

THE DIRT

IHE NEWSLETTER - SPRING/SUMMER 2026

proudly owner operated



**HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR
TRAINING SCHOOL**

GROWTH | SUCCESS STORIES | PARTNERSHIPS | NEWS | STATS

here's the dirt

CHANGING LIVES

SINCE 2005

A large yellow and blue wheel loader is shown in operation on a gravel site. The loader is positioned on a large pile of grey gravel, and its bucket is raised. An operator wearing a red hard hat and an orange safety vest is visible in the cab. The background shows a clear blue sky and more gravel piles in the distance.

**REAL MACHINES.
LEADER IN TRAINING.
WORKING GRADS.
ENDORSED BY INDUSTRY.**

ONLINE: WWW.IHESCHOOL.COM | TOLL FREE: 1-866-399-3853

CANADA RISING OPPORTUNITY STARTS HERE

Some recent examples



BRIDGER PIPELINE PROJECT OPENS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPERATORS

A major new cross-border pipeline project known as the Bridger Pipeline has received U.S. presidential approval and is expected to transport more than 550,000 barrels of Alberta crude oil per day to Wyoming. Backed by South Bow and Bridger Pipeline LLC, the project will expand Canada's export capacity while utilizing portions of the previously developed Keystone XL infrastructure. For Heavy Equipment Operators, projects of this scale can create increased demand for skilled labour across pipeline construction, earthworks, road building, site preparation, trucking, maintenance, and long-term energy infrastructure support. As Canada's energy sector continues to grow, developments like this help drive new job opportunities and long-term career potential for operators across Western Canada. [LEARN MORE](#)

NEW HOUSING PROJECTS CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Canadian government's new Build Canada Homes initiative is investing \$13 billion to accelerate affordable housing construction across the country, with projects beginning in cities including Edmonton. Focused on modular and fast-track construction methods, the program aims to build thousands of new homes while supporting Canadian materials and infrastructure growth. For Heavy Equipment Operators and skilled trades workers, this investment is expected to create increased demand for site preparation, earthworks, road building, trucking, and large-scale residential construction projects across Canada.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE...](#)

B.C. LNG EXPANSION DRIVING DEMAND FOR SKILLED OPERATORS

British Columbia's LNG and natural gas infrastructure sector is seeing major growth following federal approval of the \$4-billion Enbridge Sunrise Expansion project. The expansion will add approximately 139 km of new pipeline infrastructure and increase natural gas transportation capacity to support rising global LNG demand. With additional projects like LNG Canada Phase 2, Coastal GasLink expansion, Ksi Lisims LNG, and Tilbury LNG also advancing, the industry is expected to generate thousands of construction and infrastructure jobs across Western Canada. For Heavy Equipment Operators, this means growing opportunities in pipeline construction, earthworks, road building, site development, trucking, and long-term energy infrastructure projects as investment in Canada's LNG sector continues to expand.

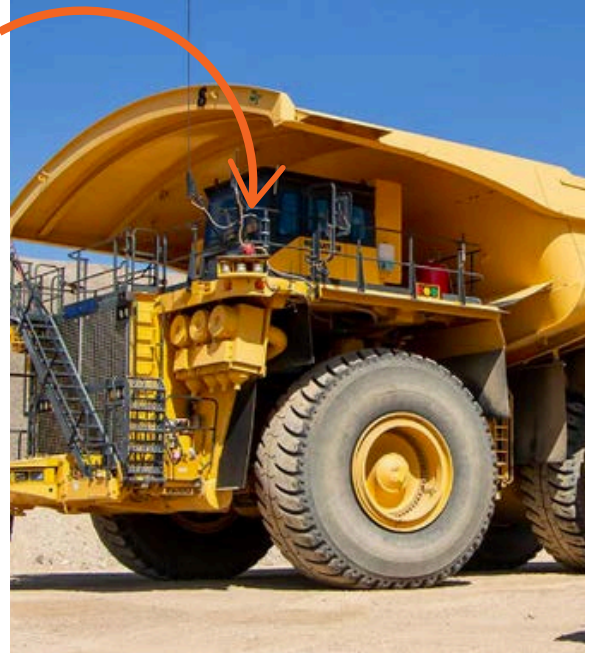
[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE...](#)

OUR STUDENT *success stories*

TRACI'S SUCCESS STORY *Traci* FROM SEAT TIME TO 930E

Traci came to IHE ready to put in the work, and it showed from day one. She made the most of her hands on training, built real confidence on the machines, and left with the skills and mindset to go after her career. Shortly after graduating, she secured a position with EVR at Fording River and quickly progressed through orientations and training shifts to be signed off to operate on her own.

