



BRITISH COLUMBIA ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 16, 2023

BCAFN Launches BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development

(Lheidli T'enneh Territory, Prince George, BC) — The British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (BCAFN) has officially launched the BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development (CoE). This exciting and unique initiative is dedicated to advancing the role of First Nations in the BC economy and will drive sustainable and innovative economic reconciliation. Harlan Schilling, Deputy Chief of Daylu Dena Council, has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer for the CoE.

"I am pleased Deputy Chief Schilling has accepted the CEO position for the Centre of Excellence and I am confident that he will bring his immense energy and dedication to the role," stated Regional Chief Terry Teegee. "He is a strong and dynamic leader who will creatively utilize his deep expertise in economic development to make significant strides in establishing and expanding opportunities for First Nations communities."

"We are thrilled to announce the launch of the CoE, an initiative that reflects First Nations' unwavering commitment to economic growth and reconciliation in British Columbia. Together, we will fully recognize and implement the rights and title of First Nations while harnessing our collective economic potential for the betterment of the province," stated Chief Executive Officer Harlan Schilling.

The CoE staff will focus on key areas, including First Nations business capacity expansion, economic strategy development, policy and research, and exploration of Indigenous trade. This initiative is funded through a partnership with the province of BC. As part of the StrongerBC Economic Plan, the BC government provided more than \$1.2 million to launch the centre, with a further \$1.9 million pledged for continued support over the next two years.

"A heartfelt congratulations to Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling for his appointment as CEO of BC First Nations Centre of Excellence for Economic Development, which our government is very proud to support," said Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation. "Under his leadership, the Centre of Excellence will advance important economic opportunities for First Nations and, and for our provincial economy. I look forward to building a collaborative relationship with Deputy Chief Schilling, as we create economic policy and programs that will benefit First Nations throughout B.C."

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