



Workforce Connex

Alberta Workforce Connex...

Alberta Forum: Building Strong

Private Sector and Aboriginal Partnerships

October 18-19, 2006

Red Deer, Alberta



Acknowledgement

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) would like to acknowledge and thank members of the Alberta regional planning committee who dedicated their time and talent to help make the Alberta Workforce Connex forum a successful event.

Alberta Workforce Connex Planning Committee

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- Gloria Anderson, Bigstone Cree Nation
- Diane Desjarlais, Métis Settlements General Council
- Connie Geroux-Snelling, Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
- Tom Ghostkeeper, Métis Settlements General Council
- Anne Many Heads, Treaty 7 Economic Development Corporation
- Kim Marcel, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
- Mark McCallum, Métis Nation of Alberta
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- Ralph Bellstedt, Service Canada
- Peter Crossen, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Don Gardener, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry
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Private Sector Representatives

- Elizabeth Aquin, Petroleum Services Association of Canada
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- Bill Campbell, Canada Safeway (Co-Chair)
- Cheryl Knight, Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada
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- Denise McBride, Shell Canada

AHRDCC would like to thank Elder Louie Rain of the Louis Bull First Nation for delivering the opening and closing prayer, the Northern Cree Singers and dancers (Josh Moonias and Chad Yellowbird) and speakers, Christine Couture (Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry) and Ralph Bellstedt (Service Canada) for their contribution to the forum opening.

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ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF CANADA
CONSEIL POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES
AUTOCHTONES DU CANADA

Canada¹¹

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Message CEO/President

Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada

KELLY LENDSAY

January 2007

Dear Workforce Connex participant,

It is my pleasure to present the outcomes of the Alberta Workforce Connex forum, which was held in Red Deer, Alberta, October 18-19, 2006.

Workforce Connex is a national forum series designed to increase Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship programs.

The concept behind the series came to life in 2005 when Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) undertook a series of roundtables with stakeholders across the country. The principal purpose of the tour was to bring together Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), the private sector and other key stakeholders to discuss collaborative partnerships in Aboriginal labour force development.

Throughout this process the council has emphasized the importance of collaboration, coordination and communication. To achieve results, the potential partners; government, the private sector, community groups and Aboriginal people, have to be committed to implement sustainable partnership strategies.

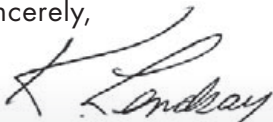
It was rewarding to see this vision unfold through active discussion among all participating stakeholder groups at the Alberta forum. Participants were engaged in discussion and motivated to break down barriers and find solutions to resolve the current training, recruitment and retention issues of Aboriginal people.

It's now critical for Alberta Workforce Connex participants to continue dialogue and build strong and sustainable partnerships that will encourage and provide training and jobs for Aboriginal people in Alberta.

The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC) will continue its work to facilitate discussion among trades and apprenticeship stakeholders to help build a skilled Aboriginal workforce that feeds the growing need of Canada's Aboriginal people and economy.

We would like to thank you, the participant, for your involvement in Alberta Workforce Connex. The council looks forward to your continued involvement and added value in this multi-dimensional partnership initiative. Your role is critical!

Sincerely,



Kelly Lendsay
President and CEO
Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada

Executive Summary

Foreword

This report is a summary of findings from the Alberta Workforce Connex forum. The findings outlined in this report are representative of the Alberta participants and have not been altered or analyzed.

This summary is focused on the input participants shared during interactive roundtable and plenary discussions. The findings will serve as a starting point for the development of new private sector/Aboriginal employment centre partnerships in the Alberta region, and for the development of the region's go-forward action plans.

The "AS SAID" reports from across the country will be analyzed for trends that will be captured in a comprehensive and integrated national report that will be used to shape initiatives in the AHRDCC national Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy.

Synopsis

Workforce Connex is a national forum series that has been designed to increase Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship programs. The Alberta forum will help meet the demand for skilled trades' workers in Alberta. The intent is for the forums to create, strengthen and leverage regional partnerships and collaborative networks that offer resolve to Aboriginal employment training, recruitment and retention issues.

On October 18-19, 2006, a group of committed stakeholders representing private sector employers, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), government and educators convened at the Alberta Workforce Connex forum in Red Deer, Alberta, to discuss ideas and commitments that will increase Aboriginal participation in the Alberta labour market.

The discussion occurred in eight stages:

Part 1: Market Highlights: A presentation on the Alberta labour market was made to provide participants with context for their discussions.

**Part 2: Walk in my Shoes-
Personal Connection:** In an effort to better understand each other's challenges, the conversation reversed roles whereby the AHRDAs were asked to walk in the shoes of business, and the private sector participants were asked to walk in the moccasins of AHRDAs.

Part 3: Best Practices: Shauna Simpson, Western Lakota Energy and Neil Camarta, Senior Vice-President, Oil Sands, Petro Canada, spoke of their success to recruit and retain an Aboriginal workforce

Part 4: Networking: Participants were given an opportunity to network and meet individuals from organizations dedicated to connecting demand and supply. Two presenters provided best practices.

Part 5: Best Practices Panel: Three presentations were made on successful projects that have found best practices and approaches to increase the number of Aboriginal people in the workforce.

Part 6: Demand/Supply Issues

Roundtable: The first part of the discussion helped employers (demand side) to better understand the foundation, role and employment challenges of AHRDAs, other Aboriginal employment agencies and their clients in Alberta. The second part of the discussion helped Aboriginal employment agencies and the AHRDA community (supply side) get to know various employment trends and challenges that business and industry are facing in Alberta.

Part 7: Keynote: Three Aboriginal people delivered real life stories about how they overcame challenges to build a successful career.

Part 8: Strategies and Commitments:

Participants built a list of commitments to ensure the value of the forum would extend into actions and long-term partnerships.

Through the facilitation of local professionals, participants were able to share their ideas and help each other increase mutual understanding about challenges and successes to increase Aboriginal participation in the Alberta labour market. There was a consensus in the room that increased momentum is required to drive the connections between the supply side (AHRDAs and Aboriginal organizations) and the demand side (employers).

It was recognized that the forum was a beginning; an opportunity to actively and consciously begin to move the agenda forward in Alberta. As a starting point, 134 commitments were made.

The work done in Alberta will be integrated into a single report that will be used to shape initiatives in the overarching AHRDCC's Canada national Aboriginal trades and apprenticeship strategy.

The Discussion

Participants discussed and shared ideas about how to increase Aboriginal participation in employment and trades and apprenticeship in the Alberta region. The dialogue and deliberations at the session are contained below.

Opening Remarks

Kelly Lendsay, AHRDCC President welcomed all participants, gave special thanks to the elders and Northern Cree singers and dancers.

In summary he made the following comments:

Canada is experiencing an Aboriginal baby boom.

Aboriginal people are the nation's youngest and fastest growing human resource...this young, upwardly mobile, labour force wants and needs workplace opportunities for training, skills development and employment.

On a national scale there is a disconnect that exists between the potential skills contribution made by an Aboriginal workforce and the view held by some business and labour leaders on this contribution.

To address the existing barriers to accessing and utilizing an Aboriginal workforce, Kelly mentioned that the Sector Council Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, has helped fund a series of Workforce Connex forums between various stakeholders including government, industry, business, training institutions and the Aboriginal community. Funding was also provided by the Alberta Government to host the Alberta event.

The forums offer a local labour solution to help narrow the growing gap between labour demand and supply, in trades and apprenticeship.

PART 1:

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS

Christine Couture, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry gave a presentation on the Alberta labour market. The main points include:

- There is very little unused labour in Alberta.
- The economy is growing very fast.
- The general population is aging. The Aboriginal population has the highest percentage of young people in the economy.
- The biggest demand for labour is in health care, tourism and hospitality, energy, construction, manufacturing and retail.
- The province has or will be investing six million dollars (\$6,000,000) per year in Aboriginal employment and training programs and all departments in the provincial Government have made commitments to Aboriginal employment and training.

The full text of this presentation can be found on the website: www.workforceconnex.com (Upcoming Forums – Alberta).

PART 2:

WALK IN MY SHOES - A PERSONAL CONNECTION

In an effort to better understand each other's challenges, the participants were asked to reverse roles. The AHRDAs were asked to think/act like they were in the Aboriginal community or AHRDA, and the Aboriginal community and AHRDAs were to think/act like they were business. From this new perspective – what are the challenges?

A summary of the conversation is as follows:

AHRDAs as Business:

Question Posed: If you were a business, what would be your challenges to make positive connections to the Aboriginal Community?

Below are the points identified by each of the five breakout groups representing the “supply side” conversation. The points closely represent those recorded by each group facilitator. The results have been organized into the following themes:

1. Communication and Awareness
2. Education, Training and Skills
3. Institutional Barriers
4. Cultural Factors
5. Specific Needs of Individuals
6. Racism, Stereotypes and Misperceptions
7. Other Challenges and Barriers

1. Communication and Awareness

- Does everyone know about us (AHRDAs)?
- Limited networking opportunities – who you know?
- Lack of referrals.
- Lack of communication – regular agencies that specialize in other groups.

- Challenge of getting work.
- What jobs are available (online issues)?
- How to best market ourselves?
- Lack of interest, lack of exposure, lack of motivation.
- How do we find the employers?
- Knowing the employers requirements for skill/competencies and education levels.
- Who do I call in an employer organization?
- Lack of employer awareness of AHRDAs – existence/purpose.
- Lack of knowledge of services available in the community or business.
- Jobopoly, monster.com.
- Lack of awareness of AHRDAs programs and services.
- AHRDAs need to be a ‘name brand’ where employers associate AHRDAs with Aboriginal people who are ready to be employed.

2. Education, Training and Skills

- Acquire training to get practical experience and better paying jobs.
- Technology – access to and understanding of technology.
- Need more training dollars (i.e., funding/upgrading).
- Experience requirements – corporate experience.
- Need help with interviewing skills.
- Increased emphasis on career planning.
- Access to skills assessment.
- Need education – experience and training – essential skills.
- Lack of job search skills – traditional job search techniques don't work (need for customized new curriculum).

- Don't know where to access training.
- AHRDAs are assessing clients for job knowledge/interviewing skills?
- AHRDAs are training for the sake of training? Implementation of training.
- Lack of life skills.