Now operating a Komatsu 930E haul truck, Traci is one of only a small group selected from many other applicants, many with prior experience. Her success is a reflection of the effort she put in and the experience she gained at IHE. We are incredibly proud of her and excited to see what she does next.



ASHLEY

Ashley stood out as a top student during her time at IHE, earning recognition from the Edmonton instructional team for her strong work ethic and skill on the machines. Through hands-on training and real seat time, she quickly built confidence and capability, showing exactly what's possible when dedication meets the right training environment.



STEVE

Steve came from the Navy with a strong work ethic and chose IHE to build his next career. Through hands on training and real seat time, he gained the skills and confidence to step into the heavy equipment industry, showing how the right training can turn experience into a successful future!



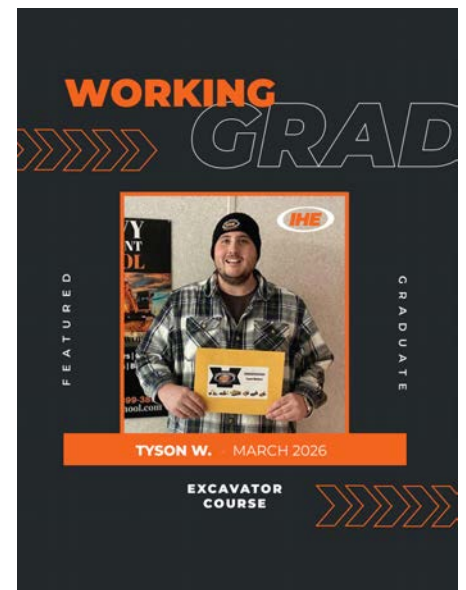
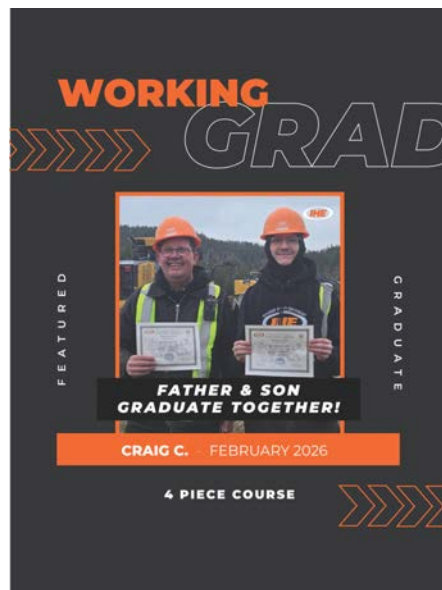
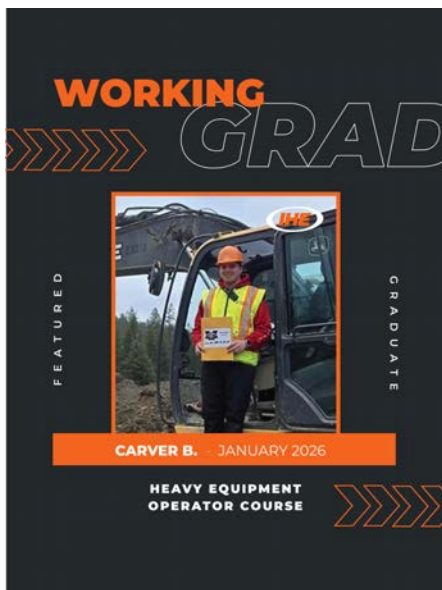
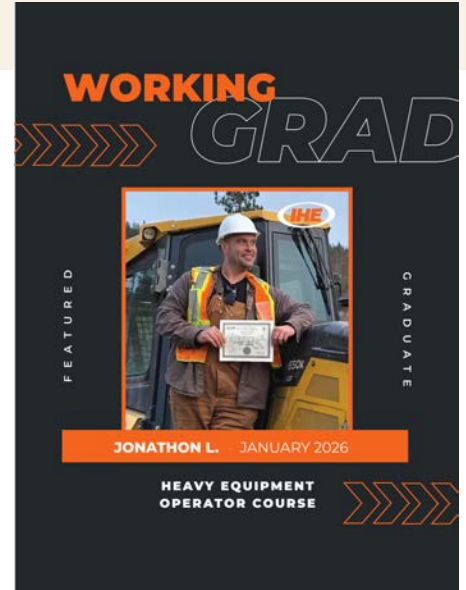
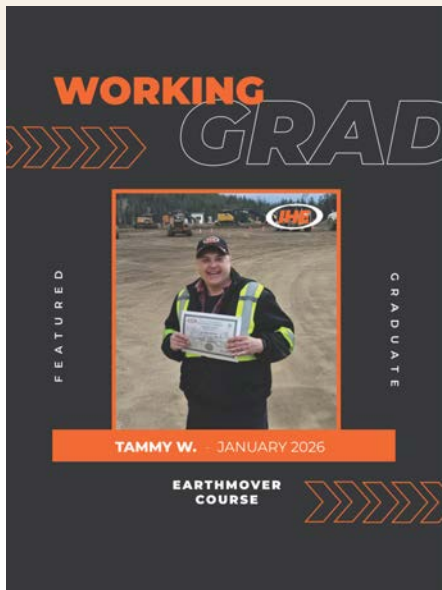
FROM TRAINING TO JOB SITE: [CLICK HERE](#)

