



## Winter 2026

### Int'l Day of Women and Girls in Science

February 11, 2026 marked the 11th anniversary of the **International Day of Women and Girls in Science** (IDWGS), a significant milestone in the global effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality in science is crucial for building a better future for all, yet women and girls continue to face systemic barriers and biases in pursuing scientific careers.

Closing the gender gap in STEM-related careers requires breaking stereotypes, promoting role models to inspire girls, supporting women's advancement through targeted programs, and fostering inclusive environments through policies and actions that promote inclusion, diversity and equity. A UNESCO initiative, we encourage you to visit the official web site: <https://www.womeninscienceday.org/>

TPBC is taking an active role with our **Women4Tech**, a special program designed to enhance awareness of education and careers in engineering and applied science technology. While we are just getting started, in 2026 we will post several profiles of women in tech careers and map out initiatives designed to elevate the possibilities, and yes, roadblocks to young women entering a career as a technologist, technician or technical specialist. Have a quick peek at the TPBC site. <https://techprobc.org/women4tech-1>



### Vivian Forssman joins TPBC as a Professional Advisor

As the planet warms and climate change impacts affect all of us, Vivian is building societal capacity for tackling climate change issues and challenges. Her mantra is "every job is a climate job" and her purpose is to provide access to upskilling so that everyone can contribute knowhow to address these challenges. She leverages her background of 30 years of knowledge-building initiatives in post-secondary institutions, to advance access to climate-focused courses, micro-credentials, and purposeful communities-of-practice, helping to open doors and foster new skills in this era of climate risks.



Specialties: Climate adaptation, learning systems design, instructional design, collaborative tools, project management, knowledge management.

*We are delighted that Vivian has joined our team to help TPBC members and others grow in our collective knowledge of climate change and to fully engage to enhance greener alternatives.*

## MLA Randene Neill Talks Tech with TPBC CEO

The role of engineering technologists and technicians and their contribution to so much of what drives BC's economy was the point of a conversation between Technology Professions BC (TPBC) CEO, John Leech, and Randene Neill, MLA for Powell River-Sunshine Coast and Minister of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship. The two talked about TPBC and its mandate as the advocacy organization for engineering and applied science technology. John scoped out TPBC's purpose and many of the programs launched to serve BC and represent and serve TPBC members. *"It was a great experience meeting with Randene to talk about our role and the work of our members,"* said Leech. *"Randene expressed keen interest in our work and in the contribution made by TPBC members in the world around us."*



According to TPBC engineering technologists and technicians contribute about \$12 billion to the BC economy every year. The Conference board of Canada (now known as Signal49 Research) prepared a report in 2016 that indicated, based on 2011 data, that these professionals contributed \$54.7 billion to the Canadian economy in 2011, about 3.3% of Canadian GDP. *"Technologists and technicians are involved in so many aspects of everyday life such as designing, over-seeing and inspecting the construction of roads, water lines, power lines, solar systems, biomedical equipment in hospitals, building designs and inspections, energy audits, environmental, electronic and electrical systems and equipment, home inspections, and so much more,"* said Leech. TPBC members who are technical specialists inspect, test and service fire protection equipment, septic systems, and other specific areas of technical systems we encounter daily.

An education in engineering and applied science technology can be achieved with a 2 year Diploma of Technology or 1 or 2-year Technician Certificate at many postsecondary institutions in BC. *"There is a demand for these professionals,"* said Leech. *"In fact, our current research suggests that BC is not producing the number of technologists, technicians and technical specialists needed to meet the needs of employers."* TPBC hopes to find the funds needed to cover the cost to update the Signal47 Research data from 2011.

MLA Neill expressed her appreciation for the meeting and said, *"It was great to meet John and learn about the role of TPBC and their work as an advocacy organization for education and careers in technology. Engineers and engineering and applied science technologists, technicians and technical specialists carry out incredibly important work here in BC."* MLA Neill concluded the meeting expressing best wishes to John Leech and his organization, *"I wish TPBC my very best as they work to enhance the profile of the education opportunities and great careers that exist for young people in the field of engineering and applied science technology."*

Randene and John agreed to stay connected as TPBC works to enhance awareness of technology education and careers. *John presented Randene with a feather carved by Indigenous artist Alex Mountain.*

## TPBC AGM 2026

The Board has set the date for the TPBC AGM, Wednesday June 17 at 12 noon. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us.



## Board Governance Task Force

With almost 3 years since TPBC was launched there has been much development and progress on many fronts. An area warranting a bit more attention as we move into the future is governance. While a really solid base is in place, the Board is looking ahead and sees a need to project out 5 or more years and set the stage such that there is active Board Director renewal and that the overall structure of the organization is resilient and framed to manage changes as they emerge. The Vice President, Keith Switzer, will chair this group.

