to develop rules to ensure that the MERF funds, in existence before the new law came into effect, are dissolved. Accordingly, on February 17, 2009, Cabinet approved the Market Enhancement Recovery Fund Distribution Regulation.

By mid-March, all building trade unions operating MERF funds must file a disclosure report with the Labour Relations Board (LRB). This report must identify how much is in the fund and whether any of the money came as voluntary dues payments from union members. If the LRB finds that any monies are from “non-compliant” sources, the regulations require it to order that this money be distributed to uses other than the subsidization of “bids, tenders, or prices of a construction contractor or the wages paid to the employees of a construction contractor”. The new regulation also gives the LRB powers to compel the disclosure of information, to investigate and examine records and for “post distribution” follow-up reports to be filed.

Cabinet’s approval of the new regulations concludes another chapter in the 15-year saga of Merit members to end MERF funds. And though the new law and regulations are clear victories for open shop contractors, it always takes time to determine how well any new rules are working.

Source Merit Alberta

A HAPPY WORKER IS A CHEAPER WORKER

Happier workers tend to be more productive, take fewer sick days and cost employers less in disability expenses, a survey released February 18th suggests.

Stress tends to affect about 28 per cent of highly engaged employees compared with 39 per cent of disgruntled workers, according to consultancy Hewitt Associates’ annual survey of 115,000 Canadian employees.

The survey asked how many days employees missed in the past six months due to emotional, physical or mental fatigue and found organizations with low engagement scores recorded more than twice as many days off on average than high-engagement employers.

This difference can cost a large organization, with at least a thousand employees, about \$1-million a year in disability costs and lost productivity, the report said.

“Better health, lower job stress and a manageable workload translate into tangible benefits for employers, particularly in terms of lower absenteeism,” said Rochelle Morandini, Hewitt’s senior organizational health consultant.

Engaged workers tend to be in better physical health. More than half, or 56 per cent, of people at high-engagement places reported being in good health, versus about 41 per cent who said so in low-engagement organizations.

Workloads also tend to differ. Disengaged workers tend to have heavier work overloads while those at engaged organizations reported fewer workload problems.

“High engagement goes hand-in-hand with better health and well-being,” said Neil Crawford, leader of Hewitt’s Best Employers in Canada study. “Employees at organizations with high engagement reported better physical health, lower job stress and work overload, and greater financial security.”

The research was carried out in conjunction with Hewitt’s 2009 best employers in Canada study.

Source The Globe and Mail



MERIT MEMBER COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

To notify the office of Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia of any changes for our records, please complete applicable portions of the form below and return by fax to (902) 453-0689:

(Please print)

COMPANY NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

FAX: _____

OWNER(S) NAME(S): _____

COMPANY CONTACT: **Name** _____

Title _____

Cell Phone _____

Email Address _____

WEBSITE: _____

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