

Community Update: Nov.17, 2016

In an effort to keep communities and our partners informed, the Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office (MEBO) would like to provide this update on its activities during this past year and outline some of our plans for the coming year.

During the past year, considerable effort was put into reaching out to different industry partners to identify opportunities and, at the same time, promote these opportunities in the communities and find ways to address the needs of industry. We rolled out many training programs to help prepare individuals for these opportunities and in some cases provided wage subsidies to encourage industry to provide vital work experience and jobs for our people.



MEBO has also put great effort into helping government departments put stronger policy and processes in place to ensure local Aboriginals as part of their substantial procurement process. One example is with highway construction contracts. The province of Nova Scotia spends more than \$250 million each year on capital projects and highway construction. This is a major opportunity and we have been showing some success with them engaging more Aboriginals in highway construction this year, building upon success in 2015. These efforts have resulted in more than 20 highway construction jobs for local Aboriginals this year, some in Potlotek, in Waycobah, Paq'tnkek and Glooscap. We also approached Public Works Canada to take a similar approach on behalf of the federal government. This resulted in a similar agreement and success this year, with Parks Canada on the new St. Peter's Canal Bridge construction.

We helped a half dozen people gain valuable work experience in concrete work this year and also worked with the local union to train a half dozen individuals as electricians. About a dozen people are working in security with First Alliance Security of Waycobah as part of a contract with the Maritime Link and another dozen people are working in construction. There has been some success at the Donkin Mine, with Kitpu, the security company out of Eskasoni, recently securing the security contract for the mine site. This provides employment for several local Aboriginals and is a success to be built upon.

MEBO has had some good success this year, despite delays by funders due to the election of a new federal government. MEBO has also identified some needs or challenges that it wants to help address in the coming year. We are working on plans to providing a coordinated apprenticeship advancement effort, to help link job opportunities with local Aboriginals in or completing post secondary education and to broaden efforts to promote and train individuals for self-employment. Tapping into our extensive experience and broad network

of industry partners, MEBO is also developing plans to help match individuals on social supports to job opportunities.

Industry will often say they want to engage Aboriginals, but don't know how. MEBO brings solutions to the table for industry, a proven process to help them successfully engage Aboriginals and build upon their skilled workforce.

Below are some of the industry partnerships and training initiatives MEBO has undertaken during the past year.



Canadian Maritime Engineering (CME)

As part of its efforts to identify new economic opportunities and build partnerships with industry, in January Alex and Owen met with Tony Kennedy, president of Canadian Maritime Engineering (CME) at their Dartmouth head office. They learned a great deal about their operation, opportunities and plans for North Sydney.

Board Meeting with Unama'ki Chiefs- May 2016

In mid May 2016, MEBO held a Board meeting in Waycobah which including the five Unama'ki Chiefs. These regular board meetings with the Unama'ki Chiefs is another opportunity to brief leadership on activities and plans of MEBO and seek advice and guidance from our Chiefs.



TOUR DONKIN MINE:

Understanding the employment opportunities at the new Donkin Coal Mine was the objective when management of the Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office (MEBO) toured the mine in June, including a trip underground. The mine owners are in high gear preparing for the mine to go into coal production in the next month or two. Shown just before they went underground are mine manager, Shad Todd and Alex Paul and Owen Fitzgerald, of MEBO.

In May the MEBO Board of Directors received a briefing on the new Donkin Coal Mine by senior management from owners, Kameron Coal and Cline Coal. The Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office (MEBO)

Board of Directors, the Unama'ki Chiefs, directed MEBO to take the lead on this project related to employment and training. MEBO management then met with Donkin Mine officials to take a detailed look at employment opportunities and timelines.

Mine officials say the coal seam is 3.8 km out under the ocean and the total coal reserve has been identified as a half billion tons. Sixty percent of this coal is recoverable and Cline and Kameron Coal plan to eventually mine two million tons a year with production to start this summer. Mine officials estimate there will be 135 mining jobs when the mine is in production, with an additional 35 jobs on the surface, as well as trucking jobs.



