

## News Release

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### **Alberta's economic challenges no threat to engineering technology and applied science profession Technicians and technologists virtually recession-proof**

Despite a softening Alberta economy in the face of low crude oil prices, technology professionals are virtually recession-proof as the demand for their skills continues to grow in a province that depends on them for the public safety and maintenance of all systems and processes – from water to electricity to transportation.

According to NAIT, in 2014 approximately 92 per cent of graduates in programs certified by the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) were employed within a year of graduation.

Salaries within the engineering technology and applied science profession continue to rise, having increased an average of eight per cent since 2011. ASET's 2014 salary survey revealed an average total income salary range between \$60,383 for ASET-certified technicians or technologists in training (T.T./associates) and \$125,806 for ASET-certified professional technologists in engineering, PTech. (Eng.).

The engineering technology and applied science profession is wide and varied, supporting 130 different occupations -- all of which keep the province functioning, and advancing the economy and the cause of public safety. The recent establishment of a new national accreditation model, namely Technology Accreditation Canada (TAC), sets the highest possible standards for the profession and will eventually open up new opportunities for these professionals.

"ASET-certification is essential to accessing numerous well-remunerated career opportunities, and it will be much easier to attain certification here and in other provinces once all technical education programs are TAC-accredited. ASET was integrally involved in pioneering a new accreditation model that sets the highest possible standards for education of the profession. The reason we developed TAC and are working with the colleges and institutions to make the transition to it is that we were dissatisfied with a pre-existing and outmoded accreditation system," said ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh.

For ASET member Sandra Pippus, her designation of certified engineering technologist (CET) translated to a world of abundance in the job market. The SAIT graduate is an industrial engineering technologist who currently works as a project coordinator for Alberta infrastructure on the new build of the Grande Prairie Regional Hospital. She has worked in municipal and government planning for the bulk of her career, focusing effectively on "engineering for business."

"The opportunities I've had in my career have been a direct result of my certified designation getting me in the door, and being able to show what I can do and develop my skills toward what my employer needs. I have not worked in fields that would always be expected as a technologist, and have been able work outside of the box I thought I would end up in, offering me an unexpected and rewarding

career path," said Pippus.

However, she recounts that when she first graduated from SAIT, her program lost its accreditation and she had to take additional courses in order to meet the accreditation standard to be able to assume the CET designation. She welcomes the arrival of TAC as it will greatly reduce, if not eliminate, such potential bumps in the road.

"I don't know about you, but further education with a full-time course as an adult gets harder and harder to contemplate, much less achieve. I shudder to think of having to write a certification exam after having already put in the time for full-time schooling that didn't meet certification requirements," added Pippus.

**What exactly do engineering technology and applied science professionals do?**

Technicians install cable and phone, monitor traffic, work in labs, and do drafting design and construction supervision. Technologists own or manage businesses, manage projects, return well sites properly to nature, and facilitate the development, design, construction, inspection and repair of commercial buildings. They ensure fast-acting telephone networks, smart bus connections, perfectly clean water to drink, reliable natural gas service and electrical power, smooth roads on which to drive, and responsible oil and gas exploration/production/processing/and distribution.

Some professionals work for governments in intelligence agencies while others literally blow things up – designing the charges and managing sophisticated controlled blasts. Many own and/or manage large, successful engineering enterprises, and even work in non-traditional areas such as biomedical and geomatics.

Representing approximately 18,000 technicians and technologists across Alberta, ASET provides its members the certification that top employers demand. ASET members play an integral role in driving the Alberta economy and their innovation is one reason why the province maintains its competitive advantage. ASET members represent a wide range of sectors including avionics, biomedical, chemical, computers, electrical, environmental, geological, instrumentation, oil and gas, and telecommunications. [www.aset.ab.ca](http://www.aset.ab.ca).

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