3. Institutional Barriers

- No role models – ancestors, elders represented within businesses.
- Intention and objectives are different – best solution on both sides is genuine interest and intentions for all.
- Lack of support – both local and external.
- Knowing who to contact.
- Fee's for education - elementary, high school, post-secondary.
- Living allowance – cost of living.
- Mentorship's (buddy system) – lack of internships, co-op, and work study.
- Lack of ability for multiple placements/ employers is unaware of the importance that Aboriginal people need support at the workplace.
- Lack of resources (AHRDAs don't have enough people).
- Focus as an agency: AHRDAs need to be more strategic in our actions.
- Job advertising is restrictive: the clients don't know they can still apply/transferable skills.
- Lack of support systems at work.
- Aboriginal clients feel excluded in the workplace.
- Culture of materials – lack of long-term planning.
- AHRDAs face more demand than they can manage.
- Who and how do AHRDAs connect to employers?

- Who do AHRDAs contact?
- Where are the jobs?

4. Cultural Factors

- Policies: do company policies support Aboriginal culture.
- Cultural barriers (i.e., fear of not understanding culture, integration, awareness, tolerance).
- Support (mentorship – buddy system).
- Employer doesn't understand the culture.
- Clients are more passive (cultural).
- Clients – lack of self esteem.
- Eye contact and other cultural differences.
- Lack of cultural awareness.
- Lifestyle/values have to be given up to fit into the mainstream workforce.

5. Specific Needs of Individuals

- Daycare.
- Where do you live? Can they afford the rent?
- Transportation – driver's license.
- Housing both on/off reserve – lack of housing, no information on where it's available, integrating clients into new settings (integrating from reserve to community).
- Fear of discrimination.
- Relocation – from reserve, support services, child care (lack of, high costs), on/off reserve, on-job.
- Location of jobs: they are elsewhere.
- Family responsibilities.
- Clients not confident – language barriers.
- Follow-up and support after receiving a job.
- Fast moving – mobility.
- Lack of basic needs.
- Lack of tools (i.e., construction, technology).
- Don't want to leave residence.

- Family needs/demands.
- Lack of trust.
- Lack of work experience.
- Generational expectations/gaps.
- Criminal record.
- Substance abuse.
- Lack of positive role models and success stories.
- Limited income = wardrobe preparation for job interviews.
- Cost of living – including housing, basic needs (i.e., water, food, and clothing).

6. Racism, Stereotypes and Misperceptions

- Motivation of people to work.
- Perception “self defeating”- don’t have skills.
- Diversity in the workplace – Aboriginal sensitivity training to understand our culture.
- How do we get rid of stigma?
We are successful!
- Negative experiences – taking negative experiences others have and capitalizing on that to educate.
- Negative experience is a barrier.
- Lack of workplace culture/expectations.
- Clients look unstable on resume (i.e., leave job for family issues).
- Biases and stereotypes prejudice.
- Fear of going on reserve.
- Exclusion – practice of past employment.

7. Other Challenges and Barriers

- Retention – what is the employer social support and sense of community? (book end- community and employer).
- Keeping the talent within our reserves.

- Remote work sites for a lot of our people.
- Technology requirements (i.e., lack of on-line/computers to apply).
- Companies providing internal career path information.
- Fear of failure.
- Lack of basic knowledge (credit, lease, etc).
- Are we setting our clients up for success?
- Are we researching/screening the jobs?
- Need to have results (jobs, money).
- Too young or too old.
- Lack of funding.

Business as AHRDAs:

Question Posed: If you were in an AHRDA or other Aboriginal employment agency, what challenges would you have to make positive connections to the business community?

Below are the points identified by each of the eight breakout groups representing the demand side during the ‘Walk in my Shoes’ exercise. As with the supply side discussion above, the points are reported as they were recorded by each group facilitator. The results have been organized into the following themes:

1. Recruitment and Retention
2. Education, Training and Skills
3. Cultural Differences
4. Specific Challenges Faced by Individuals
5. Racism and Stereotypes
6. Institutional/Bureaucratic Barriers
7. Communication and Awareness
8. Other Challenges and Barriers

1. Recruitment and Retention

- Aboriginal people don't stay on the job.
- Retention – keeping people.
- Personnel – recruit/retain.
- Difficulty in retention – attitude vs. aptitude.
- Lack of ability dealing with job maintenance issues.
- Don't know how to retain.
- Employers often wait to be approached as opposed to active recruitment of Aboriginal people.
- What can be done to overcome these challenges – retention, recruitment and advancement strategies?

2. Education, Training and Skills

- Unskilled workforce (different or limited skills).
- Lack of education and skills (including poor interview skills).
- Idea of buying into Aboriginal – investment into life long learning of Aboriginal communities.
- Build on the skill level of employees through education – have support to access training and access to programs in rural areas.
- Lack of education, experience and skills needed.
- Lack of training dollars.
- AHRDAs don't have a training partnership with the community (training program).

3. Cultural Differences

- Different expectations (i.e., work ethics)
 - flexibility
 - family expectations.
- Cultural differences – different worlds.
- Differences between the Métis and First Nation.
- Cultural sensitivity – communication from employees about “who we are and what we do”.
- Reconciling Aboriginal culture and corporate culture.
- Lack of cultural awareness and demographic – spiritual, bereavement.
- Business values/recruitment processes/practices are often different from Aboriginal business.
- In the business of making dollars.

4. Specific Challenges Faced by Individuals

- Struggle to meet the needs of Aboriginal employees (i.e., childcare, housing, transportation).
- Rural issues – transportation and housing.
- Inflexibility of work hours.
- Isolation.
- Accommodation.
- No support to deal with substance abuse in workplace.
- Transition - on reserve/off reserve (lack of awareness).
- Transportation – fly in communities.
- Logistics – travel, housing, daycare, skills.
- Need for support in mentorship of childcare, cost of living, basic needs.
- We are placing barriers (education, criminal checks).

- Don't know how to approach delicate issues (drug testing, driver's license, etc.).
- We do not offer sensitivity training.
- Do not consider demographics and needs of employees.
- Do not consider housing, transportation and childcare.

5. Racism and Stereotypes

- Perceptions of responsibilities amongst agencies and employers and employees.
- Misconceptions – how to approach?
- Overcoming stereotypes.
- Lack of understanding.
- Battling myths.
- Previously had a bad experience.
- Stereotyping (i.e., Aboriginal people are unreliable, lazy, Indian time).

6. Institutional/Bureaucratic Barriers

- Screening processes that are not relevant – lack of flexibility.
- Too much bureaucracy.
- Where do we access information, and whom do we talk to about the different Aboriginal groups.
- No direct contact with reserves and settlements.
- Lack of Aboriginal senior management positions.
- We're not aware of protocol.
- Not using current Aboriginal employers as role models.
- What can be done to overcome these challenges?
 - ensure that there are Aboriginal or individual human resource coordinators who specializes in minority groups – Aboriginal liaison
 - develop affirmative action strategies – hiring strategy.

- What are the barriers to positive connections?
 - fear of change
 - Maslow's Hierarchy (hire the best, not the little).

7. Communication and Awareness

- Making it clear that as employees we're here, we're available and we want to work.
- Communication/awareness of AHRDAs.
- How – who – where – when – to connect?

8. Other Challenges and Barriers

- How to start recruiting?
- Database (Alberta First Nations).
- Awareness of benefits/issues – industry growth (better recruitment strategies).
- Implementation strategies.
- Communication.
- CPR (A need for training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- How do you communicate reality vs. glitz?
- Building awareness in organizations.
- Quantity vs. quality.
- Lack of knowledge/information about working with Aboriginal people.
- Urbanization.
- Getting a foot in the door.
- Lack of effort – not marketing the Aboriginal components – not connecting.
- Do not have time to reach out to Aboriginal groups.
- Not committed to working with a community; not enough strategy.
- Fear of accessing/approaching community.
- Aboriginals often used as window dressings.

PART 3:

BEST PRACTICES

Participants were given an opportunity to network and meet other individuals and organizations dedicated to connecting demand and supply. Two presenters provided best practices.

- Shauna Simpson, Western Lakota Energy
- Neil Camarta, Senior Vice-President, Oil Sands, Petro Canada

Key Messages:

- Keeping a job is a key challenge.
- Treat people with respect.
- Be competitive – sharpen your pencil.
- Don't mix business with politics.
- Bring in people who know what is going on.

PART 4:

NETWORKING

Participants had the opportunity to mingle and network as the result of an Information Fair, which was set up outside the main meeting space. This fair had a number of exhibitors (businesses and AHRDAs) who had information on display about services provided and potential employment and training opportunities. This networking session attracted a number of people who exchanged business cards and ideas on the Alberta labour market.

PART 5:

BEST PRACTICES PANEL

Three presentations were made on successful projects that have produced best practices and approaches to increase the number of Aboriginal people in the workforce:

- Victoria Gubbels, Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations
- Joyce Mearon, City of Grande Prairie
- Kelly Lendsay, AHRDCC (Employer Engagement).

Key messages:

- Focus on the solutions not the problems.
- Capacity building is key to human resource development.
- Keys to success are:
 - right attitude
 - right skills
 - right information
 - right equipment.
- Having the right attitude goes a long way when it comes to the retention of people over the long-term.

PART 6:

DEMAND/SUPPLY ISSUES ROUNDTABLE

Purpose

A general discussion occurred from the supply side (Aboriginal community) and the demand side (employers) of the labour market equation. Participants were separated into small groups and asked to respond to a number of questions.

The following is a summary of responses from the various groups:

Demand Side Issues Round Table

The purpose of discussion centered on getting to know business. Business was asked to setup as advisors to AHRDAs to understand the demand side. The dialogue questions were:

Ask AHRDAs:

- What are their challenges and frustrations to engage business?
- Do you have any suggestions on how business could inform AHRDAs about current and upcoming job openings?

Ask Business:

- What kind of employment opportunities do you have today for Aboriginal people?
- How do you communicate your company's employment opportunities?
- What are the specific ways you recruit Aboriginal people?

Supply Side Issues Round Table

The purpose of this discussion was to get to know AHRDAs and the Aboriginal communities. AHRDAs were asked to setup as advisors to business to understand the supply side. The dialogue questions were:

Ask Business:

- What challenges and frustrations do you face to engage the Aboriginal community?
- Is there anything you need to know about AHRDAs that will improve your engagement with the Aboriginal community?
- What are the difficulties with recruitment and retention of Aboriginal workers?

Ask AHRDAs:

- How do you get the word out about your clients?

- Provide advice to businesses about how to overcome barriers to positive engagement with AHRDAs?

Following are the responses given to these questions on both the demand and supply sides of the labour market.

Supply Barriers to Employment

What are the challenges and frustrations to engage the Aboriginal community?

