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October 26, 2005

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Attention News, Business and Technology Editors:

New on-line tool builds workforce skills

CALGARY, Oct. 5 /CNW Telbec/ - Canadian employers can better assess the skills of their workers using a new on-line tool launched today by The Conference Board of Canada.

The Skills Credentialing Tool (SCT), available at www.SkillsSolutionsnet.com, has the potential to increase workers' productivity, improve safety on the job and help employers recruit people more effectively.

The tool also helps motivate workers to continuously develop their skills. When employees demonstrate essential employability skills and attitudes in the workplace, employers can award skills credentials, which employees are able to use for career advancement.

"The Skills Credentialing Tool is part of the solution to Canada's human capital challenges," said Kurtis Kitagawa, whose research spurred the development of the tool. "As we developed the tool with hundreds of employers over the past two years, we found that employers are looking for the same essential skills and attitudes in their workforce, no matter the industry or the job level of employees."

The Conference Board developed the Skills Credentialing Tool with support and expertise from its major partner, Calgary-based Axia NetMedia Corporation. SCT uses a customized version of NOW.net, Axia's internationally-recognized software platform for advanced human resource tools.

Several partners contributed their expertise to the SCT. These include:

- Bow Valley College - its Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) is available for users to record their official reading text, document use

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and numeracy scores within the SCT system.

- OneSmartWorld - elements of its coaching system are embedded in the tool to help individuals deploy thinking and problem-solving strategies that improve their skills and work performance.
- WCG International HR Solutions - components of WCG's YourCareerWave.com help employees, students and job seekers focus on developing their employability attitudes for career success.

The Skills Credentialing Tool is being launched today at a meeting of the Conference Board's Skills Solutions Forum, held at Axia NetMedia Corporation, 3300 450 1st Street SW, Calgary.

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