WORKFORCE-READY OPERATORS FOR YOUR PROJECTS

Our graduates are entering Canada's job sites equipped with practical skills and the confidence to operate safely from day one. They are contributing meaningfully to communities and crews across Alberta and Canada while building long-term careers with respected industry leaders.

Newly trained Heavy Equipment Operators have secured positions with organizations such as Lafarge, BC mining operations like Hudbay, Okanagan-based construction companies, Enoch Civil Construction, Elk Valley Resources, Kichten Fracking Fort Hills, and a Hydrovac waste management firm. Importantly, many of these placements reflect the growing participation of women and Indigenous operators, highlighting the value of inclusive training-to-employment pathways.

We celebrate the dedication of our graduates, the support of their families and communities, and the partnerships that make these successes possible. Together, we are proud to play a role in addressing the skilled labour shortage and supporting the workforce needs of our industry stakeholders.



STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATION

key appointment announcement

LEE-ANN METEZ

DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE OPERATIONS

We are proud to welcome Lee-Ann Metez, Director of Corporate Operations, to the IHE team. With 25 years of experience in higher education, including extensive time in trades and technology training, Lee-Ann brings a deep understanding of what it takes to build strong, student-focused operations. She has led teams across admissions, registration, curriculum, scheduling, reporting, and overall educational administration, always with a focus on creating systems that support both student success and team performance.



At IHE, Lee-Ann plays a vital role in strengthening the foundation behind everything we do. Her leadership style is hands-on, collaborative, and rooted in the belief that great teams are built by working together, not by hierarchy. She is passionate about education and the impact it has on people's lives, and she sees firsthand how the work done at IHE can truly change a student's path. Outside of work, Lee-Ann brings that same energy to everything she does, from running, hiking, and skiing to travelling and attending country music concerts. She is also a proud mom of two teenage daughters who competed internationally in cheerleading and represented their team at the 2026 World Cheerleading Competition in April. Her drive, balance, and commitment to growth both professionally and personally make her an incredible addition to the IHE team. She no doubt will play a large role in IHE's success and future shaping it from the inside-out, and leaving all that she touches better off for it.



