

Savona First Nation House Inspection Program



2013 Class (L to R) Calvin Draney, Ken Mayo, CHI, RRFA(L) Patricia Linton, Tara Gonzalez-Nicholas, Charles Gairdener, Jenna Apsassin, Doug Seymour, Carey Lamb.(Missing from photo: Lonnie Gairdner and Louis Gregg).

An urgent need to improve living conditions in a south-central BC First Nations community has led to the creation of a house inspection technology program unique in Canada.

Now underway with nine students enrolled from Skeetchest'n Indian Reserve near Savona, BC, the BC Institute of Technology training program brings a much-needed service in assessing and maintenance of existing buildings on the reserve. The program also offers valuable career training to selected band members, and could become a model for career training on reserves across the province. The instructors are certified under rigorous ASTTBC home inspection licensing standards.

“Two of the students are qualified carpenters who have been repairing these homes for years, and another is the band housing coordinator. There are 104 existing homes on the reserve, where the entire program is being delivered,” says **Ken Mayo, CHI, RRFA(L)**, one of five instructors. “In just a few weeks the class shows growing understanding of house design, building and maintenance methods. These students will soon contribute their new skills to their community and to other reserves.”

BCIT's intensive twelve-week program opened early in April and includes a series of six sessions. The curriculum began with “The House as a System” and continues through two Technical Training courses, BC Building Code Part 9, Inspection Report Writing, Field Inspections and Building Envelope Performance. Each module reinforces practical skills of inspecting residential properties and reporting

the findings. Follow-up audited field training and appropriate experience can lead to CHI licensing for graduates. “This program will certainly improve the upkeep of homes, and increase employment on the reserve, bringing younger people new options for their futures,” says Ken Mayo. “I believe this positive first step can snowball. I’m proud to be a part of it, and enjoying this chance to learn about the Skeetchest’n community.”

Dawn McGrath, ROWP, Senior Construction Manager for the Skeetchestn Indian Band and a member of the First Nations Career Council, was instrumental in designing the program and arranged the initial funding to create the successful delivery model with the Active Measures program under Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and CMHC.

ASTTBC, representing some 10,000 BC technology professionals, including licensed home and property inspectors, applauds the initiative and the involvement of members.

“We created our First Nations Careers Council years ago to encourage young aboriginal men and women toward careers in technology, so we wholeheartedly welcome the opportunity to work with Skeetchest’n Band members striving to graduate this new program,” says **John Leech, AScT, CAE, Executive Director**. “ASTTBC maintains the province’s highest standards in home and property inspector certification. Ken Mayo, CHI, RRFA(L), and the other instructors, including **Hugh Poole, CTech, CPI**, and **Steve Banfield, CTech, CPI, RRFA**, are among BC’s top home inspection specialists and educators. This program could serve as a model for skills training on First Nations reserves across the province.”