

PATCHWORKS

► HOW THE OIL PATCH WORKS

► Apprenticeships in the oilpatch

In Canada, September means back to school. Usually we think of that just for kids, but in this enduring low-oil-price environment, some oilpatch workers may also be going back to school to train for a new position in the oil and natural gas industry. The good news is, despite the gloomy market forecast, there are still plenty of attractive training and employment opportunities – even in hard-hit Alberta – that offer a solid future in the oilpatch.



One such opportunity is the apprenticeship program. According to Alberta's [Apprenticeship and Industry Training](#) (AIT): "An apprenticeship is a post-secondary education program that combines work experience, on-the-job and technical training." The best part about the apprenticeship program is that people can earn money while they learn on the job.

The apprenticeship program is well-entrenched in the oilpatch. In fact, several oil and natural gas industry apprentices were among those awarded [Top Apprentice Award](#) in 2014 by the AIT program, including employees of [Precision Well Servicing](#) (a [PSAC](#) member company), [Suncor Energy](#) and [Stoneham Drilling](#).

An oilpatch apprenticeship offers solid long-term employment opportunities, both for new entrants and for those looking to retrain for a new career.

A quick online search earlier this month yielded a number of current openings involving apprenticeships with petroleum services companies, including a company "...seeking first- to third-year apprentice steamfitters-pipefitters... [whose] applicants must currently be registered with Apprenticeship & Industry Training in Alberta." Another company is looking for a "...Journeyman Heavy Equipment Technician or [someone] enrolled in an accredited apprenticeship program." Other current openings called for apprenticeship electricians and mechanics.

Further, those who have already completed their apprenticeship have a solid base to get and keep a good job. For example, [Calfrac Well Services](#) (also a [PSAC](#) member) is looking for a coiled tubing operator with "applicable industry training including Crane Operator Apprenticeship."

Plus, with comprehensive in-house training and advancement programs, skilled trades workers have the chance to move from entry-level, front-line jobs up to senior supervisor positions and beyond.



Apprenticeships exemplify the collaborative partnership among industry, government and training institutions. The apprenticeship program gives employees a start on a solid career, provides industry with the trained workers its needs and ensures the Canadian oilpatch remains able to compete in any economic environment.



[SAIT Polytechnic](#) is

recognized for its oilpatch apprenticeship training

programs, which include rig technician and equipment

operators. At [NAIT](#), the

apprenticeship program is so

popular, application line-ups

are restricted to start only at

5:30 am on registration day.

Photo: SAIT Polytechnic

PatchWorks explains how the oilpatch works in a series of short, monthly articles.

PatchWorks is part of PSAC's public outreach program, designed to strengthen the partnership between the oil and natural gas industry and the communities where we operate.

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