

**Northern Alberta Development Council
In conjunction with
Saskatchewan Northern Apprenticeship Committee**

**Northeast Opportunity Seminar
'Workforce Planning Workshop'
Fort McMurray, Alberta**

September 19, 2006

Alberta



**Northern
Alberta
Development
Council**



**Government of
Saskatchewan**

NAC

Northern Apprenticeship Committee



Contents

Introduction	1
Background	1
Seminar Agenda	2
Session Highlights	3

Introduction

The Fort McMurray Opportunities Seminar took place on September 19, 2006 at the Sawridge Hotel. The seminar was developed through consultation with Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Saskatchewan Northern Apprenticeship Committee, Fort McMurray Regional Business Development Centre, and Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association. The seminar was intended to focus on topics related to employee recruitment in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, training and development of northern employees, as well as a focus for Saskatchewan's Northern Labour Market Committee and Northern Apprenticeship Sub-Committee and the Alberta Apprenticeship and Trades Commission to work towards a common program and seamless regulations for both provinces.

Background

In 2005, the Honourable Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan and the Honourable Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta made an announcement that the La Loche Road in northeast Alberta will be built as a joint centennial project connecting La Loche, Saskatchewan and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Fort McMurray, Alberta. The construction was to commence in 2006 with expected completion in 2009.

With the opening of a northern corridor between the two provinces, both provinces will benefit with increased tourism, trade and employment opportunities.

In order to prepare for future employment opportunities in the oil sands and gas sectors of northern Alberta, and heavy mining in

northwest Saskatchewan, the two provinces need to address Apprenticeship and Trades training and regulations in order to provide a trained northern workforce and have seamless regulations covering both provinces.

In response to these issues the Northern Alberta Development Council and the Saskatchewan Northern Apprenticeship Committee co-sponsored the Opportunity Seminar to provide information with regards to Human Resource - Labour Market needs over the next five to ten years in the oil sands sector, an overview of Alberta's Apprenticeship & Industry training at the junior and senior high school level, and northern colleges working in co-operation with industry to develop programming to meet labour market requirements.

Meetings were held with the Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation, the Fort McMurray Regional Business Development Centre, Northeast Alberta Aboriginal Business Association, Saskatchewan Advanced Education, as well as representatives from Northlands College in Saskatchewan to identify strategies that could be implemented and brainstorm ideas that could lead to developing a trained northern workforce.

NAABA was involved in organizing a "Leading Change" Conference for Aboriginal Economic and Community Development to be held September 20-22, 2006 in Fort McMurray.

NADC offered to organize an Opportunity Seminar to be held the day before the "Leading Change" Conference to bring in presenters that would be able to provide details related to human resource requirements and training opportunities that

would benefit northerners in both Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The seminar was held at the Sawridge Hotel on September 19th, 2006. The Hotel provided an excellent backdrop for the seminar and all delegates were pleased with the logistics.

Please see the following Seminar Agenda for an outline of the proceedings and a brief review of each presentation.

Seminar Agenda

9:15 a.m. Registration

9:45 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Mr. Dan Dibbelt, Executive Director - NADC

- Mr. Maurice Rivard, NADC Council Member

- Mr. Jim Carbery, Deputy Mayor, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

10:00 a.m. "Regional Cooperation to Supply Labour to the North" - Dr. Mark Partridge,

Swank Chair in Rural-Urban Policy, Professor of Agriculture, Environmental and Development Economics - Ohio State University (Prior Canada Research Chair in the New Rural Economy, University of Saskatchewan)

11:00 a.m. "Human Resources - Labour Market Needs Over the Next 5- 10 Years"

- Marion Boyd, Manager of H.R. - Suncor

- Jay Falcone, Manager Recruitment - Syncrude

11:35 a.m. Dan Dibbelt - Executive Director

- An Overview of the NADC

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Networking

1:00 p.m. "Challenges of Changing Labour Market for Small Businesses" - Mr. Jeff Pardee,

General Manager - Northeastern Alberta

Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA)

1:30 p.m. "Overview of Alberta's Apprenticeship & Training - Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)" - Rose

Simpson, Associate Regional Director Client Services - North, Advanced Education - Fort McMurray

Seminar Agenda (Contd.)

