

Construction Careers in the recession

Recovery in construction will be slow, according to a stark warning from the Construction Industry Council (CIC) which says that by 2012 employment is still expected to be 10 percent below its 2008 peak. While the worst is not yet over – with a quarter of firms surveyed saying it was likely they would make further redundancies over the next 12 months – the CIC is still predicting a skills shortage in years to come.

"Businesses in the construction industry are looking for work but they will be looking for people again in the not-too-distant-future," says Graham Watts, chief executive of the CIC. "The industry lost half a million people in the last recession and we spent the next 18 years bemoaning the lack of capacity that this void has created. How foolish to allow history to repeat itself."

To put the scale of the skill loss into some sort of perspective, the number of construction professionals claiming unemployment benefits rose 400 per cent in the two years to November 2009, according to the Office for National Statistics. The biggest increase was for architects and quantity surveyors, both of which appear earlier in the construction process.

<http://www.cic.org.uk/home/index.shtml>

IHE members can access advice at www.theihe.org.uk/members/

- Graham Dalton, chief executive of the Highways Agency, has been appointed "transport skills champion". The role arises from Project Brunel which warned of an industry skills shortage worsening over the next three years. The recession has

obviously reduced employment demand but the team behind the project is keenly aware that there is still a skills shortage. The professional workforce is aging and retirements are eroding the industry's knowledge base. TfL is seeking to counter this with a requirement for apprenticeship and training in all its major contracts. In the last twenty years the number of workers in construction aged 60 plus has doubled and will continue to rise. The number under 24 has fallen by 27%. Development and recruitment are therefore still essential to retain competitiveness and service.

- ICE's salary survey reported a fall in members' salaries for the first time in seven years with those on lower salaries more severely affected. Job security fears were also up and redundancies have been reported in a few local authorities.

Watford Gap: The Musical

BBC Radio Northampton has created a musical film based on the stories and memories of people who have been part of the Watford Gap Services to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its opening.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/northampton/hi/people_and_places/newsid_8333000/8333999.stm

Click on the sheet music to see the show.



Maintenance Consultations from DfT

- Changes to the inspection code of practice and the inspection fees regime aims to improve the quality of workmanship. Deadline 24 May.
- Amendments to the street works regulations to increase the charges for works that overrun on traffic sensitive streets. Deadline 25 May.
- Revisions to the 'red book'. Safety at Street Works and the road works code of practice will apply to local authorities as well as utilities. Other changes include higher standards for equipment, such as safety barriers and high visibility jackets, greater provision for disabled people and improved consistency with other legislation. Deadline 2 June.

Apprenticeships

- Engineering UK has published a briefing paper analysing the state of Apprenticeship training in England with an emphasis on engineering and manufacturing technologies (EMT). www.engineeringuk.com/what_we_do/research/briefing_papers.cfm
- Still on skills, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills has published its annual strategic audit of national skills, including the construction 'cluster'. www.ukces.org.uk

Development and Transport News

- **DIY Streets** – the final report with case studies in Section 3 – has been published by Sustrans. Most schemes cost around £50K, for which residents redesigned their roads to introduce low cost calming measures – echelon parking, narrowing, gateways, planters, speed tables, artwork, and surface treatments – to reduce, for example, through traffic or commuter parking. Observations from the launch conference include – people can find 2D plans hard to understand – unfinished or 'rough plans' allow residents to be more involved than polished productions – everyone needs to work together – it always costs more than you think – little things can matter a lot to those who live in the street, take care. The effort needed to be put into DIY Streets community engagement and the outcomes were very similar to fully fledged Home Zones. www.sustrans.org.uk/diystreets
- Open University has launched a 4 unit Certificate in **Travel Planning**. www.open.ac.uk/ouab
- "Beyond 2010: Taking Stock and Moving Forward" is PACTS's evaluation report on Tomorrow's Roads. www.pacts.org.uk