



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 25, 2019

MOU increases trades education and employment opportunities for the people of Gaw Tlagee, Old Massett

Old Massett, Haida Gwaii, B.C.— As part of its commitment to support success in trades education and apprenticeship for First Nations, and actively working towards reconciliation, Industry Training Authority (ITA), in partnership with Old Massett Village Council (OMVC), is pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

“I think this is a great project to help us meet our training needs in our Village and Nation to create employment opportunities,” said Elected Chief Duffy Edgars, Old Massett Village Council. “By investing in our community with local training opportunities, we are creating a stronger future for ourselves; that is what this MOU can help bring to us.”

“Our government’s commitment to reconciliation is embedded in our daily work,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. “The rights of First Nations communities to be leaders in their economies, skills training, and employment opportunities speaks to UNDRIP article 21.1. With 71,000 trades jobs expected in B.C. in the next decade, it’s important First Nations people have access to skills training and apprenticeship opportunities to be part of these good-paying, family-supporting careers.”

Through this MOU, OMVC becomes the sponsor of apprentices working on local projects, ensuring employment for their local communities and creating an appropriate cultural approach to an apprenticeship pathway and experience. As an apprenticeship sponsor, OMVC has the responsibility to register apprentices, track their hours, and work within their community’s Community Benefit Agreements to ensure contractors are hiring registered apprentices.

This MOU formalizes an agreement to support apprenticeship opportunities and training that will offer greater local skills creation and employment opportunities, economic development, and a sustainable work force.

“Fostering an environment that gives Indigenous people more control over—and success in—trades training and apprenticeship is an essential part of our journey towards reconciliation,” said Michael Cameron, Director of Indigenous Initiatives with ITA. “We’re confident that this will attract new and different contractors and urge those that haven’t been working with First Nations employers to work with them.”

The OMVC Comprehensive Community Plan (CPP) states:

“Gin ‘waadluwaan gud ahl kwaagiidang. Everything depends on everything else. Xaadgee tl’a hlgangulee ‘aayaaga, Haida’s are good hard workers. This statement is to represent the mindset of a people who have worked diligently for the well-being of their Nation, community, Clan, family, and self. The Community of Gaw have demonstrated themselves as hard workers during the Community Planning Process. 260 homes stand in our village, and our estimated population is 712, and growing. Our CCP outlined our need to improve our Housing and infrastructure. To increase our access to housing, and to increase access to locally sourced home maintenance, building and repair materials. We are currently beginning to create a housing solution with strategic planning that will include our whole community.”

About Old Masset Village Council (OMVC)

The Old Massett Village Council is the administrative and governing body of (Old Massett) Gaw Tlagee and (New Town) Tlaga Gawtlas. The Village of Old Massett is on the northern shore of Graham Island, the largest and most northern island of XAAYDAGA GWAAY.YAAY (Haida Gwaii). Old Massett and New Town is home to Gaw Xaadée (Old Massett People) who previously occupied a number of different villages in their clan’s territory.

About the Industry Training Authority (ITA)

The Industry Training Authority (ITA) leads and coordinates British Columbia’s skilled trades system. ITA works with apprentices, employers, industry, labour, training providers and government to fund training, issue credentials, support apprenticeships, set program standards and increase opportunities in the trades. For more information, visit itabc.ca.

-30-

Media Contact

Nicole Adams
Director of Communications
Industry Training Authority
604-364-1039
nadams@itabc.ca