



Building Better

A First Nations National Building Officers Association publication

Volume 4 | Number 1 | Spring 2007

Blueprint for Success: FNNBOA Internship Program

Forget making copies or fetching coffee – FNNBOA interns get their hands dirty with on-the-job experience.

FNNBOA developed its internship program to recruit Aboriginal youth and others to the profession of inspecting new and existing homes in Aboriginal and First Nations communities. The mission of the program is to train individuals to become certified as a Building Officer - Level One.

The internship program is designed to provide training and learning experiences that will equip the individual with the knowledge, skills and attitude to become a successful building officer. The individual's training will consist mainly of working under the supervision of a certified inspector or an individual recognized by FNNBOA as understanding the occupation. Interns will continue to take classroom instruction to ensure they have achieved all minimum skills and competencies.

The internship program requires a high degree of responsibility. It usually takes two to three years to graduate with the required skills, knowledge and competencies, with many hours of training along the way. (It may take less time, depending on the individual's existing skills and knowledge.)

Upon registering for the program and paying a \$50 fee to FNNBOA, the individual will be provided with a workbook that outlines the nature of the work to be completed. This work is based on the national occupational standards for building officers.

The need for an internship program was identified in the successful rollout of the Introduction to Inspecting Existing Dwellings courses held in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Several of the applicants are already involved in database inspections, providing a means for the housing department to track housing conditions and to develop housing budgets and strategic plans. As we write this article, plans are being made to provide the course for the Treaty 7 area in Alberta, to enhance existing database inspectors' skill levels.

Successful participants are continuing their career path by being enrolled in the program, secure access to the Part 9 building courses offered by FNNBOA through its association with Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and The Alberta Safety Codes Council.

For an internship application, go to www.fnnboa.ca



FNNBOA President's Message

Talk of home ownership is dominating council chambers, the green movement is gaining huge momentum, and housing managers are demanding respect. These same observations were made at the AFN Housing and Water symposium last January in Toronto. There were a number of presentations on these topics. Recently, at the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada (AFOA) conference in Vancouver, many native leaders approached our booth to talk about the importance of homes being inspected to ensure quality. There seems to be an attitude shift in some communities, where homes are being treated as an investment rather than a liability.

We have also been in conversation with banks that are increasingly requesting that building officers inspect private homes, especially where there is a mortgage. In some communities, building officers are inspecting prefab homes to ensure they are built to national codes and standards.

Across the country, we see a change in the types of homes being built. The cookie-cutter, three-bedroom bungalow – 1,000 square feet – is being traded for much larger homes. This shift in housing design is based on many factors: the size of families, marital status, income, but most importantly, band housing policies. Some communities are revising their policies to allow individuals to own their homes.

While this trend in First Nations housing is exciting, it raises many issues. For example, are housing policies up to date? Does the community have band by-laws? Are homes being inspected by certified inspectors? Are

homes being built to code and other standards? If not, who is responsible for them when the foundation cracks or collapses? These are serious questions that many communities are approaching FNNBOA to answer.

Besides the trend towards home ownership, First Nations communities are waving the green banner to conserve energy, and merging the environmental approach into their existing housing policies. There's more discussion about providing safe water, and how bands can reduce their energy bills. While these are exciting times, a lot of learning needs to happen.

A few issues ago, we published an article on how the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) was able to substantially reduce electricity costs. While bands and community leaders search for more information on saving energy, some FNNBOA members have been teaching the very popular Better Building Series – a mandatory course for contractors working in some communities. Contractors taking the course realize that by paying attention to the small details in constructing homes, they can build a more energy-efficient house. For instance, just by window placement, you can take advantage of solar heat. With properly calked and sealed window openings, energy-rated efficient furnaces/HWT, and Energy Star appliances, the savings in energy consumption are passed on to the homeowner.

Some communities, like PAGC, are developing specification packages to ensure that new homes use the best-value approach. Material choices, location of attic

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The FNNBOA Newsletter is published by the First Nations National Building Officers Association.

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Special thanks to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Natural Resources Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for their financial support.

