



Press Release
August 14, 2026

Four Indigenous Participants Graduate from Introduction to Millwrighting Program, Launching Careers in British Columbia's Mining Sector

Graduation marks successful completion of workforce development initiative connecting Indigenous talent with apprenticeship opportunities at Teck's Highland Valley Copper Mine Life Extension Project



MERRITT, BC – Four participants from local Indigenous communities are celebrating the successful completion of the Introduction to Millwrighting (ITM) Program today, marking the beginning of their careers as millwright apprentices on one of Canada's most significant critical minerals projects.

Hosted at the Shulus Community Arena, owned by the Lower Nicola Indian Band, the graduation celebrates the culmination of six weeks of classroom and hands-on training delivered through a partnership between Build a Dream, the Millwright Regional Council, UBC Millwright Local 2736 British Columbia, the Lower Nicola Indian Band (LNIB), the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly (CNA), RKM Services, and Teck.

Beginning August 17, all four graduates will begin work as millwright apprentices with RKM Services Limited on Teck's Highland Valley Copper Mine Life Extension Project, approximately 75 kilometres southwest of Kamloops.

The program was designed to increase Indigenous representation in the millwright trade while creating direct pathways into apprenticeship and long-term careers on projects in their own region. Through financial assistance, wraparound supports, technical training, and strong employer partnerships, participants have been equipped with the skills and confidence to begin rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

"Today's graduation represents four individuals beginning careers that will provide long-term opportunities for themselves, their families, and their communities. This program demonstrates what is



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possible when Indigenous communities, industry, labour, and workforce organizations work together to remove barriers and create meaningful pathways into the skilled trades."

– Nour Hachem, President & Founder, Build a Dream

"One of the greatest strengths of the Introduction to Millwrighting program is the partnerships we've built with Indigenous communities, local organizations, and industry leaders. By working together, we're creating opportunities for people to develop highly skilled careers while contributing to the communities they call home. When local people are trained to build and maintain the infrastructure that serves their own region, everyone benefits, families, employers, communities, and future generations. We're proud to stand alongside our partners as we continue creating meaningful pathways into the millwright trade."

– Mark Beardsworth, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Millwright Regional Council

"The success of the graduates and this partnership shows Teck's commitment to enhancing local inclusion and skill development. It is a privilege to partner and collaborate with the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, Lower Nicola Indian Band, Build a Dream, the Millwright Regional Council, and UBC Millwright Local 2736 to advance our shared priorities, and to build local capacity to participate in responsible resource development. We look forward to continued collaboration, to sharing benefits, and to welcoming the graduates to the Highland Valley Copper Mine Life Extension Project." – **Karla Mills, Executive Vice President & Chief Project Development Office, Project Executive Office – Teck**

"When development takes place in Nlaka'pamux territory, Nlaka'pamux people must have a meaningful place in it, not on the sidelines, but as skilled workers, leaders and decision-makers. These four graduates earned this opportunity through their determination and hard work, and their success creates a stronger path for those who follow. Reconciliation must be more than a commitment on paper; it must be reflected in real careers, lasting opportunities and stronger futures for Nlaka'pamux communities." – **Nicole Johnny, Executive Director, Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly**

The Highland Valley Copper Mine Life Extension Project is one of Canada's largest critical minerals investments and will help secure the future of one of the country's largest copper operations. Copper is essential to Canada's growing demand for clean energy infrastructure, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, and emerging technologies, making the development of a skilled local workforce increasingly important.

Millwrights play a critical role in installing, maintaining, troubleshooting, and repairing the industrial equipment that powers Canada's mining, manufacturing, forestry, energy, and processing sectors. By connecting Indigenous participants directly to apprenticeship and employment opportunities, the Introduction to Millwrighting Program helps address skilled labour needs while supporting economic participation and workforce development in Indigenous communities.

The graduation ceremony brought together representatives from Build a Dream, the Millwright Regional Council, UBC Millwright Local 2736 British Columbia, the Lower Nicola Indian Band, the Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly, Teck, and RKM Services to recognize the graduates' achievements and celebrate the partnerships that made the program possible.



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About Build a Dream

Build a Dream is a national non-profit organization dedicated to attracting, recruiting, advancing, and retaining women and underrepresented groups in skilled trades, STEAM, emergency response, and entrepreneurship. Through career discovery events, workforce development programs, mentorship, and training initiatives, Build a Dream helps individuals explore meaningful career pathways while supporting employers in building diverse talent pipelines. webuildadream.com

About the Millwright Regional Council

The Millwright Regional Council (MRC) is composed of twelve affiliated Local Unions of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBC) across Canada. The UBC Millwrights are vital partners in diverse industries such as energy, automotive, aerospace, food processing, and pharmaceuticals. ubcmillwrights.ca

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