## Checking in at 30 Months

The first 30 months have been very active for TPBC. *“The organization has achieved much in 2 ½ years. We are pleased with the progress,”* said TPBC President Dave Rutherford. The brief Report was posted Nov 17/25 to the TPBC website: <https://techprobc.org/current-tpbc-news-bytes>



## BCIT VP and TPBC CEO Talk Tech Education

BCIT Provost and Vice President Academic, Jennifer Figner, met in 2025 with TPBC CEO John Leech to talk about engineering and applied science technology education at BCIT and in BC generally. The primary focus of the conversation was on BCIT’s current and future plans for the Diploma of Technology in fields of direct interest to TPBC.

*“It was most helpful to learn about Technology Professions BC and TPBC’s role as an advocacy organization. I was pleased to learn about the work to promote careers in engineering and applied science technology, in particular with under-represented groups such as women, Indigenous Peoples and British Columbians with disabilities”,* said Figner. John reviewed TPBC’s Statement on Accreditation, noting the growing number of endorsements for the Statement. Figner commented, *“ TPBC’s Statement on Accreditation serves to inform of the benefits of accreditation, a process fully endorsed by BCIT. In fact BCIT recently sent a note of support for accreditation to Technology Accreditation Canada(TAC) indicating our endorsement of accreditation”*. A few BCIT tech programs have TAC accreditation and TPBC is encouraging BCIT to re-new accreditations with TAC of all engineering technology programs.



John noted that messaging of engineering technology programs at BCIT has changed quite significantly in the past year, putting much greater emphasis on the Diploma programs.

*“There has been substantial change from a year ago on how BCIT markets on its web site diploma and degree programs, changes that really showcase the highly regarded and much needed diploma programs. We at TPBC applaud the changes and will work with BCIT in all ways possible to reinforce the great need for BCIT to present the Institute as a leader in the Diploma of Technology.”*

Jennifer and John agreed that BCIT and TPBC will strive to work together on the marketing and delivery of tech education across BC, namely: meet with BCIT Deans to discuss areas of mutual interest and set the stage for future initiatives; re-ignite the BC Deans of Technology working group; collaborate on building information that speaks to the contribution to the BC and Canadian economies made by skilled technology practitioners; enhance awareness among under-represented groups; and, determine what more might be done to build programming in high school that grants credits at BCIT for high school students completing dual credit courses.

*John presented Jennifer with a feather carved by Indigenous artist Alex Mountain.*

#### **Okanagan College and TPBC Link to Enhance Tech Education**

TPBC has connected with Okanagan College (OC), a postsecondary institution delivering a number of Diploma of Technology programs in their Kelowna campus. CEO John Leech has met virtually on a number of occasions with Dean Halia Valladares, with the outcome being an approach that will see TPBC engage with OC in ways that will further enhance awareness of technology education and careers.



OC and TPBC will work together (and with others) to revitalize the BC Deans of Technology working group. TPBC will support the highly popular Spaghetti Bridge Building competition and consider the possibility of a joint OC-TPBC award that will recognize community initiatives that enhance tech ed. TPBC will speak with students about TPBC’s work and encourage students to consider membership in TPBC, which, as of a recent TPBC Board decision, will be free while a student and for one year following graduation from a program that is recognized by TPBC. *“We look forward to growing our relationship with OC,”* said CEO John Leech. *“With this step TPBC is growing its linkages with postsecondary institutions.”* TPBC has also formally connected with the Vancouver Island University and in 2026 will reach out to other institutions.

#### **TechTalentBC**

A NEW initiative in which TPBC will define our work to enhance the profile of tech education and careers. Watch for postings in 2026.



## **The Technology Professions Contribute \$12B to BC Economy**

In 2011, engineering and applied science technologists and technicians contributed **\$54.7 billion** to the Canadian economy, accounting for **3.3% of the national GDP** at the time. This stat is an outcome of a 2016 study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada (recently re-named Signal49 Research). The 2016 Report observed that techs are active across various sectors, including manufacturing, construction, natural resources, health care and many more fields, and the demand for their skills has consistently outpaced overall employment growth in Canada.

Update 2026: TPBC estimates that, **in 2025 dollars, these technology practitioners contribute \$12B to the BC economy**. The concern is that, based on some current research by TPBC, there has been little growth in the number of tech grads over the past 15 years. At the same time, we hear that employers are having a tough time finding engineering and applied science technologists, technicians and technical specialists. In 2025 TPBC approached Signal49 Research asking for a proposal to update the 2011 data and to do a deep dive into supply and demand in BC. Singal49 Research submitted a proposal in Q3 of 2025 and since then TPBC has been looking for the funds needed to carry out a comprehensive study. TPBC believes this added research is needed for BC and our nation to meet our objectives for a One Canada economy.

