

March 20, 2007

Premier Dalton McGuinty  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A1

Dear Mr. Premier,

**Re: Centre for Construction Trades & Building Sciences – Algonquin College**

I would like to express my support for the proposed Centre for Construction Trades and Building Sciences for Eastern Ontario to be built on Algonquin College's Woodruffe Campus. I believe that my company is representative of our industry in general.

I am currently unable to grow my company to its full potential due to the direct result of a lack of skilled trade's people. This situation will only worsen as my staff (and the industry in general) age to retirement. I have worked very closely with Algonquin over the years to ensure I have access to the few highly sought after graduates. These graduates could greatly benefit from the replacement of the current outdated and inappropriate facilities and tools. They would also benefit from the integrated learning environment and introduction to the new approach of green building techniques.

Currently, our industry is ill equipped to manage the change required for the environmental commitments being made by government. The technology exists, public education and demand is growing, but trades people require re-training to be able to implement these initiatives and a local facility does not exist to support this training. The result will be increased costs and delays. The proposed facility will also serve to retrain immigrants and build on Algonquin's current programs in language and integration.

Governments abandonment of high school and public school programs has prevented the construction industry from being a viable option for young people. This combined with the treatment of the trades in secondary establishments as poorly funded and maintained facilities has led young people to only consider a career in our industry as a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> option. Many young people today would be interested in our industry and all it has to offer if only they were exposed appropriately. You need only have to attend a Saturday morning seminar at Home Depot to realize this, as they are usually full of parents working with their children. This newly proposed facility will provide just such an

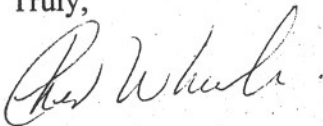
opportunity, as indicated, working with local school boards. I am regularly asked to speak to young people regarding the opportunities in our industry by forward thinking teachers and principals. I have been informed that this is the only avenue for students to be exposed to our industry. The fact that this facility will be leading edge 'green' technology with integrated learning environments and advanced modular teaching programs will provide the missing face of our industry to instil pride and fulfillment for all industry partners.

I currently can not compete with unions because I do not have the ability to offer continuing education for changing technology or career growth. Wages are very comparable, work conditions are better, benefits are comparable or better, management is better; the only thing I can not offer, that the unions can, is education because the facility does not exist.

This facility will take advantage as a leader in the field of trades' education for more than 40 years to come. It has the potential to be a beacon to both young and immigrants, welcoming them into our exciting field of work and showcasing all that our industry has to offer. The average student prefers to study away from home therefore, the Centre will provide for shortages across Ontario and Canada especially as mobility issues continue to be dealt with.

I firmly believe that my business and the livelihood it provides for so many families will be severely and negatively impacted should this initiative not proceed. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this matter in greater detail.

Truly,



*as per* Steve Barkhouse  
President  
Amsted Construction Ltd.