- Fear of unknown, being rejected (by both society and community).
- Gap between who/how to connect.
- Lack of understanding of Aboriginal protocol.
- Getting more information about the basic needs of Aboriginal people.
- Need for a project coordinator.
- Employers commit to hiring but are slow to bring candidate in after training.
- Lack of cultural awareness and work culture for all workers.
- Larger employers are sub-contracting with smaller companies who are not committed.
- Employers are not coming to the community/reservation.
- Racism at the worksite is alive and well.
- Companies make commitments to hire but back out.
- Employers are not willing to give on-the-job work experience – they want fully experienced employees.
- Support systems (like Aboriginal liaison) not available – link with employee's social and economic issues.
- Candidates lack transportation to get to job/training site.

- Job readiness: lack of essential life skills for those who are leaving the reservation with family support and transition process.
- Have the people – need to know what jobs are available.
- Have resources for training – need focus.
- Remote locations = lack of resources (i.e., training).
- Need training in communities (i.e., Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)).
- Lack of affordable housing impedes access – needs to be family friendly.
- Employers lack of knowledge about cultural differences
 - psychological and cultural differences –both ways
 - want to retain identity in workplace.
- Work environment issues
 - o organization of work
 - o psychological environment.
- Severe lack of funding.
- Need targeted recruitment dedicated to provide specific jobs.
- AHRDAs need to know what graduates' (skill sets) are coming.
- Need to understand culture to align recruitment strategies to Aboriginal community, and Aboriginal need to understand corporate culture.
 - Aboriginal people have less understanding of non-traditional careers. This is greatly in part due to trans-generational issues.
 - Employers could have programs in place to help improve a positive community life (i.e., social responsibility).
 - Employers could connect with social programs.
- Wage subsidies.
- Deal with urban transition.
- Employers are concerned about losing people once they have made a transition.
- Many candidates cannot pass security clearance (especially youth).
- Lack of specialized education (non-traditional education).
- What are the most effective ways to do community outreach?
 - Improve preparedness of candidates (corporate culture, career path, communication).
- AHRDAs don't conduct client in-take, they 'direct traffic': put people in touch with appropriate agencies and other individuals.
- AHRDAs don't get specific enough requirements... what skills/training is needed by who, when?
 - Quantity and quality (building skills).
- Can't provide employees as fast as needed by industry.
- Dealing with unrealistic expectations by business.
- Some of our clients are not motivated to work.
- AHRDAs can't run around and get people.
- Hard to get commitment and follow through on partnerships.
- Difficulty getting to training/job.
- Have so many companies to contact.
- Connect my people with my personal contacts.
- Industry association partnerships.
- Need a centralized pool of ready candidates.
- Companies tend to come to us with trades, entry level – very few management jobs.

- Need bridge to build confidence.
- Do not fully understand industry training needs to plan for future job needs.
- Duplication of services/bureaucracy within AHRDAs and Aboriginal organizations.
- Dollars needed for training; for technology (database); for training/housing.
- Need better linkages for facilitating employer specific training requirements.
- Need employers to be honest about needs/possibilities (i.e., the need to relocate, low wages).
- Need support regarding survival skills/services access (i.e., taxes, doctor, childcare, education, transportation costs, etc.).
- Driver's license – impacts! Learner license restrictions.
- Need a best practices strategy for recruiting and preparing the workforce – training in debunking myths.
- Human rights awareness.
- Need support.
- Need to better understand each other.
- Environment – flexibility with schedule.
- Need to make people feel a part of business world.
- How to get stakeholders involved?
- Need opening dialogue to begin the relationship.
- Do an annual business plan on targets for business as per labour market needs.
- Business needs to access Aboriginal people in rural locations.
- Misconceptions about Aboriginal people.
- Unfamiliar with the protocols associated with dealing with the AHRDAs and Aboriginal communities.
- Employers need to learn/know more about the AHRDAs: targeted wage subsidies, realize it may not be easy – target certain industries/sectors.
- Frustrations:
 - unrealistic expectations – quit!
 - lack of information for our workers
 - one size does NOT fit all
 - employers wanting results tomorrow -- they want numbers now
 - effectiveness/relevance of training
 - keeping on top of new employees
 - not being known by business
 - invest in training – both job maintenance and life skills
 - prepare the workplace to address retention – Aboriginal awareness
 - business working with multiple cultures
 - good training – doesn't lead to employment – agree a specific number of placements.
- Dealing with misconceptions.
- Frustrations with quick turn over after beginning new job.
- Generational expectations are different.
- Working within outdated management styles.
- Using negative experiences as the norm.
- Youth fighting the uphill battle of stereotypes.
- No visible role models.
- Poverty + isolation – Aboriginal people need to break out of it.
- Need consistent connection to communities, which is currently lacking.
- Background check holding people back.
- Expectation to be fast tracked – treated differently.

- Critical life learning comes later in life.
- Family violence – generational.
- Different interpretation of social norms.
- Need stronger leadership in the communities.
- Being judged by a resume.
- Perception of movement from job to job.
- Typically given menial job – youth wanting more.
- Need to better market AHRDAs and our clients.
- Training-on-the-job
 - providing hands-on-learning.
- Many people need camp job for shelter (affordability).
- Provide settlement support for employees that must move, require transportation, etc.
- Need cultural liaison.
- Need appropriate incentives.
- Can accommodate immigrant workers but not Aboriginal employees
 - o forget about people already in Canada.
- Don't know how to/can't interview people in a meaningful way.
- Need to better understanding why people are leaving – what is the company protocol?
- Recruitment – who – what – where?
 - where to advertise – connect to education/training
 - finding the right person with the right qualifications - how to attract
 - Employers don't know who to approach, who to partner with or their audience
 - uncoordinated process
 - don't have support or understand needs for providing good support (i.e., cultural awareness)
 - percentage of Aboriginal employees is low, therefore investing dollars in training, developing and hiring liaison officer is a barrier
 - Single focused voice from Aboriginal group – uncoordinated process.
- Retention
 - understanding need for additional support such as Aboriginal liaison officer and flexibility (in schedule). Low percentage = justification to hire.
 - cultural differences (needs to mesh with work environment)
 - new employee expectations too high need to contemplate organization of work (i.e., flying in and out – six days in and six out)
 - on/off reserve realities and rural and urban realities – expectations and policy
 - need skilled trades people and profession labour
 - need to change attitude/focus on education
 - need to focus on younger generation (i.e. mentors).
- Lack of awareness of resources.

Demand Barriers to Employment

What challenges and frustrations exist to engage the business community?

- Finding the right people and keeping them – retention!
 - what will keep our employees
 - attitude – don't take direction well
 - don't know what makes them stay vs. leave.
- Stereotyping: need cultural awareness, both ways.

- Racism – Aboriginal and women.
- Lack of respect for Aboriginal service providing.
- Time consuming to navigate corporations for feedback – little response.
- Trouble finding contracts from local to provincial scope.
- Lack transportation to opportunities.
- Employers to contract Aboriginal administration office.
- Aboriginal organizations could increase efforts to contract employers.
- Lack of cross-cultural awareness – understanding shy reserved self-esteem background. Aboriginal ceremonies.
- Drug testing – preventative measures needed (i.e., life skills).
- Fewer people with licenses – need driver programs administered by Aboriginal community.
- Employers can look further at car pooling/transport program – AHRDAs can negotiate these programs more.
- Need more awareness on the variety of career paths.
- Human resources people are trying to make the contacts – Aboriginal graduates need to know specific opportunities available to link them directly.
- Employers feel they have made people aware of opportunities – Aboriginal people often lack experience for posted opportunities.
- Employers are prepared to facilitate the transition for new entrants to obtain experience – AHRDAs have limited capacity to focus on placement.
- Who we are (AHRDA) – lack of public awareness?
- Is the commitment to AHRDAs genuine?
- Lack of understanding - could lead to discrimination.
- Honesty with businesses - discussing all aspects of jobs and company; 'being real'.
- Educating clients on employers job requirements.
- Low response rate to postings – access to computers – offer other options.
- Difficulty to reach potential employees – who to call/e-mail – connect with all AHRDAs?
- Concerns about protocol – do we connect with AHRDAs
 - do we connect with separate First Nation communities?
 - do we connect with both - others?
- How to compose job postings to clearly capture best potential candidates? – details, details!!
- Will AHRDAs have detailed knowledge of employee skills data.
- Connections need to happen with education (high school, college, etc.)
 - mentoring, encouragement
 - training – trades
 - job shadowing
 - work experience.
- Willing to talk, but lip service – there are requirements – what are your skill levels?
- Have programs to train – target wage subsidy.
- Employer challenge – the paperwork is complicated – 200 or more need employment equity.
- Trying to have people more off the reserve.
- Challenge = young people – setting expectations – education.
- Mainstream society not educated on Aboriginal history.

- Identifying gaps in skills labour.
- Shortage of educators to ensure higher level of graduates
 - suggestion: set up mock interviews.
- Awareness – where to go, what resources are needed?
 - suggestion: go to websites- service Canada, in booklet (workforce.)
- Lack of preparation and commitment by business – often good start but falls later; need buy in – suggestion: Set up is difficult – AHRDAs need to buy in.
- Culturally relevant support barriers (i.e., travel, accommodation, meals) – suggestion: life skills lacking to ensure success; need courses to help workers prepare.
- Strategies from management to make work environment more comfortable for Aboriginal people – need support.
- Financial commitment to make environment friendly.
- Taxes: HR programs to provide education via orientation/training – suggestions: websites available through revenue Canada; some First Nation agreements exist and businesses.
- What other supports are available to suppliers? (i.e., funding, outreach programs – suggestions: Employability assessment should make sure it's successful.)
- Who are AHRDAs and what do they do?
- Need to find AHRDAs – where are they?
- Consistency between AHRDAs is not there.
 - suggestions: AHRDAs could provide targeted cultural education to employers/staff.
- AHRDAs have difficulties knowing who is looking for jobs and who wants jobs.
- Challenge: support in place to ensure success of applicants in environment and work is ready for them – challenge lies in businesses where there are no internal structures in place yet to ensure success.
- Transferable skills should be looked at when looking for new employees – employers don't see it as a value (i.e., floral design).
- More emphasis needed to communicate to employers on long-term outcomes and benefits to commit training Aboriginal workers – long-term gain vs. knee jerk to fill vacancies.
- No more lip service – more affirmative action by businesses needed.
- Businesses will need some time to prepare – allocate funds to commitment.
- More communication/marketing will create ripple effect – see gains eventually if well prepared in commitment.
- If support is not there business will get bad reputation for their attempt.
- Need housing funds.
- Need contracts/agreements.
- What to invest – how?
- Business is bottom line motivated.
- Need buy in from the top down.
- Need representation from employers, particularly from the senior management levels.

