

# Powerline Technician program continues to flourish at Cambrian College



The Powerline Technician program at Cambrian College in Sudbury is so popular that the waiting list keeps growing. With the September and January intakes being swamped by applications, the College is considering the addition of a third session beginning in May 2012.

This trade is a very specialized one, requiring a high level of skills, experience, and training. Powerline technicians work on the construction and maintenance of high-voltage transmission and distribution systems, both overhead and underground. They must be prepared for a variety of workplaces—from busy city streets to remote locations far from any road.

The Powerline Technician program is the outcome of a partnership between Cambrian and IHSA. The program was set up to help companies meet the growing need for powerline technicians in Ontario, create a more knowledgeable apprentice, and help support the apprenticeship system.

Research has shown that in the coming years, the demand for powerline technicians will continue to grow. According to a 2004 study by the Canadian Electricity Association (CEA) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), “over 17 per cent of the 75,000 existing workforce will be eligible for retirement by 2014. Based on retirement estimates, the sector will need 9,000 people in technical positions in the next five years and more than 17,000 over 10 years.”

The four-semester (two-year) program at Cambrian gives students a solid foundation in both the theoretical and the practical knowledge of electricity transmission and distribution. The school boasts an outdoor yard, outfitted with equipment and tools, where students can practice their hands-on skills safely.

The program is taught both by College instructors and prevention specialty consultants provided by IHSA. These specialists concentrate on proper procedures so that when the apprentices enter their co-op placements and eventually move on to permanent jobs, they have a solid background in the safe work methods needed in this trade.

In addition to their school work, students must complete two co-op placements with a company or utility. With a college diploma, as well as an apprenticeship, these students begin their careers with a broad spectrum of hands-on skills and theoretical knowledge.

For employers, hiring a student on a co-op placement is an excellent way of taking a look at potential employees. Another advantage is that once an apprentice has finished the post-secondary program at Cambrian and done two co-op placements, he or she will have completed two of the four levels of the in-school part of the MTCU Powerline Technician Apprenticeship training and won't have to take time off work to go to trade school for those two levels.

