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Northwest
Territories Education, Culture and Employment

An initiative of the *South Slave Communities' Learning Network* made up of the *South Slave Divisional Education Council*, *Aurora College-Thebacha Campus*; and the *South Slave Career Centre*.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Trades Awareness Program Partnership Constructed in the South Slave **SSDEC, Aurora College and EC&E Initiative to Increase Student Exposure to Trades**

Fort Smith, NT (May 4, 2006) – The success of the *Trades Awareness Program (TAP)* last year, a program that gives high school students from across the region hands-on experience in different trades, has led the three education partners who piloted the program to expand it in 2006.

With some funding from the *Northern Youth Strategy*, the *South Slave Divisional Education Council (SSDEC)*, *Aurora College Thebacha Campus*, and the *South Slave office of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE)* will again join forces to host South Slave high school students and provide them with information and exposure to the trades and other College program offerings.

During the week of June 4th – 9th the *introductory* program will once again rotate students through trades courses, including *Cooking, Welding, Mechanics, Carpentry, Natural Resources Technology*, and possibly others. A more intensive program will run from May 22nd – 26th for students who participated in the program last year. This *intensive* program, which looks also to include *Information Technology* and *Hairdressing* as options, will allow returning students to spend up to a week in one of the trades areas.

The TAP was extremely well-received by students last year, who described it as a valuable opportunity to gain new skills in a wide range of interesting trades:

- “This was a very important week for me because it opened doors for success for me,” one student wrote after completing the 2005 program.
- “This week was really an awesome place to be and go to school,” commented another participant.
- A chaperone that spent the entire week with the students also had high praise for TAP. “The one thing that stands out for me is the people who participated in this program,” he wrote. “From the tradespeople who led each session to the variety of students who participated in these sessions, it was wonderful to meet good people who represent our communities”.

The program is being offered in order to give high school students access to the trades shops, equipment and instructional expertise available at Aurora College and trades related local businesses in Fort Smith. "Typically, because of their small size, most schools in the NWT are not able to offer a variety of trades programs" noted Curtis Brown, Superintendent of the South Slave Divisional Education Council. "Student interest is definitely there. This year the number of students who have indicated an interest in the program has doubled as compared to 2005".

Although developed primarily with an emphasis on the trades, the program also provides students a snapshot of the facilities and the other programs available through Aurora College from the *Trades and Management Studies* to *Teacher Education* and *Social Work*. "The diversity of course offerings available to these students will promote productive decisions about the careers and options for furthering their education after high school," said Kathleen Purchase, Aurora College Thebacha Campus Director. "Once we introduce the high school students to the excellent instructors and facilities we have at the College, we are confident many of them will choose to continue their education journey toward a rewarding career."

The partner organizations believe this form of hands-on trades exposure will assist youth in planning for their futures. Sydney O'Sullivan, ECE Regional Superintendent for the South Slave remarks, "We welcome the opportunities that these partnerships present for providing youth with work related experience, skills development and providing career related resources that are meaningful for students."

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