

Partnership Update

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Spirit Lake Tribe Creates Opportunities for NCCI Entrepreneurship Trainees

Graduates Paired to Form Teams to Bid on Real Projects

By Pat Smutz, Communications Director, NW LECET

SPIRIT LAKE, ND- The Spirit Lake Tribal Council has taken the Native Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI) Entrepreneurship Training program graduates to another level by finding sub-contracting projects for them to bid on competitively and win contract awards to do work on tribal buildings. Painting the old recreation building is the first project the newly-trained entrepreneurs are bidding on after they sharpened their pencils and put together competitive bids that were submitted to the tribal council itself.

Following up on her promise to the NCCI graduates that she would make sure they attained jobs, Tribal Chair Myra Pearson has engaged the council in the management role of evaluating and determining the awarding of the project. Graduate teams were expected to submit professional bids at tribal standards and comply with TERO and other tribal contracting rules.

"This positive outcome is how our Public Law 102-477 program gets rewarded for its efforts. It enables us to maximize good employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for tribal members on and off the reservation" commented Lynn Forcia, Division Chief Director of the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development. "I'm very proud of the efforts of the Spirit Lake Tribe."

The Spirit Lake training



Entrepreneur Program Trainees install a floor on a tribal building, as a practical exercise to learn estimation and bidding procedures.

was sponsored by the Public Law 102-477 through an interagency agreement between NCCI and the Department of the Interior's Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development. They received the second construction career training program through the NCCI Demonstration Project and that set the stage for developing the entrepreneurship opportunities.

The tribe has plans to continue the process of encouraging tribal members to form companies and hire tribal members as their workforce, and is in fact making arrangements with its housing

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Energy Auditor Training For Tribal Members to Be Next NCCI Reservation Program

Train the Trainers Module to Follow First Program

Energy auditors are becoming high in demand since the Stimulus bill came out with multitudes of energy conservation and sustainability concepts, and the Native Construction Careers Initiative is stepping up the plate in order to train tribal members to audit and train auditors for the large number of projects that will happen on reservations.

"I asked NCCI if they could put together an energy auditor program and they told me they already had one that was ready to go" commented Dr. Bob Middleton, Director of the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Office of Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs. "This dovetails nicely with not only the Stimulus money but also the FY 2010 Budget's energy programs. I think we have a situation where the tribes benefit in a number of ways including the economic development that will occur."

Working with the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC), a non-profit affiliated with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF), NCCI has developed an Energy Auditor Training program and a Train the Trainer Energy Auditor Program module. CCHRC was created to facilitate the development, use, and testing of energy-efficient, durable, healthy, and cost-effective building technologies. Their

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Entrepreneur:

Class has multiplier effect by helping local economy with new businesses and jobs

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authority and other agencies to allow for more bidding opportunities on tribal projects.

“This is exactly what the tribe committed to do with our entrepreneur graduates said NCCI Co-Founder Conrad Edwards after getting confirmation on the value-added experience the tribe is adding to the overall NCCI program. “We always get assurances from the tribes we partner with that they will provide job opportunities, and in this case bidding opportunities, for all our graduates immediately after training. It’s in our memorandum of understanding and we tell them up front that we won’t train for the sake of training. We want these tribal members to go out, sell their new skills and do something with their lives that gives them and their families a better quality of life.”

“I think this is the best ticket to real jobs for tribal members and careers for our new entrepreneurs” said Ed Hensley recently. “This is what we intended and the Spirit Lake Tribe is keeping to their word and delivering on it. The tribal council is to be applauded for their efforts, and thereby becoming a model for other tribes to follow.”

In fact, NCCI delivered a 300 Hour Remodel, Rehab and Emergency Repair class that gave the trainees the skills they needed to become

employed in the industry. They remodeled the old Tribal Housing headquarters and upon completion the \$200,000 valued building was reassessed and the value of the building is now estimated at \$1,187,000. A month later the graduates from that class participated in the NCCI 200 Hour Entrepreneurship Program. A successful effort that gave them the skills to bid and subcontract work that their previous class trained them to perform.

Kevin Buckles, Field Coordinator for NCCI, who is credited with coordinating the two NCCI programs on the reservation, brought a synergy to the system by working closely with the involved agencies. Buckles, a former TERO officer and a tribal member of the Fort Peck Tribes knows what it takes to put things together on the ground.

“A better model of synergy between the tribal council, the affected agencies and its tribal members would be hard to find” commented Buckles referring to the Spirit Lake programs. “As part of the strategy behind this type of tribal commitment to NCCI type of training, we envision it having a multiplier effect within the tribe’s unemployed population. More people than just our trainees will benefit. Our training isn’t for people who need a daily training stipend to survive the poverty we see on reservation, our training is for real careers either as a construction hand or a contractor.”

NCCI is now using the Spirit Lake program to illustrate the effectiveness of its model construction careers training modules. The OIEED is working on expanding their Public Law 102-477 program in this arena and has been advocating, along with NCCI, and its partners CTER and LIUNA, for an increase in the budget process.

Auditor Training:

Colder Climate States in Northern Tier are to be the first for Auditing and Weatherization

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expertise for the colder climate areas of Indian Country are going to be utilized for the training.

“I know our training is going to be the best” said NCCI Co-Founder Ed Hensley. “With the expertise we bring, coupled with their [CCHRC’s] professional help, we will deliver what the tribes need. Thanks to our friends in the Department of the Interior, we will have the funding to make it work for tribes in the northern climate areas.”

Allen McKay, TERO Director for the Spirit Lake Tribe was excited with the prospect of getting the auditor training for his unemployed tribal members. “

This is exactly what we need here” said McKay after hearing of the program from Hensley earlier. “We would love to have you put on another NCCI program here, especially this one.”

The Laborers’ International Union of North America, whom Hensley represents, is actively pursuing green training across the US and Canada. The quality of training and professional workmanship exhibited by the Laborers’ Union has prompted the National Building Trades (AFL-CIO) to recognize that “weatherization” is the work of the Laborers’ Union. Their efforts have resulted in a number of green training modules which NCCI intends to use in partnership



Entrepreneur Class Trainee Kyle Robertson works on a practical project for the tribe during the course of the program. The buildings chosen for NCCI programs are also the classroom sites.

with the Laborers Union. Plans to train tribal members for the actual weatherization deemed necessary by the NCCI-trained energy auditors, and for other green construction jobs created by the stimulus bill, have been formulated and are ready to be implemented on-site at a number of reservations.