



Issue 8: June 2019

WORK-WISE

Keeping you current on North Okanagan's employment scene

Local Tips for Job Seekers

As of June 1, minimum wage is up to \$13.85.



Need help using the computer for job search? Call the Vernon WorkBC Centre at 250-545-2215 x 230 to sign up for a free workshop or four. Here's the June lineup (plus they run monthly, so if June isn't your thing, maybe July will be):



- Computer Basics, 9-12, Thursday June 13 and 27
- MS Word, 2-4:30, Thursday June 13 and 27
- Build Your Resume, 9-12, Friday June 14 and 28
- Internet & Email, 2-4:30, Friday June 14 and 28

Luc Bergeron facilitates the workshops, and always aims to make them fun. From games like "mousercise" (graduate with a certificate in "mousing"!) to the occasional joke, he knows a fun learning environment is key.

"I think the method of presenting information is important," Luc explains. "To make it a non-intimidating, fun-learning kind of environment – I think the Clients like that." Then he leans over and yells into my recorder: "I have fun! I like to have fun!" It's a perfect example of the humour Luc brings to his workshops, alongside the vast experience and insight.

"The premise of the [MS Word] workshop is that by the end Clients have an idea of how to do a little bit of formatting to create their own one-page resume," he explains about one of the four workshops. You'll learn much more, so register anytime – the workshops repeat monthly.

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day. Here are a few resources for our Indigenous job seekers:

- WorkBC produces "BC's Career Guide for Indigenous People". Find it at the Vernon WorkBC Centre or check it out online at workbc.ca/Indigenous.
- On May 23, federal Tourism Minister
 Mélanie Joly was in Armstrong. She
 announced, among other things, that the
 government has allocated \$2.5 million to
 the Indigenous Tourism Association of
 Canada to help Indigenous people develop
 products and experiences to help with
 tourism. "We know there's fantastic growth
 in Indigenous tourism," she said. Is now the
 time to start your entrepreneurial journey?
- See pages 2 and 3 for more Indigenous career insights and resources.

Staples is having a hiring fair June 1 from 10am-4pm. Hiring manager Gary Ouellette says they will be doing on-site interviews. Show up with a resume and do your research first, he says. Plus know the department you want to work in, because he says they'll ask!

Sometimes local employers reach out to tell us they are desperately seeking staff. Here are a few that have reached out lately: Bamboo Beach Fusion Grille is looking for a dishwasher as well as a cook. Apply in person after 2:30pm and ask for Yuki. Under 30 and want to be a Beekeper's Helper in Armstrong? Email hello@wildantho.com to apply.

SERVICE PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT:

Employment Services at the North Okanagan Friendship Centre

Coreen Jenner smiles and points out this and that as she welcomes me into her office. On the walls: paintings she's done herself, displayed to make her Clients feel comfortable. On the desk: a book called "Active Engagement", to give people hope to grow on their job journey. On the door: a Snoopy cartoon that says: "Every day may not be good but there is something good in every day", and a sign that reads: "Employment Services".

Funded by Indigenous Skills Employment and Training (ISET), the Employment Services Coreen provides are designed to increase the employability and employment rate of First Nations people in the North Okanagan area. One of the things I like most about her office, and her approach, is that she always tries to keep her door open. "I have an open door policy," she says. "People come in and I don't know where they've travelled from or how much it took them to get here. I don't want to turn them away."



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This commitment to her Clients has been more than 20 years in the making. "When they come in, I sit with them," she says. "I say to them: 'Let's just chat'. And we do. And it builds and grows."

"What I enjoy most is working with the people," Coreen continues. "Sometimes they come in feeling that they have nothing to offer, but then we start building a plan. I say 'If you want to go to school, we can help you go to school, we can plan for that – or if you want to go to work we can help you with that, I can get you some work gear.' When they see there is something they can do, that is what I love."

One of Coreen's favourite tools is something she calls charting, where she helps a client expand on an area they are interested in, pictured here:



We chart it and I give it to them and they take it away. It helps them to have a plan in place. It gives them a way of expanding.

Not everyone needs the same level of support, and Coreen is happy to help however she can. "Some Clients come in, and they know where they're going. They just need a little bit of help. Maybe they need a bus pass, maybe they need work boots or work clothes, and then they're on their way."

Sometimes Coreen works in partnership with WorkBC, if this is the best path for a Client. She recounts one Client who went into the residential insulator program at Okanagan College, a project in partnership with WorkBC and others, and 15 weeks later he came out with a job.

"When we met him he was almost homeless," she shares.

"Now he's working fulltime and doing well. It's those kind of things that happen that are just so good. He's got a career now, and he's happy, and he's making good money. He came into town basically with nothing, and here he is. He's got a life now."

To meet with Coreen, call the Friendship Centre at 250-542-1247 – or just walk through her open door and say hello.

