

# A hometown inspiration

## FOR WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES



Ashley Weber competing in car painting at the Skills Canada National

According to the 10th annual global study conducted in 2015 by the ManpowerGroup, skilled trade positions are the jobs employers have the greatest difficulty filling ahead of such professions as doctors, nurses, and teachers. Here in Canada, a study conducted in March 2016 by the Business Council of Canada via a poll of 90 leading Canadian employers showed that after leadership/management, skilled trades workers were the second highest “persistent shortage” (43 per cent trending to 48 per cent) followed by IT, then engineering and construction. Many young women have yet to explore these rewarding careers as there continues to be a small percentage of women who work in the trades. According to a recent report, the proportion of women who make up the skilled trade workforce in Canada remains at approximately four to five per cent (source: WomenBuildingFutures.com).

Ashley Weber is one of the growing number of young women who is successfully bucking this trend by pursuing a career in car painting.

“I have been interested in working with cars since a very young age,” Weber says during an interview with Skills/Compétences Canada. “In high school, I decided to take a course in auto body as my elective and I had the opportunity to try car painting. From the first time that I held a spray paint gun, I knew that I wanted to be a car painter. When the opportunity presented itself to compete at a Skills Competition, I decided to give it a try.”

She did a lot more than try. After winning at the provincial level in Manitoba, she went on to win gold at the 2016 Skills Canada National Competition in Moncton, New Brunswick. Upon successfully completing her WorldSkills Canadian Trials in mid-January 2017, she is now a member of WorldSkills Team Canada 2017.

Team Canada will be competing at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 from October 14 to 19 where they will have a chance to become world champions in a variety of different trades. Follow their journey at [www.skillscanada.com](http://www.skillscanada.com).

Weber is looking forward to inspiring other young women to pursue a non-traditional career in the trades. “It means a lot to me to be able to show others what I am capable of and to act as a role model for young women. I am proud and honoured to have the opportunity to compete at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 and to represent my country,” says Weber.

As part of her training, Weber will be attending the 2017 Skills Canada National Competition (SCNC) from May 31 to June 3 at the RBC Convention Centre Winnipeg.

The competition site is open to the public and admission is free. Skills/Compétences Canada could not successfully host this event without the support of its many partners including Manitoba Building Trades who will be on site to meet the expected 7,500 student visitors. Their organization supports apprentices in Manitoba’s skilled trade and construction industry.

We hope to see you there to help support these young competitors. For more information about Weber, WorldSkills Team Canada 2017, SCNC Winnipeg 2017, and WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017, visit [skillscanada.com](http://skillscanada.com). ♦