**Mark Chapeskie:** E H R C is the organization dedicated to ensuring Canada has the workforce to keep the lights and other essential services running in Canada.

A workforce that is safety focused, highly skilled, diverse, and productive. And we do that in a variety of ways and I like to think we do two things particularly well.

The first is labor market intelligence. We do the deep dive research to understand who's doing what and with what skills and what occupations in Canada to ensure we can maintain 24/7/365 power flow. And do we have enough of those people? And if we don't, what do we do about it? And which stakeholders do we need at the table to help solve the big issues? We then take our research and turn it into actionable programs and including labor market interventions. So examples might include attracting more youth to the industry diversifying the industry, building out HR best practices and management best practices.

Our members and partners are companies, unions educational institutions, governments and policy makers at the federal, provincial, and municipal level. And knowing all that today, I'm gonna speak to what I consider our most important asset in the Canadian electricity industry and renewable energy industry are people.

So the Canadian energy industry is in a state of flux, and today's electricity landscape looks very different than it did even a decade ago. Our energy policies are increasingly greener. We've got new technologies that are changing the grid and the workforce isn't getting any younger. These were major trends that We actually had heading into the pandemic.

And they're, they've continued an in fact accelerated post pandemic or, I know we're not supposed to say post pandemic, but as we emerged in this new world that we are. The electricity industry has been incredibly resilient over the past almost three years. And keeping employees safe across the country was paramount.

It also allowed us to keep our hospitals, grocery stores and homes powered up over the course of that time period. However, the key drivers have continued and in fact in some cases accelerated. So technology adoption, policy shifting towards more and greener alternative energy sources.

And of course the demographic change specifically retirement in the industry. So innovation in technology and business process is really what's reshaping how we generate, deliver and use electricity. Thinking specifically of artificial intelligence, smart grids increasingly electrification as we transition from one form of energy for transportation, for example.

They're building heating and cooling. And what that does for the grid. And also one of the things that keeps a lot of our CEOs up at night: cybersecurity. And while that innovation will bring with it tremendous opportunities and efficiency pricing, quality, and indeed consumer choice, it also brings issues and challenges around upskilling developing the workforce that can continuously adapt and innovate within a rapidly changing environment as a result of technology and policy.

The skilled and trained workforce is an essential component to decarbonization, and while we still need to manage our legacy systems, so giant hydroelectric infrastructure nuclear power plants and other big infrastructure projects, we're going to see new types of work and jobs evolve as a result of energy policy and tech advancements.

One example here, of course, would be the growth in the number of electric vehicles on the roads. That's going to necessitate substantial modification and upgrades to the existing grid infrastructure to handle the load increase. When we move to buildings, that's energy efficiency, refits or new build, there will be new jobs created all along the manufacturing and natural resources supply chains.

In this industry, the electricity industry, just over 80% of the workforce requires highly technical skills to work in the sector. So skilled trades people, engineers, technicians, technologists. In order to achieve a successful energy transition, we need to think about renewable energy and storage technologies that work in a Canadian climate.

We need to think about small modular reactors. I've heard many people refer to the growth in electricity demand requiring an all hands-on deck approach. So it's not a nuclear versus renewables versus other traditional forms of electricity. It's pretty much everything. And it's, it will just, and it will be different depending on the provincial jurisdiction, based on the natural resources and other elements available in that jurisdiction.

Each of the proposed solutions though has unique skills and competency challenges associated with them. Many of them will require more trades folks, many of these roles have long lead times to full competency. We mentioned the 80, over 80% of the industry is highly skilled. Electricity in Canada depends on these essential workers, 24/7/365.

But it's not a just in time industry. It could be five to 10 years to full competence in some roles and many roles in fact. and we need to be able to plan well, in advance for labor market need. So if we're thinking five years to grow a specific worker or a specific workforce we need to really start planning now.

If anything, we should have started planning a few years ago. So if we think about that five years, that's when we have start to have enough people in a given role, assuming we've got the training programs in place, if we're thinking nuclear, that could be as many as 10 years.

There's another area of workforce need that warrants discussion too. And that's climate change. It's having an impact in our industry, particularly in two ways. So the first is the increase in adverse weather events, the response that's required. We see incredible coordination across borders, both provincial and international. And when we need to respond to some of the major storms we have seen just recently.

