

Sherritt International Partners with NLC for Professional Training

When Sherritt International Corporation, one of Canada's oldest natural resource companies, decided to move to a strategic approach to asset management, it looked to Northern Lakes College (NLC) to provide the training in-house. A global leader in mining, processing, and refining of lateritic nickel and cobalt, Sherritt's Fort Saskatchewan Metals Facility invested in the training of employees from a cross-section of the organization to establish a common framework, vocabulary, and improvement methodology in maintenance and asset management. The training was part of Sherritt's Operational Excellence initiative.



Based on the reviews of Doug Stretton, General Manager of Asset Management at the Fort Saskatchewan facility, NLC not only met but surpassed its mandate. "We now have a common language for maintenance and asset management used by employees and a good 'cross-pollination' between working groups as a result of the training. Many employees have taken the new knowledge and deployed it in their jobs. The results have been practical and immediate."

Employees from various divisions and levels of the operation, including Operations, Human Resources, Capital Projects, Sustainability, Supply Chain, and Asset Integrity participated. "We wanted to establish a common approach throughout the company. That meant not only training people in maintenance and reliability, but also individuals from departments that interface with maintenance and asset management processes and teams," comments Stretton.

The training included three modules from the Maintenance Management Professional (MMP) program. Course content included integrated strategies for maintenance management, developing and implementing maintenance tactics, and maintenance work management. The 122 employees participating in the training included managers, schedulers, reliability engineers, and technologists.

Sherritt elected for private, onsite course delivery, which allowed employees to attend during their work hours. The courses were scheduled in two-day increments, which limited operational impacts. To ensure the active engagement of students and an immediate application to the learning, NLC instructors customized the courses with examples relevant to Sherritt's industry and activities at the Fort Saskatchewan facility. "The Director of Asset Integrity collaborated with the NLC instructor to create the work projects, which resulted in practical solutions to actual problems that could be implemented into our operations. What a bang for our training buck," explains Stretton.



Stretton continues, “NLC had all sorts of solutions for any items that came up along the way. For example, we recognized this training as a great opportunity to access the Canada-Alberta Job Grant. Not only was the training eligible for the grant, but NLC was able to provide us with reporting in a format that made it easy for us to meet the reporting requirements of the grant.”

Shane Prazak, Training Manager at Sherritt, comments, “We chose Northern Lakes College to deliver this training because they deliver the PEMAC-certified (Plant Engineering and Maintenance Association of Canada) MMP program. NLC representatives were professional and accommodating. Ours was quite a large training request, yet it was relatively simple, considering the magnitude of the project. Northern Lakes College was able to set up the onsite delivery in a short period of time.”