



Our Hands Are the Tools of Our Trade

Presenter Denis Shank of the Sudbury Construction Association shared an overview of the construction industry processes to link Aboriginal supply and construction demand. As supporters of contractors, manufacturers and suppliers, service providers and training and personnel providers, the Sudbury Construction Association can offer numerous opportunities for the Aboriginal community.

Welcome Aboriginal Apprenticeship Stakeholders

Aboriginal apprenticeship is vital to the success of trades in the construction sector. The numbers of skilled tradespeople are dwindling every year while the Aboriginal population is the fastest growing in Canada. Through a unique partnership, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario (AABO) and Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT) have come together to highlight the programs and people working to increase the numbers of skilled Aboriginal people in the trades. Opened by Brian Doolittle of Six Nations Grand River Territory, the conference will hear from both sides, the Aboriginal community and the construction sector, to identify ways of improving access to employment and create an open dialogue for new and creative ideas.

Success Breeds Success

As one of the main themes of the LINK = Aboriginal Supply + Construction Demand conference, Success Breeds Success highlighted partnerships between the Aboriginal community and construction industry and the resulting success. Among the presenters were:

- Grand River Employment and Training (GREAT)
- Canadian Union of Skilled Workers (CUSW)
- Detour Gold
- Gezhtoojig Employment and Training
- OSTTC's Pre-Apprenticeship Electrical Program

The success of these programs is meant to showcase the opportunities available and inspire further partnerships between Aboriginal communities and the construction industry.

Keeping Our Bundle



Speaker Colleen Wassegijig-Migwans from the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve highlighted the historical perspective of Aboriginal apprenticeship through her presentation entitled Keeping Our Bundle.

Aboriginal people have been involved in apprenticeship for thousands of

years. Moving forward tradespeople need to honour their gifts and training needs to reflect on the history of the apprenticeship process and its success. Apprentices and journeypersons can take pride in being a part of an established tradition which builds the world around them.





Urban, Rural and Remote Construction Industry, Aboriginal Recruitment Efforts

Highlighting opportunities in remote and rural areas, this panel featured industry speakers making strides in Aboriginal recruitment. What are their strategies? How do they retain workers and recruit new ones? Those who've had success in recruiting Aboriginal workers shared their insights.

Among the presenters were:

- Detour Gold** - with a new processing plant and open pit mine, Detour Gold will require approximately 500 people on site.
- Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC)** - linking to the Aboriginal population to meet construction demand.
- Operating Engineers Training Institute of Ontario (OETIO)** - looking to hire 200 apprentices.
- Canadian Union of Skilled Workers (CUSW)** - highlighting successful partnerships with ASETAs across Ontario.
- Ontario Power Generation** - has a number of Aboriginal workers on their Lower Mattagami River project.

Creating an Aboriginal Client Database

With Aboriginal pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs producing skilled tradespeople all across Ontario, AABO and apprenticeship stakeholder community have identified a need for a database to connect these tradespeople with employers. But bringing ASETAs into the future with a central database requires a system that has a delicate balance of power and usability. That's why AABO has hired a contractor to review and compare the strengths of various databases.

“This database will lead to expanded opportunities to market ASETAs clients.”

While ASETAs offer their own referral services, one point of contact will make it easier for employers to hire Aboriginal tradespeople, further expanding apprenticeship opportunities. Feedback from conference participants will be taken into account during the development of the database. It is hoped that initializing the database will provide employers everywhere access to the Aboriginal workforce.