The views in this newsletter are those of the contributors and may not necessarily represent FNNBOA or the funding partners.



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access and properly sized heating equipment ensure that houses are built to exceed the national building code, and have an increased life expectancy.

The First Nations Building Officer (FNBO) can play a pivotal role in these developments, by providing both

technical advice and certified inspections. Many FNBOs are involved in providing training to communities on topics such as energy efficiency, indoor air quality and basic home maintenance.

Fortunately, many of our services are being used by community leaders who

want to see housing conditions change for the better. They recognize that a strong foundation built on sound policies and by-laws, informed homeowners and a trained workforce will ensure that the homes we build today will be there for our grandchildren. **Bud Jobin**

Working With Existing Resources to Change Housing Conditions

FNNBOA was given an opportunity to present its overview on housing at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) housing conference in Toronto in early February. Bud Jobin, co-president, and Vince Genereux, treasurer, gave a 30-minute presentation. Some may have viewed the points they made as controversial, but others thought it was time someone stood up and put housing issues on the table.

The presentation focused on how First Nations leaders and their communities can improve their housing conditions, despite the need for more funds. The following suggestions were made:

- Hire certified inspectors to inspect homes
- Introduce band by-laws to ensure homes are built to code and national standards
- Create band by-laws with enforcement teeth (e.g. if home is not built to code, no payment)
- Institute maintenance policies to repair homes
- Require home owners to meet maintenance standards
- Maintain sound housing policies

based on the concept that homes are an investment

To support the communities that want to make changes in their housing conditions, FNNBOA has developed several key initiatives. These are:

- Certification of inspectors by an independent Council
- Training and professional development for inspectors, contractors and communities
- Assistance for communities in implementing band by-laws
- Establishment of building-maintenance worker training and workshops
- Mobilization of communities to be

responsible for their housing

- Maintenance courses for occupants before they move into a house, as well as for those in existing housing

After the presentation, many chiefs and other native leaders visited the FNNBOA booth. They expressed their delight that finally an organization can give the needed guidance.

FNNBOA is pleased that its hard work as an organization is being acknowledged. This is just the beginning of a long road to change. As more and more communities answer the challenge to improve housing conditions, they want their local FNBO to provide advice and help them make informed housing decisions, based on real wants and needs.

We're going digital!

Yes, times are changing for FNNBOA. Over the past few years, we have been mailing out newsletters to all First Nations communities and our members. Now we want to provide the same newsletter electronically.

To receive an electronic copy, send us your email address. You will receive the newsletter and other important

information, in English or French. We can also send you important information on changes to housing standards or policies that will impact construction in your communities.

Please state whether you want the reading materials in English or French, and send your email address to: newsletter@fnnboa.ca

Your email address is for our purposes only.



FNNBOA Supports Mentorship Program

A new membership program at FNNBOA will help to increase the number of new building officers who want to make the transition from their related occupations. Most importantly, the mentorship program will help Aboriginal students who have an interest in inspecting homes. “We are very excited about the program and its impact on people who want to be inspectors,” says Helen Ward Waklin, co-president from Eel Ground, New Brunswick.

Becoming a building officer can be a real challenge. It is a time when individuals are presented with new experiences and opportunities to achieve professional success. It is also a time when individuals become involved in trying to understand all aspects of reviewing new and existing homes and applying national building codes, housing standards, working for Band or Tribal Councils and dealing with First Nations housing policies.

FNNBOA’s mentorship program was established to support individuals as they develop professionally. “The mentorship program works best in the remote areas with today’s technology and we can hold their hand without being there in person,” notes Bud Jobin, co-president, and owner of 4 Voice. “The protégés in these communities can send digital pictures and emails, and correspond via telephone to address any problems they may encounter,” says Mr. Jobin.

Mentors can provide individuals with insights into the building-officer sector, including unspoken rules, politics, and nuances, while offering perspectives and solutions to errors that may have been caused by an individual’s inexperience or naiveté.

Finally, the Mentor can help to develop the careers of individuals and open doors to new opportunities.