1:45 p.m. "Youth Apprenticeship Project-YAP"

- Ruth Fyten, YAP Teacher
- Kim Nashim, YAP Teacher
- Dr. Swift Middle School - Lac La Biche

2:15 p.m. "Colleges Working With Industry to Provide Trained Labour Force"

- Marylea Jarvis, V.P. Instruction
- Keyano College - Fort McMurray

2:35 p.m.

- Bill Persley, President - Portage College
- Denis Menard, Dean of Industry & Trades
- Portage College - Lac La Biche

3:00 p.m. "An Overview of Northlands College and Primary Projects of the North Saskatchewan Oilsands Sub-Committee - Northern Labour Market Committee"

- Bill McLaughlin, C.E.O. - Northlands College

3:25 p.m. Closing Remarks

- Maurice Rivard, NADC Member

3:30 p.m. Adjournment

Session Highlights

Dr. Mark Partridge, Swank Chair in Rural-Urban Policy, Professor of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics - Ohio State University
(Prior Canada Research Chair in the New Rural Economy, University of Saskatchewan)

2120 Fyffe Road,
336 Agriculture Admin. Bldg.
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA

Phone: 614-688-4907

Fax: 614-688-3622

E-mail: Partridge.27@osu.edu

Web: <http://aede.osu.edu/programs/Swank/>

'Regional Cooperation to Supply Labour for the North'

Dr. Partridge provided information regarding population growth in North America and suggested that looking east-west across Canada is 'simplistic', and one must look north-south to see real patterns of growth. He suggested that success is 'long-run' population growth. Cities are Canada's engine of growth and in Alberta the critical mass is located along the Calgary - Edmonton corridor. These statistics underline why Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan communities need to work together towards sustainable economic development.

Alberta jobs create opportunities. Both Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan have unique natural resource expertise as well as a large First Nations/ Aboriginal population. In order to create a win-win strategy, better incorporation of First Nations into regional development must take place.

Opportunities to meet future needs include enhancing quality of life and shift front-office work north from Calgary.

Dr. Partridge suggested that northern/rural communities can band together to achieve critical mass, to offset the population growth centered near urban areas.

Cooperation should reflect broad regional needs such as:

- Transporting people/ access to urban services - not just resources
- Environment/Land Use
- Economic Development
- Education/Health
- Quality of Life initiatives

To achieve cooperation Dr. Partridge provided various approaches and examples:

- Overlay regional government on top of municipalities (Economic Development Authorities, Transportation - critical for the energy economy, building community clusters, and access to labour market.)
- Non-government approaches (Chambers of Commerce, volunteer organizations.)
- Need to build a regional identity - "The North"

Examples of successful cooperation:

- ❖ The regionalization of Fort McMurray with Improvement District 18 North forming the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo,
- ❖ Action Southwest in Saskatchewan is a pro-active group
- ❖ Greater Calgary has informally cooperated

- ❖ Outlook, SK is a good example of First Nations participating in a regional plan.

Dr. Partridge suggested that the regions can coordinate labour supply. Northern Alberta needs a large workforce now. Northern Saskatchewan and First Nation families need work and long-run training opportunities.

Efforts to address the current labour shortage should be with current Canadian residents - homegrown solutions rather than expensive policies such as attracting immigrants.

Governments need to cooperate - check petty jealousies at the door. Alberta, Saskatchewan and First Nations all need trust, and better roads need to be built to make this 'commutable'. Work supports for workers and their families are required, such as innovative transportation - vans, busses are logical. Consider small grants for used cars and repairs.

Families need support - affordable housing and support for children including access to schools and quality daycare.

