

FOR RELEASE
July 17, 2006

#06-166

EDUCATION, YUKON FIRST NATIONS PRESENT MASTER LANGUAGES COURSE

WHITEHORSE – The Department of Education is working with Yukon First Nations and the University of Alaska Fairbanks to deliver a Master-Apprentice aboriginal languages course starting July 17 in Whitehorse.

“This course is important because Yukon First Nation Elders will be paired with Yukon First Nation apprentices to study the Kaska, Tlingit, Northern Tutchone, Southern Tutchone and Upper Tanana languages,” Education’s acting director of the First Nation Partnerships and Programs Unit, Tina Jules said. “This is a very significant aboriginal language course not only because of the one-on-one method of teaching, but also because it represents a traditional model for delivering such education opportunities. All partners involved in delivering this course are contributing the resources and knowledge to make it a success.”

The course will be administered and taught by staff from the University of Alaska Fairbanks; however, Yukon First Nation Elders play an integral role in the instructional component of the course and student evaluations. Elders will work one-on-one with apprentices to help them learn new skills and enhance existing skills.

“Working with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Yukon First Nations, the Department of Education is pleased to be able to facilitate the development of this course in Whitehorse as one of our Summer Institute programs,” Jules added. “And while the course officially begins July 17, all Masters and apprentices have committed to work approximately 10 hours per week through to December 2006.”

“There has never been a more important time for a program like the Master-apprentice Aboriginal languages course,” Education Minister John Edzerza said. “The survival of Yukon First Nation languages is critical to the survival of Yukon’s culture, because First Nation people are an integral part of Yukon’s past, present and future.

“The Yukon government’s role in enabling this course is a big part of our commitment to help preserve Aboriginal languages in the territory,” Edzerza added.

In addition to the Master-apprentice Aboriginal languages course, in 06/07 the Yukon government is contributing almost \$4.9 million in funding for First Nation language and culture programs in schools and communities, First Nation curriculum development, the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program and the Yukon Native Language Centre.

-30-

Contact:

Peter Carr
Cabinet Communications Advisor
(867) 667-8688
peter.carr@gov.yk.ca

Clea Ainsworth
Communications, Education
(867) 393-7102
clea.ainsworth@gov.yk.ca