So examples being in Ottawa the dare that hit the city and literally took out 40% of the grid in a very, very short period of time. Or Lytton, BC where we had the fires that were as a result of unprecedented heat. The second is our societal push and subsequent public policy moving us towards a zero or low carbon economy.

Electrification is of course gonna be a big part of the energy transition and energy usage. And in order for that to happen successfully, the grid and the sector is going to have to do, go on a bit of a hiring spree. Current grid infrastructure was not designed or built to handle the significantly increased load or demand for electricity.

Some studies have put Canada's electrification requirements at two to three times current generation need and IV seen at least one. Now that's projecting four times by 2050. We don't quite have a handle on what this workforce of the future is going to look like, but we do certainly know that it's gonna be bigger than our steady state a hundred thousand plus workers that's kept the grid alive since 2005 when we first started properly looking at these numbers. It's also worth discussing demographics. We're already seeing an extremely tight labor market. We knew this was coming because of Canadian demographics. We finally hit the baby boomer cliff.

So retirements coupled with a slower reproduction rate, mean we have a shrinking pool of youth talent to draw from. The pandemic had an interesting effect on retirements not just in our industry but across industries. At first, retirement's kind of stalled for a couple of years, but then last year it acceler. And it accelerated hard. This aligns with our anecdotal evidence from employers. I was speaking to a local distribution utility recently and the HR director said to me, and it was almost a direct quote, "we should all be checking on our neighbors because I don't know where all the applicants went."

So these of the belief that people have just disappeared, they vanished from the labor market. And that is bearing out from evidence we're hearing from companies across across the board. Statistics. Canada also shows that Canada's working age population is older than it has ever been. By October of last year, 300,000 people had retired, and in the entire previous year, that number was only 220,000.

86% of our turnover in this industry is driven by retirements. And our retirement rate in the industry is one and a half times the national average. Now, this is at a time when we also want to grow new generation, transmission and distribution at a rate we haven't attempted since 1981. The labor market is tighter than it's been since the seventies across Canada for a year. Job vacancies nationwide have hit a million consistently month over month across industries, and the labor market participation rate in Canada right now is at its highest point in recent history.

At the same time, training needs are evolving. Employers are looking to upskill or reskill their teams as legacy infrastructure is replaced and their expectations of employees who are job ready are likely to have to change as well as many many employers find they cannot find the workers with the level of experience or tenure that they would pro traditionally have looked for when they hire.

What this means is that a number or a lot of valuable institutional knowledge will be walking out the doors very soon or already has. And succession planning is a critical component of managing this for any organization's resiliency strategy going forward. Worryingly, many employers in the industry don't have a good knowledge management process to ensure the experience is captured and passed on to the next generation of workers.

On top of that, youth representation in the industry remains chronically low. Only 5% of the total labor force is under 25 compared to an average of 10.6% in all other industries in Canada. Many young people aren't aware of the full benefits the sector offers and don't fully understand the breadth of careers that are available.

While they very much support big changes that are going to address climate change or and a zero carbon, future, electric cars, renewable energy technology and so on, the challenge is that they don't connect these big actions with actual work in the electricity industry and all the jobs that actually exist outside of the iconic power line technician or electrical engineer.

Only 26% of our workers are women, in the trades that drops to single digits. The proportion of indigenous people working in the sector is 4.7% with a high concentration in the trades. However, even here, we can do better in this industry because electricity jobs are everywhere. They're as much rural as they are urban.

And as we look at getting off diesel in rural and remote communities, we have to engage more indigenous people. Immigration is another factor that's absolutely necessary to meet our employment needs. And as Canada commits to 1.5 million people over three years immigrating to Canada, that is an area of labor market need that we need to tap into the labor market supply that we need to tap into and do a better job.

On the subject of diversity, E H R C has long promoted the value of D e I or diversity, equity and inclusion, better integration of women, indigenous people, black and racialized Canadians, people with disabilities, internationally trained workers and others, presents an opportunity to improve innovation, reduce inefficiency, and ensure the reliability and safety of the grid through our energy transition.

Developing a culture of inclusion takes commitment and intention, and it has to be genuine. We have a shared responsibility to make that change happen. H R C launched the leadership Accord of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a commitment and has now been signed by over a hundred signatories and advocates to date, which includes benchmarking and follow on reporting to demonstrate incremental improvement. We've seen great results from that program so far, and our hope is more signatories with more time and more people committing to better over that time.

