

Training set for potential miners

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Ten would-be aboriginal miners are expected to be well-positioned for a hands-on job following a new training program organized by government, industry and national and local native agencies.

The 12-week Mining Essentials pilot program starts Monday with 10 candidates from Pic Mobert and Pic River First Nations who, in addition to receiving classroom instruction, will participate in standard common-core training at Barrick Gold's renowned Hemlo operation near Marathon.

Canadian industry experts predict that existing and future mines across the country will have to hire 100,000 new workers over the next 10 years to fill vacancies.

The Mining Essentials program "is a further step towards a developed solution tailored to human resources needs in the mining sector," Barrick Gold's Roger Souckey, human resources manager at the company's Hemlo camp, said Thursday in a news release.

The province is providing \$150,000 toward the project.

Aboriginal agencies also see the project as a way to ensure input into the implementation of government-funded training programs aimed at native candidates.

"It's important that we continue to be the leader in the development of our training programs that meet the needs of our communities," Anishinabek Employment and Training Services executive-director Bonnie Goodchild said in the release.

Matawa First Nations has launched a similar initiative to ensure its members can qualify for an estimated 7,000 mining and construction jobs that could become available at a future chromite mine in the Ring of Fire, north of Nakina.