

# Laborers Union

## Tribal Partnership Update



CHANGING LIVES - BUILDING FUTURES

October 2007

## Canada's First Nations Meet With LIUNA's Leadership

### Partnership Accord Struck, Record-Breaking Construction Jobs Targeted

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Chief Phil Fontaine visited Washington, DC recently to meet with the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) General President, Terry O'Sullivan to talk about partnering with the union. The meeting, attended by a number of LIUNA officials, including General Secretary/Treasurer Armand Sabitoni, centered on job training and the placement of members of the AFN into the construction industry as Construction Craft Laborers.

Representing over 850,000 individuals living in over 630 First Nation's communities in Canada, the AFN is by far the single largest group of indigenous people in the country. According to the Laborers' LECET research division, the amount of construction work on or near AFN communities is projected to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars over the next 10 years.

"We are going to work with Chief Fontaine and his staff to insure we make every effort to put First Nation's members to work in those jobs" said President O'Sullivan. "Our Local Unions in Canada need people to man those jobs, and we will make sure the opportunities are there for AFN's people."

LIUNA so far has signed two instrumental Memorandums of Understanding with the AFN. The documents basically declare a partnership between LIUNA outlining meetings with AFN's policy makers and the with the intent to build stronger relationships between First Nation's communities and the union.

Mano Frey, Vice President and Regional Manager of LIUNA's Northwest Region declared his support of the process and praised Ed Hensley, LECET's Construction Market Representative for his work with Local 92's Business Manager Mike Reid, President Lenny O'Toole, and Chief Fontaine's staff to put together a program to get the initial LIUNA/AFN meetings rolling.

"We are excited about the potential this partnership will have not only for the 7 provinces we cover in my region, but all of Canada" commented Frey. "I applaud the way Vice President Joe Mancinelli, from the Central and Eastern Canada Region, jumped on the opportunity to get involved. With our two regions covering all of Canada, I'm sure a lot of people are going to get training and job opportunities where it's really needed."

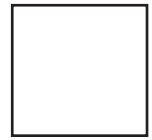
Leveraging opportunities to make things work with employers is something LIUNA and LECET make happen. Bringing a third party, such as the AFN and their affiliate organizations, to the table make things possible. Partnerships are already growing and demonstrating results, such as the recent success of Local 92 putting a sizeable number of AFN members to work in Fort McMurray where the work for Laborers is projected to increase geometrically and span a period of over twenty-five years.



From left: Judy Whiteduck, AFN; Mano Frey, VP, LIUNA; Armand E. Sabitoni, General Secretary/Treasurer, LIUNA; Rocco Davis, VP LIUNA; Blaine Favel, AFN; Phil Fontaine, National Chief, AFN; Terence M. O'Sullivan, General President, LIUNA; Joe Mancinelli, VP, LIUNA; Mike Reid, Business Manager, LIUNA Local 92. **Photo by Ed Rehfeld, Comm. Mgr., LECET**

# LABORERS TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

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## Innovation at Work

### LECET Instrumental in Partnership Initiatives

Northwest LECET Adds to Effort Communicating Message to Canada's AFN

By Ed Hensley, LECET Construction Market Representative, Northwest Region

The Laborers Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET) is a remarkable and flexible organization that has as its primary mission the expansion of market share for LIUNA and its signatory contractors. So when I got a call from Jimmy Dolan, Business Rep for Local 92 in Edmonton, Alberta I was excited at the prospect of demonstrating our success in forming partnerships in what is often called "Indian Country". Things started happening at an accelerated rate soon afterwards. Local 92's Business Manager Mike Reid and President Lenny O'Toole already had a good relationship going with the Assembly of First Nation's (AFN) National Chief Phil Fontaine, but they needed assistance getting their message across at an upcoming meeting with Fontaine at his headquarters in Ottawa.

With the assistance of the Northwest LECET Communications Director, Pat Smutz, we put together a presentation for National Chief Fontaine. Using some of the material we had already developed, and a number things that were put together by the Na-

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tional LECET office, we already had a good start. The video (A Perfect Partnership) we had produced on the success of the tribal agreement with the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana was an excellent starting point. Coupled with a PowerPoint presentation outlining the advantages of having a Tribal Labor Agreement with LIUNA, we demonstrated to Fontaine our sincerity.

It's said that old wounds sometimes heal slowly, and testifying to this is the fact that often we hear of "those unions" who did work on a reservation and never hired a single tribal member. The simple answer is that unions are not the employers, and don't really hire anybody the contractors do that. But more importantly - unions have changed - and we are actively engaged in forming partnerships with tribal and aboriginal stakeholders. It's been proven to work, and the results are quantifiable.

Our intent here is simple: Increase market share for our local unions and contractors while providing job and training opportunities for our partners' constituents. Forming a partnership with a national group like the Assembly of First Nations, an entity that covers over two-thirds of all of Canada's indigenous population, will have a major employment impact upon those who take advantage of this affiliation. They deserve a chance to get that work, especially when it's right in their back yard.

Now that the leadership of both the AFN and LIUNA have put their intent to pen and paper, we are ready for the next phase of implementing an innovative program on a national scale. The future of AFN's members will certainly change for the better as their quality of life improves after becoming a Construction Craft Laborer.