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PETROLEUM HR COUNCIL AND FORT ST. JOHN PARTNERS WRAP UP PILOT PROJECT TO INCREASE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF SKILLED WORKERS

(Calgary, AB) --- The Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada (Petroleum HR Council), along with a dedicated local working group, recently wrapped up a six-month pilot of the *Increasing the Talent* Toolkit in the Fort St. John region. The purpose of this innovative Petroleum HR Council project was to identify and implement collaborative ways to attract and retain the skilled workers needed in the Fort St. John region's petroleum industry, now and into the future.

Key members of the local working group included the North Peace Economic Development Commission, the City of Fort St. John, the Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce, the Treaty 8 Tribal Association, the Oil and Gas Commission, Alpha Safety Ltd., Cobra/BlackHawk Production Consulting Inc. and Locher Consulting.

The *Increasing the Talent* Toolkit includes a conceptual model that provides a framework for attraction and retention initiatives, as well as practical information including best and promising practices and an inventory of tools and resources. As part of the pilot project, several new tools were developed, including a checklist for onboarding new employees and a tool to help employers support employee volunteerism in the community. As the main pilot company, Alpha Safety benefited from the development of four additional tools, including: tips on ways to brand the company's current retention strategies and ideas for leveraging Alpha Safety's philanthropic activities to strengthen their employee engagement and retention.

Lori Ackerman, Executive Director of Sci-Tech North and Community Lead for the Fort St. John working group, said: "The *Increasing the Talent* Toolkit is comprehensive, yet provides key insights in bite-size pieces. Working with the Toolkit over the past six months, we collaboratively developed tools and strategies that can be successfully used to achieve business goals."

Cheryl Knight, Executive Director and CEO of the Petroleum HR Council, summarized: "We thank the Fort St. John working group for their dedication to this pilot project. Their hard work will be instrumental in enhancing the *Increasing the Talent* Toolkit. In 2008, we will make the ideas, tools and best practices identified in the Fort St. John region available to the rest of the oil and gas industry, further underscoring the value of collaboration in addressing shared HR issues."

Ms. Ackerman concurred: "This exciting project brought together a myriad of resources that support enterprises in their effort to recruit and retain skilled workers. The collaboration is truly indicative of the strength in the community available to our businesses."

The Petroleum HR Council, established in 2001, is supported by 11 oil and gas national and regional industry organizations, including one union. It represents the primary sectors of the upstream petroleum industry in Canada: exploration and production, service industries, pipeline transmission, natural gas processing, and mining, extracting and upgrading of heavy oil and bitumen. This project was funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

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