Meeting with Pictou Landing re Boat Harbour:

It was an honor to meet with Chief Andrea Paul and her committee planning for the clean up of Boat Harbour. In October, Dan Christmas, Alex Paul and Owen Fitzgerald, of MEBO, were invited to share our experiences with the Cleanup of the Sydney Tar Ponds and their success in ensuring there was meaningful Aboriginal engagement. Boat Harbour clean up may cost \$150 million and will take several years. It is larger in size than the Tar Ponds was, but with less contaminants. Great discussion, great questions.

METI Class 1

MEBO is proud of the first graduates of this METI Class 1 program. In October, all obtained the Class 1 designation and will be doing their driving hours this month. Good job!



Meeting with Minister of Labour:

In September Owen and Alex had a great meeting with Labour Minister Kelly Regan. Very productive meeting, with some great discussion. MEBO appreciates having the province of Nova Scotia and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education as a partner.

Conference Board of Canada Study of MEBO:

In April the Conference Board of Canada released a major study that looked at lessons learned and critical success factors of the Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office. This study was done on behalf of Atlantic Policy Congress (APC). "This study is intended to provide guidance to Aboriginal organizations and leaders across the region as they look to addressing the critical issue of economic development, job creation and training," said John G. Paul, Executive Director with the Atlantic Policy Congress (APC). "It is hoped that this study will help to provide stakeholders with a deeper understanding of this organization in an effort to promote constructive debate around the role an Economic Benefits Office can play to help level the playing field for First Nations in Nova Scotia's economy," said Paul.



Resume Workshop at MEBO:

In preparation for employment opportunities related to the Maritime Link Project, in September MEBO held a Resume Workshop at their office in Membertou.



Aboriginal Engagement In Government Procurement

"Soon, I hope this will not be new or the exception, but the norm for all levels of government and all government departments to have policies and procedures to ensure Aboriginals are part of their contracts," said Alex Paul, Executive Director of the Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office.

"Slowly, we are making progress and you need to look no further than the work on the new St. Peter's Canal Bridge where you can find local Aboriginals are part of the work force," said Paul.

The federal government, through Parks Canada, awarded a \$15 million contract to Dexter Construction to build a new double-lane span that will replace the 80-year-old, single-lane bridge over the historic canal that connects the Bras d'Or Lake with the Atlantic Ocean. The new crossing should be in use by May 2017.

The province of Nova Scotia spends more than \$250 million a year on highway construction and the federal government spends billions of dollars each year on ships and planes, on supplies, on construction of buildings, and even bridges, such as the St. Peter's Canal Bridge. "This is a major opportunity and we believe and have demonstrated that having a diverse workforce and engaging Aboriginals can be a win-win for everyone," said Paul. "Our Economic Benefits Office has developed successful policies and procedures, as well as supports, to help ensure these partnerships succeed."

"Given a chance and with the proper training, our people can help governments and help these construction companies succeed," said Wilbert Marshall, Chief of Potlotek. "Our people want to work and we invite industry and government to partner with us." "When we work together, when industry works with First Nations, we all benefit."

The St. Peter's Canal bridge project builds upon the success of a similar initiative in 2015 where the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal worked with the First Nation community of Potlotek and the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office (MEBO) to develop and adopt a new approach to helping ensure diversity and Aboriginal engagement in large government contracts, in this case, highway construction. Together they undertook a pilot project that included a multi-million dollar highway construction project on Route 4 through the First Nation community of Potlotek. The results were better than any of the partners expected. As a result of this success, the province of Nova Scotia agreed to take a similar approach in 2016 on five highway construction projects across the province.

Officials with the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office worked with government officials to develop contract wording that encouraged Aboriginal engagement. Once the contract was awarded, MEBO staff engaged the construction company, assisting then in working with the first Nation communities. They helped with organizing community information sessions, helped with recruitment of workers, offered necessary training and even once the construction began, the MEBO staff continued to monitor the progress of the project and provided any support needed to ensure the partnership succeeded. Shown in the photo taken in August 2016, are Richard Polchis and Scott Johnson of Potlotek First Nation, two of five community members working on the New St. Peter's Canal Bridge Project.



