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PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE MINING TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

WHITEHORSE – Partnerships between the Yukon government and industry have led to a number of successful training and recruitment programs aimed at rebuilding a skilled labour force for the exploration and mining sector.

“These innovative programs are an investment in Yukon people and resources and help to meet the growing needs for experienced workers,” Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Archie Lang said.

The programs were administered by the Yukon Mining and Exploration Training Trust Fund with assistance and support provided by the Yukon government:

- **Driller Helper Training Program** – This hands-on training involved all elements of a mineral exploration and drill program from mobilizing the drill to site, camp construction and maintenance, use of helicopters in drill moves, drill helping and drill running, drill core processing by geological technicians and core sampling. Nine Yukoners from the communities of Old Crow, Dawson, Pelly Crossing and Whitehorse received training.
- **Train the Trainer Module** – This module is a tool for exploration and mining service companies to guide instructors on how to conduct training in drilling and related activities.
- **Resource Exploration Training Program** – This training is for field assistants in both the hard rock exploration and placer mining. It is portable, hands on and consists of classroom instruction and training in a field camp. Twenty-two participants from the course were able to obtain work in the exploration sector last year and an additional ten students attended a spring session this year.

The Mining and Exploration Training Trust Fund was created in 1997 to increase training opportunities in mining and exploration related occupations.

“We are very pleased to support initiatives that provide Yukoners with key skills that will improve their opportunity to secure jobs in the resource sector,” Education Minister John Edzerza said. “To date, this government has invested over half a million dollars in the trust fund.”

Other mining related programs include the basic and advanced Prospectors Courses put on by the Yukon Chamber of Mines in the fall and winter. Enrollment for the 2004/2005 programs showed a dramatic increase over previous years. Eighteen people registered for the basic course and seven registered for the advanced course. This was the first time in several years that there was interest to run the advanced course.

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The Yukon Chamber of Mines, Yukon Mining and Exploration Training Trust Fund and Yukon Construction Safety Association conducted two safety seminars, in which 43 people participated. The seminar was a one day presentation dealing with various aspects of safety in an exploration setting such as use of helicopters, ATV's, chainsaws, bear safety, traversing and mountain safety, basic survival techniques, search and rescue, hypothermia and safe practices around heavy equipment and diamond drills.

Yukon Chamber of Mines president Scott Casselman said, "The mining industry is experiencing a sharp increase in investment this year. There is a real shortage of experienced workers to fill the positions that are being created as a result of this investment. The support of the territorial government is important to ensure Yukoners get the training they need to capitalize on these work opportunities."

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