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BC Hydro Investing \$100,000 to Support Aboriginal Trades Training

FORT ST. JOHN – Aboriginal people in northeast British Columbia will benefit from \$100,000 in funding from BC Hydro in support of trades training programs.

BC Hydro will provide the funding over two years to the North East Native Advancing Society to support trades training under its North East Aboriginal Trades Training (NEATT) program.

The NEATT program emphasizes pre-college preparation, trade careers exploration, personal development, as well as workplace essential literacy and numeracy skill-building. Many of the participants in the NEATT program experience multiple barriers to becoming trained in the trades. The goal of the program is to prepare Aboriginal people for their transition into existing trades foundation courses and apprenticeship programs offered at Northern Lights College and at other training centres in B.C.

This funding for the society is in addition to the \$1-million announced in September for Northern Lights College Foundation to provide bursaries for students pursuing trades and skills training. BC Hydro is providing trades funding in recognition of the importance of skilled workers in British Columbia, particularly in the northeast. For example, the proposed Site C Clean Energy Project (Site C), if approved, would require more than 7,000 direct jobs over the estimated seven-year construction period.

Quotes:**Hon. Rich Coleman, Minister of Energy, Mines and Natural Gas**

“Through the BC Jobs Plan, our government is committed to enhancing skills and training opportunities for Aboriginal people. This funding will help ensure Aboriginal people in the northeast get the training they need to access good, well-paying jobs in a region of the province where the demand for skilled labour is high.”

Pat Pimm, MLA, Peace River North

“It is very important for people to be able to access training that gives them the skills that are in demand in our industries, and here in our region, trades are in high demand. This program will support Aboriginal people in transitioning into trades training courses and obtaining those skills.”

Susan Yurkovich, Executive Vice-President, Site C Clean Energy Project, BC Hydro

“There is a high demand for a skilled workforce today and in the future in the Peace region. By increasing access to trades training for Aboriginal people today, our intent is to benefit Aboriginal students and provide a foundation for the future.”

Audrey Sam, Executive Director, North East Native Advancing Society

“A key priority for the North East Native Advancing Society has been to work with Aboriginal people to prepare them for their transition into trades apprenticeship programs. This funding will help us build on the success of the NEATT program and look at new ways to encourage Aboriginal people to access the opportunities that trades training provides.”

Background

Funding for the North East Native Advancing Society (NENAS) is designed to complement the \$1-million in BC Hydro funding for trades and skills training at Northern Lights College (NLC). With this funding, NENAS will support the tuition and associated costs for Aboriginal people pursuing trades training programs that are not otherwise offered through NLC. For example, NENAS could sponsor people to attend programs such as the Heavy Equipment Operator program in Kamloops, which is not offered by NLC.

As well, the first year of funding can be used by NENAS to support Aboriginal people attending NLC, prior to the BC Hydro Trades and Skills Training bursaries coming into effect for the September 2013/14 school year.

About North East Native Advancing Society

The main goal of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) is to train Aboriginal people to be able to compete for job opportunities in mainstream society across Canada. As northeast B.C.'s ASETS holder, NENAS is the only agency of its kind with the capability to deliver a variety of holistic self-development, pre-employment training and educational programming in northeast BC with the mandate to engage with and provide services to all Aboriginal people in the North. NENAS works directly and often in partnership with local industry, businesses, human resources service agencies, First Nation communities, educational institutes, and Inuit and Métis Nations.

About BC Hydro

BC Hydro has been providing **clean, reliable power** to British Columbians for more than 50 years while maintaining among the lowest rates in North America. BC Hydro is a provincial Crown corporation that serves 1.9 million customers and invests in the electrical system and in energy conservation to deliver a safe and reliable supply of electricity for today's customers and **for generations** to come.

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