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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

\$2 MILLION BUILDS NEW SKILLS TRAINING

VICTORIA – The Province is investing \$2 million in a new training program that will provide essential workplace skills necessary for British Columbians to succeed at their jobs, while creating new resources for skills training across British Columbia, Murray Coell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development said today.

“This SkillsPlus pilot project builds on partnerships with industry, post-secondary, labour and First Nations organizations to deliver a wide range of employment skills vital in today’s economy,” said Coell. “The project fills two critical needs, providing the essential skills and training employers need, and leading development of new training resources, while continuing to build on B.C.’s base of talented and productive citizens.”

SkillsPlus pilot projects will be offered in Campbell River, Nanaimo, Victoria, New Westminster, Mt. Currie, Vancouver, Delta, Surrey, Cranbrook and Dawson Creek, and will provide a range of skills training to more than 500 British Columbians employed in small businesses in various occupational sectors. Through the program, additional training in essential skills such as computer use, reading and numeracy will be built into regular workplace-based training, enabling participants to benefit from a wider range of improved skills.

“Partnerships like this one will go a long way to help British Columbians get the skills and training they need to fully participate in the workforce,” said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development. “Through our Labour Market Agreement with B.C., and new projects like SkillsPlus, we are delivering on our commitment to help British Columbians get the skills and training they need to find and keep good jobs.”

“B.C.’s manufacturing and exporting sector accounts for about 400,000 jobs, and our future depends on a skilled and knowledgeable workforce,” said Craig Williams, vice president at Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters’ B.C. chapter. “The SkillsPlus project will pilot a training program to embed essential skills into other job-specific training for lower skilled employees.”

Essential skills include reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills and computer use. Improving essential skills levels help employees deal with more complex tasks, expanding their abilities and improving productivity.

The B.C. government, working with academic, industry and other partners is enabling British Columbians to gain the skills needed to successfully participate in our provincial labour market, and respond positively to changing workplace demands.

Under the Labour Market Agreement (LMA), the Government of Canada is providing the Province approximately \$66 million annually until 2012-13. Through a variety of programs, these funds will increase training for employed individuals who are low-skilled and require essential skills, or who require recognized credentials to reach their full potential in the current marketplace. They will also help increase access to training for unemployed individuals who are not currently Employment Insurance (EI) clients including but not limited to those who are underrepresented in the labour market.

For more information on the LMA, visit www.WorkBC.ca.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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