Overcoming Barriers

Provide advice to business about how to overcome barriers to positive engagement with AHRDAs.

- Talk – open communication.
- Computer – need database access; Internet.
- Be face-to-face with manager.
- Connect supply and demand.

- AHRDAs need organized ways to connect to jobs.
- Reclassify basic driving requirements – if funding is available.
- Need a guide to Aboriginal organizations–market this.
- Work with Telecom to get communication tools.
- Mimic junior achievement model (delivered locally) – role model – develop entrepreneurship.
- Similar forums on a regional basis; generates local response (i.e., Red Deer, Medicine Hat, etc).
- 101 orientation in pre-hiring.
- Systematic feedback to employees.
- Need mentorship.
- Clear exchange of expectations.
- Invest more time in employment development.
- Influence corporate culture to change.
- Support small employers in Aboriginal engagement.
- Go direct to small employers – one-on-one consultation.
- Ensure AHRDAs link with AHRDAs
 - Service Canada funding/information
 - use this forum as a tool to get information out there.
- Management of AHRDAs to make better connections with business and industry.
- Website posting of jobs is available – access them.
- Job/career fairs on/off reserve.
- Employer symposiums.
- More initiative (involvement) of AHRDAs.
- Industry/ business to realize potential of Aboriginal workforce
 - Information sharing
 - Training myths and misconceptions.
- Lack of educational qualification of Aboriginal people who are job ready
 - employer understanding/communication
 - willingness to invest/ provide training/ supports/resources (i.e., childcare, transportation, etc.).
- Lack of funding to acquire basic/ secondary education.
- Increase employer awareness/access to government funding, especially for the trades.
- Front line jobs available in the hospitality industry
 - sales/catering; managers; coordinators; front office, room attendants.
- Postings online – websites - email.
- Mail presentations to all the AHRDAs.
- Advertise in Aboriginal newspapers.
- Aboriginal websites - use resources from Aboriginal communities.
- Contacting HR departments for information.
- Increase networking.
- Communication/knowledge - dissemination to all participants.
- Build relationships successfully, honest and efficiently.
- Jobs require education
 - encourage Aboriginal people to pursue education (i.e., apprenticeship)
 - Employment Insurance benefits are not enough for many families.
- Build essential skills.

PART 7:

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rodrick Alexis, former Chief, Alexis First Nations, gave the keynote address during lunch.

Key messages:

- There is a communication gap between the communities and businesses.
- Attitudes about Aboriginal people have not changed that much since he was young in the 1960's.
- Company officials need to understand that Aboriginal people work collectively to achieve goals, in contrast to non-Aboriginal people who are more competitive.
- Aboriginal communities need more access to information, the Internet.
- More Aboriginal people need to start businesses.
- In forums such as this – why not invite the people who have the problems with employment?

Real Life Workplace Stories

Three Aboriginal people gave their real life stories of how they got to where they are today.

- Michael Jakeman, Lawyer, Vinni, Coobe, Jakeman – Barristers and Solicitors
- Dan Calhoon, Mechanical Engineer, Suncor
- Russell Snyder, IT Project Manager, Consultant

Key Messages:

- For years have hidden Aboriginal identity but affirmative action helped to overcome this issue.
- Success came to me through excellent support from Métis Nations of Alberta.
- You are never lost if you know where you are going.

- Having a strong family support system helps.
- Russell Snyder suggested an 11 step approach to finding employment.

Step 1	Visit Employment Canada
Step 2	Show interest
Step 3	Market research on what is available
Step 4	Narrow down the options
Step 5	Check out the education requirements and ensure you have them. If not, go back to school
Step 6	Pass the required exams
Step 7	Submit your resume
Step 8	Go to interviews with enthusiasm
Step 9	Be open to all jobs – it's easier to find a job when you have one
Step 10	Be prepared for rejection
Step 11	Accept help when it is offered

PART 8 :

STRATEGIES AND COMMITMENTS

The last group exercise was the 'So What' discussion. Participants had talked about the barriers, challenges and solutions to the problems of demand and supply – now it was time to do something concrete about how to have greater Aboriginal participation in the labour force. The participants returned to their groups and were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What strategies come to mind to increase positive connections in Alberta?

- What can we commit to today to create those positive connections?
- What are the elements that would make a meaningful partnership with the Aboriginal and business community?

The following list of 135 'go-forward' commitments was made at the session:

1. Employers to make direct contact with communities.
2. Build long-term relationships.
3. List of contacts.
4. Community consultation invitations.
5. Encourage staff to continue with education.
6. Promote career laddering.
7. Life long learning.
8. Bring business into Aboriginal communities/reserves.
9. Brief your HR departments on this conference.
10. Take training to communities.
11. Specify/quantify human resource development needs – qualitative needs too.
12. AHRDA service site will be available to advise on employer community based initiatives.
13. Annual Workforce Connex forums.
14. Greater utilization of AHRDCC as an information-sharing medium.
15. AHRDAs do greater effort to prepare its clientele.
16. AHRDAs can make the business case.
17. Provide training.
18. Hire additional people.
19. Like to meet again to gather more information.
20. Mobilize other people in organization.
21. Will start new project such as contacts and schedule a meeting with an AHRDA representative to begin discussions.
22. Invite 20 small to medium enterprises to November 1 Edmonton Aboriginal Employment Forum.
23. Facilitate direct connection (Brian - Shell) and regional manager (Lonnie) Lokken career training in Fort McMurray.
24. Market research business case for hiring Aboriginal employees in and on Bushee Reserve within 30 days.
25. Connect Dave @ Oteenaw with three new business contacts in the next month.
26. Finish employer toolkit for Aboriginal employee placement (Edmonton).
27. Contact every business card collected to arrange meeting to discuss possible activities.
28. Request letters from private sector for support of AHRDA renewal process.
29. Ensure First Nations liaisons make personal connections with line managers – begin influencing.
30. Albion Sands will reconnect directly with AHRDA in Fort McMurray area to implement effective posting process.
31. Shell to liaise directly with 13 AHRDAs in Alberta to implement job posting connections.
32. Urban and rural AHRDAs commit to improved information sharing regarding postings.

33. Wetaskiwin/Hobbema to raise issue of 'how do we let people know' at next monthly meeting.
34. Engage Aboriginal person in mentoring tomorrow!
35. Ensure all recruiters know names/locations/resources of AHRDAs – make part of individual performance plans.
36. Work with HR to create an Aboriginal awareness focus group to collect information and feedback (cultural issues etc.).
37. Create employee awareness survey to collect feedback regarding Aboriginal issues.
38. Connect directly with line managers and AHRDAs to share information (employers) regarding holistic approach to employee support.
39. Approach businesses and discuss demand vs. supply – bring labour to select employees.
40. Invite business to come to my settlement to generate understanding about the realities.
41. Business to ask to go out to reserves for orientation.
42. Annual youth and elders conference – mentoring, job/recruiting fair on site.
43. I will contact my nearest AHRDA.
44. Get to know your local businesses and AHRDAs.
45. AHRDA partnerships to capitalize upon resources – refer employees – refer jobs.
46. Organize company specific job fairs prior to looking outside your borders, look to AHRDA, Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP).
47. Run ads in AHRDA newsletter, newspaper.
48. Accept hard copy resumes.
49. Determine referral focal points.
50. Develop/offer more job shadowing.
51. AWPI invites AHRDAs to next quarterly meeting – December in Sturgeon Lake.
52. Fort Chipewyan/Aboriginal Workforce Partnerships Initiative exploratory meeting – INAC.
53. Alberta Advanced Education to examine increasing on reserve participation in Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) program.
54. November – Shell will meet to connect contractors with neighbouring band to explore job opportunities.
55. Shell will help to encourage the stakeholders groups in Rocky Mountain House to hold a forum to discuss biases and opportunities.
56. January meeting between Albian Sands and Athabasca Tribal Council Wood Buffalo Partnership in training Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry and economic development groups.
57. Grande Prairie – Peace Country Health Region to meet with City of Grande Prairie and Grande Prairie Regional College.
58. Health Canada will meet with AHRDAs to discuss partnerships.
59. Athabasca Tribal Council AHRDA will meet with AHRDAs to discuss partnerships.
60. Athabasca Tribal Council AHRDA will arrange a meeting with neighbouring AHRDAs to plan a follow-up forum with a regional focus.
61. BEAHR to create a one page informational document outlining their wage subsidy program to send to all participants to today's forum.

62. BEAHR will send their booklet from their youth program outlining possible careers in environmental industry to all forum participants.
63. City of Grande Prairie to create a booklet of career profiles to send to elementary/high schools and AHRDAs.
64. SIKSIKA Nation to arrange a meeting with the Strathmore Chamber of Commerce to discuss possible opportunities.
65. Access and put into action the 'setting direction' document, found on the Alberta Advanced Education Website (Safeway, Shell, Service Canada, AHRDAs). Suggested/informative website links: www.hrsdc.gc.ca, www.alis.gov.ab.ca, www.servicecanada.gc.ca.
66. Employer to send email to AHRDCC's Inclusion Network (www.inclusionnetwork.ca) website for job opportunities.
67. Employer to build relationships with AHRDA: email, by phone, in person (Resources: AHRDA kit you received).
68. AHRDAs to better market and screen the candidates (Alberta International, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Relations) – send out brochures to employers.
69. AHRDAs need to develop database to speed up process, make connection between employee/employer.
70. AHRDAs meet employers to assess employment needs, current practices.
71. Liaison mentorship program.
72. Three-months on-the-job training commitment (AHRDA prepares employee – job readiness – pre-employment with employer).
73. Make direct contact– meet with an AHRDA to start dialogue to describe needs and setup a process.
74. Make appointments with First Nations in your area.
75. Develop workplace readiness tools in partnership with other stakeholders (i.e. Construction Sector Council; AHRDCC).
76. Re-evaluate where BMO is with respect to diversity and pick up from there.
77. Create an association for AHRDAs and create a process to better link with industry.
78. Lobby with Agreement on Internal Trade (Alberta Government, International and Intergovernmental Relations) to motivate companies to access and utilize workplace readiness tools prior to accessing foreign temporary workers.
79. Share forecasting projections of jobs (people in each job category) with AHRDAs.
80. Top management to meet with AHRDA.
81. Provide 'myths and misconceptions' training at all levels.
82. Time off in lieu of company benefits.
83. Volunteering outside work.
84. Networking groups.
85. Remain committed to the process of connecting with employers.
86. Offer practical opportunities – focus on their interests and focus.
87. Opportunities of interest of the youth.
88. AHRDAs to network amongst themselves (i.e., combine training programs).
89. As employers – building relationships (personal) with the communities.
90. Access to information on protocol.
91. Appointing an Aboriginal champion in the company.