I think it's also worth talking a little bit about more about a project that we also took on a couple of years ago. We started a journey to map out every task, skill, competency, and occupation in the industry that it's required to keep the lights on.

We now have mapped a competency framework that allows us to see, with a high degree of clarity, which competencies are required for the sector across occupations and employer. With this framework, the H R C is able to take a deep dive into different roles to see which roles share competencies with other roles.

This allows for efficiencies of training and upskilling. It allows for broader workforce planning to transition staff from one role to another in the event one role is disappearing. I'm thinking meter readers, for example, or thermal coal workers. The common language also allows for better informed pay equity discussions across roles.

Our labor friends really like that aspect of it. It informs training and curriculum development plans, and even custom job descriptions. Picking and choosing from one competency stack to another to marry job descriptions. One of the interesting side benefits of this research was that we started to explore some experimental occupations.

So things like several years ago as we were starting the research, there was a lot of buzz around energy storage technicians and smart grid specialists, and even ev charging station installers. But today sounds a little bit silly that we would even have second thoughts about those occupations.

But at the time, they weren't really role, they were performed by technicians, technologists, electricians, just off the side of the proverbial desk. So to. But as we've dug deeper and as time passed, those were, and are emerging roles. We're seeing them performed increasingly today. But the current education system isn't isn't tooled currently to keep up with the, with this emerging labor market demand for these roles.

And we're hoping that over time as a result of this particular work we'll start to see a bit of a better standardization of training across Canada. And we are working on an initiative that I'll talk shortly about as well related to that. On that note we're rolling out our new labor market intelligence.

This time we're building our own economic model with in-house and contracted economists, experts, so that we can start to do more real-time data analysis and projections as policy and technology change over time. And that responds to the unique circumstances of each Canadian region as electricity is provincially and territorially regulated. We're also developing a micro accreditation program. The goal here is not to replace the trades technician, technologists or engineering certifications, but instead to focus on those roles that I just mentioned that have emerged so quickly.

Grounded in our competency framework and national occupational standards we can accredit training programs. Educational institutions looking to train solar installers, wind turbine techs, wind blade techs ev, charging station installers as and a few others. And this will allow us to standardize the training across Canada as right now, there is no training standard nationwide for any of the roles.

So why is this important? I thought I'd share with you a little anecdote about a friend of mine who, who traveled up to Northern Quebec. He had spoken to a mayor there. Mayor was super proud. He was the most northern municipality in Quebec that had an ev charging station installed on site. So my friend drove up from Montreal parked his car in the parking lot of the town hall.

And as he went to plug the car in, he realized that he couldn't actually see the meter on the charging station because it had been installed 180 degrees backwards against the wall. So when I talk about standardization of training across Canada, that's what I'm referring to. That's a really lighthearted example.

There are potential concerns of individuals performing electrical work without the proper safety and health and safety training in order to do so it's definitely a work in progress, but our hope is that over the coming years, we'll be able to help solve that problem too.

Lastly, we'll be able to support employers in hiring workers from other sectors looking to transition for the first time to help respond to a significant labor market need. I mentioned earlier that we have a youth engagement challenge in this industry. So E H R C is partnered with Canadian Geographic to engage with youth in middle school.

Because that's where they start to lose interest in math and science. And they need those math and science high school credits right up to grade 12 in order to enter over 80% of the occupations in this industry. So it doesn't matter whether it's engineering technicians and technologists, or our skilled trades roles. You need your grade 12 math and science to enter any of those. By engaging youth while they're still in school. We can en engage the next diverse generation of talent. Our hope is that we'll be able to encourage you throughout the K to 12 system to think about decarbonization, explore how they can play a role in leading Canada to a greener future.

These giant maps that we're developing in partnership with Canadian Geographic Education. And when I say Giants, they are 11 by eight meters in in area. And they do roll out across the floor of a gymnasium in a middle school. And our hope will be that we can focus on highlighting the electricity industry in Canada, the energy efficiency that we're going to have to factor in and our role and their role in, in helping Canada get to a zero or at least reduced carbon future.

These are fundamental not only in a classroom setting to get young people thinking about environmental issues and the electricity sector and energy efficiency as being key to addressing these issues. But they'll be more broadly. The creation of the maps will also appeal to the general public by fostering national dialogue and the economic future of our country.