Training is required to build hard and soft skills. Journeymen need worker accreditation; Saskatchewan should enter the B.C.-Alberta agreement. Skills' training is required to permanently lift families into middle class. A holistic approach is needed. What is good for energy producers and Alberta is good for First Nations families and Northern Saskatchewan. This is one of the most ambitious efforts of regional cooperation and would set a good example for North America.

In conclusion Dr. Partridge warned "don't fritter away the Alberta Advantage". Alberta and Northern Alberta must use their wealth to build a different/diverse economy.

Enhanced quality of life linked with opportunities to include First Nations and enhanced transportation improves access to labour, services, and markets.

Labour market cooperation has long term benefits for Northern Alberta, Northern Saskatchewan, and First Nations. However, an over-riding lesson is that to get worker involvement, families and communities also need support.

Marion Boyd, Manager of Human Resources

Suncor Energy Inc.

P.O. Box 4001

Fort McMurray, AB T9H 3E3

Phone: 780 743-6459

Fax: 780 791-8333

E-mail: mboyd@suncor.com

Ms. Boyd provided an overview of Suncor Energy Inc., the original and single largest investor in the Athabasca oil sands. The goal of the company is to produce more than ½ million barrels of oil per day in 2010-2012. Suncor's leases cover 1800 square kilometers with reserves and resources in place to produce a potential 14 billion barrels of crude oil.

Suncor's Vision: To be a unique and sustainable energy company, dedicated to vigorous growth. The Employee Value Proposition:

- Highly skilled and engaged workforce; attract, retain and motivate employees.
- Challenging & Satisfying Work: Learning and development opportunities
- Rewards: Flexible benefits & pension - top 25% in industry.
- Competitive compensation - top quartile pay for top quartile results.

- SunShare - links employees to long-term goals of company
- Safety Vision: Eliminate all workplace injuries. All employees, contractors and leaders are responsible and have a role to play.

Ms. Boyd provided a chart of regular full time and part time positions employed at Suncor between 1999 and 2006. The employment positions increased from 1714 employees to 2987 employees during this period. The average age of employees is 40, with 20% of the employees being 50 years + and 18% under 30 years. 60% of employees have less than 5 years service.

The top 10 positions Suncor is recruiting between 2006 - 2011 are:

- Heavy Equipment Operators
- Process Operators
- Engineers
- Heavy Equipment Technicians
- Supervisors
- Electricians
- Business Support
- Technologists
- Project Management
- Environmental, Health and Safety

Heavy Equipment Operators require a minimum of a High School Diploma or GED. Preference will be given for previous heavy equipment experience (6 months experience on a 777 truck/150 ton truck or larger). Graduates of Keyano College's Mine Operations Program have an advantage because of the 3 month work requirement (ie. experience gained).

Coker Trainees require a minimum of a High School Diploma or GED

and a minimum of an ABSA 4th Class Power Engineering Certificate.

Extract Operator Trainees require a minimum of a high school diploma or GED and Part 'A' of the Fourth Class Power Engineering Certification.

Fixed Plant Operator Trainees require a minimum of a high school diploma or GED and a minimum of an ASBA 3rd Class Power Engineering.

Trades Positions require a minimum of a High School Diploma or GED as well as a Journeyman certification. If the Journeyman Ticket is from out of province it is mandatory to have an inter-provincial red seal journeyman status. (Electricians, Heavy Equipment Technicians, Instrumentation Technicians, Millwrights, Steamfitter/Pipefitters, Welders)

Engineers require a minimum of a B.Sc. in Engineering in one of the following disciplines: Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Metallurgical, Mining, Instrumentation & Controls.

Technologists require a technological diploma

Office Positions: Preference is given to candidates with a minimum of an Office Administration or Business Administration Diploma.

Suncor's Labour Market Needs - Key Messages:

- High School (secondary school) is important.

- Availability of skilled tradespersons and operators is critical to their growth.
- Many opportunities available at Suncor as well in the contractor workforce
- \$\$\$Earning potential is high\$\$
- Suncor Oil Sands has limited camp jobs available
- Camp jobs are available through the construction contractor workforce.
- The availability and cost of housing in Fort McMurray is a challenge.