92. AHRDA list – contact person and information.
94. Employers to contact AHRDAs directly.
95. AHRDAs need to invest in employer services – market your employees (AHRDAs).
96. AHRDAs setup as job coaches.
97. Aboriginal retention dollars bonus with union it needs to be non-financial.
98. Cultural/diversity sensitivity training.
99. Cross-culture: Creeburn Services, Ripple Effects, Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Workforce Partnerships Initiative work kit.
100. Aboriginal Liaison Officer.
101. Moyra – collaborate with industry, community and boards of education to reintroduce trades in high school (i.e. machine shop).
102. Carolyn – same as above but with math/science (many industries require proficiency in math/sciences).
103. Hobbema/Wetaskiwin Committee developed this event – supports this group (Sharon and Moyra to meet to discuss employment opportunities at our Wetaskiwin store).
104. Trade Winds to Success Projects – ‘Putting Aboriginals into Trades’.
105. Connect with organizations and small employers about apprenticeships: boilermakers, carpenters, iron workers, welders, pipe fitters, plumbers (men and women 18+ - grade 10 (English/Math and Science)).
106. Yvonne – Tribal Council has done a skills assessment and in her area matching skills to jobs available in Alberta.
107. Yvonne to meet the council to help prepare individuals to make the transition from the reserve to job placement.
108. Bertha to help bring together parties and groups to have a dialogue with the school division in her area to discuss the quality of education.
109. Maintain and continue Aboriginal Internships with AHRDAs.
110. Rachel – Sharon to meet with Bill to set up cultural awareness training for Alberta Managers @ Safeway and other groups.
111. Also, ‘train the trainers’ to help our people be liaison in bridging the gap.
112. Carolyn – meet with AHRDAs to determine what groups needs are to develop a career path for an individual.
113. BEAHR is hiring two people as project coordinators (liaison between project/community).
114. Bill – to meet (along with other Alberta Workforce Connex Steering Committee members) put pressure on school systems to improve cultural awareness at the early childhood education stage.
115. Yvonne meeting with Junior High School (Lesser Slave) children about the important of education.
116. Bertha – planning to have a meeting with Minister of Alberta International, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Relations to discuss the quality of education in school divisions.
117. Contact AHRDA – Marijana.
118. Plan to attend job fair at an Aboriginal Employment Centre – Safeway.
119. Plan to attend career fair or post-secondary or high school.

120. Implement cultural awareness program @ Syncrude.
121. Add Aboriginal awareness component to existing cultural programs – Safeway.
122. Contact all 13 AHRDAs – Sobeys.
123. 1-800-252-7553, Métis Education Fund, Métis Nation of Alberta
124. Exchange business cards – Alan.
125. Strategic partnerships – planning with employers.
126. Assist AHRDAs (i.e., cost shared with clients training programs – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry.
127. Diversities inclusion plan – City of Edmonton, Safeway.
128. City of Edmonton – website for employment.
129. Visit more Aboriginal communities – career fairs – Syncrude.
130. Universal assessment too with AHRDAs – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry.
131. Ask Workforce Connex to send a list of email address for AHRDAs and employers, large job posting distribution list.
132. Make contact with Métis Nation of Alberta – six Labour Market Development Manager's .
133. Contact 13 First Nations (Manager's) – get the contact list.
134. City of Edmonton – discuss the possibility of implementing a mentorship program.

SUSTAINING CONNECTIONS

Kelly Lendsay, President and CEO of the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHDCC) thanked all the participants for their hard work through the forum. The council will look forward to monitoring how and when the commitments come into play. Kelly mentioned that the success of any connection depends, to a large degree, on building a rapport and fulfilling commitments. He gave special thanks to the Alberta forum steering committee for their time, energy, interest and commitment to plan this very successful forum. He made specific mention about the great participation of industry sectors and how great it was to have a large number of employers in the room.

Mr. Lendsay mentioned of the Eastern Trades Symposium that would be held in November 2006 in Membertou (Sydney), Nova Scotia as well as the National Trades Symposium scheduled for 2007.

A more detailed description of the council's national trades project can be found in the next section.

Elder Louie Rain gave the closing prayer and mentioned that he would welcome an update on the accomplishments of the commitments that were made at this forum.

THE NATIONAL TRADES PROJECT

AHRDCC is responding to Canada's growing need for skilled trade and apprenticeship workers through a new national trades and apprenticeship project. This three-year initiative, designed to develop new partnerships and employment strategies, will give employers and trainers enhanced access to Canada's largely untapped and existing human capital of Aboriginal people who are eager to fill the employment gap.

This innovative initiative will create, strengthen and leverage partnerships with private-public sectors, Aboriginal employment organizations, learning institutions and government stakeholders in an effort to collaborate on methods to recruit and retain Aboriginal participation in trades and apprenticeship.

Members of the AHRDCC trades and apprenticeship team have been actively supporting the AHRDA community with current projects and future initiatives that will successfully advance Aboriginal interests in trades and apprenticeship.

The forum series, *Workforce Connex*, is the first of many trades and apprenticeship initiatives to link national and regional employers with opportunities to connect to provincial Aboriginal employment training, recruitment agencies and associations. The work done in Alberta will be integrated into a single report that will be used to shape initiatives in the overarching national trades and apprenticeship project.

Ultimately the project is designed to link people and ideas. The project will provide regional and national links to groups involved in trades and apprenticeship across Canada. Initiatives will increase skills, learning and employment opportunities and open doors for stakeholders to work together on local and regional projects and initiatives.

The trades and apprenticeship project is administered by AHRDCC and funded through a \$2.9 million contribution from Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).

AHRDCC is a not-for-profit public-private partnership with the mandate to increase Aboriginal participation in Canadian labour markets.

For further information on the national trades and apprenticeship project contact:

- Gerald Conrad, National Director Aboriginal Trades and Apprenticeship Development – g.conrad@ahrdcc.com
- Victoria LaBillois, Eastern Trades Liaison, victoria.labillois@ahrdcc.com
- Peggy Berndt, Manager, Communications and Marketing peggy.berndt@ahrdcc.com
- Colleen Ostlund, Administrative Coordinator-Trades, colleen.ostlund@ahrdcc.com

Appendix 1

FORUM AGENDA

DAY ONE

ACTIVITY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18

12:00 – 1:00 PM	Registration
1:00 – 1:50 PM	Opening Ceremony Northern Cree Singers – Dancers, Josh Moonias (Grass) and Chad Yellowbird (Fancy) Elder Louie Rain Kelly Lendsay, President/CEO, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada Ralph Bellstedt, Regional Manager, Aboriginal Partnerships, Service Canada Chief Victor Buffalo, Samson Cree First Nation
1:50 – 2:30 PM	Market Highlights Alberta labour market overview Christine Couture, Alberta Human Resources and Employment
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Nutrition & Networking Walk in my Shoes: A Personal Connection Group discussions Debrief: Sharing the conversation
4:15 – 4:45 PM	Best Practices Shauna Simpson, Western Lakota Energy Neil Camarta, Senior Vice-President Oil Sands, Petro Canada
5:15 – 7:00 PM	Information Fair/ Networking Event Employer and Aboriginal employment centre displays and information tables
5:15 PM	Opening presentation Honourable Mike Cardinal, Minister, Alberta Human Resources and Employment

DAY TWO

ACTIVITY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19

8:30 – 8:40 PM	Recap Day One
8:40 – 9:40 PM	Best Practices Panel Victoria Gubbels, Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations) Joyce Mearon, City of Grande Prairie Eva Stang, IBM Canada Ltd.
10:10 – 11:45 PM	Demand and Supply Side Issues Round Table Business setup as advisors to Aboriginal employment centres – Barriers to Aboriginal participation – Frustrations – Sharing strategies to remove barriers Aboriginal employment centres setup as advisors to business – Barriers to engaging with business – Frustrations – Sharing strategies to remove barriers Debrief: Sharing the conversation
11:45 – 12:45 PM	Lunch and Keynote Speaker – Rodrick Alexis, Former Chief, Alexis First Nations
1:05 – 1:30 PM	Real Life Workplace Stories: Aboriginal People Michael Jakeman, Lawyer, Vinni, Coobe, Jakeman Barristers and Solicitors Dan Calhoon, Mechanical Engineer, Suncor Russell Snyder, IT Project Manager, Suncor
1:30 – 2:45 PM	Sectoral Roundtable Overview of sector issues Business setup as advisors to Aboriginal employment centres – Barriers to Aboriginal participation Aboriginal employment centres setup as advisors to business – Barriers to engaging with business Commitments and path forward decisions
2:45 – 3:00 PM	Nutrition and Networking
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Conversation About Strategies and Commitments
4:00 PM	Sustaining Connections: Closing Statements and Closing Prayer Kelly Lendsay, President/CEO, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada Elder Louie Rain

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
1. Adebist, Ademola	Sector Council Program, Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Ottawa
2. Ageioutay, Nadette	Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Services	Red Deer
3. Alexis, Roderick	International Trade of Aboriginal People Inc. and Bourne Telecon	Edmonton
4. Alexis, Yvette	Yellowhead Tribal Development Foundation	Enoch
5. Allard, Dawna	Alberta Economic Development	Red Deer
6. Alton, Mark	Coram	Calgary
7. Anderson, Gloria	Bigstone Cree Nation	Wabasca
8. Anderson, Jody	Canada Safeway	Calgary
9. Angelstad, Denise	Aboriginal Partnerships – Service Canada	Edmonton
10. Ashna, Atiya	Canada Safeway	Calgary
11. Asprer, Maria	Hewitt Associates	Calgary
12. Auger, Melba	Bigstone HRD	Wabasca
13. Ayoungman, Angeline	Siksika Employment and Training Services	Siksika
14. Baker, Anne	Red Deer Aboriginal Community Council Society	Red Deer
15. Barthel, Susan	Fishing Lake Métis Settlement	Fishing Lake
16. Batra, Sterling	Shell Canada - Oil Sands	Calgary
17. Bayley, Colleen	Costco Wholesale	Red Deer
18. Bearhead, Roberta	Paul First Nation	Hobbema
19. Beaverbones, Beverly	Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Services	Red Deer
20. Beers, Rhonda	Hewitt Associates	Calgary

