

## **Keeping the Best Pieces of the Ontario College of Trades in the Wind Down**

Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

Co-Sponsors: Kingston Chamber of Commerce

### **Issue**

There were some pieces of the Ontario College of Trades that were working and should be kept as the program is repatriated to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

### **Background**

With the passing of *Bill 47: Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018* the call to wind down the Ontario College of Trades was made official. Since the College started operation in 2013, there has been concern from the skilled trades and the Chamber Network as to its true value to the employer, the trades, and the public.

That said, we have since learned that there were parts of the College that our Chamber members found useful to their business and to their customers, the people of Ontario.

One of these parts was the public registry. The registry that indicates whether or not the business or person is in good standing with their qualifications, how long they've been active and is reflective of all members in the compulsory and voluntary trades in Ontario.

"If keeping the registry helps increase the professionalism of the trades without driving the costs of being a tradesperson up then I am fully behind it."<sup>1</sup>

"We often direct potential customers to the register as a way to confirm that our company was in good standing."<sup>2</sup>

Both members also see it as a way to discourage the underground economy if set up in a way that is advantageous to tradespeople and not prohibitive, particularly around cost.

If promoting the skilled trades continues to be a mandate of the new regime then a public registry would go a long way toward fulfilling that mandate.

The second area that our members felt was a benefit to their profession was the commitment to reduce barriers for internationally qualified tradespeople to become qualified in Ontario. It is anticipated that most of Ontario's workforce of the future will be coming to our province through immigration channels. Creating clear pathways for assessing certification and capabilities in a timely manner will allow more new Canadians to work in the skilled trades economy sooner.

<sup>1</sup> Email correspondence with Chamber Member on Monday, December 10, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> In-person meeting with Chamber Member on Monday, November 5, 2018

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:**

1. Keep the public registry for skilled tradespeople operational.
2. Create clear pathways for international and interprovincial skilled tradespeople to transition smoothly into the Ontario economy.