These maps along with poster maps and Canadian Geographic in education in the classroom materials will have map legends, activity cards, props, teachers guides with curriculum linked activities to help bring this map to life. And embedded on the map will be QR codes that will unveil amazing sensory experiences, including career profile videos of people actually working in the electricity industry and energy efficiency space.

Highlighting these roles and highlighting how individuals can come to work just like these people are today. The maps and their associated digital and print resources will be distributed to over 20,000 teachers in schools across Canada over the next three years. And one of the things that has consistently come out of our research is that Canada has been seeing registrations of youth in the skilled trades decline.

And I think it, that's worth mentioning because that's a challenge we have a lot of building to do until 2050 in order to meet our energy efficiency and electricity commitments and tradespeople, skilled tradespeople will be required to do that. And over the course of the pandemic, we've actually seen trades or apprenticeship registrations decline.

We've seen completions decline and that's a challenge. And e hcs working elsewhere on that too. And so I'd like to actually hand the floor over to my colleague, Yoana Turnin, project manager of our Empowering Futures program to to take us through the next, next little.

**Yoana Turnin:** Thank you mark and thank you Alison for the opportunity to be here today.

Mark spoke earlier about the rate of retirement and the time it takes to, for someone to in the industry to achieve work full competence. But aside from that, we also know that the industry relies heavily on contractors for routine jobs, and recruitment is oftentimes done from within the sector.

So all these factors combined present the big challenge in replacing the existing workforce, but also preparing for that growth that we were talking about earlier in the sector. At the same time though our sector is generating a lot of opportunities for rewarding and in demand career, in renewable energy, in clean technologies that a lot of young employees are attracted to.

They want to work in professions for a healthier planet. So this presents a huge opportunity for employers to attract youth in the industry and build their talent pool. So I wanna tell you a bit about one of our e HRCs programs, empowering Futures whose aim is exactly that, to strengthen the industry's workforce.

We'll go over the general program overview, some of the eligibility requirements and information on how to apply. The Empowering Futures Program is Canada's student and apprentice work placement program for the electricity industry. And the program's main goal is exactly that, to address the skill gaps and help the industry create and sustain a skilled and diverse labor force.

So to do that empowering futures in E H R C provide financial incentives and additional supports to employers who create work integrated learning opportunities for students and for first year apprentices in select red seal trades. So you'll see that the program provides which subsidies and support both for students and for first year apprentices.

But today I'd like to focus on the app apprenticeship stream. With empowering futures, eligible employers can receive a financial incentive. $5,000 for hiring a new first year apprentice. An additional 5,000 if the apprentice actually self identifies as belonging into one of the equity deserving groups.

So that's a total of $10,000 per apprentice. The equity deserving groups, as defined by this program and our funder, are women newcomers to Canada, so that's anyone that has arrived in Canada within the last 10 years. We also have persons with disabilities, indigenous people, those who identify as a member of a visible minority group or as a member of the two s lgbtq plus communi.

In order for employers to be eligible for funding, they have to be a Canadian owned, small or medium enterprise, and that means to have 499 employees or less. And we're not counting contractors just full and part-time employees. The primary activity of the organization has to be either the generation, transmission or distribution of electricity, but we're also able to provide funding to organizations that provide sector support, including renewables in any of the areas such as r and d, business development and energy efficiency.

Lastly the firms that are engaged in manufacturing of equipment or the provision of services also are eligible. On the candidate side, there are three very simple eligibility requirements. They have to be a first year apprentice in one of the 39 construction and manufacturing Red seal trades.

And I'll give you a glimpse of that in a moment. They have to be a citizen permanent resident or a person with refugee protection in Canada, and they also have to be legally able to work in the country. So here is the list of the eligible trades. So these are also available on our website in case you need to consult them later.

But you'll see we have welders, insulators, power line technician, construction electrician, industrial electrician, millwrights. So you are definitely more than welcome to to visit our website for additional information if you're not sure if the trait you're looking to hire is covered by this.

Some of our other considerations. Each small or medium enterprise can hire a maximum of two new apprentices per fiscal year, and that's defined as April 1st to March 31st. So really, if you are looking to hire someone in the next couple of months, you're eligible to hire two more people right after April 1st.

We're not able to fund retroactive applications unfortunately. But if you had a pre-apprentice, or someone working as a contractor who then starts an apprenticeship, then they would be eligible. And lastly, I just wanna let you know about some of the additional supports that we provide our professional skills development program which is a training launched by H R C to support participants in the development of skills such as leadership, problem solving, communication, really skills that are essential to career evolution and growth in any career. We distribute this program free of charge to all of our participants, and we also encourage them to use our mentorship platform, mentor Junction.

