

OCNI/FNPA Project with Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development a Huge Success

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PICKERING, ONTARIO, CANADA, May 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In 2021 the Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries ([OCNI](#)), in partnership with First Nations Power Authority ([FNPA](#)), was awarded a grant of \$500,000 from the Ontario Government to undertake

a year long program directed towards promoting the education and training in skilled trades to women and Indigenous people. The goal of this initiative “Indigenous & Women Skilled Trade Development Pathway to the Nuclear Industry/Clean Energy Sector” was to recruit, train, and

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*Dr. Ron Oberth, OCNI
President*



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place women and Indigenous people into skilled trades positions with nuclear industry supplier companies in the Tri-County and Durham regions to support nuclear life extension projects. “Our government is for working for workers to help them earn bigger paycheques for themselves and their families,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. “I am proud to support this project that gives Indigenous people the training they need for rewarding and well-paying jobs in the nuclear and energy sector.”

The project successfully wrapped up in March 2022 and exceeded performance measurement targets with a total

of 42 women and Indigenous people participating in upskilling, training, experiential, apprenticeship, and employment placement opportunities focused on carpentry, millwright, electrical, plumbing, construction, and project coordination. The success of this project is

contributed to multiple training providers, unions, Indigenous organizations, and employer partners coming together to support the project.

The OCNI/FNPA employment pathway project was part of the Ontario Government's new two-year \$115 million Skills Development Fund (SDF) intended to support workers and apprentices in meeting the challenges brought on by COVID-19 and to reduce obstacles related to hiring, training, and retaining workers to participate in the province's economic recovery. This project created education and employment opportunities for skilled trades jobs, delivered pre-employment soft-skills and hard-skills training, on-the-job learning experiences, and further training opportunities within industrial trade apprenticeships. This proactive approach to filling the gap for the provincial demand for skilled trades people will help to ensure the wider nuclear industry/clean energy sector is supported by a steady stream of qualified workers. The project was divided into multiple, smaller initiatives tailored to meet the career goals of the participants.



“This project aligns perfectly with the objectives of the Skills Development Fund,” said Ron Oberth, President and CEO, OCNI. “It connects groups hardest hit by the pandemic with a sector that is leading Ontario’s economic recovery while contributing to the province’s Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions reduction program.”

One initiative, “Women in Skilled Trades Readiness Program”, was a ten-week trades and skills training workshop series that offered women an opportunity to learn about and explore a career in the trades. In partnership with Carpenters Union Local 2222, the Adult Learning Center, and employment service provider VPI Working Solutions, this program included an introduction to carpentry and scaffolding course, and a hands-on component to build a much-needed new shed for the local Women’s House shelter. Ryan Plante of UBC Local 2222 states “having the participants of the program build the shed created a great opportunity to promote skilled trades awareness while giving back to our community partners, it was a great fit and we were pleased to participate”.

“The Introduction to Millwrighting Program” developed by the Millwright Regional Council of Ontario (MRCO) was another initiative of this project. In partnership with Millwright Union Local 1592 and 2309, Durham College, Adult Learning Center Grey/Bruce/Georgian, Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) organizations Huronia Area Aboriginal Management Board

(HAAMB) and Kagita Mikam, Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation (OPG), and the

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario (AABO), participants completed a specialized six-week training program focused on safety fundamentals and an introduction to the millwright trade. All 15 Indigenous participants in the program successfully completed the union entrance exam and were indentured into the Millwright union as first year apprentices and placed with nuclear supplier companies. “The MRCO is committed to working with our partners, Indigenous and community leaders to build pathways for success through education, experience, and knowledge,” says Mark Beardsworth, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Millwright Regional Council of Ontario.

One of the participants in the Project Coordinator initiative who attained employment as a Procurement and Proposal Coordinator says of the program “In the past five to six months alone, the world has opened up for me. I have a much better understanding of project management, and am now getting hands-on experience. I’m grateful to OCNI for the leadership training, licenses, and wrap-around supports. The experience I’ve received is invaluable to me.” Another participant shares “Within weeks, I was called for an interview...then offered the job. The industry itself will be challenging with lots of new opportunities with the growing need to be net-zero and reduce climate impacts. I genuinely believe I am in the right place. Thank you for helping me get here!”

OCNI and FNPA hope to build on this program and expand it to a wider audience beyond Southern Ontario to attract and train Indigenous peoples for careers in the Canadian clean energy sector, and to create a cohort of skilled Indigenous workers to participate on Small Modular Reactor (SMR) projects across Canada. “This is the start of not just producing [tradespeople] but producing entrepreneurs” said Guy Lonechild, President and CEO of First Nations Power Authority, “these occupations will help to build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada, and together with our partners, look to build towards a cleaner energy future for future generations to enjoy”.

Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries (OCNI) is an association of more than 200 Ontario-based suppliers to the nuclear industry that employ around 20,000 highly skilled and specialized engineers, technologists, and trades people.

First Nations Power Authority (FNPA) is Canada’s only not-for-profit organization mandated to help grow Indigenous-led independent power producers while greening Canada’s electricity grid. For Further Information Contact:

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