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Alberta CEOs release plan to ensure Albertans are the most adaptable, innovative & progressive workforce in Canada

*New report—**Skilled by Design**—sets a vision for Alberta to thrive through a focus on reputation, education, and training*

CALGARY—The current crises have magnified already-present challenges for Alberta’s economy and people, such as sluggish growth, high unemployment, declining investment and a faded reputation as a dynamic place of innovation. A new report released today by the Business Council of Alberta (BCA) proposes solutions to make Alberta the place where **the brightest minds come together and solve the world’s biggest challenges.**

“Alberta is the place where talented people should work together to create new opportunities and solve the toughest problems,” says **Dawn Farrell, a member of the Business Council of Alberta and chair of the Task Force on Future Training & Skills.** “Integrating learning with work experiences, developing micro-credentialing and promoting lifelong learning in business cultures that, at their core, are inclusive and transparent will ensure we attract the best and the brightest to our province.”

The report, ***Skilled by Design: A Blueprint for Alberta's Future Workforce***, was developed by BCA’s inaugural Task Force. The *Task Force on Future Training & Skills* was chaired by Dawn Farrell, President & CEO of TransAlta, and its membership included CEOs and senior business leaders from across the province. The report offers businesses, governments and post-secondary institutions over 50 actionable and strategic recommendations in three broad focus areas:

1. *Building a Better Alberta*—Alberta is an attractive place to live and work, and is seen as inclusive, open and welcoming.
2. *Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning*—Alberta maintains a highly employable, competitive and flexible workforce by enabling an environment for skill development.
3. *Expanding Experience-Based Training*—Alberta develops well-prepared, highly skilled and confident workers by going beyond the classroom to provide real-world experience.

“Alberta has long been a place where if you had a good idea and were willing to work hard, you could find opportunity here, but that image has been impacted in recent years,” says **Mike Holden, Vice President, Policy & Chief Economist at the Business Council of Alberta.** “The economic reset that we are experiencing is an opportunity for us to restore that reputation and build our workforce with intention. This report lays out a blueprint to create a workforce that could prove to be the most employable, adaptable and resilient in the country.”

While this report provides policy recommendations to government, it is also an offer and commitment from Alberta's largest businesses to take meaningful action, including:

- Exploring an **annual A-Prize public competition** to incentivize individuals, businesses and other organizations to develop innovative and effective solutions and technologies to solve the biggest challenges the world faces today.
- **Expanding micro-credentialing programs** to allow people to rapidly adapt and develop the skills they need to be highly employable in the jobs of the future.
- **Conduct diversity & inclusion training for Alberta CEOs** and expand progressive and equitable hiring practices at the staff, management and leadership levels.

"Micro-credentialing and scalable assessments are powerful tools to validate a person's competency of specific skills and knowledge," says **Laura Jo Gunter, President & CEO, Bow Valley College**. "Micro-credentials, when implemented correctly, are fast to complete, standardized, stackable and focused on the skills Albertans need to meet labour market demands. Alberta is already a leading innovator in this area, through initiatives like Bow Valley College's nationally recognized Pivot-Ed project."

The ambitious objective of expanding social and economic prosperity for all those who call Alberta home is bigger than what any one business, government ministry or educational institution can do alone. This report represents a piece of that work to allow these pillars of society to function in better harmony.

The members of BCA believe that this work is needed now more than ever. As Alberta emerges from the economic shutdown and transitions from relaunch, workforce development will be a crucial element for economic recovery and future sustainability.

"Alberta is currently facing an unemployment challenge, a talent challenge, and in some areas a reputation challenge," says **Mike Olsson, Vice President, PCL Constructors Inc. and member of the Task Force**. "Developing the country's most skilled, adaptable and progressive workforce is an answer to all those challenges, and that's why we wanted to put these recommendations forward."

Read the full report at <https://www.businesscouncilab.com/>



Task Force on Future Skills and Training members

- **Dawn Farrell**, President & CEO, TransAlta Corporation (Chair)
- **Brad Zumwalt**, President, Zinc Ventures
- **Drew Zieglansberger**, Executive Vice President, Strategy & Corporate Development, Cenovus Energy Inc.
- **Dave Filipchuk**, President & CEO, PCL Constructors Inc.
- **Mike Olsson**, Vice President, HRPD, PCL Constructors Inc.
- **Scott Bolton**, President & CEO, UFA Co-operative Limited
- **Paul Gardner**, Senior Vice President, Human Resources, Suncor Energy
- **Jeff McCaig**, Chairman, Trimac Transportation
- **Judy Fairburn**, Co-Founder, The51

About the Business Council of Alberta. The Business Council of Alberta is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to building a better Alberta within a more dynamic Canada. Composed of the chief executives and leading entrepreneurs of the province's largest enterprises, Council members are proud to represent the majority of Alberta's private sector investment, job creation, exports and research and development. The Council is committed to working with leaders and stakeholders across Alberta in proposing bold and innovative public policy solutions and initiatives that will make life better for Albertans.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Scott Crockatt, VP Communications and External Relations at media@businesscouncilab.com.