The objectives of FNNBOA’s mentorship program are as follows:

- To promote the personal and professional well being of the new apprentice or building officer
- To develop the knowledge, skills and competencies needed by apprentices or building officers to be successful
- To provide an opportunity for analysis of their skills and knowledge through coaching from mentor building-resource officers

- To develop knowledge and mentoring skills in experienced building officers
- To improve the skill sets of both the protégé and the mentor

The mentoring program involves three components: the mentor, the protégé, and FNNBOA.

Role of the Mentor

- Accepts the protégé
- Skilled at providing support
- Committed to being a mentor
- A model of continuous learning
- Communicates hope and optimism
- A leader as a building inspector

Role of the Protégé

- Must be willing to enter the mentorship relationship
- Must respect and trust the mentor
- Be responsible by taking initiative and showing resourcefulness
- Develop a plan for accomplishing goals
- Listen to advice and respond appropriately

Role of FNNBOA

- Mentoring program is fully supported by the Association (e.g., resolutions, mentorship committee)
- The committee assesses and identifies key strengths of potential mentors
- The committee and the protégé identify key areas for growth that will be developed throughout the year
- The committee pairs protégés and mentors possessing strong teaching and learning skills and interpersonal dynamics that support and complement each other

If you are interested in becoming a mentor or a protégé, go to the FNNBOA website, where you will find an application and overview of the program.



FNNBOA Members Receiving Certification

FNNBOA wishes to congratulate all of the successful applicants on meeting the Occupational Standard to become an FNBO – First Nations National Building Officer.

This Occupational Standard was developed and validated by industry professionals with extensive knowledge and experience in home/building, residential and property inspections within First Nations and Aboriginal communities.

The FNBO ensures that the objectives of structural safety, fire safety, health, accessibility and the protection of buildings are addressed prior to occupancy. In addition, the FNBO uses his or her training, experience and professionalism to report in an objective manner on the operation, condition, necessary repairs, and safety of existing properties and dwellings.

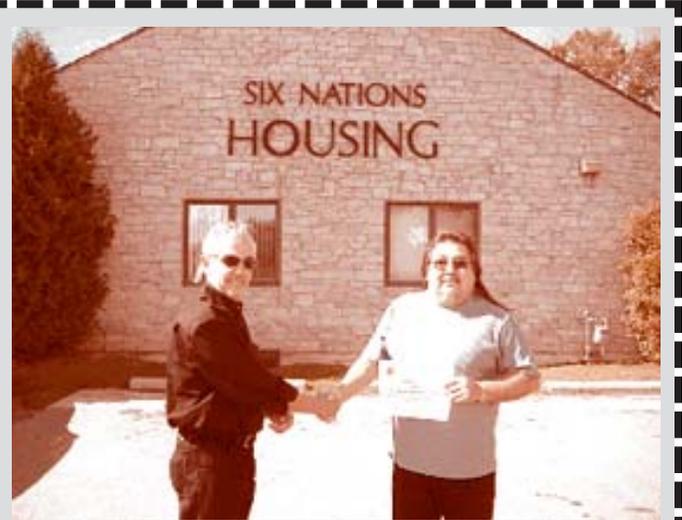
The inspection of buildings is an important learned profession. FNBOs therefore will continue their professional development throughout their careers by pursuing continued educational opportunities, workshops and seminars. They will also provide opportunities for the professional development of others under their supervision.

Members of the profession recognize that their work has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by the FNBO require honesty, impartiality, fairness and integrity, and must be dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the public's safety, health, welfare and accessibility in the examination of all buildings.

Certification is a great step forward in the process of ensuring construction quality and accountability. Over the years, the time and effort you put towards certification will play an important part in improving the housing conditions of First Nations communities.

The following members have been certified as First Nations Building Officers:

British Columbia: Jim Munroe, Richard Hall, Frank Bellerose and Dan George



Proud Moments

Morgan Green, Chair of the Certification Council, presents Errol King, Housing Inspection Supervisor for Six Nations Housing, with his certificate for Level 1 Building Officer. The Council has been busy approving applications from across the country. It has approved 35 Level 1 and two Level 2 Building Officers. Twenty-two people have signed up for the internship program. Applications are now being received from Quebec.

