



New training facility to serve the North

When you look at a map of Northern Ontario, you see only a few cities sprinkled lightly across a vast space; that's very different from the density found in Southern Ontario. Because of the resulting travel time, as well as the weather, the more than 11,000 firms IHSA serves in the North can find it difficult to take advantage of the in-person training offered by the

Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA) at its facilities in the GTA.

To make things easier, at least for those working in the northwest region, IHSA has opened a training facility at Confederation College in Thunder Bay that will serve the area's construction, electrical and utility, and transportation industries. On May 30, representatives of IHSA and the local construction industry attended a media event hosted by Confederation College to launch the training facility. One of the speakers was Al Beattie, IHSA's president and CEO.

Serving the North

"IHSA is dedicated to improving service to our clients in Northern Ontario. We've hired more local consultants in the North, added more training sessions, and strengthened our relationships with colleges, universities, and other local organizations to ensure that our northern clients can get the training they need where they need it," says Al.

This partnership with Confederation College is one of the initiatives IHSA has undertaken to serve its northern clients better. It will make state-of-the-art





safety training more accessible to workers and employers in the Thunder Bay area and will help to ensure that they can all get the information they need in order to work safely.

Before having this facility, IHSA held health and safety courses in Thunder Bay at various locations where space could be rented. Now that we have a permanent space, we can offer more regular schedules and can use distance-learning technology to deliver training to remote locations. Having this permanent space at the college also means IHSA can provide more of the hands-on training that used to be offered only at the training centres in Mississauga and Etobicoke.

At the opening of the Thunder Bay facility, Harold Lindstrom, Manager of the Thunder Bay Construction Association, spoke about the effect this new training facility will have on the local construction industry. "This is an important expansion of IHSA service to the construction industry in the Thunder Bay area. Contractors will be able to improve their health and safety programs with local training and safety consulting. This will meet the safety needs of the growth that's expected in northwestern Ontario due to an increase in construction projects related to mining. It will be a win-win for the construction industry and IHSA." IHSA expects the effect to be similar on the electrical, utility, and transportation sectors as well.

A Future Safety Culture

Confederation College has an average of 11,400 full- and part-time students at nine sites across Northern Ontario. IHSA's new training facility is at the main campus in Thunder Bay, in the Dorion building, where the School of Trades and Technology is located. It's a perfect fit for the industries that IHSA serves.

"We are seeing a growing number of students in the school, and it is paramount that health and safety training be ingrained in their programs," says Don Bernosky, Vice President of Regional Workforce Development for the college. "The location of this training facility on our site for industry use goes far to creating a safe work culture among tomorrow's workers."