

Introduction to Mining, Parkland College and Carlton Trail College

A collaborative effort of the two Colleges to work with a number of potash mines within their two regions to develop an Aboriginal workforce for entry-level positions in the mines and processing facilities. The Introduction to Mining prepared the students for a number of specific entry-level positions as well as preparing them for further education in minerals industry related occupations.

In this project, students received certification in two separate training programs: Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR) Environmental Monitoring and Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) Mining Essentials.

BEAHR Environmental Monitoring, developed by Environmental Careers Organization Canada, was delivered over seven weeks. The program focused on understanding environmental issues, government regulations, monitoring effects, risk management and mitigation measures, sampling protocols and basic research, mapping, and journaling. An Aboriginal cultural component ran throughout the program.

MiHR's Mining Essentials lasted 10 weeks. It focused on the essential skills profiles in MiHR's National Occupation Standards for entry-level occupations and combined work readiness skills as defined by a development committee of industry, Aboriginal organizations, and education experts. Further exploration of a career in the mining industry included the potash mine tours, guest speakers, and visits from recruiters.

Aboriginal people offer the potential of a strong workforce in Saskatchewan. This project offered Aboriginal people the foundational training required to be successful in skills training. They received safety training and environmental monitoring skills that will help them better understand the environmental impact issues facing mines and First Nations communities.

26 female and 28 male students from 10 First Nations Bands enrolled in the program over the two-year period. All students who participated in this program gained new skills and a better understanding of the opportunities for employment in the mining industry. Completion of program was both a personal and professional success for many students.