

Skills Canada BC
Executive Director's Report – Michelle Skelly

Skills Canada BC Board Meeting - September 16, 2026

The summer months have been productive despite staff vacation schedules, with progress made across administration and financial planning, sponsorship development, operational planning, inventory management, communications, preparations for the upcoming competition season amongst many other tasks.

Financial Administration and Competition Year-End Activities:

Over the summer we continued to finalize outstanding operational items from the previous competition cycle including contractor invoices, Tradex reconciliation, food and beverage reconciliation, school subsidy payments, national competition reimbursements and sponsorship reporting requirements in addition to other various year-end administrative tasks.

I met with our contact/representative at the Royal Bank with regards to the GIC renewal and options. This will be further discussed in the Finance Committee portion of this meeting.

In August, Mona and I began work on budgeting and financial planning for the upcoming fiscal year which will be further discussed in the Finance Committee reporting and Treasurer's report.

Mona and I collaborated with the Skills Canada Finance department regarding the five-year agreement they are completing with ESDC, the Federal Government. The agreement will commence October 1, 2026. Further details can also be provided in the Finance Committee discussion.

Sponsorship and Partnership Development:

One key focus over the summer has been working on existing and new partnerships in addition to working on the sponsorship guides and charts for 2027.

I met with Maureen Phung from Skilled TradesBC (STBC). We have now successfully secured \$150,000 in sponsorship funding for the current year. The contract is now complete and signed. Discussions also indicated that while funding will remain consistent this year, there may be opportunities for increased support in future years. I will be following up with Skilled Trades BC with regards to this.

Work was completed on sponsorship reporting and stewardship. Reports and supporting data were prepared for CN, WorkSafeBC, and Coast Capital summarizing sponsorship outcomes from the previous year. These reports are required to support continued participation and sponsorship opportunities through the Benevity platform for 2027.

I prepared two proposals for Coast Capital and CN. Coast Capital has confirmed sponsorship for \$15,000 for 2027 and CN has committed \$25,000. Contracts and deliverables and invoicing are being finalized at this time.

Mike Ford and I met with Home Hardware in July regarding the Phase Two rollout of their sponsorship program. Skills Canada National and Skills Ontario participated in Phase One, and we discussed opportunities for Home Hardware to become either a title sponsor or signature sponsor. Mike prepared a sponsorship proposal which has been prepared and submitted for their review, and we are awaiting their response.

In addition, Mike and I met with representatives of Air Canada during Nationals and discussions continued in July. A sponsorship proposal has also been prepared to Air Canada. They are currently also supporting Nationals.

Mike and I have continued work on the Skills Canada BC Sponsorship Guide which will be distributed to the Board, and which can be distributed to any potential leads or contacts.

To support ongoing sponsorship activities, the Master Sponsorship Working Chart is an ongoing shared document.

We have also thoroughly reviewed and edited the jotform registration which is completed by confirmed sponsors providing a more seamless process for gathering information such as contact information, logos, invoicing details etc.

Operational Planning and Administration:

Efforts this summer was also devoted to reviewing and improving internal processes.

I worked with Mona Soleimani to review, update, and streamline a variety of organizational forms and administrative procedures. This included: Regional, Provincials and Nationals competition expense reimbursement forms, staff expense forms, Board expense forms and other documents.

Mona and I also collaborated on the preparation and submission of the Quarterly Report for Skills Canada, which was due on July 15.

To improve organizational efficiency and provide greater flexibility for Regional Coordinators, we upgraded our registration platform to Jotform Enterprise. The Canadian-based platform is expected to reduce administrative workload and allow designated Regional Coordinators to access and manage their own registration data. This initiative will be piloted this year in two regional areas.

The staff and I collaborated on the surveys and registration to further streamline the fields and reporting system.

Additionally, we prepared and updated internal planning documents including staff task lists, timelines and deadlines.

A historical data-sharing document was also created to provide year-over-year comparisons and support future planning and reporting.

Inventory and Storage Management:

Inventory management was another area of focus the staff and I worked on this summer.

In June, staff met at the Andrews farm in Abbotsford to conduct an inventory review. Mike is planning on working with Myles Andrew to develop a more efficient process for organizing, categorizing, loading, and unloading equipment, particularly in preparation for Provincial competitions.

Shoshawna Blair and I toured a storage facility in Abbotsford and explored the relocation of our current storage operations from Langley. We have moved the location to Abbotsford which will provide several advantages, including, reduced storage costs, proximity to Tradex, improved accessibility for staff, greater operational efficiency during event setup and teardown and the location is halfway between Shoshawna and I.

National and International Activities:

In June, I attended the Skills Canada Operations Meetings in Ottawa, where member organizations met to discuss operational priorities, national initiatives, and future collaboration opportunities.

We already into the planning stages for Nationals 2028. The hotel list has been provided for Nationals in 2028 in Quebec City by Skills Canada, so we are working to secure our team hotel with the anticipated contract to be provided soon.

National Competition banners have been delivered to us, and Shoshawna Blair is coordinating distribution of both the banners and National Competition certificates. We've been delivering the banners locally to some secondary and post-secondary schools.

Preparations have been ongoing for WorldSkills, including administration, invoicing of BC delegates, participant communications, payment coordination, practice schedules, and travel preparation.

Mike and I, along with representatives from other member organizations, will be supporting the Skills Canada booth and assisting with photography and various operational duties to help alleviate pressure on Skills Canada staff during the event.

