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NEW FIRST NATION NORTHERN GOVERNANCE CERTIFICATE CLASSES UNDERWAY

WHITEHORSE – A unique program designed for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) to enhance their executive leadership and management skills capacity is being supported today by the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Yukon government, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and Yukon College.

The pilot Executive Development Program is an accredited Yukon College certificate in northern governance with a particular focus on self-governance under the Yukon First Nations Final and Self-Government Agreements.

“This program is a significant step in advancing modern self-government from a concept into a reality,” Premier Dennis Fentie said. “Courses like this provide capacity to the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations citizens to more fully realize the spirit and intent of the treaties. Our government will continue to support the full implementation of the treaties for the benefit of all First Nations and Yukon.”

The overall program is funded by \$1.05 million from the Northern Strategy Trust Fund and \$500,000 in direct and indirect contributions from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Yukon College is also providing considerable support in the form of staff time and other resources.

The program comprises 10 courses including Public Administration, Financial Management and Aboriginal Governance. The program is being delivered by Yukon College and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations in Haines Junction and Whitehorse over three years, so that students in the program can study while continuing to work for the First Nation.

“The partnership model of design and delivery is really working. It is so very important that First Nation governments have real influence over the training they receive. Champagne and Aishihik First Nations have a long history of strong leadership that we want to continue into the future,” Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Diane Strand, who is also a student on the program, said. “With over 30 per cent of our staff participating in this program we can already see the benefits. It is expanding our existing management capacity and is providing a forum for the development of our future leaders.”

“Yukon College is honoured to have been able to develop and deliver the Executive Development Program with CAFN. We hope that we’ll be able to use this program as a model for other Yukon First Nations,” Yukon College President Terry Weninger said. “Working together with First Nations on capacity development is in keeping with the College’s five-year strategic plan.”

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