Alberta: Richard Jobin, Daniel Horkas, Kathleen Griffin and Leslie Steinhauer

Saskatchewan: Vince Genereaux and Jeffery Iron

Manitoba: Durwin Chartrand

Ontario: Danny Butler, Keith Maracle, Walter Mishibinijima, Rick Brant and Errol King

Atlantic region: Paul James Paul, Terry Pictou, John Gloade and Mario Lapointe

We wish you success in your endeavours, and look forward to your participation in FNNBOA activities that match your skills, background, and education.



Eagle's Eyes on Housing: Improving Indoor Air Quality with Heat Recovery Ventilation Systems

We all know that bad indoor air due to mold and moisture build-up can cause health problems for home occupants. First Nations communities across the country are discovering that one effective way to help improve indoor air quality is a heat recovery ventilation system. HRV systems are not complicated to install and, with proper servicing and maintenance, can have a positive effect on home occupants, as one family in Conne River, Newfoundland can attest.

The community had a unit installed in the home last year, as part of a workshop led by Tex McLeod, a veteran trainer in the fields of indoor air quality, energy and housing. When he and Ken Taylor, head of CMHC's Aboriginal Capacity Development in Halifax, dropped in this year to see how the family was doing,

they were impressed with the results. The husband, who suffers from asthma, no longer uses an inhaler. "Turns out everyone's health is doing better, the musty odours are gone, along with the condensation from the windows – plus, no more mold," says McLeod. He was also impressed with the creative designs the teenage daughter painted around the air grill, and wonders if the inspiration to paint her room came from the installation of the ventilation system.

"This is a great example of how ventilation installed well can make a big difference." Similar stories have been reported in other communities that have installed the systems.

Now, says Ken Taylor, it's up to First Nations communities to invest in the

systems, and provide education and training to both housing staff and home occupants on how to maintain them. CMHC now offers training workshops as part of its Housing Quality Matters series. The two-day session is designed for renovators, construction workers and maintenance staff, but the first day is open to non-technical people such as public-health nurses and environmental health officers. They may also return on the second day to see the system once it has been installed. (Other workshops are available to home occupants who want to improve their home maintenance knowledge and skills.)

For more information, contact your band office or local CMHC office. You can call 1-668-2642 or visit www.cmhc.ca to find the CMHC office nearest you.

Ready to Learn: Online Course Available

In partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Natural Resources Canada, FNNBOA is pleased to offer the course *Inspecting Existing Dwellings*. This is the first course in Canada that has been developed for building officers. Other professionals such as home inspectors, realtors and housing managers have expressed interest in this course as well. This course is also a requirement for FNNBOA's certification. Best of all, individuals can participate through their computers. The following information has been posted in Humber's College Course Guide:

Course Description: HMIN 506 – Inspecting Existing Dwellings

The *Introduction to Inspecting Existing Dwellings* is a fully online course primarily developed to help First Nations building officials, builders, renovators, inspectors, maintenance workers, property owners or property managers develop their general knowledge and skills for residential buildings.

The course will familiarize participants with residential building systems and the terminology used in the inspection industry, the main building components in each of the systems and the interlinking of those systems within the residential building structure.

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(Online course ... continued from page 6)

The course is designed to allow inspectors, particularly those in remote communities, to complete one of the courses required for First Nations National Building Officers Association (FNNBOA certification).

Hours: 30 hours | **Credits:** 2 | **Fee:** \$395.00

Pre-requisite: none | **Delivery:** Online via a web browser scheduled over a 10-week period.

Proposed dates: Spring, 2007 semester - Tuesday 8th May – 10th July inclusive | Fall, 2007 semester – Wednesday 18th September – 20th November inclusive | Winter, 2008 semester – Tuesday, 22nd January – 25th March, 2008

For further information please contact:

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email: muhammad.virk@humber.ca or info@fnnboa.ca.