## **TEChub –Appoints Co-Chairs and define their PURPOSE**

TEChub is a new group created to assist TPBC advocate for technology education and careers. At a meeting in late 2025 the group selected as ***Co-Chairs Dawn McGrath and Lee Rowley***. Both bring a wealth of knowledge, leadership skills and passion for the work of TPBC. TEChub also defined its purpose as: ***TEChub advises and supports Technology Professions BC, the organization that advocates for engineering and applied science technology education and careers.***

### **Members of TEChub:**

Dr Steve Cardwell  
Dr Andrew Hay, PEng (Retired), LSME  
Domenico Iannidinardo RPF, RPBio, PEng  
Grant Lachmuth, ASCT  
Dawn McGrath, PhD Candidate (Civil), MBA, ASCT, ROWP  
Frank Rizzardo, ASCT  
Lee Rowley, PEng, M.I.Struct.E., MICE., LEEDAP  
Dale Wheeldon  
John Leech, ASCT (Retired), CAE - Staff Support



## **Letter to PM Carney & Minister of Finance**

The PM made mention of 'engineers and technicians' in a speech this Fall. The Budget speech made the same reference. TPBC wrote to the PM and Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne to express our appreciation for acknowledging the important role of these practitioners and to encourage further efforts to elevate the profile of engineering technicians and technologists. We heard back from the



PM's office and have since connected with national government staff on our proposal to work with the Canadian Government on enhancing technology education and careers. We'll have more to report as we move along this path.

### **Letter to Premier David Eby and Minister of Jobs, Ravi Kahlon**

In response to BC Government's **Look West** plan, TPBC sent a letter to the Premier and Minister. TPBC noted the need to elevate the profile of engineering and applied science technology education and careers and to better understand the contribution being made to the BC economy



by techs. *TPBC estimates that engineering and applied science technologists and technicians contribute \$12B to the BC economy. About 3% of BC GDP.* TPBC is following up with Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth, Jessie Sunner, Minister of Postsecondary Education and Future Skills, and others.

### **TPBC and APB Water Song**

Something a little different. CEO John Leech arranged for a musician to help him write special song about water, which has now been recorded. TPBC is partnering with the Association of Professional Biology to release the song this Spring. Stay 'tuned'.  
*Sorry... Just had to use the phrase.*

### **Home Inspection – An Improved Regulatory System is Needed**

The Office of Professional Governance issued a report in 2022 recommending that home inspection registration should move *FROM* Consumer Protection BC (CPBC) and *TO* ASTTBC, at least as an *interim step* toward enhanced regulation, This recommendation was not implemented. We learned later in 2025 that the Minister of Postsecondary and Future Skills, who has responsibility for the Professional Governance Act, issues a letter indicating that Home Inspection will NOT be incorporated under the PGA. As part of TPBC's work on this file going forward we have been in touch with CPBC and have reached out to the Ministry of Attorney General, the Ministry responsible for CPBC. TPBC is of the view that licensing of home inspectors is in the public interest and that a change from licensing by CPBC to ASTTBC is a strong solution. TPBC is following up.

### **Building Design Practice Rights Long Overdue**

An area of practice that has been discussed, debated and not resolved... for decades! TPBC has decided to weigh in and is working with the BC Association of Building



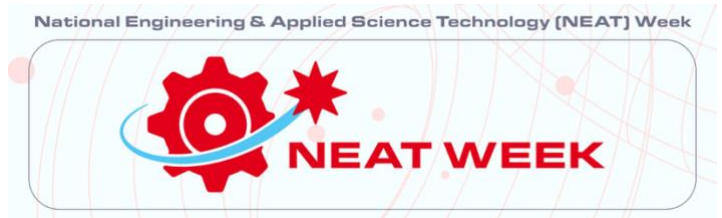
Designers to ask Government to address the issue as part of practice rights for ASTTBC registrants. More as TPBC and BCABD strive to have building designers' skills fully recognized.

## **National Engineering and Applied Science Technology Week (NEAT)**

November 24 – 28, 2025 was NEAT in Canada.

TPBC joined with other provincial associations to promote the education and careers of engineering and applied science technologists,

technicians on technical specialists. One key bit of information was released every day during the week. Check out the post on November 24, 2025 > <https://techprobc.org/current-tpbc-news-bytes>



## **Member Patron**

Looking for an opportunity to make a difference in promoting tech education and careers? We have one opportunity you may wish to consider, becoming a Member Patron. The initiative was launched in the early days of TPBC and to date a total of 10 members have each contributed \$1k to



help move the needle on this important work. ALL FUNDS are set aside for education and careers promotion. Read more: <https://techprobc.org/member-patron>

## **FEEDBACK REQUESTED – A PRIZE FOR A BRIEF COMMENT ON OUR WORK**

We want to hear from you... to know what you think of our progress thus far... to get your thoughts on the ConneXion newsletter... and anything else that you wish to offer up. Please be brief (max 50 words suggested). [info@TechProBC.org](mailto:info@TechProBC.org)

***To add a little SIZZLE we will award a few TPBC prizes for the 3 top submissions. Send in your thoughts by end of day March 31, 2026. Thanks.***