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
21. Bellstedt, Ralph	Service Canada	Edmonton
22. Berg, Belinda	Canada Safeway	Calgary
23. Berg, Eric	Shell Canada Limited	Calgary
24. Berger, David	ATCO Electric	Edmonton
25. Berry, Greg	Canada Safeway	Edmonton
26. Blackmer, Nicole	CHIP Hospitality	Edmonton
27. Bodnaryk, Denise	Wal-Mart Canada	Calgary
28. Buffalo, Heather	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
29. Buffalo, Patrick	Samson Oil and Gas Inc.	Hobbema
30. Buffalo, Shannon R.	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
31. Bull, Bert	Louis Bull First Nation	Hobbema
32. Butler, Darren	Canada Safeway	Calgary
33. Butler, Rick	Lokken Career Training	Wetaskiwin
34. Calhoon, Dan	Suncor	Fort McMurray
35. Campbell, Bill	Canada Safeway	Calgary
36. Campbell, Sheryl	Edmonton Economic Development Corporation	Edmonton
37. Campiou, Paulette Pearl	Sucker Creek First Nation	Enilda
38. Cardinal, Alma S.	Kapawe'no First Nation	Grouard
39. Cardinal, Betty Anne	Portage College	Lac La Biche
40. Cardinal, Christine	Saddle Lake Human Resource	Saddle Lake
41. Cardinal, Lorraine	Bigstone HRD	Wabasca

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
42. Cardinal, Marcel	Treaty Six	Saddle Lake
43. Cardinal-Howse, June	Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement	Caslan
44. Carpentier, Beatrice	O'Chiese First Nation (YTDF)	Rocky Mountain House
45. Coates, Elise	Athabasca Tribal Council	Fort McMurray
46. Coleman, Bernadine	O'Chiese First Nation (YTDF)	Rocky Mountain House
47. Collins, Mary	Trade Winds to Success	Edmonton
48. Comstock, Holly	Sears Canada Inc.	Edmonton
49. Contreras, Guido	Métis Nation of Alberta	Calgary
50. Couture, Christine	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Edmonton
51. Couture, Will	Shell Canada Limited	Calgary
52. Crossen, Peter	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Edmonton
53. Cummer, Destiny	Calgary Board of Education – Aboriginal Education Team	Edmonton
54. Davies, Bryan	Direct Transport	Edmonton
55. Deans, Dianne	Canada Safeway	Calgary
56. Desjarlais, Dianne	Métis Settlements Strategic Training Initiatives Society	Edmonton
57. Desjarlais, Lori	Métis Settlement STI	Cold Lake
58. Diduck, Don	IVMT Training Company	Edmonton
59. DiLallo, Wayne	Lokken Career Training	Wetaskiwin
60. Doherty, Oliver	Fishing Lake Métis Settlement	Fishing Lake

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
61. Domak, Linda	Treaty 7 Economic Development Corporation	Calgary
62. Donnelly, Gerry	Alberta Building Trades Council	Edmonton
63. Dupas, Darcy	Edmonton Economic Development Corporation	Edmonton
64. Durocher, Jim	Western Cree Tribal Council (Duncan's First Nation)	Brownvale
65. Dy-Reyes, Belle	Métis Nation of Alberta	Bonnyville
66. Elbaz, Avi	CCQ	Montreal
67. Esperance, Delia	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
68. Essar, Kevin	Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Edmonton
69. Everett, Vanessa	SAIT Polytechnic	Calgary
70. Fayant, Brian	Métis Local 1935	Fort McMurray
71. Fayant, Karman	Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.	Bonnyville
72. Ferguson, Kari	Shoppers' Drug Mart	Calgary
73. Ferguson, Scott	Western Economic Diversification Canada	Edmonton
74. Fleury, Guide	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Wetaskiwin
75. Fontaine, Martin	IVMT Training Company	Calahoo
76. Forster, Garth	Canada Safeway	Edmonton
77. Friesen, Ivy Kim	Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources	Calgary
78. Gambler, Darlene	Bigstone HRD	Wabasca
79. Gardener, Don	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Edmonton
80. Gatner, Larry	Local Union 424, IBEW	Edmonton
81. Gauthier, Leonard	Alberta Department of Energy	Edmonton

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
82. Giroux, Norma	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Edmonton
83. Gladue, Brenda	City of Red Deer – Social Planning Department	Red Deer
84. Gladue, Jason	Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project	Edmonton
85. Gladue, Kris	Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
86. Gladue, Lorne	Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
87. Goodin Lightning, Elda	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
88. Goodrunning, Jocelyn	Rocky Aboriginal Employment Service	Rocky Mountain House
89. Gosselin, Paulette M.	First Nations and Inuit Health Branch	Edmonton
90. Gouda, Rita	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Rocky Mountain House
91. Graham, Kent	Aspen Regional Health	Onoway
92. Gubbels, Victoria	Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations	Regina
93. Halani, Zohra	Canada Safeway	Calgary
94. Halcrow, Coty	Kapawe'no First Nation	Grouard
95. Hecht, Benjamin	Direct Integrated Transportation	Winnipeg
96. Holbrow, Carolyn	Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources	Calgary
97. Hood, Christy	Calgary Marriott Hotel	Calgary
98. Hope, Bill	Brewsters	Calgary
99. Horseman, Victor	Oteenow Employment and Training Society	Edmonton

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
100. Houle, Eugene	INAC	Wetaskiwin
101. Houle, Rose M.	Saddle Lake Human Resource	Saddle Lake
102. Hrysak, Tom	Direct Transport	Calgary
103. Hululak, Bonnie	Service Canada	Edmonton
104. Hunt, Brian	All Weather Windows	Edmonton
105. Hunt, Deb	Canada Safeway	Edmonton
106. Ingram, Ronald	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Lethbridge
107. Isaac, Joan	Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
108. Jackson, Shelley	Portage College	Lac La Biche
109. Jahelka, May	Britt - Albian Sands Energy	Fort McMurray
110. Jakeman, Michael	Vinni, Coobe, Jakeman Barristers and Solicitors	Fort McMurray
111. Jani, Steve	Syncrude Ltd.	Fort McMurray
112. Janvier, Rick	Cold Lake First Nations	Cold Lake
113. John, Gordon	Kehewin Cree Nation	Kehewin
114. John, Phaedra	Kehewin Cree Nation	Kehewin
115. John-Gladue, Eva	Six Independent Alberta First Nations	Edmonton
116. Karakonti, Sid	CLAC	Edmonton
117. Kemp, John	Direct Transport	Calgary
118. Kennedy, Moyra	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Wetaskiwin

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
119. Kemble, Sam	Construction Labour Relations	Edmonton
120. Kiyawasew, Dawnn	Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation	Valleyview
121. Knebush, Donna	City of Edmonton	Edmonton
122. Knickerbocker, Barb	Sears Canada Inc.	Edmonton
123. Kolebaba, Carolyn	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties	Nisku
124. Kootenay, Clayton	Oteenow Employment and Training Society	Edmonton
125. Laboucan, Penny	KeeTasKeeNow Tribal Council	Peace River
126. Laboucane, Krista	RBC	Calgary
127. Lamarche, Greg	TD Canada Trust	Calgary
128. Lane, Leaetta	Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Edmonton
129. Lang, Lorna	Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
130. Laslo, Gerry	Sunchild First Nation	Rocky Mountain House
131. L'Heuveux, Guy	Lethbridge Community College	Lethbridge
132. Link, Karen	Edmonton Economic Development Corporation	Edmonton
133. Louis, Leanne	Montana First Nation	Hobbema
134. Luft, Marilyn	Alberta Workforce Essential Skills	Red Deer
135. MacKay, Katherine	Dell Computers Edmonton	Edmonton
136. Mackinaw, Andrea	Ermineskin Human Resources Development	Hobbema
137. Manchak, Dave	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Edmonton

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
138. Many Heads, Anne	Treaty 7 Economic Development Corporation	Tsuu T'ina
139. Marcel, Kim	ACFN - AHRDA Employment and Training Coordinator	Ft. Chipewyan
140. Martial, Jacqueline	Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary	Calgary
141. Martin, Diana	Service Canada	Red Deer
142. Maul, Linda	Edmonton Economic Development Corporation	Edmonton
143. McArthur, Kathleen	First Nations Relations, AAND	Edmonton
144. McBride, Denise	Shell Canada Limited	Calgary
145. McCallum, Mark	Métis Nation of Alberta	Fort McMurray
146. McCallum, Norman	Rocky Native Friendship Centre	Rocky Mountain House
147. McClocklin, Kristy	Canada Safeway	Edmonton
148. McFarlane, Suzanne	BMO Financial Group (c/o Hewitt Associates)	Toronto
149. McNabb, Linda	Albian Sands Energy	Fort McMurray
150. McRae, Al	Layfield Environmental Systems, Geosynthetics and Industrial Fabrics –	Edmonton
151. Menard, Cathy	Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development	Winnipeg
152. Metchewais, Randy	Cold Lake First Nations	Cold Lake
153. Minde, Karen	Ermineskin Cree Nation	Hobbema
154. Monais, Sandy	Heart Lake First Nation #469	Lac La Biche
155. Monterrosa, Sylvia	Six Independent Alberta First Nations of Hobbema	Hobbema

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
156. Moonias, Tammy	Louis Bull First Nation	Hobbema
157. Moulton, Doug	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Vancouver
158. Mueller, Giesela	Oteenow Employment and Training Society	Edmonton
159. Muhlbeier, James		Rocky Mountain House
160. Mustus, Rosanne	Western Cree Tribal Council	Valleyview
161. Neigel, Paulette	Oteenow Employment and Training Society	Edmonton
162. Nicholls, Alison	Human Resources and Social Development Canada	Edmonton
163. Noskey, Jack	Loon River First Nation	Red Earth
164. Ozga, Brian	London Drugs	Red Deer
165. Page, Allan	Construction Sector Council	Victoria
166. Paul, Lorianne	Alexander First Nation (YTDF)	Morinville
167. Pelletier, Brain	HRSDC Aboriginal Affairs Dir.	Gatineau
168. Pennington, Catherine	EnCana Corp.	Calgary
169. Pinder, Heather	Service Canada	Edmonton
170. Polchies, Toni	Aboriginal Futures Career and Training	Calgary
171. Potts, Brenda	Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation (YTDF)	Glenevis
172. Potts-Johnson, Donna	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
173. Quinney, Sheila	Frog Lake Careers	Frog Lake
174. Rain, Betty	Six Independent AB First Nations	Duffield

