



Yukon Mine Training Association

Into the Deeps: Yukon's First Underground Mine Training Program

(July 31, 2009 Watson Lake) –

The Yukon Mine Training Association (YMTA) announced today that it is providing funding to Liard First Nation Development Corporation to deliver an Underground Mine Training Program at North American Tungsten's (NAT) Cantung mine Site.

For 14 weeks this summer, 8 Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council members are learning how to be hard-rock underground miners. This training will take them from the classroom to the mine site. The program involves classroom learning, but the students will also be spending time in a work environment at the Cantung mine, putting their book-learning to the test as they practice the skills that are essential in any underground mining situation.

"We're working closely with the Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation," said Wade Stogran, NAT's Vice President of Environmental and Corporate Affairs. "Together, we identified the need for local, trained underground miners, for the First Nations to see some of the benefits from the mines, and for their membership to gain skills that are transferable. Once they're in the stream for underground mining, the scope of employment opens up," he added.

With more mining operations, such as Yukon Zinc Corporation's Wolverine property and Alexco Resource's Bellekeno property, preparing for the decision to develop their underground operations, the graduates of this program will be in high demand in the near future.

"YMTA is glad that it could help bring this kind of training to Yukon and increase the number of skilled workers in the territory," said YMTA Executive Director Tracy Thomas. "The instructor, Rob Clark from Corona College, has been doing a fabulous job and going out of his way to ensure the students receive all of the training they need," she added.

The Yukon Mine Training Association is a partnership between the Yukon's mining industry and First Nations. YMTA works to maximize employment opportunities emerging from the growth of the mining and related resource industries in the North.

The Government of Canada has contributed funding to this initiative.

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Background:

Yukon Mine Training Association:

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Underground Mine Training Program

This project has been coordinated by Liard First Nation Development Corporation (LFNDC) in partnership with YMTA, North American Tungsten and Corona College. Eight Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council members are training to become hard rock underground miners. There will be a combination of in-class training in Watson Lake followed by a work placement out at the Cantung mine site that allows the students to experience the real work schedule of underground miners. There will be a graduation dinner for the students on August 14th in Watson Lake.