

De Beers Funds Training Centre in

Attawapiskat

The most effective means of helping communities is by giving them a hand up, not a handout. This is a cornerstone of De Beers' approach to social sustainability. The idea is to build capacity, not dependency, in the communities with which the company interacts.

Education and training is key to ensuring lasting improvement in communities. De Beers is dedicated to the education, training and personal development of its community partners wherever it operates.

One initiative De Beers has funded which will make a significant difference to the people of a remote Northern Ontario community is the construction of a \$600,000 training centre in Attawapiskat, 90 kilometres east of the Victor Diamond Project.

The new training facility will assist community members prepare for employment at Victor and progress to post secondary education. Academic upgrading to a grade 12 level and pre-employment training will be the primary educational focus in the short term. A key component of the centre will be a computer lab with high-speed internet access for community-based delivery of online courses. The centre will also be used by the community for a range of life skills training and personal development programs including computer and internet classes, parenting and early childhood education, financial planning as well as business and administrative programs.

Post-secondary students will now be able to undertake much of their further education without leaving the community, which is a real benefit to the students, the community and the project. The Training Centre will contribute to Attawapiskat's economic viability, resource employment and community development. De Beers Canada will also benefit from this new facility by being able to select from a group of educated, local individuals who will contribute to Victor's continuous growth.

A Training Centre Committee composed of De Beers Canada, the Band Council, the Local Education Authority and Northern College has been established to manage the facility and its programs.

An application for funding has been made under the federal government's new Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program (ASEP). This program is designed to fund the training of Aboriginal community members for jobs at large (resource-based) projects such as the future Victor mine. Community-based programs will be implemented through the Attawapiskat Training Centre as well as facilities in other regional First Nation communities.

The Training Centre is expected to employ a full-time Administrator an Administrative Assistant and a number of contractual educators on a program-by-program basis. The funding will be managed by a partnership consisting of De Beers Canada and the First Nation communities of Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany and Moose Factory.

The design of the Training Centre consists of an octagonal center core for meetings or large gatherings combined with three wings for classroom activities, and a fourth wing encompassing the instructor's living quarters. Each classroom was designed to perform a different function. One classroom is wired with 22 computers for electronic training. A second training area will be set up as a standard classroom and utilized for academic upgrading. The third classroom will encompass a technical shop for hands on mechanical training. The instructor living quarters are fully self-contained and furnished within the complex.

Final commissioning of the training centre is expected to take place in January 2004, now that the Five Nations Energy grid has energized the new hydro-electric power line to the community.



Aerial views of Attawapiskat

The Training Centre was designed by members of the De Beers/AMEC Victor Project team, with input from the Attawapiskat First Nation and was constructed in October/November 2003. The modular complex was fabricated in thirteen sections by ATCO Structures in Calgary, Alberta and transported to the site via rail to Moosonee, Ontario where it was then loaded onto barges and shipped to Attawapiskat. Members of the Attawapiskat Technical Services construction company where then tasked with the installation of the foundation and underground services.

The construction and installation of the Training Centre was completed in less than six weeks, achieving 2,400 man-hours without an incident, accident or injury. All those who worked on the project are to be commended for their tremendous health and safety efforts.