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## **IMII funding Virtual Reality Equipment for Morris Interactive's Indigenous Pre-employment program for potash mining**

*Supporting indigenous Success in Industry*

January 11, 2024

(Saskatoon, SK. Canada) - The International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII) is pleased to announce an investment of \$11,000 to fund the purchase of Virtual Reality equipment for Morris Interactive's Indigenous Pre-employment program, *Digital Transformation in Potash Mining*.

The program is leveraging the power of virtual reality to enable the Indigenous participants to have access to two innovative platforms designed to enhance safety awareness - specific to potash mining - and expose them to various trades. The program utilizes Industry Sponsor Noble Construction's potash-specific VR safety modules which provide an immersive learning experience, allowing participants to navigate real-world scenarios and master essential safety processes in a risk-free virtual environment. The second virtual reality platform opens doors to a dynamic exploration of different trades within the mining industry. This hands-on approach not only broadens their understanding of the industry but fosters a practical and informed perspective on potential career paths.

"Morris Interactive is very thankful for IMII's ongoing support as we continue to add innovative additions to the program to give the participants the best experience possible" says Morris Interactive's CEO, Mathew Cey. "Our program's KPI is employment or further education following graduation, but the most important aspect is ensuring all of our graduates work safely once they join the industry. Thanks to the VR safety modules, students can learn complicated safety processes specific to potash mining at their own pace."

"Virtual reality's ideal for safety training as it expedites learning and improves information retention," says IMII's Executive Director Al Shpyth. "Research conducted into VR has found that users retain information much more easily with virtual reality and further improves safety training as it easily measures logistics and competency. Introducing VR in a program such as Morris Interactive's Digital Transformation in Potash Mining also recognizes the ability of IMII's minerals member companies to create digital twins - replicas of real mines, which personnel can explore using VR headsets and familiarize themselves with the mine's layout before experiencing it first-hand."

As an employer of several of the graduates of the program, and an Industry sponsor since the pilot project was delivered on Cowessess First Nation, Noble Construction has continued to do their part in improving the program. "We are very pleased that the modules have enriched the learning experience for Morris Interactive's students" says Les Roberts, General Manager of Noble Construction. "While the VR modules allow students to safely explore real-word underground work environments, the training they receive is a vital component of worker competency and a positive safety culture. We look forward to future collaboration with Morris Interactive in our shared pursuit of safety education excellence."



Morris Interactive is excited to be running two programs simultaneously in January - in Saskatoon and Yorkton. The Saskatoon Edition received an immense number of Indigenous applicants, totaling over 2,150.

**About IMII:**

IMII is a non-profit organization jointly funded by industry and government and is committed to developing and implementing innovative education, training, research and development partnerships for supporting a world-class minerals industry.

IMII serves as an Innovation Steward to strengthen the Saskatchewan minerals industry's competitiveness and growth through Research, Development & Demonstration and Education & Training to drive the future's Qualified & Representative Workforce.

**About Morris Interactive:**

Founded in 2003, Morris Interactive has been working with organizations to develop their people and their business.

Morris Interactive believe our people and our relationships are what drive business growth and success. We work with businesses of all sizes across multiple industries including agriculture, public sector, healthcare, mining, construction, as well as with over 210 First Nations and Métis organizations.

The Digital Transformation in Potash Mining program was initially piloted by Morris Interactive on Cowessess First Nation in 2021, which was funded by IMII. Following the initial delivery, the Mosaic Company announced a long-term investment of \$1 million dollars to Partner with Morris Interactive and expand the program to provide more Indigenous students over the following five years.

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