N E W S R E L E A S E

Thursday, October 9th, 2003

<u>"We're part of the solution," says Chairman Eric Newell</u>

CAREERS: The Next Generation responds to Learning Commission

EDMONTON — *CAREERS: The Next Generation* is well positioned to help generate successful learning outcomes for every child, as advocated in the report of Alberta's Commission on Learning.

CAREERS: The Next Generation is a not-for-profit foundation that offers career information for Alberta students as well as work experience programs in the Trades and Technologies, Health Services, and Information & Communications Technologies.

CAREERS Chairman Eric Newell said his organization is already active in several key areas identified in the report as essential to successful learning for Alberta students. "We are working to be part of the solution," he said.

One of the report's goals is to ensure that 90 per cent of students complete grade 12 within four years of starting high school. Toward this, *CAREERS* programs help make schooling meaningful and relevant to students by ensuring they understand the array of career options available to them upon high school graduation. "We give them an objective to work toward, which is their life beyond high school, and we help them develop employability skills and get real-world work experience," said *CAREERS* President and CEO Janet Riopel. "What's more, we work with all other stakeholders, including teachers, parents, employers and communities in a group effort to help students make a successful transition from school to work, and attain their career goals. This approach is unique in Alberta."

Riopel said such programs are essential to promoting success among Aboriginal students, who often reside in rural communities where perceptions about limited local career prospects may diminish the desire to get a high school diploma. "The fact of the matter is, pleas to stay in school have a lot more impact among Aboriginal students when the students can see a light at the end of the tunnel," said Riopel. "Resource developers often have projects in close proximity to Aboriginal communities and they need skilled people; we're linking them with students so students can develop an appreciation of the terrific array of local career options if they stay in school. Another important area of Aboriginal career opportunity is health care; native communities need qualified care givers."

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The Learning Commission Report advocates support for initiatives such as *CAREERS: The Next Generation,* which was launched in 1997, and says these will be well-placed investments in the future of our children and our province. Since its inception, *CAREERS* has proven its value. It has grown the number of schools participating in its programs to 248, the number of communities in which it is active to 145, the number of employers offering work experience to 740 and thecumulative number of student interns placed at these employers to 3,881. In addition, *CAREERS* has held career workshops with nearly 100,000 high school students over the last five years.

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