

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2006

## ATTENTION: BUSINESS EDITORS

### AN ABORIGINAL SOLUTION TO ATLANTIC CANADA'S SKILLED TRADE, APPRENTICESHIP AND TECHNOLOGY LABOUR SHORTAGE

**Membertou (Sydney), Nova Scotia** – *Navigating Skilled Trades*, held November 14-16, 2006 at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre will help employers address the shortage of skilled workers in the Atlantic Canada's trades, apprenticeship and technology sectors.

The skilled labour shortage, caused by the aging workforce and slower growth in population, combined with the out-migration and increased economic activity in several sectors/regions, is creating increased pressure on employers to meet labour demand requirements. The patchwork economic forecast of Atlantic Canada, coupled with geographic challenges, also escalates the private sectors' ability to secure a skilled and consistent workforce using traditional training, recruitment and retention strategies.

"First Nation communities must focus on training and employment opportunities within the trades, apprenticeship and technology markets", said Chief Terry Paul, Membertou First Nation. "With a growing population and eager youth, Atlantic Canadian Aboriginals are in a great position to address the skill trades gap while training our people for long-term careers."

"Employers are searching for innovative solutions to the skilled worker shortage in Atlantic Canada, said Kelly Lendsay, President and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada. "The Atlantic region has the capacity to mobilize a skilled Aboriginal workforce from this youngest, fastest growing and largely untapped human resource. The day has arrived for Atlantic Canada to awaken to the Aboriginal solution as a competitive and socio-economic advantage."

"Atlantic Canada's success in the global economy will largely depend on its ability to narrow the skill gap in trades, apprenticeship and technology, said Paul Brennan, Director of Corporate and Community Relations, Association of Canadian Community Colleges. "Investments in training and employment strategies will generate a skilled workforce and close the socio-economic gap."

Many of Canada's leading authorities in trades, apprenticeship, technology and Aboriginal diversity will be present at *Navigating Skilled Trades* to help employers connect to the Aboriginal community and increase workplace employment opportunities for Aboriginal people. Focus will be placed on the accelerating demand for skilled workers in the aerospace, construction, fisheries, transportation, mining, manufacturing, transportation and oil and gas sectors throughout the Atlantic Canada region.

*Navigating Skilled Trades* is hosted by the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) in conjunction with the Nova Scotia regional planning committee; Department of Education, Nova Scotia Community College, Construction Sector Council, the First Nation Human Resource Development Council, Mi'kmaq Employment & Training Secretariat, Aboriginal Peoples Training & Employment Commission and Service Canada. The symposium is funded by Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, Maritime Northeast Pipeline and the Sector Council Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada.