



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

January 15, 2021

Partnership between Kitselas First Nation and the Industry Training Authority to pave way for skilled trades career growth and local workforce development

Terrace, B.C. - As part of its commitment to support success in trades education and apprenticeship for First Nations, Industry Training Authority (ITA), in partnership with the Kitselas First Nation, is pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to increase sponsorship for individuals pursuing an apprenticeship in the trades, that will also lead to community-based training opportunities.

Through this MOU, the Kitselas First Nation becomes the sponsor of apprentices working on local projects, ensuring an appropriate cultural approach to an apprenticeship pathway. ITA is actively working toward reconciliation and supporting opportunities in high-value skilled trades careers for Indigenous peoples.

“As the B.C. economy continues to recover this year, northern nations such as Kitselas will be empowered by these partnerships where local employers take on Indigenous apprentices to gain skills towards a trade,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training. “There will be 73,000 job openings in the trades in the next decade, and these sponsorships teach valuable skills, offer competitive salaries and often result in a knowledge and cultural exchange that brings fresh perspectives to worksites and the local community as well as ultimately becoming steps towards reconciliation.”

“I am proud of the opportunities that Kitselas is attracting and look forward to our ability to serve other communities in the region through this momentous partnership,” said Kitselas First Nation Chief Judy Gerow.

The Kitselas First Nation was among the first Indigenous communities in B.C. to receive funding from the Government of Canada through the Canada-British Columbia Workforce Development Agreement for training programs, including the Kitselas Community-Led Apprenticeship Development (KCAD) program. KCAD provides members with an interest in trades with funded tuition, connections with employer sponsors, and the ability to begin working as a registered apprentice. As the number of community projects around Terrace and Kitselas territory grows, apprenticeship will allow the Kitselas First Nation to continue to increase their self-determination and establish a local workforce.

“As General Manager of Kitselas Five Tier LP, I am proud to see our partner recognize the value of our community-led approach and choose to walk alongside us as we continue delivering these services,” said David Hansen.

The Five Tier System is a self-directed approach to employment and labour development developed by Kitselas First Nation's Employment and Training (KET) Department. The five tiers include: wholistic healing (self-assessment), skills for success, work experience, advanced training, and job placement and opportunities for advancement.

"This partnership reinforces the strong commitments that the Kitselas First Nation has made to increase the number of career opportunities in the region and supports their beliefs in the importance of education and training," said Michael Cameron, Director of Indigenous Initiatives at ITA.* "Community-based training and initiatives will raise the profile of trades professions as fulfilling careers for not only Indigenous people, but for all British Columbians."

Previous partnerships with Indigenous communities and ITA have increased their socio-economic wellbeing. In 2018, the Lil'wat First Nation partnered with ITA and Murphy Construction who funded community-based training for local apprentices to work on construction projects within their community. This allows members the ability to stay local while working toward the completion of their apprentice hours and technical training.

Supporting the success of Indigenous people and communities in trades careers is a key commitment at ITA. The partnership between ITA and the Kitselas First Nation will go a long way for members considering apprenticeship and will put them on a path toward certification.

* Michael Cameron was ITA's Director of Indigenous Initiatives from January 2018 to January 2021.

About the Kitselas First Nation

With a population of approximately 700 people, Kitselas traditional territory is located in Northwest British Columbia. Their reserves and territory surround the City of Terrace and the Skeena River. Kitselas is a progressive nation, proud of their heritage and achievements, both historic and contemporary. The Kitselas vision is to be a financially self-sufficient and self-governing Nation that provides responsible leadership in all that they do.

The Kitselas Canyon, located in Gitau, is the heart of the Kitselas nation. The Canyon is a stronghold of the Kitselas people, who once charged traders and travelers on the river a toll to pass through. The Canyon is now a National Historic Site of Canada and open to visitors.

About the Industry Training Authority (ITA)

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia's skilled trades system. ITA works with apprentices, employers, industry, labour, training providers and government to fund training, issue credentials, support apprenticeships, set program standards and increase opportunities in the trades. For more information, visit itabc.ca.

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