



For Immediate Release

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**Innovative Partnerships Lead to Customized Training for the Minerals Industry**

An innovative partnership between several diverse groups has proven to be an effective model to provide employment training for the minerals industry. Northwest Community College, Canadian Zinc Corporation, the Mine Training Society of the Northwest Territories and the Smithers Exploration Group partnered to develop a unique program which concluded on August 7 and graduated eight students from the communities of Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson and Fort Providence, Northwest Territories. The students successfully completed 5 weeks of hands-on, field based training at the Prairie Creek Mine Site, a zinc-silver-lead property owned by Canadian Zinc. The training camp was set in the spectacular Mackenzie Mountains, within the watershed of the South Nahanni River and in the traditional territory of the Deh Cho First Nations.

The customized training program consisted of numerous industry standard safety certifications and three technical courses: Mining Exploration Field Assistant, Drill Core Technician Basic Training and Prospector Basic Training courses. The program was custom designed and delivered to meet the employment skills needs of Canadian Zinc Corporation. Northwest Community College School of Exploration and Mining (NWCC SEM) instructors brought the expertise to support student success and teach essential skills as well as technical skills through a variety of teaching models. "These eight students have now graduated with skills to meet the needs of the minerals and natural resources industries and as a result have already been hired by Canadian Zinc Corporation" says Danielle Smyth, SEM Project Administrator. Since 2004, NWCC SEM has graduated more than 900 students, and more than 70 per cent of these have found employment or pursued further education.

The unique program provided positive outcomes for each of the partner organizations, the students, communities, and the minerals industry as a whole. Strong relationships with industry partners are key to the success of NWCC SEM programs. The Smithers Exploration Group, NWCC SEM's founding industry partner, and an industry program Advisory Committee ensures that NWCC SEM continues to deliver cutting edge innovative training as needs of industry change. Smithers Exploration Group President, Rob Boyce highlighted the importance of remote and field based training, "The ability to hold a training session in a remote location further advances the goal of providing skills-based education to local people, which in turn enables them to pursue employment opportunities in the minerals industry".

The Mine Training Society, one of the partner organizations in the project, is the premier training and employment agency for Canada's northern mining industry. The role of the Mine Training Society is to build capacity and to ensure that Aboriginal people and other Northerners have education and skills they need to become employed in long-term jobs in the NWT mining sector. General Manager, Hilary Jones, comments on the exceptional nature of the project partnership, "We are excited for the prospects of the graduates in the NWCC SEM program – not only will they be able to work with Canadian Zinc, but will be a valuable resource for exploration companies in the Deh Cho. This program would not have come about without the great partnership built around this project: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Canadian Zinc, Dehcho First Nations and Liidlii Kue First Nation, and the willingness of Northwest Community College to stretch to meet the unique needs of the people of the Deh Cho."

Special thanks are due to Canadian Zinc Corporation for the use of their operating camp facilities, including a fully equipped Core Shack, an operational Diamond Drill and a full service exploration camp.

The onsite Canadian Zinc staff also generously donated their time and expertise to assist the instructors and students with guest lectures and safety workshops. The Company's vision is the development and successful operation of the Prairie Creek Mine with controlled road access, where the ecology is protected, and mineral extraction with its related economic benefits successfully co-exist with traditional aboriginal land uses and, the Nahanni National Park Reserve. General Manager, Chris Reeves hopes to work with NWCC SEM again in the future and states that "Canadian Zinc was extremely pleased with the exploration skills training program delivered by Northwest Community College at our Prairie Creek Mine in the Northwest Territories" said Reeves. "We are even more delighted with the calibre of individuals now employed with our company after completing the program".

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