

Mechanical Contractors Association of Saskatchewan
Heritage Business Park
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Attn: Judy Nagus

2008 Refrigeration report:

The MCA has seen quite an increase in the number of refrigeration contractors coming into the membership since the last AGM. It is great to see a trend towards working together and having a common voice when it comes to industry issues. Being as most trades have the same general issues facing them, I believe that as a group we can challenge and resolve these issues in a much timelier and effective manner when we work together.

In general the refrigeration industry is in full swing as are most other trades. An interesting observation is the southern part of the province is somewhat quieter and has experienced the normal late winter slow period while the northern part of the province has had an abundance of work throughout the year. Regardless of which part of Saskatchewan contractors are located in, the refrigeration industry is experiencing a skilled labor shortage. With the abundance of work, the retiring of baby boomers and the poaching of our people by other industries, other provinces and by governments, it is a constant battle to find and keep qualified people. Industry veterans face a constant battle of training the up and coming workforce that is required. Unfortunately with an economic boom being held back only by the lack of people to do the work, this situation will not get any easier in the near future. This is not just a refrigeration trade dilemma as all trades seem to be facing this same issue.

On the upside I am pleased to report that the refrigeration trade board has seen a dramatic turn around in attendance at the trade board meeting in the fall of 2007. With this improved attendance quite a number of issues were brought up and discussed to the point we even had to have a couple of group teleconferences to finish the discussions. On the down side even with this extra involvement and discussion, in the end the apprenticeship board turned down all proposals and suggestions. In fairness they did respond to one issue with some merit but the general response was that they have a shortage of people to try and implement any changes so they are not going to. Interestingly enough at least one of the proposals would have saved them time and effort. As a board member I here this same situation exists with other trade boards as well. So much for being industry driven as they constantly state throughout their annual reports.

On a brighter note SIAST refrigeration program is in as good a shape as ever and continues to provide top quality education and training to the apprenticeship students and to the pre employment student program.

In closing I would like to say as a lifelong Saskatchewan resident it is very satisfying to be able to tell our trades people and our children that for the first time in decades they no longer have to look elsewhere as the future is here and the future is bright right here at home.