



FUTURES

Yukon Mine Training Association Newsletter

Issue 8 - Winter 2010



Mine Training Program from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). YMTA intends to purchase the SIAST curriculum for the Yukon.

The major emphasis in this course will be on safety for underground miners. Safety procedures learned during the course will be based on the principles developed for the Ontario Common Core mining modules.

“Alexco is

pleased to contribute funding and to work with the YMTA to deliver hands-on, up-to-date mine training,” said Alexco Resource Corporation Vice President Rob McIntyre. “Alexco will provide camp support, an active underground mining venue, skilled underground trainers, supplies and equipment, as well as mentorship to the participants in this training course, which will increase the number of skilled workers in the Yukon. It is part of our contribution to long-term growth in the Yukon Territory,” he continued.

The course, which started its sessions at the beginning of February, will run through to the spring, just in time for students to get applications in for summer work.

YMTA Underground Mine Training at Keno Hill Focuses on Safety

Safety will be the focus as 12 students learn the skills they need to start careers as underground miners in a course jointly funded by Alexco Keno Hill Resource Corporation and YMTA. The course consists of four two-week training sessions at Alexco’s Bellekeno Mine. Alexco Keno Hill will be providing more than 50 per cent of the funding for this training by contributing the use of the work site, equipment and supplies needed during the on-site portion of the program, along with mentorship for the students.

“The focus of this course will be on safety and best-practices,” said

YMTA Executive Director Tracy Thomas. “This is a great opportunity for people to develop the skills necessary to participate in Yukon’s mining industry,” she continued.

The course will include both classroom and hands-on training, with the top eight students in the classroom earning spots in the hands-on training underground in Alexco’s Bellekeno Mine. The historic Keno Hill mines, where these students will be learning their trade, were renowned for decades as being among the world’s highest-grade silver districts.

The underground mining course will be taught using the Underground

Collaboration With **YMTA** Brings Water- Quality Training to Champagne-Aishihik First Nation

Water quality is one of the most important issues for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations community. In 2006, at the community of Champagne, preliminary water-quality sampling showed that most wells in the community contained contaminants such as food preservatives, pharmaceuticals, and petroleum products. Water has been trucked into the community ever since.

Now, a partnership with YMTA is providing training in environmental monitoring and sampling, increasing the capacity of the First Nation to monitor and ensure the quality of its water supply. The course will also teach basic soil sampling and the use of field equipment.

“It is important that the people

living in Champagne feel secure about the water in their wells,” said YMTA Executive Director Tracy Thomas. “So the partnership between YMTA and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations to provide training is a wonderful way to build up skills and provide the people living in Champagne with the facts about their water supply.”

“This testing has been ongoing for several years, and with CAFN members trained in the basics of water-quality testing, the First Nation will be able to monitor their wells more easily,” said environmental consultant Jillian Chown, who is the primary instructor for the course and who has worked with CAFN since the water issue was

discovered.

The course will teach many new skills to the participants including: water sampling, analysis and interpretation of water-quality results, conducting Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments according to CSA standards, and air photo interpretation. The skills developed during this course are readily transferable to the mining and resource industry.

“This training is going to create a strong resource within our community. I’m very pleased that YMTA and CAFN were able to work together to create a training opportunity like this for our membership,” said CAFN Chief Diane Strand.



The People Behind **YMTA**

Front row from left to right:

Patti Wagantall, Administrative Assistant
Tracy Thomas, Executive Director
Elizabeth Anderson, Training Liaison Worker, North Central

Back row from left to right:

Anne Lewis, Training Coordinator
Marika Isaac, Office Manager
Brad Stoneman, Training Liaison Worker, South West
Cynthia Kearns, Training Liaison Worker, South East
Jennifer Russell, Training Manager



YMTA Funds Helicopter Training

“I’m working hard,” said Richard John Nagano over the phone from Abbotsford, B.C., where he has taken a break from his studies to talk about his latest endeavour.

Nagano is training at Chinook Helicopters to become a commercial helicopter pilot. It’s a skill he hopes will take him all over the Yukon. For four weeks, Nagano has been attending ground school three days a week, and flying for an hour or so each day to get himself ready to take a series of three exams from Transport Canada.

“When you pass those exams, you are able to fly commercially,” he explains.

Although the training to become a pilot is rigorous, getting into a helicopter was nothing new for Nagano, who worked five seasons as a firefighter.

“As a firefighter, you’re in and out of helicopters and you just see the pilot and think, ‘You’re making more money than me and it kind of looks like more fun,’” he reflects. “So I thought I’d make the change. A lot of firefighters become helicopter pilots. You’ve got more of an understanding when you’re a helicopter pilot who worked on fires.”

But just because Nagano had set his course didn’t mean he would jump right into training.

“I wanted to be a helicopter pilot for about three years before I told anyone,” he remembers.

