

BHP Billiton Potash cements ties with three First Nations



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Together, the BHP Billiton Potash Community Engagement team, the Kawacatoose First Nation, Day Star First Nation, and Muskowekwan First Nation have built the first agreement of its kind in the Potash industry.

The aim of the agreement is to ensure that the peoples of the three First Nations gain from our presence at Jansen.

This agreement will build capacity in these communities, including enabling members and businesses to participate in the opportunities that arise from the Jansen project.

The agreement also creates a relationship between the parties that will enable mutually beneficial opportunities in employment, business and community development.

BHP Billiton Potash has committed to assist in the building of the First Nations business capacity, by providing entrepreneurs and community-owned business development corporations an outlined process of opportunities directly related to the Jansen Project.

'We in BHP Billiton have an unwavering commitment to sustainability, including supporting the communities around our operations,' said BHP Billiton Potash Asset President Alex Archila.

'We believe the signing of this agreement enhances our mutual capacity and ensures that we can work together to ensure the members of these First Nations can participate meaningfully in the opportunities that arise from the Jansen Project.'

The agreement was celebrated with a traditional First Nations ceremony at the Jansen Project on 8 November 2013.

Kawacatoose First Nation Chief Darin Poorman, Day Star First Nation Chief Lloyd Buffalo and Muskowekwan First Nation Chief Reginald Bellerose began the day with a traditional pipe ceremony on site with Potash Asset President Alex Archila, members of the First Nation councils, elders, the community engagement team and other guests.

After giving greetings and a prayer, bannock and soup were served before moving into the newly constructed atrium of the Discovery Lodge construction camp for the ceremonial exchanging of gifts and signing of the commemorative photos.

BHP Billiton was proud to present traditional star blankets to members of the negotiating team.

'First Nations are forging new relationships with industry in order to reinvest in our community,' said Chief Darin Poorman of Kawacatoose First Nation.

'This new agreement with BHP Billiton will create new and innovative ways to an environmentally sustainable, healthier future for our people. We are striving for economic sovereignty and will establish new initiatives that will build capacity and better opportunities for our Peoples.'

The Opportunities Agreement also addresses sharing of information important to environmental management practices and includes governance processes for the parties to co-manage the implementation of the Agreement and report back to the members of the First Nations.

The day after the Opportunities Agreement was signed, the First Nations honoured BHP Billiton and Alex Archila with the presentation of a War Bonnet Headdress. Receiving a War Bonnet marks the highest respect to be earned by a First Nation and is highly symbolic of the relationship between BHP Billiton and the three First Nations.

A War Bonnet is earned through brave deeds and its feathers signify the deeds themselves. The presentation took place at our Discovery Plaza office in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

BHP Billiton has recognised the great honour to have received this War Bonnet and will house it in a special display case at the Saskatoon office. Alex will also proudly wear it at Aboriginal PowWows throughout Saskatchewan.