Lastly, for the employers, we are developing a diversity, equity and inclusion training to hire. Obtain those participants. And we also encouraged employers to use our job board to post their opportunities there. To apply for the funding, we have developed our own platform funding for Futures, which is a one stop shop where you can manage your applications from the moment you submitted to all the way through the claim processing and payment stages all the way to completion.

And again, you can access that at E H R C funding for futures ca or through our main website, eh hrc.ca, and mark back to you for closing.

**Mark Chapeskie:** You threw me there. So I'll just reemphasize. So we need to cri develop a critical supply of talent that's adaptable and we need to do it essentially now. Transition to clean energy must be built upon inclusive policies that strengthen and support skilled and diverse workforce that's going to lead to better collaboration across all of us.

To get there we need to continue to be leaders in such things. Electrification, developing policy that supports labor, mobility and credential recognition and supporting the world class workforce that we know Canada has come to rely on. So in closing again, thank you to Efficiency Canada for having us here today.

Please go ahead and contact us if you think of something after today's discussion that we didn't discuss or that you'd like to ask a question about. Over to you, Alison.

**Allison Mostowich:** Seamless transition, mark. Thank you both so much. I am, I'm blown away. I think by the enormity of the challenge, but also the work that's being done to solve this. So there are a couple questions in the chat right now, but I thought maybe we could start with a few questions that are maybe a little bit more existential.

So I'd love to hear your thoughts on them. We know that this is a huge challenge and we know that this goes beyond the electricity industry as well. We're seeing trades like heating, ventilation, insulation, lots of trades to do with efficiency, having the same problem. So how are you managing that competition right now?

Is that part of the conversation that you're having with your stakeholders?

**Mark Chapeskie:** Competition is one of the biggest things in labor bunker right now. And inside of this industry, one of the interesting things we didn't talk about, but inside of this industry, one of the worst things that they do is they essentially poach from each other. That's the most likely talent pool to draw from. Because they have the most skills. They're the, they have the most tenure. They've demonstrated it within the electricity industry in this role. That has proven a challenge and I think that's a particular challenge today because instead of just an industry that steady state, We're growing.

And so as soon as you, as soon as you start to grow anything, you need to start thinking about new ways of doing things. And I think one of the things I think labor market work right now is particularly interesting is because of this, employers are starting to innovate. They're looking to access labor and talent from areas that they've never previously looked before because they didn't have to.

They had enough people coming with the right skills, the right competency mix. And that's just not the case anymore. I wasn't kidding about earlier when I said that there was a company that was like, go check your neighbors. I don't know where everybody is. Companies are now having to work with their college partners, with their polytechnic partners, with their university partners to come up with programs that respond to their labor market needs because there just aren't enough people.

And that's layered on an issue. It's been simmering under the surface for a long time. So innovation is the name of the name of the game for it to to borrow a catchphrase. But we have to look more innovatively at how we draw people into roles. I also think on the trade side, like the skilled trade side, one of our biggest challenges as a nation is that we view the skilled trades as lesser than.

And the truth of the matter is we call them skilled trades for a reason. They are skilled. They are working with technologies that we simply didn't have 40 years ago. They're doing, there's a reason they have to have their grade 12 math and science in order to enter these programs because they are, they're doing mathematical calculations on the fly.

They have to understand the science of insulation, for example. Determining the R factor and what is up to code. Like all of these things are. There are higher cognition skillsets that we need. And I think this, and it is a very Canadian problem, by the way. It's a very Canadian, a very US problem.

In Europe, they don't have the same issue with regard to viewing trades as lesser than. And and it's boils down to even when we do surveys and I say the collective, we as a society, what's your highest level of education? It's not actually a higher level because again you're tiering the trades as lesser than because you'll start off with you have a doctorate and then you have a graduate degree, and then you have a undergraduate, et cetera.

So I think it again, it goes back to our elementary, middle school, and high school system. And it's not just the teachers, it's not just the guidance counselors, it's the parents right across the board. We need to encourage more people to enter the skilled trades. And I don't know if anybody's had work on their house done recently, but it costs a lot more than it used to and part of the reason, and even if you can get a trades person to pick up the phone because they are so slammed for business. Yeah. It's a big issue competition, as you say, Alison is a big issue. We need to encourage more people regardless of the the trade to go into the trades and to do it from an earlier age.