FNNBOA Member Profile: Errol King

Errol King comes from a large family of nine brothers and three sisters. Fifty-two years old, he has lived on The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation (Ojibway) in southwestern Ontario his whole life. He's been married to his wife, Jacqueline, for 30 years, and they have three children and seven grandchildren.

For the past 24 years, Errol has worked in the field of First Nations housing inspections. He started with Indian Affairs in 1983; back then, he says, some First Nations were reluctant to allow inspections, but that attitude has changed over the years, with more First Nations people getting the training they need to build and maintain good housing. He went on to the On-Reserve Housing Code Compliance Inspections Incorporation (Indian Inspectors Unit), where he stayed from 1984 to 1995. He was then with the Ontario First Nations Technical Corp. (OFNTSC) till 1997. Since then, he's been with the Six Nations Council, currently as Housing Field Inspector Supervisor, working with two Housing Field Inspectors.

The housing budget is approximately three million dollars a year. Between 1200 and 1300 inspections are carried out per year by all three inspectors. The community's housing requirements for new homes and renovations

“exceed the Building Code requirements by far,” he says, with energy ratings of 82 for new construction (the new energy-star rating in the code is 80). Other examples: concrete foundations must have crack-control joints installed in each wall, crawl-space floors must be insulated with a minimum of R-12 and basement floors and walls also require insulation.

During his career, Errol has served approximately 50 First Nations communities, providing inspection services, advice and workshops., people stop him on the street to ask for advice. “I enjoy educating homeowners about their home and how it all has to work as a



system,” he says. “When dealing with the elderly people, you suggest having their windows lowered so they can enjoy looking outside in a sitting position or laying down, or wider doors for easier access. Our people will live in their homes for a lifetime and then pass them down to their children and grandchildren, so we help design homes for the long run.” Errol is in the process of getting younger people to train with him, so the community will have a new generation of professional housing inspectors. “I am proud to have worked with many First Nations, and know that we are making a difference.”



FNNBOA Member Profile: Richard Kent

Richard Kent, a Level 1 Building Inspector and a member of FNNBOA, currently heads the Emergency and Protective Services branch with the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC). He is an executive member of the Aboriginal Fire Fighters Association of Canada (AFAC), representing Saskatchewan. He has most recently been given the mandate by the PAGC Chiefs to set up Search and Rescue Teams throughout the area.

“I think that AFAC and FNNBOA complement each other,” says Richard. “Both associations strive to ensure a better and safer quality of life in our First Nation Communities. Each association has information and expertise that should be shared.”

Richard started out with Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) in the forest protection branch, where he headed a team of fire fighters called the Regional Initial Attack Control Team (RIAT) for five years. He then moved on to the Prince Albert Fire Department, where he worked as a fire fighter for 12 years. While there, he worked on the High-Angle Rescue team, the River Rescue Team, Fire Suppression, Inspections, Investigations and Prevention.

Richard began training the PAGC structural fire fighters in 1997. Since that time, PAGC’s fire fighters have won the Canadian National Aboriginal Fire Fighters Competition three times, and

placed in the top three every year for the past eight years. One team from Fond Du Lac, Saskatchewan, even placed first at the

Provincial Aboriginal Fire Fighters Competition, the national Aboriginal Fire Fighters Competition, and the provincial “Fire Power” competition at the Saskatoon Exhibition, all in the same year. “All of our First Nation people need to showcase their skills, and be recognized for the time and effort that they put toward their chosen professions, whether that is fire fighting, building inspections or any other type of work,” says Richard.

Richard is a level-three fire and arson investigator and a member of the international association of arson investigators. For the past 12 years, he has been very involved in dealing with emergencies within Saskatchewan. Floods, Forest Fires, Chemical Spills and the ensuing evacuations that go along with these types of emergencies are what seem to be occupying more and more of his time these days.

He is also an Emergency Medical Technician, and sits on Saskatchewan’s Influenza Pandemic

Committee. He was the Chairman of the Saskatchewan Emergency and Fire Services Committee, and was appointed to the Minister’s Advisory Committee to make changes to Saskatchewan’s Fire Prevention Act. These changes are to be passed in the legislature this spring.

