



Aboriginal Work Readiness Program

Essential Skills And On-the-Job Training to Develop a Local Mining Workforce

By Lindsay Forcellini, The Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR)

A group of 64 local residents from several of Saskatchewan's First Nations will be recruited to explore the possibilities of a career in mining through their participation in *Mining Essentials: A Work Readiness Training Program for Aboriginal Peoples*. Beginning in the fall of 2014, four deliveries of *Mining Essentials* will take place through Parkland College and Carlton Trail Regional College, with learners and community partners from the following First Nations communities in the province's southeast region: Day Star, George Gordon, Pasqua, Okaneese, Peepeekisis, Cote and Keeseekoose.

Learners will complete the practical component of the curriculum on site at BHP Billiton and The Mosaic Company-Esterhazy, where they will receive on-the-job training, perform job shadowing and gain valuable experience while learning about the mining operations in their region, which largely focuses on potash. Vale also supports the project and if their proposed potash solution mine is launched successfully, will participate in job shadowing.

This opportunity is made possible through a funding partnership between Parkland College, Carlton Trail Regional College and the International Minerals Innovation Institute, a unique industry, government, and post-secondary education partnership jointly funded by Saskatchewan's mining industry and government. The institute is a catalyst to developing industry-driven education and training programs to address labour force needs in Saskatchewan's mining sector.

The institute also conducts research and development to address workplace health and safety, environmental sustainability, social license, policy research, exploration, mining, processing and economics of commodities.



Photo courtesy of MiHR.

BHP Billiton and The Mosaic Company are current members; others include Agrium, Cameco Corporation, K+S Potash Canada GP, PotashCorp., and North Rim Exploration Ltd. The Institute is currently funding nine projects; four of these projects include partnerships with regional colleges, others include the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology and The University of Saskatchewan.

The upcoming *Mining Essentials* deliveries are the first intakes of the program for both Parkland and Carlton Trail, and the first to be funded through the International Minerals Innovation Institute. The deliveries will run until spring 2016. Prior to this partnership, the last delivery of *Mining Essentials* in Saskatchewan was with Southeast Regional College, The Mosaic Company and the Kahkewistahaw and Ochapowace First Nations in 2013; this delivery was funded by the Government of Saskatchewan's Ministry of the Economy.

What is *Mining Essentials*?

Mining Essentials was developed to help mining companies and aboriginal communities meet their joint hiring and employment targets. It fosters partnerships between employers, educators and communities and bridges the skills gap so local residents have the essential skills required to pursue an entry-level position in the mining industry or to further their education and training to establish a career. Aboriginal teaching methods are integral to *Mining Essentials*, which was designed to encourage learning in a culturally appropriate environment that incorporates traditional methods to help learners better relate to the material, whether they are First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

The program, developed by the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, and in collaboration with industry, education and other aboriginal organizations,