



## UA Canada member newsletter

### Volume 1 | Issue 6

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#### UA Canada conference announced

2013 UA Canadian Conference has been scheduled for July 24-25, 2013 at the Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland, in beautiful St. John's, Newfoundland.

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**Video: UA Local 488 gives back**

The UA Local 488 Gives Back – Sowing Seeds Across Alberta

# The UA Local 488 Gives Sowing Seeds Across Alb



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## UA Local 324 rallies to help in family crisis

UA Local 324 (Victoria) is asking for member donations to help Brother Reece Buchanan, his wife and their unborn child, a son named Ledger.

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## Saskatchewan Pipe Trades Apprenticeship Skills Competition

UA local 179 (Saskatoon) recently held the Saskatchewan Pipe Trades Apprenticeship Skills Competition where the province's best UA apprentices competed to earn a spot at the western regional competition.

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## UA Local 67 Technical Trades Academy open house

UA Local 67 Technical Trades Academy open house in Brantford, ON.

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## UA Local 325 celebrates 50-year members

UA Local 325, located in Fredericton, New Brunswick, celebrated the longstanding commitment of four 50-year members on March 26, 2013.

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## UA Local 67 call for women apprentice applications

The Technical Trades Academy in Brantford, ON is now accepting applications for **Pre-Apprenticeship in Welding & Plumbing for Women**. The programs will begin on July 2, 2013 and run for 22 weeks.

Selected students will be offered an apprenticeship through [UA Local 67](#).

The deadline for submitting pre-apprenticeship applications is May 15, 2013.

Download the applications form [here](#).



### UA in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador's labour boom comes as no surprise to UA Local 740. Located in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, Local 740 has been busy working on some of Canada's most important resource projects.

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### Newfoundland and Labrador, boom-like conditions in the land of opportunity

Newfoundland and Labrador is increasing looking like it's the place to be.

A RBC provincial outlook released in March 2013 points to continued economic growth in the region in 2013, mostly from natural resources and related projects.

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# UA Local 488 women in the trades

UA Local 488 is experiencing a rise of women in a formerly male-dominated field, reports the Edmontonians.

In the 8th annual salute to women in business edition of the Edmonton magazine, UA Local 488 members Lyndsay Webster and Pauline Lavallee talk about their experiences as women in the trades.



**WOMEN IN THE TRADES**  
UA Local 488 experiencing a rise of women in a formerly male-dominated field

BY PAULA E. KIRMAN

When it comes to the trades, it isn't just a man's world anymore. More and more women are becoming welders, pipefitters, plumbers, and other trades that have traditionally been known as men's jobs. Women's changing attitudes and needs in the work force are changing the face of the trades.

As United Association Local 488, representing the plumbing, pipe fitting, welding, and related industries, women are stepping up – and standing out.

"A lot of our work is in the Oil Sands. The trades we represent are welders, pipefitters, venters, plumbers, refrigeration mechanics, maintenance technicians, sprinkler fitters, and pipefitters," says Lory Matychuk, Local 488's Business Manager/Financial Secretary. "The greatest number of women in our local you will find in welding, sheetmetal working, and plumbing."

One of those women is Pauline Lavallee, a 48-year-old welder who is also pursuing a second trade school in sheetmetalting. "I always had an interest in the trades," says Lavallee, 48. "My dad is an electrician and my uncle was a welder. I knew they were their careers and made a decent living."

The UA Local 488 has 12,700 members in northern Alberta (including northern) The union covers all of Alberta from Red Deer north and the Mackenzie Valley of the WAT (although the union is not active there at this time).

"We were chartered in Edmonton in 1964. So, we're one year older than the Province of Alberta, and have built most of the province post-Tulsa time," says Matychuk, who has been with Local 488 since he was 18, making three trade tickets (as a Plumber, Sheetmetal Pipefitter, and Gasfitter). Matychuk worked in the field for 20 years and was elected as Business Agent with the union in 1991. In 2008, he became Local 488's Business Manager and has held that position ever since. "A lot of what we do is advocating for workers. We do collective bargaining. We represent our workers, so most people would think of a union doing what they don't realize is that the majority of what we do is training. So, that's the biggest aspect that we do."

In fact, the Edmonton-based office of UA Local 488 is home to the Alberta Pipe Trades College, the training arm of Local Union 488. "We are government certified to train first and second year apprentice (sheetmetal) workers, welders, and pipefitters," says Matychuk. "Aside from that, we also run many upgrading courses for our existing journeymen and apprentices. They can come in, and take courses that are over and above the government curriculum."

