

MEDIA RELEASE

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SIAS launches new mining program

Industry projects high demand for new employees

February 10, 2012 – At the Saskatchewan Mining Association’s 46th Annual General Meeting today, SIAS announced a made-in-Saskatchewan solution in response to high demand for skilled workers in the mining sector. SIAS’s new Mining Engineering Technology program, designed with input from industry experts, will provide hands-on training in mining design and operation.

“The program responds to both current and future needs in the Saskatchewan mining industry,” says Jamie Hilts, SIAS’s dean of Technology. “It will help ensure that Saskatchewan has both a competent and qualified labour force to meet the growing demands of the sector.” SIAS offers a number of programs that equip grads to work in the sector, including several in various engineering technology specialties and several in trades.

Also at the mining association meeting, the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification, announced a federal government contribution of \$500,000 to specialized equipment for the new program.

“Investments like this are important in creating jobs and growth,” says Minister Yelich. “Our Government is proud to support SIAS’s Mining Engineering Technology program. The highly-qualified engineering technologists that graduate from this program will help the mining industry stay productive and competitive.”

Pam Schwann, executive director of the Saskatchewan Mining Association, says the SMA is working with institutions such as SIAS to address the sector’s human resources needs. “Approximately 15,100 additional workers will be needed in the mining industry in the next 10 years,” says Schwann. “Trades and technologist training, as well as engineering and geoscience programs, are key to preparing the next generation for careers in the mining industry.”

In order to ensure that graduates of the program best meet the requirements of the mining industry, SIAST consulted extensively with industry experts. "It's been a very involved and collaborative process where we've had an enormous amount of support, feedback and contribution from the various mining companies within the province," says Hilts. "That's why we anticipate that the program will be such a tremendous success, because it is founded on a robust partnership."

SIAST's Mining Engineering Technology program applies scientific principles to basic mining engineering problems in both hard and soft rock mining environments. The two-year diploma program will cover surface and underground surveying, mine ventilation, ground control and mine planning and design using a combination of classroom and hands-on learning. The first intake for the Mining Engineering Technology program is August 2012.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. SIAST serves 26,000 distinct students with programs and courses that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

– 30 –

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