

## Chartered accountants in demand

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Steps are being taken to address the current strong demand for chartered accountants (CAs) in the province.

"The demand is huge and I don't think it's going to go anywhere but up," said Rod Barr of Deloitte and Touche, the past chairperson of the Institute of chartered accountants of Ontario and a former Sarnian.

Barr and the organization's CEO, Brian Hunt, were in Sarnia Tuesday meeting with local accountants. They are currently visiting all district associations in the province to discuss issues around the education and licensing of public accountants in Ontario.

The industry did a demographic study and found that the supply of new CAs had flattened out, said Barr. But in the late 1990s and early this decade, the demand for CAs was growing again, in part because of greater need in the private sector for knowledgeable accounting people.

Combined with the pending retirement of a large number of CAs, the the supply and demand situation was getting out of balance, said Barr. The industry was projecting profession wide "zero growth," he said.

So steps are being taken to broaden the education and development opportunities for new CAs.

Traditionally, that development had all taken place at accounting firms, he said. Now they are working with other partners, including corporations and government departments, to educate new CAs.

An education system is being developed with the same subject matter, the same mentoring system and the same qualification standards, but working with new partners, said Barr. It will provide greater opportunities for qualifying university graduates to pursue the CA designation.

This system is being built across the country, not just in Ontario, he said.

It has so far heightened the level of interest among university students in becoming a CA, he said, and they are looking for perhaps a 10 per cent increase in the number of people going through to become CAs.

The CA designation provides a person with an opportunity to see a number of different companies from the inside, an opportunity they don't get anywhere else, said Barr.

More information about the profession and becoming a CA is available on the Institute of chartered accountants of Ontario website at [www.icao.on.ca](http://www.icao.on.ca).