Jay Falcone, Manager Recruitment Syncrude Canada Ltd.

P.O. Bag 4023

Fort McMurray, AB T9H 3H5

Bus: 780-790-6313

Fax: 780-790-6186

Email: falcone.j@syncrude.com

Jay provided an overview of Syncrude's development and expansion plans. Syncrude is the largest oil sands producer in the world and the largest single source of oil in Canada. He advised that the company is a major employer, top researcher, and responsible corporate citizen.

Alberta's oil sands are larger than Saudi Arabian Reserves. 2.5 trillion barrels in-place, 300+ billion barrels are recoverable, and 50% of Canada's oil production is from the oil sands, and this is slated to increase to 75% by 2015.

Mr. Falcone stated that Syncrude has a promising future with staged development planned. First expansion 1996-1999, second stage 1998 - 2001, third stage 2001- 2006. In stage three the company plans to de-bottleneck, between 2009 to 2013, to

increase production to 140 - 155 million barrels per year. Stage four, 2012 and 2016, they expect to increase production to 185 - 200 million barrels per year.

Syncrude has 4,400 full time employees, and have 500 student work terms each year. There are 3500 contractors, on average, with an average age of about 42 years old.

Syncrude is estimating that 600 new jobs, plus 2100 replacement jobs will be required by 2010.

The key positions Syncrude will be hiring are:

- Heavy equipment operators
- Engineers/Technologists
- Process operators
- Maintenance trades (Heavy equipment technicians, millwrights, etc.)
- Contract administrators
- Accountants/Financial analysts
- Project Managers

The workforce challenges for Syncrude are the company demographics, 2100 people ready to retire in the next 5 years; increasing competition for human resources in the oil sands industry, ability to attract employees to the region, - housing, infrastructure; employee retention and increased productivity.

Mr. Falcone outlined Syncrude's plans to meet the challenges:

- Limited opportunities available without post-secondary training
- Continue to leverage employee development programs: co-op (process operations, mine operations, and trades) discipline co-op (engineering, business and IT)

- Offer more apprenticeships
- Expand labour pool - under represented groups
- Develop more in house training programs
- Continue commitment to community and region.

**Dan Dibbelt, Executive Director
Northern Alberta Development Council**

P.O. Bag 900-14
206, Provincial Building
9621 - 96 Avenue
Peace River, AB T8S 1T4

Phone: 780-624-6274

Fax: 780-624-6184

E-Mail: dan.dibbelt@gov.ab.ca

Dan spoke on the opportunities and challenges for the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC). He provided an overview of the NADC area, 60% of Alberta's land mass and 9% of the province's population. Mr. Dibbelt advised that 34% of northern Albertans are less than 20 years old compared with 28% for the rest of the province. 20% of northern Albertans are of Aboriginal origin compared with 7% for all of Alberta. There is a huge shadow population, people who work in the north but do not reside in the north. Provincial and federal grants are based on per capita, and shadow populations are not included, so infrastructure and policing grants fall short for northern municipalities.

The contribution of northern Alberta in the energy, forestry and agriculture industries are 37% of Alberta's natural gas, 75% of Alberta's exported forest products, 19% of province's agricultural exports, and all of Alberta's oil sands. The per capita contribution to Alberta's revenues is \$57,300 per northerner compared to \$12,200 for other Albertans.

The challenges faced in northern Alberta include small and sparse population, lack of transportation infrastructure, road rail, and airports, increased skill levels needed and because it's a resource based economy, uneven growth and decline, transient and shadow population, and pressures on community infrastructure and services.

The NADC mandate is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the Government thereon."