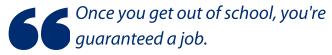
NORTH OKANAGAN EMPLOYMENT EVENT:

Give Them Wings

Kaylee Willier is an Indigenous pilot, and she knows first-hand that the industry is in crisis. "There's such a giant pilot shortage," she tells me, "that once you get out of school you're guaranteed a job and you'll work up in seniority really quickly."

In addition to the shortage, Kaylee says she has also seen that a lot of Indigenous youth don't feel they can be pilots. This misconception is why she jumped at the opportunity to be Program Coordinator for a new initiative called Give Them Wings, which aims to get Indigenous youth excited about aviation and looking at it as a career path.





Created by Indigenous pilot Teara Fraser (who founded Iskwew Air in 2017), Give Them Wings held an event at the Kelowna Airport on May 12 this year. Indigenous youth aged 15-29 showed up to explore the hangar, tour the tower, sit at the controls of a gutted Swoop plane, talk to pilots, and go on flights in a helicopter and a fixed-wing plane. The excitement was palpable; many left with sights set on careers as pilots. Kaylee is convinced it's a good move: "If you have anyone interested in a career as a pilot," she says, "definitely convince them to do it!"

Okanagan College in Kelowna offers a Diploma in Commercial Aviation, so I connected with Jewell Gillies, Aboriginal Transition Program Advisor. She explained that, like all post-secondary education, if you're Status or have Métis Citizenship, you can apply to your Band or to Métis Nation BC to see if they can fund your education – either part of it or potentially all of it. Sara-Jane Schofield, also with Okanagan College in Kelowna, confirmed a few unique partnerships that the Diploma offers graduating students:

- if you graduate as a top student in your class, you could receive the Jazz Aviation Pathways Program award, which consists of an interview and possible direct-entry employment with Jazz - top students are also considered for future employment at reduced entry requirements at Porter Airlines and WestJet Encore

I ask Kaylee from Give Them Wings what she thinks about the salary expectations. She says the first year the pay is low (\$30-\$40,000), but says you can work your way up really quickly. On a happy path where everything works as expected, she says you could be making \$75-\$90,000 in two years. "Right now the pilot shortage is so ridiculous," Kaylee says, "that if you start school in the fall, then in 10 years you'd be laughing."

In Vernon, for example, Aurora Helicopters Ltd says they are always on the lookout for pilots and offer a salary of \$60-\$125,000.

For more information visit givethemwings.ca, check out the Okanagan College Commercial Aviation Diploma, visit a WorkBC Centre, or explore more job market information for pilots at workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers/Browse-Career-Profile/2271.

TIDBITS

Bits and bites for local folks looking for work



At WorkBC, we love a good collaboration, and the "Working Together" program is one of our go-to's. If you have a disability (it doesn't have to be diagnosed, just self-reported), and you aren't eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), then the program can pay a portion of your wages once you line up a job. Knowing this gives you an edge when you're out there applying – and sweetens the deal for employers to choose you.

We chatted with program coordinator Mindy Rollins, who was quick to share many successes. A Bakery Assistant at Vernon's Gumtree Catering, for example, came on board through the Working Together program more than four years ago, and she's still there today, with her same big grin and solid work ethic and shiny catch phrase: "It's so exciting!"

If you think Working Together might be the edge you need in your job hunt, you can contact Mindy directly – or if you start working with a case manager at WorkBC first, then we can provide additional support along the way, especially with keeping the job.

P.S. If you're a student looking for a summer gig in between schooling, Working Together is promoting its wage subsidy for summer students. "It's an excellent opportunity," says Mindy. "Act on it fast because summer's approaching!" Employers or job seekers can call Mindy directly at 250-492-5289.

Have a fresh tip about work, employment, or business in the North Okanagan? Want a job fair or a hiring push featured? Email centre-vernon@workbc.ca to get your news in Work-Wise.



BC EMPLOYER TRAINING GRANT

On June 3 at 9am, the BC Employer Training Grant opens to accept applications for its second round of funding. If you're looking for work, or if you're an employer looking to upskill your workforce, then this grant is for you. It comes in three flavours:

- Foundational: to support unemployed, underemployed, and low-skilled British Columbians to obtain essential, transferable and certified skills to increase their job security and obtain good-paying jobs
- Technical: to help employers train current or new employees in technical skills in response to automation and technological advancements
- Workforce: to help employers upgrade their employees' skills and develop their workforce.

The last round reached its target number of applications in just four hours, and promptly closed the window for applying. That means: get your application together now, and submit it at 9am on June 3rd!

For more information, check out https://www.workbc.ca/Employer-Resources/BC-Employer-Training-Grant.aspx.



Reach WorkBC Employment Services: 3105 33 Street, Vernon BC, V1T 9P7



250-545-2215 x 230



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