



Wataynikaneyap Power is Energizing Youth and Looking to the Future

Toronto, Ontario (GlobeNewswire May 8, 2019) - Opiikapawiiin Services LP (“OSLP”), in partnership with Natural Resources Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, and Wataynikaneyap Power, are delivering a unique energy capacity building and empowerment program for youth aged 18-25 from the 24 owner First Nations. The program is designed to engage youth in the Wataynikaneyap Power transmission project by providing Indigenous-centred introductory energy curriculum, job shadowing and an introduction to careers in the powerline industry. The program will build capacity among six youth per year over the course of 5 years with a total of 30 projected participants. Natural Resources Canada has provided \$400,000 in funding with in-kind contributions from OSLP, ENDM and Wataynikaneyap Power.

“Community engagement is vital to the communities having ownership of the process, and we are excited and looking forward to hearing more feedback and input from the youth through the Energizing Youth Network on their perspective of the transmission line,” says Lucie Edwards, CEO of OSLP. “Capacity building and job shadowing will provide a good foundation for youth to get involved and start their pathway to meaningful careers.”

“Part of the vision is to mentor our youth to discover careers and land meaningful jobs. This means our youth will be ready to lead this company and its operation into the future,” says Margaret Kenequanash, CEO of Wataynikaneyap Power.

Youth from the 24 Wataynikaneyap Power owner communities will be invited to apply to the program and participate in a two-week unique training course which will include an introduction to the Wataynikaneyap Project and energy in remote First Nations. They will learn about renewable energy, fundamentals of electricity, improving communication and Indigenous values related to energy. Participants will be empowered and challenged to consider their vision for life in their communities with a transmission line and what role they can play in their community’s future.

Following the course, they will be mentored in a job shadow work placement that matches their interests and strengths. Work experience could be related to community energy planning and management, youth engagement in energy conservation, electrical safety and housing, public works and community electrical systems, etc. The participants will apply what they have learned to design and deliver a community level energy initiative that meets a unique need in their community.

“This project will provide youth with the skills necessary to take up leadership roles in their communities to build and manage clean energy initiatives, which incorporate not only sustainable practices but also community values,” says Paul Lefebvre, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources. “This investment will encourage clean energy training and education, and promote employment opportunities locally.”

About Wataynikaneyap Power:

Wataynikaneyap Power is a licensed transmission company, regulated by the Ontario Energy Board, and majority-owned by a partnership of 24 First Nation communities in partnership with private investors led by Fortis Inc.

To connect remote First Nations communities to the electrical grid, Wataynikaneyap Power will develop, manage construction, and operate approximately 1,800 kilometers of transmission lines in northwestern Ontario. For further information visit www.wataypower.ca.

About Opiikapawiin Services LP:

Opiikapawiin Services was established by a partnership of 24 First Nations in Northwestern Ontario, the 24 First Nations Partnership is also a majority owner in Wataynikaneyap Power. Opiikapawiin Services is responsible for administering projects and programs for Wataynikaneyap Power relating to community engagement, community readiness, education & training, business readiness, stakeholder engagement (including government relations), communications, and capacity building. Opiikapawiin Services will also support the First Nations Partnership in the management of its investment in Wataynikaneyap Power, which includes raising equity for the First Nations interest in the transmission project. For further information visit www.olsp.ca.

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