Mr. Dibbelt advised that the NADC had nine members from across northern Alberta and the Chair Ray Danyluk, MLA for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

NADC provides bursaries to students in post secondary education up to \$475,000 per year in partnership with Alberta Advanced Education. 480 northern students received a total of \$581,210 in Northern Students Supplement grants. The NADC bursary is a return service bursary and in 2005 78% of the students worked in northern Alberta on completion of post secondary, and in 2006 80% of students returned to the north. The NADC provides a Northern LINKLS grant to school divisions, post secondary institutes, First Nations and Metis Settlements for projects that encourage students to stay in school and go on to post secondary training. 149 projects impacting over 10,000 students were accomplished in 2005.

The NADC has partnered with Alberta Learning in a pilot project called YAP. Yap is the Youth Apprenticeship Project for junior high school students to increase their awareness and interest in trades and technologies. YAP just finished the 3rd year of the pilot program, operating in five schools in High Prairie, Wabasca and Lac La

Biche. Early evaluations indicate the pilot project is very successful. A Review Committee will meet later this fall to compile the summary report and evaluate the success of the program. Hopefully it can be introduced in more northern schools within a few years.

The NADC partners with other jurisdictions to promote northern opportunities. Approval has been received for the Northern Alberta Highways Strategy. Hospital and school authorities as well as other northern employers use the "Opportunity North" CD Rom, brochures and website as a recruitment tool. 206,892 Opportunity North website hits occurred in 2005.

The NADC promotes awareness of the significance of northern development to all Albertans. The NADC holds Challenge North Conferences every three years, two Opportunity Seminars each year, working with other jurisdictions and promoting Aboriginal employment and entrepreneurship. Two hundred and seventy (270) participants attended the Challenge North 2006 Conference in High Level. Twenty (20) working groups identified a total of 60 key strategies related to transportation, education, health, economic development and municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Dibbelt stated that the NADC is always available to meet with northern organizations to determine their development priorities and identify areas of mutual cooperation.

The NADC enjoys strong collaboration with other jurisdictions - Economic Development Agreement between Alberta and NWT, April 2006, Focus North information package website development, retention and training strategies for northern Canada.

The NADC is involved with eleven northern communities to address northern strategies, conducting a shadow population study, working towards a child care strategy, working with the northern Mayors and Reeves and northern economic development officers, oil synergy groups, looking at northern museum opportunities and parks and special places.

**Jeff Pardee, General Manager
Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business
Association (NAABA)**

Mail Address: P.O. Box 5993 Stn. Main
Office Address: #100 - 425 Gregoire Drive
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 4K7
Phone: 780-791-0478
Fax: 780-714-6485
E-Mail: naaba@telus.net

Jeff provided an overview of NAABA and spoke in broad terms about the challenges faced by small businesses and dealing with a challenging labour market.

Small businesses in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo find it hard to compete with the oil sands employers, when it comes to salary and benefits. The small and medium sized contractors accept apprentices, and find that after two or three years, they are losing them to the large corporations.

Medium sized contractors in the area require all types of trades people from welders, to heavy duty mechanics, millwrights, truck drivers, etc.

**Rose Simpson, Associate Regional
Director, Client Services - North
Advanced Education**

Apprenticeship & Industry Training
Box 19
7th Floor - Provincial Building
9915 - Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4
Phone: 780-743-7150
Fax: 780-743-7492
E-Mail: rose.simpson@gov.ab.ca
Website: www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca

Rose provided an overview of Alberta Advanced Education's Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) which provides apprenticeship training for high school students, while earning high school credits. RAP opens the door for high school students to gain work experience, and develop skills and abilities in a career they are interested in upon completion of high school. In return, RAP employers pay the apprentices' wage, and provide on-the-job training in one of Alberta's more than 50 trades.

The time a RAP student spends at school and on the work site is quite flexible. The student, school, and employer jointly agree to a suitable schedule. The student might work as a RAP apprentice for a semester, half a day, or one or two days a week. Summers, holidays and weekends are also an option to get the most out of the opportunity.

In grade 12, RAP apprentices can apply for scholarships, including a \$1,000 RAP Scholarship.

