

Kerrilee **KINDER**

Journeyman Electrician



Kerrilee is a journeyman electrician at SaskPower's transmission and distribution centre in Meadow Lake. **It's a world away from her first career as a cosmetologist. Here's how she DIYed her second career.**

What was your 1st career?

I wanted to be in the automotive trade, but I chose to be a cosmetologist because I was fearful to be a young woman in a male-dominated trade. At the time, those were the only two trades offered. Since a trade was more affordable, I chose beauty culture.

Did you like cosmetology?

Don't get me wrong, I liked being a cosmetologist. When I had children, I opened a little in-home salon so I could earn a little money but still be at home.

Why switch careers?

I made a decent amount of money but not enough to raise my children. When I became a single parent, I knew I needed a career that paid more. I got a job in Saskatchewan's oil patch. That's where I met someone doing electrical work, which got me interested in the electrical trade.

How did you start?

I found someone who took me on as an apprentice. When I had worked enough hours, I did two months of school to get to the next level. The class work

didn't come naturally, I had to study and study. After four years of work hours and classroom study, I got my journeyman certificate in 2016.

Is it hard being in a male-dominated trade?

The guys I work with are great, but I've had times when the stereotypes kicked in. I expected it. I learned to use humour and to be a peacemaker but also to stand up for myself. You need a strong personality to be a female in a male-dominated trade. And I proved myself by having a good attitude, a good work ethic and paying my dues.

Best part of your job?

Working with amazing people. I like that every day is different. I'm outside and inside, doing maintenance and monitoring of transmission stations, working on transformers and DC batteries, protection and control, switching, bonding and grounding. I like that we're always learning through different courses and on-the-job training. That's what makes a good electrician.

Hardest part?

When there's a power outage. We feel a lot of pressure to get the power back on as quickly as possible. It can be stressful, but there's also a lot of satisfaction when we get everything back up and the lights on.

Best job tip?

Learn to ask questions. It's important to be willing to say, 'I don't know how to do this.' You have to actively ask questions to get the information you need.

Any career advice?

Don't get so focused on your career that you miss out on life. You only get this one life, so make sure you're living it.

Would you change anything?

You know, if I knew in high school how many skilled trades there actually were, I could have been so many other things. But when you're young, you don't know what you don't know. I wish that information had been more available, or that I'd known where to look for it.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

I'm happy where I am right now, but at some point, I can see myself exploring Canada and the U.S. on my motorbike. Did I mention I have a Harley?

7 STEPS TO APPRENTICESHIP

1. Find an employer willing to provide the necessary on-the-job training and supervision.
2. Sign an apprenticeship contract with the employer and register it with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Trade and Certification Commission (SATCC). saskapprenticeship.ca
3. Work and learn on the job for the required period of time.
4. Submit your hours of work (trade time) to the SATCC every few months.
5. When notified by the SATCC, attend technical training for the required number of weeks each year.
6. Pass your technical training.
7. Pass your certification exams to earn a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship and a Journeyman Certificate of Qualification.