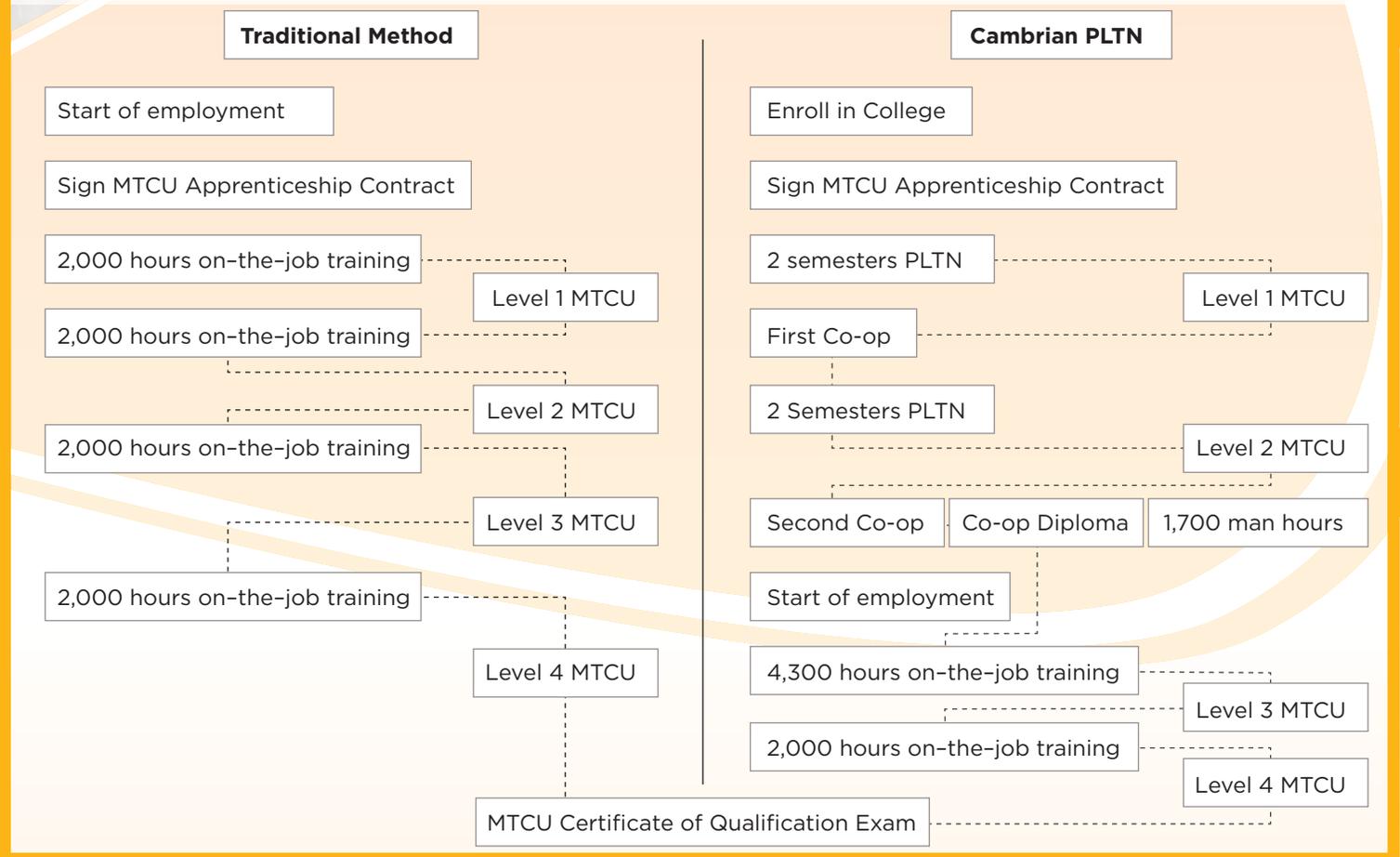
The employers will continue with on-the-job training until these new employees have enough man-hours to achieve the milestones in their apprenticeship contract for the third year. As Cambrian students this past year were taking their MTCU Level Three training at the IHSA facility in Mississauga, it became evident that their practical skills were equal to those acquired by the traditional method of training. (See chart on next page.)

So far, the program has been successful in creating more knowledgeable powerline technicians, which is reflected in the industry acceptance of the graduates. It continues to be an extremely popular program and, judging by the long waiting lists, shows no signs of slowing down.

**IHSA** also gives a special spring-break session where the Cambrian students can take extra training in various areas, such as first aid, that will make them more competent and more valuable to their potential employers.



# Apprenticeship Training – Traditional Method vs. Cambrian



## IHSA introduces **COR™** program for Ontario construction contractors

IHSA is proud to present to its membership the Certificate of Recognition program (**COR™**) for Ontario.

**COR™** is a volunteer occupational health and safety audit program. It provides construction industry employers with an effective health and safety management system (HSMS) for reducing the human and financial costs of workplace incidents, injuries, and illnesses. It is currently being used across Canada and is supported by the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations (CFCSA). **COR™** is often required for contracts with both public- and private-sector construction projects.

**COR™** illustrates that the employer's HSMS has been evaluated on an annual basis through comprehensive internal and external audits. The audit criteria are recognized by construction industries throughout Canada. Effective development and maintenance of an HSMS is a proactive approach to eliminating workplace injuries and illnesses. If a situation arises where you have to demonstrate that you have an active HSMS, participation in **COR™** would be an asset.

To register for the program or find more information, visit our website, or contact Carlos Figueira at [cfigueira@ihsa.ca](mailto:cfigueira@ihsa.ca) or 1-800-263-5024, ext. 8524.