



Nisichawayasihk CREE NATION

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Construction Begins on \$8.1 Million Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence in Nelson House

NELSON HOUSE, Manitoba – August 18, 2004– Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and its partners in the Atoskiwin Training and Employment Centre of Excellence (ATEC) today mark the beginning of construction of the non-profit, community-based, fully-accredited, post-secondary training facility at Nelson House, with an official sod turning ceremony.

“Jobs and training initiatives have been central to our discussions with Manitoba Hydro as part of our negotiations for our participation in the Wuskwatim project,” said NCN Chief Jerry Primrose.

“We realize for our members to have meaningful participation in that project and other northern development projects, we need to acquire the training, skills and experience necessary for employment.”

Construction of the \$8.1 million ATEC facility is expected to take 10 months to complete and will open as soon as it is ready to accept students, next summer. It will be an energy efficient building, constructed with quality materials to respect the intent of the facility as a cornerstone for future development. It is being built to last.

The facility will be around 28,000 square feet and include the ATEC campus, dormitory, day care centre and an internet café.

“The planning for this centre includes the potential for expansion to accommodate the future demands of our fast growing community,” said NCN Councillor and Future Development Portfolio holder W. Elvis Thomas.

“The operations of the centre will focus on hydro development in the immediate future, with the scope of its activities expanding into other areas in the future. The new facility is conveniently located on NCN’s reserve to make it accessible for NCN members and residents of other First Nations in nearby communities,” Thomas said.

“ATEC will provide First Nations people with the entrepreneurial and trades skills needed to take full advantage of opportunities created by extensive hydro development and other projects that will be taking place in northern Manitoba over the next 20 years.

“The project will create job-training opportunities for NCN Members. Around \$500,000 will flow into the local economy, benefiting business and creating employment for Members during construction. There will be training opportunities in the areas of concrete, framing, welding, electrical, drywall, and mechanical, such as h-vac and plumbing, for

example,” he said.

The federal government committed \$3.26 million towards the project, with additional funding for training provided by Manitoba Hydro and the provincial government, (including Indian Affairs, Northern Development, Western Economic Diversification and Human Resources and Development). The province also brought forward the construction date of the access road to Nelson House to provide earlier on-the-job-training and work experience for NCN Members.

A TEC director, Ezra Bogle, who took up his position in early 2003, has put the program infrastructure in place and many people have already completed training. A TEC offered training to 166 NCN and South Indian Lake residents in the year ended March 31, 2004. About 90 NCN and South Indian Lake residents successfully completed various levels of training in designated and non-designated trades and construction support.

Their skills have already been put to good use. For example, the PR-260 access road to Nelson House was completed ahead of schedule using NCN and South Indian Lake heavy equipment operator trainees under the Work Experience Program.

Once complete, the facility will employ around 20 fulltime staff, and is likely to create some spin-off support jobs in the wider community.

Winnipeg-based, Parkwest Projects Ltd. will construct the facility, which has been architecturally designed by Winnipeg-based Gaboury, Prefontaine, Perry Architects.

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is based in Nelson House, Manitoba, about 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg and 80 kilometres west of Thompson. NCN has close to 5,000 members living in Nelson House, South Indian Lake, Thompson, Brandon and Winnipeg. More than 60 percent of its members are between 13 and 30 years of age.

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