



First Nations
Employment Society

NEWS RELEASE

Aboriginal Groups Announce the Creation of the Coastal Aboriginal Shipbuilding Alliance (CASA)

For Immediate Release – November 1, 2013

North Vancouver – Three Aboriginal training and employment organizations today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to create the Coastal Aboriginal Shipbuilding Alliance (CASA).

In the MOU, witnessed by **Jonathan Whitworth** - CEO of Seaspan ULC (Seaspan), the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS), Coast Salish Employment and Training Society (CSETS) and First Nations Employment Society (FNES) have agreed to jointly develop, design, deliver and evaluate quality training and employment programs and services in the shipbuilding industry for Aboriginal people living in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island.

“The award of the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS) to Seaspan creates a need for skilled workers in the marine industry,” said **John Webster**, President and CEO of ACCESS. “ACCESS is proud to be partnering with FNES and CSETS under the Coastal Aboriginal Shipbuilding Alliance to provide Aboriginal people with the means to gain the skills necessary to be part of this exciting opportunity.”

The MOU was signed at a ceremony at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre in North Vancouver. The guests, represented by a wide range of partners from Aboriginal organizations, Seaspan, educational institutions, unions and municipal, provincial and federal government representatives, were welcomed by Chief Gibby Jacob of the Squamish Nation and elder Ernie George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and treated to a performance by the Squamish Youth Group.

“This is a long-term partnership,” said **Marlene Rice**, Executive Director of CSETS. “We are joining forces to provide funding for training and assist our clients in finding employment in the shipbuilding and marine industries.”

Under the MOU, ACCESS, CSETS and FNES will now work together to ensure Aboriginal Peoples are poised to meet the challenges and opportunities created by the shipbuilding industry. In turn, this initiative will better equip industry to meet the greatly increased demand created by the federal shipbuilding contracts.

“We are honoured to sign this agreement with our ACCESS and CSETS colleagues,” said Chief **Garry Feschuk** of the Sechelt First Nation, and President of FNES. “Our goal is to create career opportunities for Aboriginal people. Together we can ensure a brighter future as a result of our joint training and employment programs for the shipbuilding industry.”

“Today’s signing ceremony marks yet another crucial milestone in the future of the NSPS,” said **Jonathan Whitworth**. “We are thrilled to partner with ACCESS, CSETS and FNES, and look forward to working with CASA to develop and grow a world-class shipbuilding and ship repair centre of excellence on the west coast.”



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About ACCESS

The Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society is designed to stimulate and support innovative labour market initiatives. Human resource development is an integral aspect of Aboriginal self-determination and capacity building. Partnership driven in spirit and in practice the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society is now guided by a group of six Aboriginal service delivery organizations in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. More information about ACCESS is available at <http://www.accessfutures.com/>.

About CSETS

The Coast Salish Employment & Training Society was created in 1997 through an agreement between the 19 Coast Salish First Nations and three Aboriginal Friendship Centres. The purpose of CSETS is to assist member organizations/Nations so that participants may gain training and become more employable.

About FNES

The First Nations Employment Society (FNES) is a non-profit society providing leadership in developing Aboriginal human resources at a regional level. FNES manages an agreement with Service Canada on behalf of the ten First Nations with delegated authority for training and employment in the Vancouver Sunshine Coast region of British Columbia. Our programs and services cover four labour markets, which include: Greater Vancouver, Lower Sunshine Coast, Upper Sunshine Coast, and the Pemberton region. Please visit www.fnes.ca for more information.

About Seaspan

Seaspan is an association of Canadian companies primarily involved in coastal marine transportation, shipdocking/ship escort, ship repair and shipbuilding services in Western North America. In addition to the marine transportation services offered directly through Seaspan, commercial ferry, shipyard and bunkering services are provided via affiliate companies: Marine Petrobulk, Seaspan Ferries, Vancouver Drydock, Vancouver Shipyards and Victoria Shipyards. The scope of Seaspan's services, the quality of its employees and over a century of successful participation in coastal commerce, make the company a major partner in the economy of the Pacific Northwest. Please visit www.seaspan.com for further information.

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