



## **Apprentice workers needed to fill demand as condo development booms**

by Roger Petersen & Victoria Revay

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When it comes to housing construction, Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe is one of the busiest places in North America, however there's concern that future projects may be in danger of suffering significant delays because of a growing shortage of skilled tradespeople.

LIUNA, one of the country's largest construction unions, is calling on the next provincial government to bring in some changes to avoid, what it says, could be a potential crisis.

Jason Ottey of LIUNA Local 183 says they are doing all they can to get young people interested in careers in construction.

LIUNA is offering training programs and is working with groups like Toronto Community Benefits in reaching out to at-risk youth and also targeting First Nations youth and women with training opportunities.

"If you look at the high-rise sector, the amount of high-rise multi-residential development going on, than you are seeing projects... taking considerably longer because there is not enough manpower to satisfy that need," says Ottey. "The longer the project takes the costs increase."

The president of the **Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON), Richard Lyall**, says they are offering similar programs but says the next provincial government needs to bring back programs to high schools that show the positives of the trades. He says it's more than just a good income; trades have one of the highest job satisfaction levels of any industry.

Many of the careers in framing, high-rise and concrete have entry-level salaries between \$50,000 and \$60,000 and can reach \$100,000.

One of the reasons for the shortage is that many tradespeople have stayed on longer than planned and are now retiring. If new people don't get trained to work, tough decisions will have to be made.

"It's a race against time," says Lyall. "We have to come up with solutions, implement them because it's going to be like a scissors effect. We're going to have a lot of people leaving and we're going to need a lot of people coming in, so in five years we're going to need to have figured this out."