



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services

PARTNERSHIP INCREASES JOBS FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

VICTORIA – An innovative partnership between the provincial government, the BC Construction Association (BCCA) and aboriginal organizations will increase job opportunities for aboriginal people in B.C.'s booming construction industry, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Murray Coell announced today.

As part of the partnership, the BCCA will identify future job opportunities in construction so aboriginal organizations can better match training programs to upcoming employment trends in the sector.

“B.C.'s construction industry is booming and we want to ensure aboriginal people share equally in new job opportunities in this field,” said Coell. “Through the Aboriginal Employment Partnership Initiative, we are assisting employers to address long-term employment needs while also providing aboriginal job seekers with better information about job opportunities to come.”

“This partnership is about helping to reduce the barriers of access that often prevent aboriginal people from participating in the economic mainstream,” said Geoff Plant, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations. “This and other economic development projects with aboriginals - in forestry, mining, tourism and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games - show that government is working to materially improve the lives of aboriginal people across British Columbia.”

The Aboriginal Employment Partnership Initiative is designed to better match and coordinate job training and skills programs with areas of greatest job opportunity in B.C. The provincial government has provided \$600,000 over the last two years through the Economic Development Fund to implement AEPI. To date, seven similar agreements have been reached with the Vancouver Police Department, Duke Energy Gas Transmission West, RBC Royal Bank, London Drugs, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, Royal Roads University and the City of Dawson Creek.

“The construction industry is concerned about the potential for skills shortages in the coming years. Since the majority of the aboriginal population is young, it provides us with a wonderful opportunity to access a yet untapped pool of talent,” said Manley McLachlan, President of the BCCA. “We look forward to working with the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, and the aboriginal leaders of this province, so more aboriginal people can access the recognize the incredible career prospects available in our industry.”

The program is administered and delivered by the Métis Provincial Council of B.C. in partnership with the provincial government, and benefits all aboriginal people including those living on and off-reserve and in urban areas.

“I appreciate the efforts of the BCCA in being the first organization in the construction industry to recognize the need for developing solid relationships with the aboriginal community,” said Harley Desjarlais, president, Métis Provincial Council of B.C. “We’re committed to implementing all employment opportunities resulting from this partnership.”

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