Mi'kmaq Electrician Students Volunteer at the New Whitney Pier Youth Club: March, 2016

Six local Mi'kmaq that are training as electricians, have volunteered to work on the new building for the Whitney Pier Youth Club. These students were enrolled in a 12 week introduction training program as commercial and residential electricians. The program was put on by the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office in partnership with the local IBEW union, local 1852 in Whitney Pier. Their instructor, Peter Gillis, with IBEW 1852, supervised their work.

Recently Chester Borden, Executive Director of the Whitney Pier Youth Club, met with the students to express his appreciation for their work. Alex Paul, Executive Director with MEBO, said, "Work experience is a critical component of their training. We are thrilled that this work experience helps an important community organization like the Whitney Pier Youth Club."

Shown meeting with Chester Borden at the Youth Club are L-R: Aaron Cabot from Eskasoni, Shane Bernard and Dmitri Googoo from Waycobah, Pauline Doucette from Eskasoni, Chester Borden, Executive Director of the Whitney Pier Youth Club and Justin Cabot from Eskasoni.



Work Experience in Concrete Work:

Sponsored by MEBO, William Marshall and Seth Doucette of Chapel Island are part of a crew in Membertou that gained valuable work experience in concrete work. This photo was taken in August 2016.

Converter Station in Woodbine Maritime Link Project:

In September we toured the Converter Station site in Woodbine, near Marion Bridge, part of Emera NL Maritime Link project. The first person we met on site was Randall Googoo from Waycobah. Randall is supervisor with First Alliance Security of Waycobah. Randall also worked on security at Port Hawkesbury Paper. The Waycobah security company has the contract with ABB and the Maritime Link. There are about a dozen local Aboriginals working just in security on the Maritime Link. First Alliance Security currently employs a total of 30 local Aboriginals. Randall is shown with Owen Fitzgerald, Director with MEBO, who provided security training for the workers with First Alliance. In addition to security workers and labourers, there are three utility line workers working on site. These line workers went through MEBO training.



ABOUT MEBO:

MEBO seeks out and cultivates productive working relationships with industry and this has proven critical to understanding economic opportunities that exist. In doing so, it seeks to identify both employment and business opportunities for local Aboriginals. The Benefits Office helps industry find the workers they need through promotion and recruitment efforts. MEBO works to train and support both individuals and Aboriginal businesses to be part of these opportunities. Industry in turn capitalizes on MEBO as a single entry access portal to the human capital resident in First Nations communities.

MEBO acts as a liaison between the First Nation communities and businesses, government and industry. The Economic Benefits Office puts great effort into engaging the First Nation communities to ensure they are provided with good information and timely information on new economic opportunities. This includes individuals and Aboriginal businesses. MEBO also shares opportunities and provides guidance to Aboriginal businesses on how to engage with the industry partners.

As part of its community engagement, MEBO works closely with the Native Employment Officers (NEOs) for each of the Mi'kmaq communities. By engaging the NEOs, the Benefits Office better engages the communities. The NEOs provide input from the communities as to their priorities and needs and the NEOs make the final recommendation as to who should get into training. MEBO also works collaboratively with other Aboriginal organizations in the province that are involved in economic development and training.

Once MEBO builds a relationship with industry and understands their needs, it engages industry in all aspects of its training program, from promotion to recruitment, to design of the training program, as well as delivery of the training. Finally, the Benefits Office encourages industry to provide on the job work experience, hoping that will lead to long-term employment.

To date, MEBO has trained more than 1,000 individuals and helped create more than 500 jobs for local Aboriginals. The office had received national and even international recognition for its unique and successful efforts in economic development.

For More Information, Contact MEBO:

If you have any questions, please contact our office in Membertou. Staff will be happy to help you. For any training, the first step is to contact your community Native Employment Officer (NEO).

Visit our website, www.MEBONS.ca, which integrates social media to provide timely information so we can better engage community members and communicate more effectively.

To keep you better informed, like our Facebook page: Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office, and follow us on Twitter (@MikmawEBO). We regularly post new information and updates to our twitter and Facebook pages.

Contact Information:

Alex Paul, Executive Director
Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office
201 Churchill Dr., suite 201, Membertou, NS
Tel: 902-562-4700

www.MEBONS.ca

Twitter: @MikmawEBO

FaceBook: Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office