



BACKGROUND: *FutureWorks PEI*

Overview

On May 25th, Holland College announced *FutureWorks PEI*, a new, multi-year initiative to address key workforce productivity challenges facing Prince Edward Island. Supported by a monumental \$15 million philanthropic gift from the Weston family, the initiative will strengthen skills training, applied research, and industry collaboration in sectors critical to PEI's economic future.

The context

Prince Edward Island is facing a convergence of economic pressures:

- Critical labour shortages in construction, bioscience, digital/technical services, and manufacturing, with projected gaps exceeding 6,000 skilled workers by 2035 (*Source: Stiletto Consulting, Labour Market Assessment, December 2025*)
- Productivity constraints for SMEs, which make up 98% of PEI businesses and often lack access to R&D capacity and digital adoption supports (*Source: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. Key Small Business Statistics 2023. Government of Canada, 2023, <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/sme-research-statistics/en/key-small-business-statistics/key-small-business-statistics-2023>*)
- Demographic pressures, including an aging population and declining workforce participation, affecting PEI's ability to meet housing, infrastructure, economic growth, and climate targets (*Source: Stiletto Consulting, Labour Market Assessment, December 2025*).

Our new initiative: *FutureWorks PEI*

In direct response to current labour market needs and economic priorities, *FutureWorks PEI* will include the expansion of three core areas at Holland College:

1. Trades Centre Expansion

Will help to address PEI's largest workforce gap by:

- Strengthening core construction trades training
- Adding new purpose-built trades training facilities at the Summerside Waterfront Campus
- Providing upskilling and reskilling for Red Seal and sustainable construction trades
- Introducing short, industry-aligned micro-credentials

- Integrating applied research to support innovation in construction methods and materials

2. Applied Biotechnology Research Centre Expansion

Will drive innovation and growth through:

- Expanded and modernized R&D laboratories
- New research chairs, student fellowships, and funds to support research and innovation
- Entrepreneurial training and incubation support for SMEs
- Hands-on applied research experience for students

3. Business Analytics, AI & Cybersecurity Expansion

Will help to build PEI's digital talent pipeline by:

- Adding a new post-secondary cybersecurity program
- Expanding AI and data analytics research capacity
- Providing expertise and specialized equipment to lower barriers for SME digital innovation

As a result, *FutureWorks PEI* will:

- Build a strong talent pipeline in construction, bioscience, and digital/tech sectors
- Improve SME productivity and competitiveness
- Support PEI's housing, infrastructure, bioscience, and digital modernization needs
- Strengthen connections between education, applied research, and industry

Why Holland College

Holland College is uniquely positioned to lead *FutureWorks PEI* given it is:

- PEI's leading workforce and economic development institution, reaching approximately 12,000 learners annually (2,300 full-time post-secondary students and 9,000+ learners in community, adult, and continuing education)
- A recognized leader in applied research, ranked 12th nationally among Canada's Top 50 Research Colleges
- A long-standing partner to local business and industries, ensuring that programs and research are industry-led, responsive, and rapidly adopted