For more information on RAP and RAP Scholarships, apprenticeship training and careers in the trades, contact Apprenticeship and Industry Training by e-mail aitinfo@gov.ab.ca or visit the website www.tradesecrets.org

Ruth Fyten, Youth Apprenticeship Project (YAP) Teacher

Dr. Swift Middle School
10140 104 Street
Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0
Phone: 780-623-4129
Fax: 780-623-2101

Kim Nashim, Youth Apprenticeship Project (YAP) Teacher
Dr. Swift Middle School

Ms. Fyten and Ms. Nashim are teachers at Dr. Swift Middle School in Lac La Biche teaching the YAP program. YAP is a pilot project operating in 5 schools in northern Alberta in High Prairie, Wabasca and Lac La Biche.

In February 1999, the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) articulated a need to identify strategies to improve student retention and enhance career development, including skills development training for youth in northern Alberta. Coupled with the high demand for skilled persons was the need for youth to stay in school, complete a high school diploma and to see the career opportunities available to them in northern Alberta. In October 2001, Minister Oberg expressed support for YAP. During this time period, the current departments of Alberta Education and Advanced Education were under one Ministry – Alberta Learning.

A feasibility study on the appropriateness and need for career development focused educational programs such as YAP was conducted in 2001-02 by ALPS Consulting (Dr. Michael Alpern). A pre-implementation phase was initiated in 2003-04 with three northern Alberta communities: Lac La Biche, High Prairie/and Wabasca/Desmarais. In 2004-05, the first year of the pilot project was implemented in five schools in these communities to 240 grade 7 students. In 2005-06, the pilot was extended to grade 8 and

in 2006-07, the pilot was extended to grade 9. The pilot project plan provided for an additional grade to be added each year. The plan also provided for a formative evaluation to be conducted at the end of year 2 and a summative evaluation to be conducted at the end of year 6. Since then, it was agreed that the formative evaluation would be conducted after year three with a focus on assessing the project's interim success to the end of the year three (2006-07 school year).

YAP's goals are to:

- increase awareness among students in grades 7 and 8 and their parents of alternative learning pathways and career opportunities particularly in the trades and agriculture-related occupations;
- encourage students to consider learning pathways leading to careers particularly in the trades and agriculture-related occupations;
- encourage students to stay in school and earn a senior high school diploma
- expand access to RAP by enabling them to enroll beginning in Grade 9
- enable students to attain a "pre-apprenticeship credential" and where possible, complete a minimum of 1000 hours of on-the-job training for a trade or advanced standing toward a Green Certificate credential;
- increase the number of students who choose a trade or agricultural career option;
- increase the number of local trade-related business owners and farm operators who will provide work experience placements for students
- increase the number of students graduating with qualifications to enter a full apprenticeship program or who are eligible for advanced standing in a post-secondary agriculturally-oriented program.

Students receive hands-on learning opportunities in school and through worksite

visits/placements. YAP is grounded in the belief that the delivery of integrated curriculum using community-based, experiential, hands-on teaching strategies will maximize students' learning potential.

In Lac La Biche, preliminary findings of the project indicate that students enrolled in YAP have increased their attendance in school, as well as increasing their academic standing. It appears that students in the project enjoy the 'hands-on' learning opportunity, and it reflects in attendance and academic study.

A YAP Review Committee has been struck with representatives from Advanced Education, Alberta Education and the NADC. An interim review of the project is being analyzed to determine the usefulness.

Ms. Nashim and Ms. Fyten added that the programs success is dependent on the interest of the teachers and the local business and industry participation.

Marylea Jarvis, Vice President - Instruction

Keyano College

8115 - Franklin Avenue

Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2H7

Phone: 780-791-4851

Fax: 780-791-4841

E-Mail: Marylea.jarvis@keyano.ca

Marylea provided the delegates with an overview of Keyano College offerings. There courses cover hard skills, soft skills and support services. Hard skills include apprenticeship in 5 trades with on-campus or on-site options; power engineering co-op, process operator co-op, coker technician, and inspection technologies. The soft skills include pre-apprenticeship mechanical and construction trades prep, ASEP, and trades in Motion. They also offer workforce

development, customized training, supervisory skills, teambuilding, conflict management, project management, safety training, plus many more. The support services training includes Aboriginal Entrepreneurship, Aboriginal Financial Management, environmental monitoring, community-based upgrading, English for skilled immigrants, and English as a second language.

