



## BCCA Wins International Business Award

*Left to Right: Manley McLachlan, President BCCA; Danielle Sauvageau, Former Head Coach, Canadian Women's Olympic Hockey; Anibal Valente, PCL Constructors Westcoast Inc., Chair BCCA*

The British Columbia Construction Association was recently honoured as the co-recipient of the Canadian Construction Association International Business Award, sponsored by Export Development Canada.

The CCA International Business Award was created in 2008 to recognize the outstanding activities, programs or accomplishments of a Canadian-based business or association active in the construction industry in the area of international business or trade. The purpose of the Award is to promote such international business activity and to highlight the activities and initiatives of the CCA International Business Committee. Eligible candidates include a firm, corporation or association based in Canada and active in the construction industry.

This award reflects the hard work and vision of many people starting with our Board of Directors who displayed vision and leadership when they mandated our Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP) initiatives. This honour was awarded based on the work done by our European Union (EUSTEP) and Immigrant (ISTEP) programs.

Over the past few years, the British Columbia Construction Association has developed a series of human resource focused projects aimed at recruiting and placing foreign construction workers with B.C. firms. We launched the European Union Skilled Trades Employment Program, or EUSTEP in 2006, and through it placed 140 skilled workers from such countries as Germany, Finland, Mexico and Russia with member firms primarily through the Provincial Nominee Program. The Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program also commenced in 2006 as a pilot project to help landed immigrants build careers in British Columbia's construction industry.

To date over 800 landed residents have been placed in construction careers through this program. ISTEP's success is also due to the work of our funding partner, HRSD Canada Foreign Credential Recognition Program, our administrative partner, the Construction Sector Council, and our operations partners - the four regional associations that constitute BCCA - the Southern Interior, Vancouver Regional, BCCA North and BCCA Vancouver Island Construction Associations.

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## Aboriginal STEP Underway

The BC Construction Association has undertaken a number of significant and very successful Skilled Trades Employment Programs (STEP) initiatives, designed to create employment connections between individuals and the construction industry. Initiatives include: STEP for Women, ISTEP for landed immigrants, EUSTEP for European and other foreign trained skilled workers and, most recently, ASTEP for the Aboriginal Community.

The Aboriginal Skilled Trades Employment Program (ASTEP) – was designed to facilitate the recruitment of Aboriginal workers into the construction industry labour force by assisting individuals to identify and pursue rewarding and meaningful careers in the Trades. Initiated with funding support from the Provincial Ministry of Housing and Social Development, ASTEP focuses on an existing underrepresented labour force in construction. The initiative heightens awareness of a career path that will provide nationwide accredited employment credentials to participants and provides sustainable employment opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.

The project goal is to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal workers in the construction trades, by creating innovative approaches to partnering between industries, service organizations, Aboriginal governance groups, Tribal councils, and Elder groups. Over the past few months of operation the program has placed approximately 180 individuals into construction industry jobs.

The project, while developing the relationships, encourages the involvement and collaboration of the respective Chief and Council, and Elder Committees. The direct involvement of the Chiefs and Elders assists in the alignment of the goals

of the project and the goals of their community.

The methodology behind the project is the “Connector Model” which utilizes the specialized skill of a “Trades Employment Specialist” or (TES). The TES is a certified Trades person (whenever possible), and he/she assists with identifying individuals who are interested in pursuing careers in the construction industry. The TES uses employability assessment tools specifically tailored to the construction industry to identify skill levels which in turn aids the TES in recommending the proper employment path for each individual. The TES works closely with each individual along their advancement path until they are ready for employment placement.

A critical component of the “Connector Model” is the direct connection the TES has with BCCA members and construction employers in general. The TES is continually cultivating relationships with potential employers to connect them with new employees. Once the connection has been made the TES continues to work as a liaison between the Employer and the Employee to assure a successful match, and to address any potential issues along the way.

ASTEP provides a benefit to Aboriginal communities by creating a direct connection to construction employment opportunities and opening the door to rewarding sustainable employment for Aboriginals in a vibrant industry. It is currently operating on Vancouver Island and in Northern BC. Anyone interested in more information should contact Randy Garon [rgaron@bccassn.com] at the BCCA office.



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The mission of the BCCA is to provide leadership and excellence in the representation of and service to British Columbia's construction industry