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## **Minister Lafferty Urges Federal Government to Continue ASEP**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 18, 2011)** – In the Legislative Assembly today, the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Jackson Lafferty, joined Members of the Legislative Assembly in calling on the Government of Canada to announce a successor strategy to the highly successful Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program.

The objective of the ASEP program is to provide sustainable employment for Aboriginal people in major economic industries, leading to lasting benefits for Aboriginal communities, families, and individuals. The federal ASEP program ends on March 31, 2012. ASEP partnerships across the NWT have led to over 900 individuals gaining skills and employment.

Using this program, ECE works with Aboriginal governments, industry partners, regional training committees, Aurora College and other stakeholders to plan, invest and deliver training that leads to increased Northern participation in the labour market of the Northwest Territories. ECE has been a partner in four ASEP projects since the program was introduced in 2003 and has contributed over \$3 million in funding and in-kind resources to the success of these projects.

“ASEP has been a catalyst in bringing partners to the table to address training and employment needs,” said Minister Lafferty. “It is working well and we need to find a way to convince the federal government to continue with this success.”

Minister Lafferty met with Minister Diane Finlay, federal Minister Responsible for Human Resources and Skills Development, to urge the Government of the Canada to continue with its commitment to Aboriginal skills development.

“There is an ongoing need for Aboriginal training and partnership funding in the Northwest Territories to ensure continued labour force growth and development for all communities,” said Minister Lafferty. “We will continue to press the federal government to invest in this important area.”

ECE continues to support the three ASEP partnerships in the NWT and also delivers a variety of training and employment supports to ensure Northerners have the skills and ability to obtain meaningful employment.

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**Media requests for interviews with Members of the Executive Council may be directed to:**

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