Keyano College offers on-line learning, video conferencing and blended learning.

Bill Persley, President

Portage College

P.O. Box 417

Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0

Phone: 780-623-5525

Fax: 780-623-5665

E-Mail: bill.persley@portagecollege.ca

Bill provided an overview of the Portage College campuses located in northeast central Alberta. The main campus is located in Lac La Biche, with campuses in St. Paul, Bonnyville and Cold Lake.

Bill introduced Denis Menard, Acting Dean of Continuing Education at Portage College.

Denis Menard, Dean - Continuing Education

Portage College

P.O. Box 417

Lac La Biche, AB T0A 2C0

Phone: 780-623-2264

Fax: 780-623-5665

E-Mail: denis.menard@portagecollege.ca

Denis advised that over 90% of the students graduating from Portage College find employment immediately. Mr. Menard advised that Portage College created a 'fast track' system so students can obtain

whatever training they require, in the shortest possible time. The Employment and Learning Foundation Department developed four preparatory programs focused at getting students qualified as quickly as possible.

The Trades Readiness Program is 20 weeks and offers the necessary math, science, and communication skills required so students can meet the pre-requisite of the apprenticeable trade of their choice.

The Pre-Technology Program is also 20 weeks, and it was designed to assist students at the grade 10 - 12 level wanting to enter a Technical Program with high school math, science and/or English as entrance requirement. For example, a student may have obtained Physics 10 in high school but requires Physics 20 to meet the 3rd Class Power Engineering entrance requirements.

The College Preparation Program offers a wide variety of high school courses so adult students may continue their education in preparation for post secondary training or job placement.

The Retail Sales Associates Program is designed for students interested in entering the service and/or retail sales industry. Students learn skills that enable them to function in the retail service industry and adapt to a changing workplace. This program also has a three week placement.

Portage College also offers a Pre-Trade Program that enables students to obtain employment and enter the apprenticeship system at the first year level. Pre-Trades training is offered in welding, steamfitter/pipefitter, carpentry and cooking. They are working on obtaining approval to offer Pre-Trade in electrical and heavy duty technician.

Portage College offers a Power Engineering Program that delivers a full 4th class, a full 3rd class and by February 2007, they will be offering three (3) papers at the 2nd class level. These programs are delivered in partnership with industry where students are able to obtain the necessary practical time at each level. Students are placed with industry for 160 hours at the 4th class level and for 960 hours at the 3rd class level. As well, in partnership with industry the College raised necessary funds to construct a high pressure lab at the campus in Lac La Biche, to expose students to an actual hands-on experience.

Portage College also a Forestry Technician Certificate program. The program was designed to prepare personnel in the practical and technical skills needed to work in the Forest Industry. Forest Technicians perform technical fieldwork related to forest management, forest harvesting, silviculture and forest protection.

In the area of Truck Transport, Portage College delivers Class I and II programs and are in the development stages of offering a Professional Heavy Haul Certificate Program.

The Portage College Continuing Education Department offers customized training programs to meet the changing requirements of industry, business, agencies and communities. Programs can be delivered at the College, in the community or at the worksite. The programs can be offered during the daytime, in the evening, or on weekends, depending on what works best for the client and students.

For more information contact: John Nicklin, Dean Community & Industry Training at 780-623-5633; Ken Scullion, Coordinator Continuing Education 780-623-2525.

**Bill McLaughlin, Chief Executive Officer
Northlands College**

P.O. Box 1000

LaRonge, SK S0J 1L0

Phone: 306-425-4273

Fax: 306-425-

E-Mail:

mclaughlin.bill@northlandscollege.sk.ca