News Release

For Immediate Release
July 31, 2018

Proposed legislation change to regulate technology profession vital to public safety

Canadian Armed Forces Master Corporal (retired) Tara Chahl was one of the first female infantry soldiers on the front lines of the Kandahar, Afghanistan war zone and knows that adherence to rules, rigour and discipline are the difference between life and death in any operation where public safety is at risk. The same could be said about the applied science and engineering technology profession which is responsible for maintaining public infrastructure and many essential services in Alberta.

Chahl, who now holds a certified engineering technology (CET) designation and works as a project manager on the Alberta oil pipeline, supports the efforts of the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET), one of the founders of Technology Professionals Canada (TPC), to have the Alberta provincial government regulate her profession through amendments to the Engineering and Geoscience Professions Act (EGPA).

In its advocacy for amendments to EGPA and ultimately universal registration and certification of technology professionals, ASET is advancing a national mandate initiated by TPC to formally regulate the profession in the interest of quality assurance. Established in 2010, TPC is an alliance of technology professional associations from four provinces which together represent approximately 85 per cent of the profession in Canada: Alberta; British Columbia; Ontario; and Saskatchewan.

Currently, the applied science and engineering technology profession is the only profession in Alberta lacking mandatory universal registration. All other professions such as chiropractors, physiotherapists, pharmacists and dentists must be registered with, and have their competencies assessed and certified by, their respective professional associations.

What this means is that more than half of the applied science and engineering technology professionals in the province are working without designations or potentially even proper training. No checks and balances are in place to ensure they're certified and competent at their jobs. The fact that a significant proportion of these professionals are engaged in activities that serve and protect public safety make this absence of accountability all the more shocking.

"You wouldn't send soldiers into battle without proper training and their competencies assessed, yet every day this province is allowing half of its technology professionals to perform jobs where public safety is at stake, without certification or other proof that they are capable of doing the job. It's effectively the distinction between bandits and soldiers," said ASET CEO Barry Cavanaugh.

Chahl, who retired from the military in 2008, earned top marks in NAIT's chemical engineering program, and joined ASET in 2011, was fiercely determined to achieve her CET designation.

"Getting my CET designation through ASET was the best thing I could have done for my career. It means not having to prove to anyone that I have the competencies required to do my job which is especially meaningful when you are working in a profession that is still largely male-dominated," said Chahl.

If ASET is successful in achieving the changes to EGPA, all technology professionals in Alberta will be required to register and undergo its rigorous certification program to ensure that only the fully competent, and those who submit to mandatory continuing professional development and liability insurance, and a fulsome code of ethics are admitted to the profession. Other Canadian provinces are likely to follow suit if they haven't done so.

What do engineering technology and applied science technology 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 and 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.

The Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) is the professional organization for engineering technologists and technicians in Alberta. ASET currently represents over 18,000 members, including full-time technology students, recent graduates and fully certified members in 21 disciplines and some 124 occupations across a multitude of industries. **aset.ab.ca**

-30-

Media Contact:
Michele Penz, Calico Communications for ASET
1.778.888.2249 calicocomm@telus.net