Lmetez@iheschool.com



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IHE-SCHOOL ENTERS NEXT GROWTH PHASE

As leadership signals confidence in Canada's Construction Workforce

IHE Heavy Equipment Operator Training School (formerly known as Interior Heavy Equipment Operator School) announced January 5, 2026, that CEO **Mike Hansen** and COO **Christine Hansen** have acquired all outstanding shares of the organization, marking a defining milestone in the school's 20-year history and signaling strong confidence in the future of Canada's construction workforce.

The acquisition represents a strategic step forward for IHE, reinforcing long-term leadership stability and positioning the organization for continued growth, deeper industry partnerships, and expanded training opportunities as demand for skilled heavy equipment operators continues to rise across Canada.

"This milestone is about responsibility to the industry, to our students, and to the employers who rely on us to deliver skilled, safety-focused operators who are ready for real work on real job sites," said Mike Hansen, CEO of IHE School. Founded over two decades ago, IHE School has grown from a single-machine operation into a leading heavy equipment operator training provider with a strong reputation for hands-on instruction, safety standards, and employment-focused outcomes. Throughout its journey, the organization has faced periods of uncertainty and challenge common to entrepreneurial businesses, but disciplined leadership and a clear commitment to its mission have kept it focused and moving forward.

Looking ahead, IHE School is entering 2026 with a focused growth strategy centred on workforce access, operational excellence, and national impact. As part of this evolution, IHE relocated its headquarters from British Columbia to Calgary, Alberta, beginning in June 2024, with the transition fully completed in 2025.

The relocation reflects Alberta's role as a hub for construction, energy, and infrastructure activity, while positioning IHE to better serve industry partners, students, and communities across Western Canada and beyond. *"Sometimes success is about being prepared for the opportunity,"* said Hansen.

In 2026, IHE will focus on strengthening workforce pipelines, broadening regional training capacity in Alberta and British Columbia, expanding access to skills training in remote and northern communities, and Ontario - deepening partnerships that connect training directly to meaningful employment outcomes across Canada. Christine Hansen, COO of IHE, emphasized the significance of entering this next chapter with unified leadership. *"Being fully aligned as life partners and business partners has allowed us to make long-term decisions rooted in purpose,"* she said. *"As we move forward, our focus remains on building training programs that evolve with industry needs and create meaningful opportunities for those working in the trades."*

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The transaction was completed with the support of a highly experienced advisory team, reflecting the professionalism and governance underpinning IHE's leadership and growth strategy. The Hansens expressed sincere gratitude to the advisors and partners whose expertise and dedication were instrumental in completing the acquisition.

IHE School also acknowledged the late Conrad Lefebvre, whose vision laid the foundation for the institution. *"None of this would have been possible without Conrad,"* said Mike Hansen. *"He believed in the potential of this school and entrusted me to help grow his vision. We carry that responsibility forward with pride."*

As Canada continues to invest in infrastructure, resource development, construction projects nationwide, and natural forecasted turnover, the demand for skilled operators remains strong. With full ownership aligned under leadership, IHE enters 2026 with clarity, confidence, and a renewed commitment to training that leads to meaningful employment outcomes.

"Our responsibility goes beyond training operators," said Christine Hansen, COO of IHE. *"Supporting Indigenous communities is a small part of reconciliation in action, and we believe all Canadians, no matter where they live - or are from, deserve access to life-changing skills training."*

She added, *"By meeting critical labour needs and removing barriers to training, we are enabling more people to fully participate in Canada's economic future. This next chapter is about long-term impact, empowered teams, and building workforce pathways that truly serve others and communities."*

About IHE Heavy Equipment Operator Training School

IHE is a leading Canadian heavy equipment operator training provider dedicated to preparing skilled, safety-conscious operators for meaningful careers in the construction and industrial sectors. With a focus on hands-on training and real-world outcomes, IHE engages with industry to support workforce development across Canada.



PARTNERSHIP FEATURES

OTEENOW EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SOCIETY

Our long-standing partnership with Oteenow has helped countless students gain hands-on Heavy Equipment Operator skills and meaningful career opportunities. Their incredible team brings passion, dedication, and heart to everything they do, always going the extra mile to support their students. Together, we're proud to be part of life-changing outcomes.