First, he had to tell someone about his dream. He chose his aunt, Gina Nagano, and together they made a proposal to the Tr’ondek

Hwech’in First Nation. The First Nation paid for half the cost of the course he is now taking. Then the pair headed for YMTA, which agreed to fund the remainder of

the \$57,000 needed to pay for the flight time and course work required to train as a helicopter pilot. With the funding set up he headed for Abbotsford and got ready to fly.

“The first time you go out, you’re just watching, then they let you control the altitude a bit. The next day, you are in control of the angle that you’re flying. Then they take you out again and you’re in charge of the torc pedal,” he says.

By the end of four weeks or so, Nagano felt confident on the controls.

“You have to learn small movements and move the controls millimetre by millimetre,” he asserts.

Learning the controls and getting the helicopter to fly smoothly hasn’t been the only challenge for Nagano as his training goes on. Part of the challenge is getting himself used to the study schedule required to complete the pilot training.

“All the jobs I’ve had have been outside jobs,” he says. “I worked as a firefighter, archaeology jobs, fisheries positions... It’s difficult applying yourself and having to



sit and study most of the time. I’d rather be outside doing something,” he says.

Nagano believes that the time at his desk is going to pay off with lots of travel and outdoor time in the Yukon flying to forest fires and mine sites. He’s sure that there will be plenty of flying to be done once he gets back home.

He’s also appreciative of the work that YMTA does when it comes to funding training for Yukon First Nations people.

“You want to expand out to whatever horizons open up to you as a First Nations person because you don’t want to be confined,” he says. “The work YMTA does is really useful and necessary.”

Nagano will continue to hit the books in Abbotsford until spring. He knows it is worth it.

“Sometimes you just have to sit down and button yourself down,” he says with a laugh.

YMTA Part of Innovative Training

As part of an innovative Yukon program, Grade 8 girls from across the Yukon gathered at the Yukon Women Exploring Trades 2009 conference. The event aims to make sure that girls across the territory know that there are opportunities in the trades, as well as offering role models and a chance to learn some new skills.

"It's amazing to see the potential in this room," said keynote speaker Ching

Gettman, a renowned engineer and Senior Vice-President for Cummins. "We need more programs like this across Canada. Thanks for having me here," she added.

First Gettman spoke about her love of engines, mechanics and engineering. Then participants set off for workshops where they tried out different kinds of work in the trades. The students built boxes out of sheet metal, hammered in the carpentry shop, cooked sushi, painted walls, welded CD holders, soldered pipes, and mapped out flight plans.

"YMTA wanted to be a part of the Yukon Women Exploring Trades conference to ensure that the young women in the Yukon can realize their dreams when it comes to working in the trades," said YMTA Executive Director Tracy Thomas. "As more people realize what the trades can offer them, we'll see an increase in the expert

workforce available in Yukon."

Most of the girls had never had the opportunity to try activities like pipefitting and were excited by the prospect of working in the trades. Participants shared their excitement in a Twitter feed created especially for the event:

"I just met someone who got her culinary ticket and got to travel to Paris to work!!!!!!! :)," typed one student.

"I made a sprinkler!!! How cool is that?!!!! LOL," wrote another.



Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion

With a focus on providing training in First Nations Communities, YMTA is working to build skills among Yukon's First Nations workers. While getting proper training is the beginning of a journey towards a career, the second part is getting a job. Sadly, many Aboriginals face barriers when it comes to getting a job, and employers may not even be aware of how their company's hiring practices affect Aboriginal applicants. At the same time, Aboriginal workers are one of Canada's youngest, fastest growing working groups, with the skill and desire to succeed.

In order to reduce barriers to employment and create a more positive hiring environment for First

Nations trainees, YMTA is hosting a workshop for employers. Taught by the Aboriginal Human Resource Council, the course is called Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion.

"The workshop uses materials that were developed by respected leaders in workplace diversity and Aboriginal inclusion," said YMTA Executive Director Tracy Thomas. "It provides information, but it also gives employers and businesspeople a chance to meet other business owners who are committed to Aboriginal inclusion and building strong, diverse workplaces," she added.

The seminars build on a series of self-study modules, using case studies to examine different kinds of work environments and how they can be made more inclusive. It also takes a

look at diversity tools that human resources departments can use to create fairer hiring practices.

The Mastering Aboriginal Inclusion two-day course provides practical human resources assistance and advice to companies that want to explore and introduce Aboriginal employment and inclusion strategies. These training sessions are designed to kick-start corporate inclusion efforts by encouraging corporate leaders and human resources practitioners to become 'agents of change' in their own organizations.

For Aboriginal job applicants, this workshop opens doors. For businesspeople, the workshop will provide the opportunity to solve skills shortages, build local capacity, and create a workplace of diversity.