

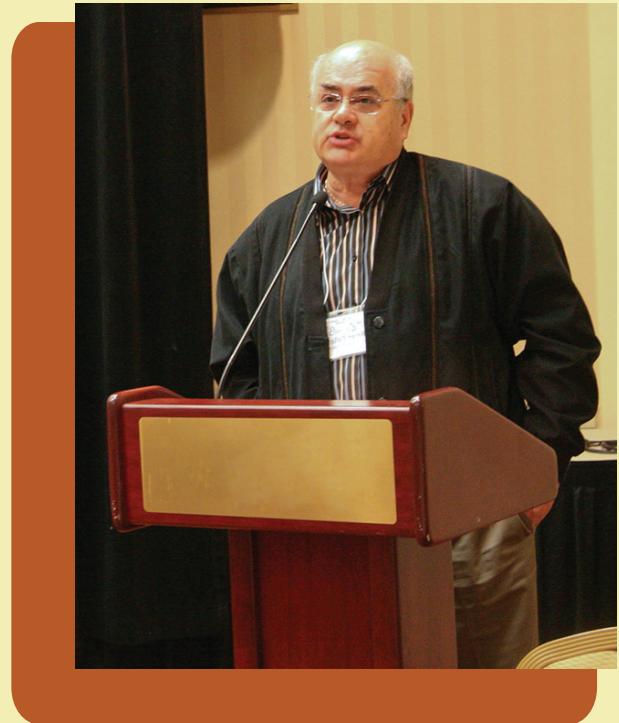
# AABO Takes its Message of Aboriginal Apprenticeship on the Road

AABO's message of sustainable apprenticeship best practices has been recognized internationally, specifically by the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans (IFEBP). Invited to participate in the IFEBP's 45th Annual Canadian Employee Benefits Conference in Orlando, Florida in November of last year, AABO was recognized as key to bridging the skills gap in apprenticeship.

"Because we're getting people to work together it's making it easier for employers, and the ASETAs more and more are believing in AABO," explains Brian Pelletier, apprenticeship coordinator.

Brian was encouraged by the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) to share AABO's extensive list of accomplishments including partnership and training programs, awareness initiatives and most importantly connecting the Aboriginal supply to the industry demand. "It's because of the whole partnership AABO has been creating, because of the best practices, because AABO is engaged in the industry and we had some good examples of what we're doing that they felt they wanted to share that with other parts of the industry," says Brian.

During the three-day conference Brian conducted one workshop entitled Aboriginal Trades and Apprenticeship and was overwhelmed by the response. In his standing room only workshop he presented AABO's achievements, discussed the work that's been done with the ASETAs and the industry and gave an overview of best practices for recruiting Aboriginal people. "I think we can demonstrate that the Aboriginal people are a go-to solution on the supply side, and that there are First Nation, Metis and Inuit people ready for work," he says. Brian also believes that there is still more education needed in regards to Aboriginal people. "I think it's part of breaking down barriers and stereotypes as well and it makes people aware of the Aboriginal population. There's a lot of myths, so we need to tell them what's fact and what's fiction," says Brian.



The 45th Annual Canadian Employee Benefits Conference hosted over 1,300 guests, many from Canada, and with its unique blend of industries the yearly conference is a unique networking opportunity. As a nonprofit organization the International Employee Benefits Association (IEBA) is dedicated to being a leading objective and independent global source of employee benefits, compensation and financial literacy education and information.

Now gearing up for the 46th Annual Canadian Employee Benefits Conference, the IEBA focuses on providing information for the effective management of trusts as well as specialty information on health and wellness, pensions, training and apprenticeships. Brian hopes that the 2013 conference, to be held in San Francisco, will continue to recognize the important role the Aboriginal population has and will continue to play in the trades industry.

# When one door closes...



## Good Luck Brian Pelletier

When it comes to promoting Aboriginal apprenticeship across Canada, it's the people who believe in the cause and work tirelessly to promote change that really make AABO's projects stand out. Brian Pelletier, program manager for AABO since 2010, is one such dedicated individual who's efforts towards awareness, promoting programs, and harmonious partnerships have really pushed Aboriginal apprenticeship to a higher level. Now after three years working on the supply side of the equation, Brian is moving to a new position on the industry side where he will continue his efforts towards promoting Aboriginal Apprenticeship.

In his new role as Aboriginal Coordinator for the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario (OETIO), Brian says he feels that he'll still be able to contribute to AABO's efforts but from a different aspect. "I don't want it to sound like I'm gone, I think that I'm moving on but I'm moving in parallel with AABO, so now I'm on the industry side and I'm hoping to engage more of the industry and specifically engage the operating engineers," says Brian.

The OETIO has long been a supporter of AABO's initiatives, often partnering to provide young Aboriginal apprentices an overview of heavy equipment operator and crane operator trades. With a comprehensive training facility in Morrisburg, Ontario, the OETIO gives apprentices the quality training needed in today's construction industry.

Being on the industry side of LINK = ABORIGINAL SUPPLY + CONSTRUCTION DEMAND, Brian feels he can take the LINK steering committees to a different level to get them up and running. Currently Brian is working to develop a strategy to engage the First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities of Ontario. "We'll have a strategy and part of the strategy is to cochair some of these LINK steering committees," he says.

## Introducing Sara Monture

With the movement of Brian Pelletier's dedication and passion to the OETIO, AABO wondered where they'd find someone just as driven to advance Aboriginal initiatives. Enter Sara Monture. With a real passion for Aboriginal apprenticeship, Sara is the perfect fit to continue to push forward AABO's objectives.

As new executive director of AABO, Sara is bringing her previous experience working with the federal government as well as time spent on the Grand River Employment and Training board. "Obviously I believe in the organization or I wouldn't be here, GREAT knows what they're doing and they're a good organization and I can see the other ASETA holders some of them just need that push, so it's about developing relationships and bringing more publicity, more awareness of Aboriginal apprenticeship," says Sara.

With a few months under her belt Sara is already making strides with various ASETAs and hopes to focus more effort towards the LINK steering committees. "I can see the partnerships that are forming and they're doing good work and I really want to continue that good work," she says, adding, "I can see the things that Brian has done, he has so many contacts and both side industry and supply are very eager and very hungry so it's a good fit." Her experience as a communications manager with the Federal Government out of Hamilton lends itself well to promoting Aboriginal apprenticeship across Ontario and Canada. Keeping the lines of communication open and providing greater access to information across AABO's network of partners will be a big step towards implementing the LINK steering committees and all of AABO's initiatives. Welcome Sara!

