



# NEWS RELEASE

January 24, 2023

## **TNDC partnering with TCG, Province and Industry to create Tahltan Nation Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program**

Dease Lake, BC, January 24, 2023 -- Tahltan Nation Development Corporation (TNDC) has partnered with the Tahltan Central Government (TCG), Government of British Columbia, and several industry partners (Centre of Training Excellence in Mining, Coast Mountain College, Contact North BC, Finning, Mining in HR Council, Newcrest Mining Limited, and SkilledTradesBC), to create a pilot Tahltan Nation Heavy Equipment Operator Training Program.

The Tahltan Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Program will address an industry problem, by combining equipment training in Tahltan Territory with on-the-job practical operating work experience and camp life exposure. In addition to building capacity within the Tahltan community, the training program will integrate Tahltan regional and traditional knowledge on local projects while tapping into senior experienced Tahltan operators.

The program will align with SkilledTradesBC (formerly Industry Training Authority) learning outcomes as well as the Mining in HR Council common competencies. It will provide a mixture of workplace safety training, underground miner fundamentals, HEO simulator training, and at least 140 hours of hands-on training, focussed on a progressive approach to learning heavy equipment operation over three years. Additional pieces of equipment will be added each year.

Participants will receive four weeks of hands-on Heavy Equipment Operator training, followed by job placement as an apprentice with an industry partner in Tahltan Territory, focussing on the relevant pieces of equipment they learn each year, to build up their hours that season, and complete their SkilledTradesBC certification. At the outset, the program will also support Tahltans in acquiring their Class 4, 5 and 7 drivers' licences in territory, and provide a one-week camp life orientation at the Red Chris Mine. Travel, accommodation, meals, and a training stipend will be provided during training while full apprenticeship wages will be paid during the job placement.

During the training and work season, participants will also receive support from senior Tahltan Heavy Equipment Operators, who will be supported in challenging the SkilledTradesBC HEO Certification, as well as building skills as mentors through additional ongoing training with the Mining in HR Council and Coast Mountain College.

Tahltan Territory, located in remote northwest British Columbia, is home to approximately 70% of B.C.'s resource rich Golden Triangle, including two of the 10 operating metal mines in BC (Red Chris and Brucejack). Tahltan Territory is also home to approximately 14% of Canada's exploration

expenditures, approximately 3% of the global exploration budget, approximately \$295 million of mineral exploration expenditure, and \$1.05 billion of total projected mining production values. Demand for skilled, experienced and certified HEOs will continue to grow in the decades to come.

**“Despite global financial headwinds, there is and will continue to be, a significant need for experienced Heavy Equipment Operators with TNDC and in Tahltan Territory. TNDC frequently receives resumes from new Tahltan operators who have spent several weeks outside territory attending a Heavy Equipment Operator Program, returning without complete qualifications to work on an active mine site and operate heavy equipment. TNDC saw an opportunity to tap into new funding opportunities and partner with TCG, the Province and industry to create a program that is more cost effective and Tahltan oriented, and that will provide the certification skills and training TNDC and our industry partners need. The fruition of this program is testament to partnership and collaboration, and a win-win-win for everyone involved,”** said Colleen Cashin, VP People & Corporate Culture, Tahltan Nation Development Corporation.

**“I am thrilled at the opportunity this course will create for Tahltans wishing to pursue a career that allows them to be trained in Tahltan Territory and encourages them to use their skills in our communities after completion,”** said Chad Norman Day, President of the Tahltan Central Government. **“The Tahltan Central Government strives to support our members in finding careers and employment opportunities, including through the use of OnTrack, our Tahltan exclusive job site. I have repeatedly emphasized that for there to be world-class mining in our territory, there is a need for world-class wildlife stewardship, but in addition to this, world-class mining cannot exist in Tahltan Territory without Tahltans being included in the workforce. We support breaking down any barriers that have traditionally prevented our members from accessing employment opportunities. Tahltans must benefit from preferential hire by those operating in our territory. I am excited to see the doors that this program and partnership will open for Tahltans.”**

**“This pilot program will help people develop the skills and experience they need to become certified Heavy Equipment Operators,”** said Selina Robinson, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. **“Skills training, such as the Tahltan Nation Heavy Equipment Operator Training program, is essential to addressing the demand for skilled trades in the area.”**

ENDS

## **ABOUT TNDC**

Tahltan Nation Development Corporation (TNDC) – the business arm of the Tahltan Nation – is owned by its shareholders – Iskut Band, Tahltan Band, and Tahltan Central Government – and partial profits are returned to the shareholders for initiatives to benefit Tahltan members. TNDC was founded in 1985 by visionary, progressive Tahltan leaders who wanted to ensure the Tahltan Nation benefits from the economic activities and development occurring within Tahltan Territory and to provide employment, training, and contracting opportunities to Tahltan members. From its roots in residential construction, TNDC's services have expanded to heavy construction, earthworks, camp services, air support, aviation, forestry, transportation, and fibre-optic communications services. TNDC serves the resource exploration, mine development and mining, building construction, forestry, hydroelectric power, civil, infrastructure and public works sectors. [www.tndc.ca](http://www.tndc.ca)

## **ABOUT THE TAHLTAN NATION**

The Tahltan Central Government (TCG) is the administrative governing body of the Tahltan Nation and is the representative government of the Tahltan Nation with respect to the inherent and collective Aboriginal title and rights shared by all Tahltan people. The Tahltan Nation's Territory spans 95,933 square km of Northwest British Columbia or the equivalent of 11 per cent of the province. [www.tahltan.org](http://www.tahltan.org)

### **Contacts:**

Deena Tokaryk  
Communications Manager  
Tahltan Nation Development Corporation  
[communications@tndc.ca](mailto:communications@tndc.ca)

Ombrielle Neria  
Communications & External Relations Director  
Tahltan Central Government  
[communicationsdirector@tahtlan.org](mailto:communicationsdirector@tahtlan.org)