Because one of the other things that if you start to dig into labor market economics, one of the other interesting things is sometimes people will, go into university, they'll do a degree and then they'll be like, oh, there's no labor market demand for this particular degree or diploma, and then they end up in trade school anyway.

What if we could short circuit that? Not to suggest that a university degree is not necessarily I absolutely think that liberal arts, I'm a liberal arts graduate myself and social sciences are critical and will also be critical to the energy transition because we need people to sell the wig ideas to push the agenda, to change policy.

Like those are all critical as well. But I also think that some people would be better suited in the trades. And the other thing too is trades people make a lot of. They, if we're honest with themselves, like they do very well. If somebody had explained to me back when I was in high school that as a, as an entry level power line technician, for example you can start out as an apprentice in the, like 80,000 a year as an apprentice.

So you're still training basically. So no loans, no student debt and you're making money right off the block. And then by the time you're a journey person that you could. , into the 110, 115, 120,000 a year. Some people might have made different life decisions. But that message is not making it into the education system.

So I know that was a really long winded response to your question, but I think it's an all hands on deck approach and we all need to do our part basically.

**Allison Mostowich:** Yeah, that sort of leads into the next couple questions. So I'm curious to know, when you're talking about the industry and posting competition, how aligned are they?

Because I know you work with a lot of distribution utilities, and I know you've got a big group of stakeholders. How aligned are they on working together to solve some of these issues?

**Mark Chapeskie:** . So because labor market is the language that everybody's speaking right now.

So if you talk to a ceo, what keeps you up at night regardless of the company. It could be like a Bruce Power or a Hydro One, or a, a Hydro Ottawa or an Atco or whatever. Everybody is saying labor market and when everybody starts to say labor market they all start to say, okay, if that's an issue for me and it's an issue for you, then like the poaching has to stop.

Or at least we need to come up with a bigger plan together that solves the problem in the long term because this interim sort of solutions that we're coming up with isn't working. And I'm hearing a lot more about how to work together to solve it than I would have even five years ago. And everybody seems to be singing from the same song book, and now it's just a matter of getting everybody to row in the same sort of policy direction So just be, just because of the sheer magnitude of the problem, I think more people are willing to work together to help solve it. And this industry does. A history of doing that. If you think about natural disaster response and I'm, specifically returning power to households that have lost it.

We've all seen the huge Quebec comp trucks in Ontario come across the border. Even trucks from New York or Maine to support in the event of an ice storm recovery. And there's a long history of collaboration in this industry across international and provincial jurisdictions.

And so that's starting to. From the frontline into other areas of the companies. That's what we're starting to see anyway.

**Allison Mostowich:** And so from the policy perspective what policies are in place right now that are supporting this labor market issue for the electricity industry or even the energy efficiency industry? And then what would you like to see?

**Mark Chapeskie:** I think credit to certainly the federal government or credit is due. I think there's been a lot of effort and funding put into solving some of these problems. Like some of the things that eh, H R C is working on right now is a direct result of federal policy.

So the. Program that Yana was mentioning the it's a bit of a pilot essentially, that the government's running, like they, they know they have an apprenticeship, registration and completion problem. They're hoping that this at least helps to solve the front end of it the registration by creating more labor market demand.

And so that helps to solve that piece of it. And then they know that we have a growth problem and a retirement problem. So how do we get more people in? . You can't be losing people in at the same time, need more people and not have a longer term solution to that. One of the benefits of better labor market intelligence, something that we're also working on with federal funds is that we can help to solve some of those problems too.

The fact that they're working to strengthen the education system to respond to new roles. That's, all of these are good. It's just that it's like the Titanic. We need to turn the ship and it just takes time. And unfortunately we don't have a lot of time, so the hope would be that that we get there.

I'm, I tend to be optimistic. I think we will, I think a lot of people are pulling in the right direction. And I also think that regardless of the government of the day, and I'm not gonna name names by any stretch of the imagination, the economy has already started to shift.

Car manufacturers now are increasingly saying by 20 27, 20 28, 20 29, we will no longer be a manufacturing internal combustion engines. That means regardless of public policy, like federal policy people are gonna be buying EVs. And so because there's no other option. And yes, there'll be a used car market for a while but there will also be more and more EVs on the road, and that is going to increase demand for electricity as well. How do we manage that? . And again the pendulum swinging. Interestingly side note Alberta, I went to tender not that long ago on new generation. And one of the cool things about Alberta is they just ask for the lowest bidder. And so the lowest bid now for a new generation is wind and solar every time.