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
175. Raine, Telly	Louis Bull Tribe	Hobbema
176. Ramos, Regina	Compass Group Canada	Calgary
177. Redcrow, Andrew	Saddle Lake Human Resource	Saddle Lake
178. Sarkadi, Brian	Shell Canada - Oil Sands	Calgary
179. Sarkis, Cristi	Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada	
180. Savard, Kathy	Peace Country Health	Grande Prairie
181. Sawchuk, Sharon	Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
182. Schaly, April	Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources	Calgary
183. Schick, Jaclyn	Albian Sands Energy	Fort McMurray
184. Schuyler, Trina	Blood Tribe Employment and Skills Training	Standoff
185. Semper, Eyren	TD Canada Trust	Calgary
186. Sharphead, Penny	Enoch Cree Nation	Enoch
187. Shimek, Janice	Career Assistance Network Ltd.	Red Deer
188. Short, Scott	Trimac	Calgary
189. Slezak, Murray	Shell Canada Limited	Calgary
190. Smith, Jay	Lethbridge Aboriginal Career and Employment Centre	Lethbridge
191. Snyder, Russel	IT Consultant	Calgary
192. Sound, Yvonne	Swan River First Nation	Kinuso
193. Stafford, Janet	Bigstone HRD	Wabasca
194. StandingontheRoad, Leonard	Montana First Nation	Hobbema
195. Stang, Eva	IBM Canada	Edmonton
196. Stevenson, Joanne	Manitoba Chiefs	Winnipeg

PARTICIPANT	ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
197. Stevenson, Michelle	Sobeys	Edmonton
198. Stimson, Daniel	Siksika Employment	Siksika
199. Swag, Jim	Piikani Employment Resources	Brocket
200. Swampy, Pat	Samson Cree Nation	Hobbema
201. Switzer, Brad	Cara Operations	Edmonton
202. Symyrozum, Wayne	Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry	Camrose
203. Thomas, Chris	Tim Hortons	Calgary
204. Tobo-Gaudreau, Shelley	Sobeys	Edmonton
205. Tousignant, Marijana	Canada Safeway	Calgary
206. Tremayne, Alan	Métis Nation of Alberta	Slave Lake
207. Vanidour, Mari Jo	Youth Employment Development Centre	Red Deer
208. VanKeeken, Dan	Dell Computers Edmonton	Edmonton
209. Villeneuve, Jeanette	Alberta Advanced Education	Edmonton
210. Voghell, Sharon	Canada Safeway	Edmonton
211. Ward, Dave	Oteenow Employment and Training Society	Edmonton
212. White, Rachel	Trade Winds to Success	Edmonton
213. Wilson, Kerry	Direct Transport	Edmonton
214. Wilson, Maria	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	Ottawa
215. Wolfe, Taylor	Eermineskin Cree Nation	Hobbema
216. Youngman, Joan	Trade Winds to Success	Edmonton
217. Yuzwak, Susan	Canada Safeway	Calgary
218. Zee, Frank	CLAC	Edmonton

Appendix 3

EVALUATION SUMMARY

RED DEER, ALBERTA - RESULTS

Summary

The Alberta Workforce Connex forum attracted delegates from Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), private sector organizations and government. In total, 218 participants were in attendance. 81 evaluations were received; representing a participant return rate of 37 per cent. Response sector demographics are broken down as follows:

Private sector delegates	48
AHRDAs.....	33
Unknown	0

General Questions and Responses

1. *Please forward me a copy of the forum report as follows:*

By Email.....	77
No Indication	1

2. *Did the Workforce Connex forum meet your expectations?*

Agree.....	72
Disagree	3
No Indication	6

Comments:

- More than expected – follow-up is needed!
- This forum provided resources that I was not aware of.
- Did not know what to expect.
- I wish there were more Inuit organizations participating.
- Would like to see a follow-up meeting.
- It was a very well organized forum, but the Information Fair was ineffective to connect with AHRDA stakeholders.
- It was great.
- An excellent initiative to get us networking.
- Great opportunity to create awareness between groups around issues – common to both.
- Exceeded expectations.
- Exceeded.
- Would like to see a follow-up to Connex!!
- Very informative, interesting comments.
- Had no expectations therefore not disappointed.
- We talked a lot about ‘culture’ but still have no idea what the Aboriginal culture is all about – no understanding.
- Exceeded!
- I am wiser.
- No comment – I was here only for the 18 Oct/06.
- Exceeded my expectations.
- Exceeded – more should be scheduled.

- The what and why were duly explained.
- Increased knowledge about barriers obstacles with supply and demand.
- I entered the forum with the expectation of learning and found this both a learning and participatory and interactive community experience.
- I wasn't sure what my expectations were. (appreciate the opportunity to learn more about Aboriginal people).
- Would like to see more employers.
- Would like to see more businesses.
- Great opportunity for interaction networking.
- Would like to see follow up on this forum.
- Excellent forum.
- Very excellent.
- Connections and partnerships.
- Networking.
- It was nice to have such a diverse group together – good job!
- A guest from MB, very glad attended – can now take experiences back to planning committee for Manitoba forum.
- Yes how to move forward, how to take a lead in making the connections work – commitments – build a network.
- A good cross-section of employers and all Alberta AHRDAs.
- A nice blend of discussion, presentations and small group work.
- Yes, it was quite capable.
- A good start in networking with AHRDAs and business sector.
- A positive and focused approach.

3. *Were the information materials you received at the forum valuable to you?*

Agree	77
Disagree	2
No Indication	2

Comments:

- Yes, I will bring this back to my institute for awareness.
- There should have been more details on the material available in the package.
- Met and networked with a wide variety of people.
- More detailed information on initiatives and skill pools required.
- Good access to contact materials for other organizations.
- Very valuable.
- Would love to have seen more industry HR people in attendance.
- On the list of attendees email addresses would have been nice.
- Would have preferred presentation notes.
- Have not looked through them yet.
- Not just valuable...essential.
- Would like to see more awareness of our AHRDAs to the employers. Invite more than the AHRDAs.
- Could have had more.
- I don't know yet.
- Information I can use in my programs.
- List of participants – contacts.
- It's always nice to have supports to take back to the office and share with leadership.

- Very much so – greater understanding of supply/demand issues.
- Connections – where to go, who to meet and what must be looked at as far as culture.
- Employers could use government/AHRDA website information.
- The opportunities to connect with other organizations/people was very much appreciated.
- Yes, for the most part.
- I was very surprised the number of people who did not show the second day or who left too early.

4. *Did you visit the Workforce Connex (www.workforceconnex.com) website prior to the forum?*

Agree	53
Disagree	24
No Indication	4

Comments:

- A very informative website.
- I will be looking for results.
- No, I did not hear about it before.
- Will follow-up.
- I will now.
- I will visit your website now – moving forward.
- Not helpful – very little substance pertaining to this conference.
- Shared info with others to encourage attendance.
- Agenda could have been more specific – when/if meals provided.
- No I didn't get the opportunity to do so.
- Not yet.

- No time busy putting Aboriginals into the trades.
- Just to find the agenda. Now I will take a closer look at it.
- Yes I did, registered online.
- No time, due to my demanding job.
- Gave me the information I needed.
- Could put more info on the website – previous forums, agenda, upcoming forums, minutes.
- Professional – look!
- Impressed with the range (and detail) of information.
- Was not aware of it.

5. *Did you have sufficient advance notice about the forum?*

Agree	74
Disagree	4
No Indication	3

Comments:

- Thank you to Bill Campbell.
- Very well organized.
- Good notice – well planned and executed event.
- Good usage of time – allowed for 'networking' opportunities.
- Through Bill Campbell/HR Safeway.
- Yes – Bill Campbell is to be complimented.
- Post follow-up forum in newspapers.
- More advertising.
- Did email a few weeks regarding the Information Fair, but there was no reply. I did contact on Monday, and fortunately there was a table available.

- I had vehicle problems and I could not arrive for the full time.
- Saw it advertised in the Journal.
- Should be held annually.
- Quite a bit of advance notice is very helpful for planning.
- As an AHRDA holder, T7EDC was a part of the planning.
- We were informed by AHRDCC and our AHRDA.
- Did not receive any agenda or schedule of events/locations prior to getting to forum – should have gotten this information.
- Well done folks!!
- Last minute notice.

6. *One thing I liked about the forum...*

- Networking.
- Informal Network.
- The information sharing and networking.
- Strong representation by Métis nation.
- That AHRDAs got to see the employers' side of things.
- Networking.
- To be exposed to different kinds of organizations.
- Great interaction!
- The organization and facilitation was great.
- Discussion – opening up regarding concerns and giving our solutions – real connections.
- Variety.

- Discussion groups.
- Good usage of time – allowed for 'networking' opportunities.
- Conducive environment provided to all players to interact, network and communicate.
- Interaction directly with AHRDAs and artisans.
- The interest in 'Walk in My Shoes'!
- Facilitator was great.
- The agenda and the way it was presented plus new contacts and awareness.
- Working with groups and commitments.
- The networking.
- Pace was well-done, excellent facilitator, lots of information and commitments.
- Understanding the diversity of perspectives (employers).
- Reconnecting with employment agencies.
- The dialogue and approach to get discussion going (reverse role playing).
- 'Walking in other shoes' showed misconceptions on both sides on the story.
- Open dialogue – breakout groups.
- Excellent host, speakers, were engaging and enthusiastic!
- Looked at solutions rather than all negatives – involvement of business/industry.
- Very open environment for sharing ideas.
- Opportunity to learn about resource centres.
- Creative ideas to address current issues.
- Facilitator – well spoken.
- The opportunity to better understand the Aboriginal mindset.

- Being part of the conference and seeing new faces and who what are the proper to seek help from.
- Small group discussions with Aboriginal and business representatives.
- Education.
- Connections – open discussion – sharing.
- Group work discussions.
- Well done!! Meaningful positive dialogue and excellent networking event! A good variety of balance of lectures, information sharing and participatory interactive group activities (small/large). Good participation.
- The real life workplace stories and Neil Camarta presentation.
- Learning more about the issues on both sides.
- The small work groups.
- Interaction among industry and Aboriginal employment participants
- Solution focused.
- Being able to express “our voice” to industry.
- Great time keeping – I made great contacts.
- Very dynamic.
- Good participation from employers and AHRDA holders.
- Given me hope.
- Stayed on time! Woo hoo.
- Making connections with employers.
- Information and good networking. We need follow-up to this conference.
- Making connections and possible future partnerships. Do a follow-up on the Workforce Connex.
- Networking.
- Meeting new people and getting new information.
- Excellent forum facilitator – Fact commitments were made at end of forum.
- Great information, great participation, directing us in the right direction.
- The agenda was very well done, the lunch excellent, lots of contacts made.
- *Developing a list of next steps/actions.
*Connections made between AHRDAs and employers.
- Good degree of discussion – good ideas. The info fair was excellent – would have been good to have more employers/AHRDAs @ the info fair.
- Great attitude shown by the employer partners.
- The personal stories. Best practices. Real life workplace.
- Meeting with employers/commitments made by both sides.
- Breakout sessions.
- Dialogue – between delegates.
- Informative/interesting.
- The variety and diversity of delegates.
- Location.
- The speakers – forum.
- Networking.
- Success stories and Neil Camarta.
- Open dialogue from industry.
- I got lots of ideas of how to connect with employers and how to promote our office.

