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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2009

No. 09-29

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Labor Presents 6 Apprenticeship Awards

JUNEAU, Alaska—Labor Commissioner Click Bishop presented six awards at the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's second annual Apprenticeship Conference and Awards Celebration.

The awards, which recognize outstanding achievements toward building a skilled Alaska workforce through registered apprenticeship, were presented today at the second annual "Building Alaska's Future" Apprenticeship Conference in Anchorage.

Labor Deputy Commissioner David Stone presented special recognition awards for the new first-of-its-kind core driller apprenticeship program that is delivering training that will allow Alaskans to compete locally and globally in the mining industry to Pebble Ltd. Partnership, Yuut, Calista Corporation, Alaska Technical Center, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship, the University of Alaska's Mining and Petroleum Training Service, Foundex Pacific Inc. and NANA Major Drilling.

Stone also presented a special award to Kakivik Asset Management for its Non-Destructive Tester registered apprenticeship program.

More than 230 attended the one-day conference, which featured two tracks – one for employers and industry, and one for counselors and educators. Keynote speakers were John Ladd, administrator for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, and John MacKinnon, executive director of Associated General Contractors of Alaska.

Employers of the Year

CH2M HILL was recognized for training a rural workforce based on industry's current needs. The company's Electrical Apprenticeship training program, held at the de-commissioned King Salmon Air Force Base, increased employment opportunities for Alaskans in the Bristol Bay and Aleutian Regions. All of the graduates were offered work in jobs on a rotational work schedule, which enables them to continue to reside in their communities. CH2M HILL has also trained and certified 15 Alaskans in King Salmon as scaffold-builders. Company leaders say their long-term goal is to develop a transferable workforce to meet the needs of the company and its clients.

Behrends Mechanical hired the Alaska Department of Labor's first school-to-apprenticeship applicant. The Juneau-Douglas High School student began as a shop hand and became a first-year apprentice when

he graduated. Dick and Candy Behrends have been supporters of apprenticeship since they opened their Juneau business in 1994. About 40 percent of their workforce are apprentices. Behrends Mechanical also supports the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 262 apprenticeship program, by allowing the use of their tools for training, and material donations and at-cost pricing.

Chugach Electric, founded in 1948, ranks among the largest of the nearly 1,000 electric cooperatives nationwide. The company develops electrical workers by employing eight to 10 apprentices each year. Most work with the utility for six months at a time. The company offers a broad range of training opportunities for linemen through timely rotation policies, which gives them the opportunity to gain exposure in many facets of their trade that are often only available through a power utility company.

Instructors of the Year

Ken Wilkinson has been an instructor with the Alaska Operating Engineers-Employers Training Trust for more than 15 years. His cooperative nature, dynamic energy and resourceful initiative are a great contribution to his organization. His broad experience and ability to relay his knowledge to members and apprentices makes him an asset to the operators' training program.

Pete Leov has been the lead instructor for the Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship and Training Trust Lineman Apprenticeship program for more than 25 years, as well as being a journeyman lineman for more than 40 years. Since Leov has taught and graduated several hundred linemen, an entire generation of Alaska power linemen has learned their trade from him.

Apprentice of the Year

Deborah Kelly, a seventh-step apprentice in the power lineman program of the Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship and Training Trust, will soon reach journeyman status. After looking at traditional options available, Kelly said, she made her decision to join the IBEW to work with her hands, build and create. This interest, coupled with the possibility of a lifelong career tipped the scales away from a traditional college path. Kelly is the only female line apprentice in Alaska.

Registered apprenticeship is a national training system that combines paid learning on-the-job and related technical theoretical instruction in a skilled occupation enabling employers to develop and apply industry standards to training that can increase productivity and improve the quality of the workforce.

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Information About Apprenticeship

Think Apprenticeship!

<http://www.jobs.alaska.gov/apprentice/index.html>

Alaska Economic Trends, February 2009

<http://www.labor.state.ak.us/trends/feb09.pdf>

To view photos please visit:

<http://labor.alaska.gov/news/2009/09-29/>