Why so much emphasis on training? The next to be explained is Matychuk. "We have to compete in a world product in our skills and Alberta trades apprentices have grown over the years. To be some of the finest in the world. The way we do to be competitive is not to lower our standards of entry. We do to ensure that we're the best skilled, the best educated, and through those means we can be competitive."

More and more frequently, women are among the members of these qualified, talented tradespeople. And for many of them, this is something that years before would have been beyond their reach. "But all the women and coming into the trades right from high school," says Matychuk. "For a number of them it's a second life. This is an opportunity they did not have when they were younger."

Lyndsay Webster is one such woman who was looking for a career change – and decided that the trades were it. The 31-year-old had been a hair stylist but began thinking her job. "I wanted something more challenging, more stable, and with set pay (hours and benefits)," she says. "I did a lot of research online and narrowed it down to either welding or heavy duty mechanics. They sounded cool and got a great opportunity to start my welding apprenticeship."

Being a woman in the trades has its challenges, particularly when it comes to dealing with their male colleagues. "A challenge being a woman is sometimes getting over the stigma of not being able to keep up with the men. Always having to prove yourself on the job," says Lavallee. "My job may be challenging at times but at the end of the day I wouldn't imagine doing anything else."

On the other hand, Webster has found that she has not really experienced any challenges in the trade specifically due to being a woman. "I don't really think that as a woman I have any different challenges than men. I just go to work and do my best," she says. "I always show up, on an on-time, and work my hardest. There have been a few comments here and there, but I don't let it get to me. I see my hard work and eventually be a better welder than anyone that has an equal ability to being a woman."

Local 488 is the largest local of the UA affiliated across the country. The local has 15,000 workers in jobs and jobs. The Local is also philanthropic, having given \$100,000 in grants to charity donors and job training programs, particularly in areas involving medical research and education. "It's our members that live in the communities, so supporting community is a big part of the union," says Matychuk.

50%. The majority of what the local does is training and recruiting. Towards that end, the Local is a partner in a program called Tradeswelds to Success, with offices in the Alberta Pipe Trades College, specifically for first nations applicants who are put through a 16-week academic upgrading so they have the skills to start an apprenticeship in either trade interests them. "There are many women coming through this group," says Matychuk. "We start them in a 12-week pre-apprenticeship program, then move them into an apprenticeship program and get them out to the workforce."

As well, Local 488 is currently working with Edmonton Public Schools to develop shop facilities in high schools to attract and train interested students and get them on a career path in the trades. There is also a connection with Norquest College, bringing Alberta youths into the trades by helping them upgrade their academic standards enough to handle an apprenticeship. "People are talking about bringing in foreign workers, and there is a need for that," says Matychuk. "However, the long-term is to ensure that we train young Alberta men and women and ensure that they have opportunities. We emphasize giving Alberta men and women first opportunities. These are good paying jobs."

Both Lavallee and Webster encourage women to pursue careers in the trades. "If that is what they truly want. If you like the trades, I would say pursue it," says Lavallee. "Make sure you research the trade you want. It's not always what you may expect, but it's nice to see the finished product at the end of the day."

"Be persistent," says Webster. "Being a woman and trying to get into the trades isn't going to fall in your lap. It's not easy at first. You have to keep pushing if you want the job. It will eventually pay off. Do not get discouraged!"

Pursuing the career of your dreams is certainly worth it, and the job is right there supporting its workers in their chosen field. "I wake up every morning and look forward to going to work," says Webster. "The amount of knowledge I have obtained in the last year is knowledge I look forward to the future and the rest of my career."

**Click to read**



**ALBERTA PIPE TRADES COLLEGE**  
16120-118 Avenue, Edmonton, AB  
Phone: 780-488-1266  
www.local488.ca

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## Local 488 funded Edmonton student welding facility opens

The new Edmonton welding facility at M.E. LaZerte High School is proving a success with students, reports The Edmonton Journal.

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## Tell us your stories...

Do you have a story you would like included in the UA members newsletter? We want to hear from you.

Every month we pull together stories from across Canada that demonstrate the impact UA Locals have in their community, profession and on prospective members. Your stories are important.

If you have a story to share, contact us and we will ensure your good work is shared with members nationwide.

Contact Carrie Croft at [croft@thornleyfallis.ca](mailto:croft@thornleyfallis.ca) or call 613-231-3355 ext. 227.

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UA Canada Members  
225 Metcalfe Street  
Suite 600  
Ottawa, On K2P 1P9