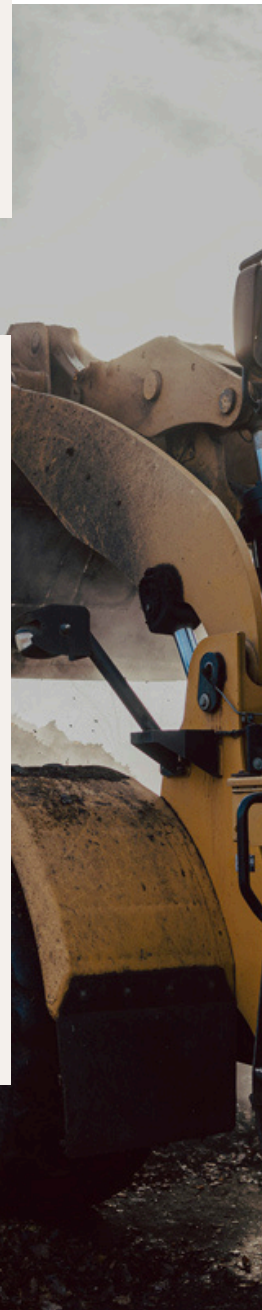
Together, IHE and Oteenow operate in mutual respect and responsibility with a genuine commitment to transforming lives through Heavy Equipment Operator training. The heart of this work lies in Oteenow's incredible team, who consistently show up for their students with care, encouragement, and tireless dedication. Together, we've witnessed powerful journeys of growth, hope, and lasting change.



VNFC PARTNERSHIP POWERS CAREER-READY GRADUATES

IHE Heavy Equipment Operator Training School was proud to partner with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) to deliver a customized remote training program focused on building real career pathways in heavy equipment operation. Through this collaboration, participants received hands-on training, mentorship, and ongoing support designed to help them successfully transition from training to employment, made possible through the strong support of VNFC and the District of Saanich and their commitment to community development, reconciliation, and opportunity creation.

We were honoured to attend VNFC's inaugural HEO graduating class on WSÁNEĆ Territory, a powerful milestone that truly brought this partnership to life. The ceremony highlighted a program rooted in reconciliation, empowerment, education, and action, with **graduates already stepping into employment**. It was an inspiring moment for our team and a reflection of what is possible when strong partnerships come together to create real opportunities.



KELMAR LTD AND IHE DRIVE STRONG OPERATOR PERFORMANCE IN CALGARY, AB

IHE Heavy Equipment Operator Training School partnered with Kelmar Ltd to deliver a comprehensive multi-day assessment program in Calgary, focused on validating operator competency across Excavator, Backhoe, Loader, and Skid Steer operations. Conducted by IHE's subject matter experts, the assessments evaluated key areas including hazard identification, equipment inspections, operational knowledge, and safe work practices in alignment with Alberta OH&S and industry standards.

The program saw strong engagement and results, with operators successfully meeting competency standards and demonstrating high levels of skill, safety awareness, and professionalism. Several participants stood out for their leadership, precision, and mentorship on-site, contributing to a positive and productive training environment. This successful collaboration highlights the impact of hands-on, in-field assessments in strengthening workforce capability and identifying any gaps known or unknown. IHE was proud to partner with them and deliver meaningful results through this collaboration, and we look forward to continuing this momentum by working with more organizations like theirs in 2026.



OUR PARTNERS. OUR STRENGTH.

A micro snap shot of some of the partners helping us train and support the next generation of operators:



Oteenow
Employment & Training Society



Our partners play a vital role in shaping the success of our students and the industry as a whole. Whether it's through hiring graduates, providing specialized training, or supporting events and initiatives, these partnerships help bridge the gap between education and real-world application. Together, we're building a stronger, more skilled workforce, one operator at a time.

Interested in partnering with IHE? We'd love to connect—reach out to us to start the conversation.

CALL/TEXT: 1 (403) 888-6883

ONTARIO EXPANSION IN ACTION

BRINGING TRAINING TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES. CREATING REAL OPPORTUNITIES.

