

For Immediate Release
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"TOOLS [th]at WORK" campaign strives to raise regional awareness

Dryden, ON – Preparing today’s students for rewarding career opportunities in the Skilled Trades through school-to-work initiatives such as Cooperative Education and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is the end goal for Keewatin-Patricia District School Board’s (KPDSB) TOOLS [th]at WORK campaign. Crescive Corporation in partnership with KPDSB developed the TOOLS [th]at WORK campaign to raise skilled trade career awareness and spent two weeks touring the communities of Dryden, Red Lake, Ignace, Sioux Lookout and Kenora presenting skills and trades as a third pillar of education and obtaining feedback from skilled trades employers and school council members.

Employers and school council members were presented with a number of statistics and goals that would support introducing skills and trades in the secondary school system. Following the presentations a Question & Answer period generated additional interest in future involvement from the attendees in more than one of the following target markets of promotion: Grades 7 & 8, Grades 9 to 12 and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. Participants were encouraged to fill out a survey that would provide direction and next steps for the TOOLS [th]at WORK project managers.

“The ideas and feedback from 70% of participants who took the time to fill out the survey were remarkable” said Vicki Scherban, Special Projects Consultant with Crescive Corporation “one forestry company claimed to have saved \$35,000 - \$50,000 per year by attending the session and receiving information on incentives and tax credits for employers who recruit youth through apprenticeship”.

As a result of the outcome survey many reoccurring themes were mentioned and highlighted in the KPDSB communities by employers and school council members in attendance. Employers indicated a keen desire to work with the KPDSB to enhance hands-on training opportunities and develop curriculum for youth. School councils wanted to see more sessions and believed youth should be introduced to the TOOLS [th]at WORK programs as early as Grades 7 and 8. It is hoped that the TOOLS [th]at WORK campaign will continue its next phase in 2006 based on these recommendations and ideas. To view the survey results or obtain more information on school-to-work initiatives designed for the KPDSB go online to www.toolsthatwork.ca.

Cyndi Cossais, Operations Manager for Crescive Corporation concluded, “This project set out to educate students, parents, educators and employers in the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board about school-to-work initiatives. In addition, other school boards did participate during the events and have since indicated their desire to join the campaign.” Cossais further added “we are pleased that our TOOLS [th]at WORK campaign has been cited as an opportunity to raise the awareness of the skills and trades shortage in Northwestern Ontario while promoting our youth as the next generation of skilled and trades professionals.”

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