7. *One thing I would change about the forum*

- Make it an annual event.
- Minimal value for the \$100 booth fee – need to create more traffic.
- Limited activity – one day conference would be adequate (breakout groups were finished earlier than time allotted).
- It would have been nice to have a perspective of a young Aboriginal youth in the process of education/training and job seeking. Found the final comments inappropriate.
- Our college should of maintained a booth.
- Maybe have some clients come in and listen at the next one, to see their point of view.
- Add First Nations people life stories.
- Stay focused on the real reason we gathered!
- More Inuit involvement.
- All stakeholders invited to event – union, grassroots, coordinators, and real individuals struggling with trying to get positions.
- Would like to see people from the reserves attend and give their thoughts on what they need and want.
- More rotation with discussion groups.
- Wording is somewhat confusing (i.e., supply and demand and switching).
- Align facilitator instructions with actual roll-out.
- Have workshops focused on specific topics e.g. info on taxation. Also, have organized networking (most AHRDA reps left for a smoke break during the networking sessions).
- I would like to have seen larger participants from Grande Prairie (larger #s in general would be better).
- Bring job hunters to the conference.
- More industry HR people.
- Maybe adding 1/2 day.
- More interaction between delegates.
- More employers.
- More information in package.
- More emphasis on the fact that if business does not make money there will be no jobs. People are in charge of their own destiny.
- Add info/conversation about what we are doing at “home” to prepare our youth.
- I would invite more service industry providers from the northeast.
- Not sure – maybe have youth involved.
- I would like to know the findings of the five Connex forums prior to this to see where the common issues exist and have presenters address these issues specifically.
- More time.
- More employers – invite CEO’s and UP’s.
- I would like to see more youth involvement regarding being invalue who are the companies who are the HR’s.
- Nothing comes to mind.
- More in-depth how to’s.
- More employers present invite target group.
- Hard to hear participants in large room when the flip chart small groups numbered 25+ each (small rooms worked better). Would like to see more representation from Aboriginal communities including youth and potential employees as well as more small business representatives from all major Alta communities (also NWT and Nunuvit would be good).

- The networking exercise I would change to a speed dating style where people move from table to table and have one minute to tell each other about themselves and to exchange business cards. This would force people to network. It's difficult for most people just to walk up to someone and introduce themselves.
- More interaction small/groups? between employer and AHRDA.
- Not enough employers.
- Add youth components.
- Network could have been better.
- Organize an optional dinner between employers and AHRDAs for the evening. A social. Relationship building event.
- The AHRDAs should be clearly identified so employers can go to them.
- Would like to see more input from people at the grassroots level. (First Nations clients).
- Invite the target group (native peoples and small business and more employers).
- Purpose? Audience? Real life stories – What's up with three men? Where is the woman?
- I wish it was two whole days, not enough time.
- Cultural awareness presentation.
- None.
- Include the supply (bring in reserve/Métis members) because we are always talking on their behalf.
- Have a better (broader) selection of employers. Start earlier and end earlier – too many people left early.
- Ensure accommodation/logistics are looked after – was informed hotel was paid for – it was not.
- AHRDA artists should all have separate booths at the fair, so they could be met as far as city, instead of private sector booths.
- Forums with a sector focus (i.e., oil gas, service, health. Elder closing comments?).
- Provide/create a formal/structured follow-up process to implement the next steps.
- Need to reflect on that.
- Make it happen again and measure our success.
- More personal stories. Best practices. Larger representation from education providers. When reporting back, ask each group to share five to six strategies vs. the entire list but post the entire list on the website.
- No change necessary but would like annual forums.
- A.M. session – engage the group with physical act and humour. We need a follow-up conference.
- More time for dialogue – between delegates – for networking. Need another forum – make it an annual event.
- More participation from native sector.
- Invite more small and medium business and First Nation unemployed participants.
- Include on reserve people, chiefs and counsel.
- Needs to happen one times per year in Alberta.
- Add more companies on 'What is Working' to help mentor others.
- Screen comments (closing) by Louis Rain.

8. Participants were asked to rate the following questions using the following scale:

5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE						STRONGLY DISAGREE				

PRIVATE SECTOR

a. Prior to attending this Workforce Connex forum I had a high level of awareness about Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs).

Agree..... 21
 Disagree..... 17
 No Indication 11

Comments:

- Have some knowledge of how some AHRDA holders work.
- Had never heard of them.
- They are our funders.
- One of the 13 AHRDA holders.

b. As a result of this forum, I am coming away with a better understanding of the constraints and impediments that Aboriginal people face in their efforts to work with companies and secure employment.

Agree..... 50
 Disagree..... 2
 No Indication 13

Comments:

- I may not always agree that all of the 'constraints' are truly constraints but more self imposed through a lack of willingness to integrate by some more militant people.
- All AHRDAs – where they are at.
- Already had an idea.

c. I intend to develop a plan to increase my organization's recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people.

Agree..... 46
 Disagree..... 1
 No Indication 17

Comments:

- In the training aspect (as an AHRDA holder).
- I would like to see that happen.
- To certainly research and learn more about the aboriginal culture/values and lifestyle.
- Will table with community council.
- We are doing that within our program (job retention worker and mentorship program).

ABORIGINAL HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT HOLDERS (AHRDA)

- a. Prior to attending this forum, my AHRDA has experienced many challenges developing relationships with businesses.

Agree..... 26
 Disagree..... 3
 No Indication 3

Comments:

- Basically lack of information.
 - I am new in my position and I have more information on networking and getting more involved with finding more support from other AHRDAs.
 - But we now will hire a job retention worker who will be our liaison.
- b. This Workforce Connex forum has helped me to better understand the issues and constraints that businesses face in their efforts to recruit and retain Aboriginal people.

Agree..... 28
 Disagree..... 1
 No Indication 3

Comments:

- I need to do more!
- Always knew.
- Sceptical about them following through.
- Even though from another province some barriers/challenges and solutions are transferable to all provinces.

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE ALBERTA WORKFORCE CONNEX FORUM

- "Great Awareness Opportunity!"
Alberta Department of Energy
- "This was a great informational forum, it created an awareness of a large labour pool that is currently located in Alberta." *Bill Hope – Brewster Calgary*
- "Would like to see this forum for follow-up."
Bigstone Cree Nation Human Resources Development
- "It's a great employer – employee partnership building exercise." *Maria Wilson*
- "A real eye opener on issues facing the First Nation, Métis nations." *Zohra Halani – Canada Safeway Ltd.*
- "Let's do this annually – check progress – update activity, success, and feedback."
Susan Yuzwak – Canada Safeway
- "I found the free exchange of ideas and concerns to be very enlightening. It opened my eyes to issues on both sides." *Jody Anderson – Canada Safeway*
- "Excellent experience. Thank you."
Dianne Deans – Canada Safeway
- "These forums are value-packed enough and address such relevant issues that they should be available in every major city more than once a year!" *Suzanne McFarlane – Hewitt Associates (Client: BMO Financial Group)*
- "I encourage all to attend Workforce Connex forums. I would like to see this forum annual and follow up meeting." *Kathy Savard – Health Care Recruiter, Peace Country Health*
- "This conference is well worth attending – bringing all stakeholders together is a valuable exercise."
Joyce Mearon – City of Grande Prairie

- "Workforce Connex is an excellent Networking forum." *Kim Marcel – Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, AHRDA/Employment and Training Coordinator*
- "This is the most important source of information (Labour Market Barrier) we have found." *Lokken Career Training*
- "Great opportunity to connect with the Aboriginal community and with employers facing the same challenges." *Christy Hood – Calgary Marriott Hotel*
- "There should be more workshops like this." *Trina Schuyler – Blood Tribe Employment and Skills Training*
- "Attend this workshop at all costs." *Jason Gladue – Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project*
- "I will encourage our leaders to come to the next Connex conf." *Alexis Human Resource Development (Y.T.C.F.) AHRDA holder*
- "For years we have been trying to get business/industry at our table. There is promise yet." *Lorna Lang – Métis Nation of Alberta*
- "I highly recommend that more individuals participate in similar conferences to network Aboriginal communities and business and industry/government." *Alan Tremayne – B.A.; B.Ed – Labour Market Development Manager Region V Métis Nation of Alberta*
- "It was a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of the AHRDAs and network." *Anne Baker, Red Deer Aboriginal Community Council*
- "Opportunity to meet other AHRDA reps and the business sector." *Siksika Employment and Training Services*
- "I was able to meet a great number of people with which I will build partnerships and working relationships." *Ron Ingram, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, Lethbridge*
- "Challenges and solutions are transferable to all provinces. We need to learn and assist each other." *Cathy Menard, Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development*
- "I felt that both sector delegates had a better understanding of each other. This event should be annual and come to smaller towns." *Gerry Laslo – Sunchild First Nation, YTDF AHRDA*
- "Valuable resource of knowledge." *Rick Janvier – Cold Lake First Nations*
- "Bringing together cultures improves Canada as a whole!" *Cold Lake First Nations Human Resources*
- "Great place for networking." *Trade Winds to Success*
- "Great start, lots to do in future to come. Target group missing." *Trade Winds to Success Project – Calgary 403.228.3502*
- "I was impressed with how willing and ready AHRDAs were to engage in employers." *Shell Canada Ltd.*
- "Need to do this, follow-up, again annual, maybe regional." *Susan Barthel*
- "Don't miss this opportunity to learn and partner with Aboriginal peoples of Canada – they are a resource that can help us shape and create our Canadian future together." *Alison Nicholls, Service Canada*
- "I would encourage an annual meeting." *Brad Switzer – Car Operations*
- "I truly saw the other side and I am now much more aware of their concerns." *Mark Alton – Coram Construction*

Glossary Of Terms

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
ABE	Adult Basic Education
AHRDS	Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy
AHRDCC	Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada
AHRDAs	Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements holders
APTEC	Aboriginal Peoples Training and Employment Commission
AWPI	Aboriginal Workplace Partnership Initiative
CAD	Computerized Assisted Design
CEDO	Community Economic Development Officer
CNSSLF	Canada/Alberta Skills and Learning Framework
HEO	Heavy Equipment Operator
HR	Human Resource
HRSDC	Human Resources and Social Development Canada
IN	Inclusion Network
IT	Information Technology
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada



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