

MEDIA RELEASE

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Indigenous peacekeeping training pilot first of its kind in Western Canada

On-reserve band members participate in four locations across province

Tuesday, February 9, 2010 – An indigenous peacekeeping training pilot being delivered through a partnership between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology was unveiled in Saskatoon today. The partnership was established in response to identified public safety concerns from Saskatchewan First Nations communities.

The training partnership is being facilitated by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN). The aim of the initiative is to train peacekeepers on reserve to provide prevention and intervention services, respond to community and family crises, control crowd activity, secure investigation scenes and liaise with the RCMP.

"This is a proactive approach; candidates on reserve working in areas of security and community services are selected by their community to participate in the training. The aim is to improve community safety within our territories," says Vice Chief Delbert Wapass.

In June 2009, the Chiefs-in-Assembly directed FSIN to negotiate a First Nations peacekeeping initiative that would include infrastructure and protocol development, funding, quality training and capacity development.

The training is composed of 23 courses; 18 are SIAST's correction and policing based courses and five are self governance and peacekeeping courses designed by First Nations University of Canada. In addition to classroom instruction, the training includes 90 hours of field experience in First Nations communities. The program is comprised of four levels: Level 1 and Level 2 is being delivered in the four pilot areas: La Ronge, Prince Albert, Yorkton and North Battleford. More than 80 candidates are enrolled in the training. Levels 3 and 4 will be completed before the end of June.

"We're honoured to join in this partnership and to collaborate in responding to an important First Nations training need," says Dr. Robert G. McCulloch, SIAST president and CEO.

Four peacekeeping co-ordinators have been hired by FSIN to work directly with the trainees. Candidates on reserve working in areas of security, health care or community services are chosen by their community to participate in the training. The aim is to eventually grant the trainees peace officer status.

The Indigenous Peacekeeping pilot began February 1 and will wrap up at the end of June. Plans call for the training to be rolled out to First Nations communities across the province.

FSIN represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of Treaty, as well as the promotion, protection and implementation of the Treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 14,000 students were enrolled in SIAST programs in the most recent academic year; additionally, the organization drew almost 30,000 individual course registrations. Through program and course registrations, SIAST served almost 26,000 distinct students with programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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