
Release

For Immediate Release
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BERENS RIVER FIRST NATION TO UNDERTAKE COMMUNITY TRAINING IN PREPARATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ALL-SEASON ROAD ON EAST SIDE OF LAKE WINNIPEG

\$11 Million Agreement to Deliver Jobs, Training and Economic Opportunities for First Nation

Today, the East Side Road Authority, Inc. (ESRA) and the Berens River First Nation announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a Community Benefits Agreement that will deliver jobs, training and economic development opportunities for the First Nation community on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

"This agreement is the first of its kind in Manitoba and ensures that the Berens River First Nation community benefits in a meaningful way from construction of the all-season road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg," said Eric Robinson, Acting Minister of Aboriginal & Northern Affairs on behalf of Ron Lemieux, Minister of Infrastructure & Transportation. "The agreement provides jobs and training for local residents and an important economic development opportunity for the community."

"This is a proud day for the Berens River First Nation people," said Chief George Kemp. "This demonstrates that sound financial and human resource management by a First Nation and their leadership can lead to greater opportunities and a brighter future! This partnership also demonstrates to all First Nations and indeed all Manitobans that the Manitoba government is committed to working with First Nations towards building a sustainable and viable future."

"Construction of the all-season road provides an important opportunity to create long lasting benefits for the east side communities," said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of ESRA. "At the same time, this agreement helps to ensure that we are ready to begin construction of the all-season road in the fall of 2010. As the project proceeds, we look forward to signing other benefits agreements with other east side communities."

Under the terms of the MOU, ESRA will establish a construction training program in 2009 and 2010, in preparation for the construction of the all-season road. Approximately 50 – 70 local residents from Berens River First Nation will be provided an opportunity to obtain labourer and heavy equipment operator training associated with gravel crushing, right-of-way clearing and road construction.

Once the project is initiated, it is anticipated that the Berens River First Nation, through a separate corporate entity known as Pigeon River Contractors Inc. (PRC), will undertake activities associated with the construction of the all-season road including:

- Gravel Crushing – PRC will crush and stockpile aggregate material at the current market price plus a capacity building allowance of 25 per cent over the next three years for construction of the all-season road; and
- Right-of-Way Clearing – PRC will undertake clearing of a section of the proposed right-of-way for the all-season road including potential pre-construction work required for surveying, final design and site preparation. The agreement also allows the First Nation to utilize all usable harvested material for community purposes.

To assist PRC in project management, to ensure appropriate oversight, and to provide mentoring, ESRA will perform project and contract administration services to PRC and Berens River. The total value of the agreement is estimated to a maximum of \$11,250,000. PRC will have the opportunity to undertake future potential contracts associated with the project.

Prior to construction beginning on the all-season road, authorizations from federal and provincial regulators are required. On January 30, an environmental application to begin the environmental licensing process was filed with Manitoba Conservation. ESRA has hired SNC-Lavalin as a consultant to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment for the project. As part of this process, a Public Open House has been scheduled for:

When: Thursday, June 25, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Where: Winnipeg Convention Centre, Millennium Room

Anyone interested to learn more about East Side Transportation Initiative is welcome to attend. For more information, please visit the www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca or contact 945-4900 or toll free 1-866-356-6355.