The gas can't compete. And the other options just can't compete with wind and solar. It's just cheaper to do. It's faster. To, to get through regulatory stuff. And wind and solar winds every time at least currently in Alberta. And I see that trend moving anyway, like in again, internationally, wind and solar.

It just increasingly keeps winning the big contracts. Assuming there hasn't been a stipulation for one generation type over another.

**Allison Mostowich:** That is one of the only things we have going for us in Alberta when it comes to energy efficiency and renewables. I say that in jest! Being from Alberta.

**Mark Chapeskie:** It's moving in the right direction though. I have to tell you. I know that maybe some of the political personalities aren't mentioning it, but there's a lot of work being done in the space by behind the scenes.

**Allison Mostowich:** Okay. So I'm just gonna go to the question box. And I wanted to ask a question about stakeholders anyways.

Can you talk a little bit about funding for affiliates? Do you fund affiliates that can help you provide candidates for the program? Or do you have relationships with organizations that help to provide candidates? Talk a little bit about your stake.

**Mark Chapeskie:** With regard to partners so eh, HRC is a member-based organization, so our members currently are the companies, the unions, and the post-secondary education institutions in Canada that sort of make up this space.

it does make us unique. Not a lot of in associations have all of those three stakeholder groups at the table. And we also have stakeholders from government at the table as well. So policy makers mostly at the federal, federal level. Partners: industry association, so think like the electricity Canada, Canadian Renewable Energy Association, efficiency Canada. And others like them.

We work very closely with them to help get the word out about the work that we're. And of course as far as funding goes most of our programs from a funding perspective are employment specific. Employers would come to us with a, I've got three candidates that I wanna hire in this role. Do you have funding available? And then we determine, using our platform that we've developed which program best aligns with what they're trying to do. So is it a newcomer to Canada, they'd go to welcoming Newcomers. Is it a first year apprentice? They go to Empowering Futures. Is it a worker who has no previous experience working in the electricity industry? We can help you too, using our workers in transition program. All of those are funding opportunities that employers mostly would be able to access in order to bring new talent into their companies.

Hopefully that helps to answer the question.

 So just to reiterate, so the funding for affiliates like our Ontario Sustainable Energy Association, that can help provide... yeah.

Again, we're more on a funding per employee model than we would be for an affiliate model, I would say. But I would be happy to have a conversation with somebody from Ontario Sustainable Energy Association, if that's of interest.

**Allison Mostowich:** Great. And I think we've got time for one more question. There's a lot of interest in the game that you were talking about.

And people are wondering is it available elsewhere for groups that might not be schools? I think it's the map that you were talking about.

**Mark Chapeskie:** Oh, yes. So I honestly, okay, so the map project, I have to tell you of all the projects that we're doing right now, and I'm not supposed to say that I have a favorite, but I do have a favorite!

And it's just because it's so cool. We're literally right now going out across Canada and collecting video stories from Canadians, working in real jobs, whether it's energy efficiency or electricity or renewable energy or whatever. I like some very cool stuff happening in Canada right now.

We've got 75 of those that we're shooting over the course of the next three months. And what we're doing is using those videos on the map. So as you walk across the map, there's a QR code trigger, and you can see whoever it is, whether it's Joe the solar panel installer in Northern Alberta, or the hydro engineer in Northern Quebec or whatever it happens to be.

Talk about their role, what they do in their contribution to getting Canada to a zero carbon future which I think is super cool. And then on top of that, there's all the resources that come. Learning kits curriculum guides, like all those sorts of things that teachers benefit from.

And we've linked them to curriculum in the provinces. So we all know that provinces have an energy, most of them, have an energy curriculum as an element of their teaching. Increasingly now, and in, in Ontario included, there's an occupation specific element to the curriculum that they have to teach on.

So this hits that as well. Our goal, of course, is that sort of grade six to grade eight, because we want to keep them in STEM for as long as possible and to engage them in why they stick to stem. But really these maps can be used much bigger than that. And we have actually we had originally planned to print five.

We're actually gonna print a six and that's gonna be used for us with partners to do things like events and that sort of thing to engage more broadly on the discussion of getting Canada to net zero.