

# Prairie Creek Mine training program gets boost

*Mine Training Society receives \$200,000 for equipment*

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Deh Cho

The Mine Training Society of the Northwest Territories has received \$200,000 to support a training program designed to prepare Deh Cho residents for job opportunities at the Prairie Creek Mine.

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) provided the funding through its Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development Program. The program focuses on long-term economic growth, economic diversification and capacity building in all three territories.

The society will use the funding to purchase equipment to be used in a two-and-a-half-year training program. The program is the result of a partnership between the society, the Canadian Zinc Corporation, Aurora College, Arctic Response, Dehcho First Nations and Deh Cho commun-

ities, said Hilary Jones, the society's general manager.

"We're really excited. It's a great partnership and it's the first time we've really concentrated on the Deh Cho," she said.

## **Mine administration course**

Through the program, which began in November, a mine administration course was offered in Fort Simpson, heavy equipment operator training was offered in Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte and an emergency medical first responder course was delivered in Nahanni Butte and Fort Simpson.

This year, the society will be offering a wide variety of training courses including camp cook, mineral exploration field assistant, diamond drill assistant, environmental monitor training, emergency medical first responder and safety training.

"We have a huge suite of programs we're doing this year in the

Deh Cho," she said.

Jones said the \$200,000 will help support the delivery of the training. Trucks, all-terrain vehicles, safety equipment and GPS units are among the training equipment that will be purchased.

The society plans to establish a training centre in Fort Simpson but until a suitable location can be found training will be offered in Deh Cho communities and at the mine site.

## **Camp cook program**

A camp cook program is one of the training sessions the society will be offering this year. Starting in May at Prairie Creek, six participants will receive training that follows the occupational standards established for camp cooks. Additional material will also be added to the course.

At the end of the session, the participants will be encouraged to write their trades entrance exam which would allow them to register

as apprentices to work at the mine in 2013, Jones said.

"We're pretty excited about that one," she said.

The overall training program will run until March 31, 2014. Jones said all of the training will be aimed towards securing Deh Cho residents jobs at the mine or in their own community. It will build capacity in the Deh Cho, she said.

The society has hired Fort Simpson resident Darlene Sibbeston as a job coach for the project. Candy Brown, a former Fort Simpson resident, will also be working on the project as a career and employment assessment officer.

Given the level of activity in the Deh Cho, Jones there will be many opportunities for employment. Jones listed the silica sand project near Fort Liard and the potential for copper at the Redstone property 290 kilometres south of Norman Wells as two possible areas of growth.