We are proud to share the successful expansion of our Remote Mobile Division into Northern Ontario, marked by the completion of a meaningful training program with Eabametoong First Nation. In partnership with Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services, and with the support of Roxann Shapwaykeesic, this initiative brought Heavy Equipment Operator training directly into a community where opportunities like this have never been available before.

This program represents more than training. It represents access, opportunity, and real change. In a community where education currently only extends to Grade 9, delivering in-community training removes barriers that often force individuals to leave their homes, families, and culture behind. Being able to provide this opportunity locally is a milestone we are honoured to be part of.

With the support and collaboration of Ricky Ostamas and the Eabametoong First Nation team, this program was not only delivered successfully, but with impact. We are proud to share that all participating students completed the program and have since secured employment with Eabametoong Heavy Equipment. A powerful example of what can be achieved when partnerships are built with purpose and a shared commitment to community growth.



SEBASTIAN REES

NEWLY APPOINTED HEO MOBILE TRAINING MANAGER

We are proud to introduce Sebastian as our new Mobile Training Manager at IHE. With over 25 years of hands-on experience across multiple sectors, he brings a global perspective shaped by early mentorship in a family rooted in construction, agriculture, and infrastructure, along with international work in Australia and New Zealand on major projects, agriculture, and quarry operations.

Over the past year and a half with IHE, Sebastian has demonstrated a strong commitment to our students, partners, and communities. From instructor to site supervisor and now into this leadership role, he has helped coach future operators and build meaningful relationships with First Nations communities. His passion for sharing knowledge and adapting to diverse environments continues to strengthen our HEO Mobile Division and support impactful training across Canada.



BUILD YOUR WORKFORCE WITH IHE

ATTENTION: Industry Leaders, Employers & Workforce Development Partners

Are you seeking reliable, professional, and customized support in heavy equipment training, competency validation, or workforce development?

IHE Remote Mobile division, led by our trusted Senior Client Partner Specialist, **Halima Akhtari**, and known for her exceptional customer service and relentless commitment to meeting client needs, has earned a reputation for getting results for partners, no matter the challenge.

From major contractors to government agencies, training institutions to Indigenous communities, we're here to help you build the workforce you need - locally, efficiently and effectively.

- Operator Competency Testing & Validation
- Custom On-Site Training & Safety Sign Offs
- Competency-Based Frameworks & Pre-Hire Assessments
- Job Fairs & Talent Alignment Strategies (entry & experienced HEOs)

Let's build solutions that match the scale of your goals and needs.
Advertise to our HEO Alumni FOR FREE!

Reach out T-O-D-A-Y to Halima at **bd@iheschool.com** or call/text **403-888-6883** to discover the quickest solution.

STREAMLINE YOUR WORKFORCE NEEDS

CLICK HERE



Email: **bd@iheschool.com**
or call/text **403-888-6883**

HALIMA

Senior Client Partner Specialist



RECENT EVENTS

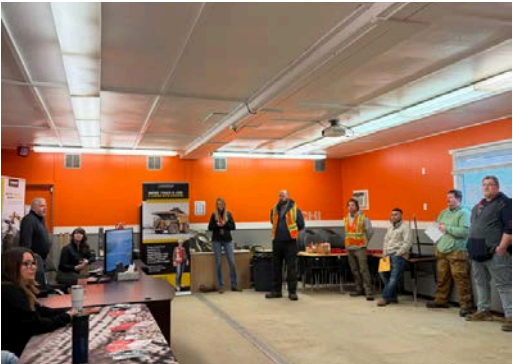
CON EXPO LAS VEGAS

watch this!

IHE was proud to attend CONEXPO-CON/AGG, where our team connected with industry leaders, including **Aaron Witt** and **Cody DesRoches**. These conversations centred around workforce development, training, and the evolving needs of the heavy equipment industry, with valuable insight shared on both industry trends and equipment innovation.

The experience provided a strong opportunity to exchange ideas that directly impact how we train and prepare students for the workforce. It also offered a broader look at where the industry is heading and how IHE can continue to evolve alongside it. Engaging directly with leaders in the space reinforces the importance of hands on, industry aligned training and staying connected to those shaping the future of the field.