In July I visited LaSalle College where Dhefen Goh, our Fashion Technology World Skills competitor is training. I met with the trainer, expert and Dhefen and took photos for highlighting Dhefen's journey on social media and our newsletter.

Shoshawna and I also met with the other two World Skills competitors Eric Wu, Automation and Control and Veljko Stevanovic, IT Network Systems Administration at BCIT in August and their experts and trainers in order to ensure things are on track with them and to showcase their journey. I also met with Marita Luk, Business Development Manager, at BCIT, who will also further promote the competitors and their journey.

Provincial Competition Planning:

Planning for the 2027 Provincial Skills Competition has continued throughout the summer.

Multiple meetings were also held with Tradex, our Provincial Competition venue. Contract discussions are ongoing, and while some cost increases are anticipated, we successfully negotiated the removal of charges for outdoor space usage, resulting in savings of approximately \$5,000 which should balance out some of the costs.

Shoshawna and I met with representatives from the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) regarding student housing and accommodation options for Provincials. Discussions focused on identifying new and expanded housing opportunities to better support participants.

Website updates continue to be made to support competition planning, including the addition and refinement of competition-specific information.

New competition signage for Provincial events is also currently being designed and produced.

In collaboration with other provinces, we are looking at potentially running Cloud Computing and possibly Cybersecurity for 2027. Preliminary meetings will be held in the fall with regards to this.

It was determined after meetings and discussions with the Provincial Technical Chair and Committee that the Welding competition will remain status quo for this year. Mike Ford has provided an update with regards to the reasoning behind this.

Regionals Competition Planning:

The team met with College of New Caledonia with regards to the Regionals competitions in the Central Interior. College of New Caledonia is keen on hosting competitions again (since pre-covid), so we are working to support their team with this.

I will be meeting with the Dean for School of Technologies, Applies Arts & Trades, Mark Pollard as well in October to review potential Regional sponsorship opportunities, particularly some key contacts Mark has in the mining industry.

I collaborated with Sandra Wrigley, Northwest Lower Mainland Regional Coordinator to review her continuation as a Regional Coordinator for the upcoming competition season which she has agreed to continue.

Shoshawna Blair will continue as Regional Coordinator for Central Lower Mainland though we have been actively seeking someone to fill this role.

In addition, we are working to fill a new Regional Coordinator position for the Kootenays due to the Regional Coordinator/teacher moving away.

Programs:

Skills Canada BC partnered once again with UFV to deliver the Summer Baking Camp program.

Following the camp, Shoshawna and I met with Michelle Morier at UFV to review outcomes, conduct a debrief, and discuss opportunities for continuing and expanding the program in Summer 2027.

Mike Ford visited Terrace in June, including contacts at Coast Mountain College and attended a career event regarding opportunities to align with our strategic plan objective of being involved in an event outside of the Lower Mainland.

Additionally, I had discussions were held with Terri Sedgewick regarding a potential Indigenous presentation opportunity with the Tsleil-Waututh Nation in North Vancouver as part of the MEND program.

I met with Ben Haber, previous Inspire contractor this summer as well to review the Inspire program on the island. I reached out to the existing sponsors and Construction Foundation of BC has agreed to sponsor \$5,000 for this. We are still working on the scenarios for this.

We will also be running some presentations in September in collaboration with Enbridge in Merritt, Williams Lake and Kamloops as part of the 2026 partnership deliverables.

Further presentations, conferences and careers fairs are being evaluated and secured for the fall including the CES Conference (Career Educator Society) and BCTEA (BC Technology Education Association) Conference.

Next Hands Program:

A review of the Hands-On Tools program inventory was also completed, and equipment that is no longer relevant is being assessed for donation opportunities.

Through our Next Hands Skilled Futures program, Skills Canada BC donated 12 sets of MAXIMUM cordless tools to Fusion Rise in support of its Trades Explorer Program on Vancouver Island. Valued at approximately \$8,000, the donation includes drills, drivers and circular saws that will be put to use almost immediately in Fusion Rise's fall programming. The tools will remain with the organization as part of its permanent program infrastructure, allowing them to support hands-on trades exploration for many groups of youth in the years ahead. Creating this kind of lasting community capacity is precisely why the Next Hands Skilled Futures program exists.

<https://fusionrisegroup.com/>

Marketing and Communications:

A new promotional video has been released and is now available for use across our communication channels. The video has already been shared through social media platforms and will continue to support awareness and outreach efforts.

Click here for Provincials Promotional Video:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DYFUyY7GdPE/?igsh=YWt0amc4aW85Mmlj>

Mike and I have been working in collaboration with Gloo Studios on the development of a new broadcast commercial. Existing footage will be incorporated where appropriate from the Skills Canada video, while a new component is being developed specifically to target parents and teachers as the primary audience in BC.

Communications activities have also included ongoing website updates, competition information enhancements, and digital content development.

Shoshawna has also continued development of podcast and related communications initiatives to support stakeholder engagement and promotion of skilled trades careers.

Newsletter eblasts and social media has included World Skills competitor coverage, save the date for Provincials among other content.

Board Committees:

Continued committee involvement with the Board. These Committees will provide updates on the status and follow up details including Executive, Finance, Business Development, Governance and the Sub-Committees of Governance including Board Composition and Risk Registry.

Continued meetings with Dennis Innes, Board President for updates and cheque signing are ongoing.

Thanks to all the Board for your support!