

information

BULLETIN

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Minerals and Metals Sector of Natural Resources Canada promotes the sustainable development of Canada's natural resources and encourages Aboriginal participation in minerals and metals activities.

Aboriginal peoples are well-positioned to take advantage of a wide variety of employment, training, and apprenticeship opportunities in the exploration and mining industry.

● Aboriginal peoples are among the 369 000 Canadians employed by the mining and mineral processing industries in Canada. The mining sector saw a 21% increase in its Aboriginal work force from 1996 to 2001. ¹ The mining industry provided some of the highest weekly earnings in the economy, averaging \$1100 per week, compared to the national weekly average of \$747. ²

● Based on exploration levels and the number of new mine openings and retirements, the mining industry is expected to need between 28 000 and 71 000 new workers within the next decade. ³ The close proximity of Aboriginal communities to mining developments can lead to significant employment and capacity-building opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, including youth. ⁴

● There are more than 120 different careers in mining, with entry-level, semi-skilled trades and skilled jobs available throughout all stages of the mining process. ⁵ Short-, medium- and long-term opportunities can include:

✕ Exploration-related jobs such as geologists, field assistants, camp staff and catering, line

cutters, construction labourers, prospectors, samplers, and drill operators;

✕ Mine development, construction, and related jobs such as heavy equipment operators, truck drivers, tradespersons, environmental technicians, caterers, engineers, underground miners, mechanics, electricians, human resource and public relations specialists, drillers, blasters, administrative and financial officers, managers, and lawyers;

✕ Mine closure and site rehabilitation jobs such as environmental monitors and technicians, water treatment samplers, tradespersons, site security, tree planters, and landscapers.

● The mining industry is increasingly high-tech, requiring highly skilled technicians and specialists able to operate and maintain robotics technology, computer design programs, and remote mining software, for example.

● Highly skilled mining jobs such as engineering and environmental technicians require post-secondary education, while skilled occupations such as underground



miners and production workers may require a high school diploma, on-the-job training, and trades certificates.

● Preferential hiring practices for Aboriginal workers, as well as training, educational and apprenticeship opportunities, are often key components of Impact and Benefits Agreements (IBAs) and other agreements between mining companies and Aboriginal communities.



- Sub-contractors that supply goods and services to exploration and mining companies, such as air transportation, trucking, construction, catering, and environmental monitoring, are another source of job opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.

- Skills gained through participation in mining can be transferable to other sectors of the economy, and to the local community economy, following mine closure.

- Aboriginal peoples are using skills gained through mining to support their own construction, catering, and trucking businesses, resulting in increased employment opportunities within communities.

- Numerous educational, skills development, and on-the-job training opportunities are offered by academia, governments and the mining industry in support of Aboriginal participation in mining. Examples of leading programs and partnerships include:

- ✕ The Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia and the British Columbia Institute of Technology's **Prospecting and Exploration Methods** present a two-week introduction to the study of geology and minerals as they apply to prospecting and exploring for mineral deposits. The course is offered in Aboriginal communities and Friendship Centres. More than 100 Aboriginal students have taken the course to date, while some 40 Aboriginal students have completed the first



Photo: Association for Mineral Exploration BC.

stage of the 15-week **Associate Certificate Program in Minerals Discovery** (contact: www.mining.bc.ca or www.amebc.ca).

- ✕ De Beers Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada's **James Bay Employment and Training (JBET)** strategy offers skills development programs, on-the-job work experience, and long-term employment opportunities at De Beers' Victor diamond mine project in northern Ontario. Regional communities and industry and academic partners collaborate in providing mine-related training in fields such as truck driving, chef training, trades apprenticeships, office skills, and hazardous materials management. The JBET strategy aims to maximize Aboriginal participation in the estimated 600 construction-related jobs and 375 mine operation jobs at Victor (contact: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/employment/aboriginal_training/index.shtml or www.debeerscanada.com).



Photo: De Beers Canada Inc.

- ✕ BHP Billiton Diamonds' **Workplace Learning Program (WLP)** at the Ekati diamond mine in the Northwest Territories offers educational and training opportunities to learners of all levels. Through literacy skills upgrading, pre-trades training and apprenticeships, correspondence courses, and support for workers who wish to complete high school, the WLP aims to develop skills among the mine's northern and

Aboriginal labour force (contact: http://ekati.bhpbilliton.com/people_and_employment/).

- ✕ Aurora College, Northwest Territories, in partnership with Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR), offers the **Environmental Monitor Training Program**, providing students with the knowledge and skills to meaningfully participate in environmental monitoring activities in a variety of settings, including mining operations. The program addresses local and traditional knowledge and their link with the environmental monitoring process. Of the 92 students who have completed the program to date, more than 90% are of Aboriginal descent (contact: www.auroracollege.nt.ca/).

- **Examples of mining job sites, employment, and training resources:**

www.acareerinmining.ca
www.CareerMine.com
www.Northernminerjobs.com
www.MiscoJobs.com
www.PDACjobs.com

Additional information and resources are available at related mining industry, provincial, territorial, and federal web sites. You can also download the *Mining Information Kit for Aboriginal Communities* at www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms/hm_e.htm.

- 1 Statistics Canada, Census 1996 and 2001.
- 2 Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), 2006.
- 3 *Prospecting the Future*, Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR).
- 4 Some 1200 Aboriginal communities are located within 200 km of 180 principal producing mines and 2500 exploration properties across Canada (source: NRCan).
- 5 MiHR.

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For more information on Aboriginal communities and mining, please visit www.nrcan.gc.ca/mms or send an e-mail to info-mms@nrcan.gc.ca