

For Immediate Release
2010ALMD0015-000450
April 23, 2010

Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market
Development

ABORIGINAL SKILLS PROGRAM BUILDS COMMUNITIES

VANCOUVER – The Province is investing almost \$4 million in a new program to help build skills and training for over 600 Aboriginal people in communities across B.C., creating opportunities for participants to practice their new skills and gain work experience, Minister Moira Stilwell announced today.

“Tapping into the labour market potential for B.C.’s Aboriginal people is vital to meet our province’s future needs for skilled workers,” said Stilwell. “This is another example of how government, the Aboriginal community and the private sector can collaborate, creating new opportunities in skilled, well-paying jobs.”

The Aboriginal Training for Employment Program (ATEP) will deliver job-related training in essential skills and introductory trades training, coupled with mentoring, coaching and other retention tools through public, private and Aboriginal-controlled training organizations around the province. Seventeen Aboriginal organizations have partnered with industry education and training providers to deliver services in over 60 communities.

“As demand for skilled labour increases and the average age of our population continues to rise, Aboriginal communities, with their young and vibrant populations will become even more important to the workforce of the future,” said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. “Through the Canada-B.C. labour market agreement, we’re investing in the skills needed for the future success of our economy.”

Once participants successfully complete their training, the ATEP program will directly lead to employment in business and industry, as well as First Nations economic development and self-governance projects of varying size throughout B.C.

“Through the ATEP program, we’re working with our partners in First Nations and Métis communities to create lasting opportunities through skills training,” said Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation George Abbott. “Participants will not only gain valuable skills for employment, but in many cases will be able to immediately use their new abilities on projects within and for the benefit of their own communities while building experience.”

“The Yekooche First Nation is a small, semi-remote community, and we are working hard to find more educational and employment opportunities for our people living on the reserve,” said Chief Partner Schielke. “This program enables us to train and hire up to 10 trainees, building skills and capacity for our members through work in the community.”

The B.C. government – working with academic, industry and other partners – is enabling British Columbians to gain the skills needed to successfully participate in our provincial labour market, and respond positively to changing workplace demands.

Under the LMA, the Government of Canada is providing the Province with approximately \$66 million annually until 2013-14. Through a variety of programs, these funds will support training for employed individuals who are low-skilled and require essential skills, or require recognized credentials to reach their full potential in the current marketplace. They will also help increase access to training for unemployed individuals who are not currently Employment Insurance clients, including but not limited to those who are under-represented in the labour market.

For more information about B.C.'s labour market initiatives, please visit www.workbc.ca.

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A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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SKILLS TRAINING FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development's Aboriginal Training for Employment Program will be delivered in these areas in cooperation with the organizations indicated:

Fraser Valley	Métis Provincial Council of British Columbia
Interior	BC First Nations Forestry Council
	Xeni Gwet'in First Nations Government
	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council Society
Northern	Prince George Native Friendship Centre
	Tse Keh Nay Consortium
	Yekooche First Nation
	Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Society
Vancouver Coastal	Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS)
	Musqueam Indian Band
	Tla'amin Community Health Board Society
	Tsleil-Waututh Nation
	NEC Native Education College
Vancouver Island	KUU-US Crisis Line Society
	North Vancouver Island Aboriginal Training Society
	Port Alberni Friendship Centre
	Victoria Native Friendship Centre

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