Experiences like this continue to strengthen our commitment to training to employment and preparing our students for real opportunities ahead.



CONNECTING OUR STUDENTS TO INDUSTRY

Recent job fairs at our Innisfail, Lake Country, and Edmonton sites have continued creating strong connections between industry and employment opportunities for our students and alumni. Companies are regularly coming directly to our campuses to meet and hire graduating operators, including recent hires from our sites by **Hudbay Minerals** and **Elk Valley Resources**, along with many other industry partners across Western Canada. Employers are seeing firsthand the skill level and job readiness of our students, while graduates gain direct access to real career opportunities. With growing industry demand, IHE is now planning to host job fairs every Friday across our training sites to continue building these valuable connections between employers and future operators.

If you are looking to hire job-ready operators, visit one of our training sites in Edmonton, Innisfail, or Lake Country, or would like to be involved in an upcoming job fair, connect with our team at BD@iheschool.com or call (403) 888-6883.

SAFETY TICKET HUB

Your One-Stop Shop
for Safety Tickets!



Whether you're a current student, one of our proud alumni, or a valued industry partner, company, big or small, Safety Ticket Hub is designed to be your go-to resource for safety training and certification.

- ✔ **For students:** Gain the certifications you need to get job-ready and stand out to employers.
- ✔ **For alumni:** Stay current with industry standards and keep your tickets up-to-date.
- ✔ **For businesses & partners:** Streamline staff training and ensure your team meets workplace safety requirements quickly and efficiently.



With a wide range of online safety courses available, Safety Ticket Hub makes it simple, fast, and convenient to get the tickets you need—anytime, anywhere.



Visit www.safetytickethub.com today and make it your one-stop shop for safety tickets.



HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR
TRAINING SCHOOL

GO TO RESOURCE

Online Safety Tickets

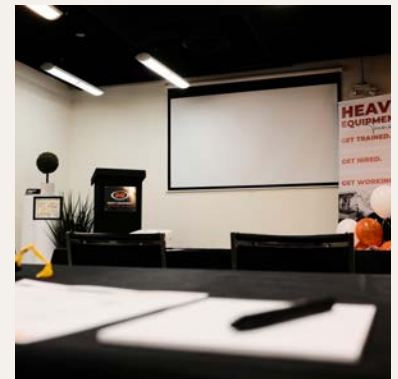


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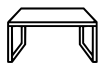
NEW MULTI-PURPOSE TRAINING ROOM NOW AVAILABLE IN CALGARY

IHE is excited to announce that our new multi-purpose classroom and meeting space is now available for rental at our Calgary Head Office located at 6227 2 St SE #107, Calgary, AB T2H 1J5. Designed to support training sessions, meetings, orientations, workshops, and small events, the space offers a clean, professional environment with flexible seating and presentation capabilities.

The room features seating and tables for up to 30 guests, a comfortable lounge space, full AV equipment, one unisex handicap accessible washroom, and free parking for attendees. Conveniently located in South Calgary, the new rental space is designed to provide businesses, organizations, and community groups with an accessible and comfortable venue for professional gatherings and training opportunities. Catering options are also available nearby through a local business across the street with advance ordering.



Features



5+ Tables



Kichen Area



2 Washrooms



Lounge Area



Full AV Equipment



Free Parking



Contact us

1-866-399-3853

info@iheschool.com



HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR
TRAINING SCHOOL

2025

by the numbers

44K+

hours of students training on machines

52+

Average weekly number of students across all our sites

1

new mobile learning centre acquired. **STAY TUNED.**

2,320+

hours spent on employer job sites working with clients & operators

100'S

of students trained across multiple campuses & mobile training sites

2K+

new followers across our social media channels

48

female graduates in 2025.

273

male graduates in 2025

7500+

alumni across Canada and beyond

3

training sites across Western Canada

1

Mobile Division

1

new website launched for Safety Ticket Hub
www.safetytickethub.com

1,000,000 +

Website Hits

60+

Pieces of Iron Operating Across all sites