



Wendy Twance

Ojibways of the Pic River First Nation

During my Wage Subsidy placement with AETS, I worked at the Pic River Health Centre. I was trained on how to process the Non-Insured Health Service claims for community and Band members. This process involves submitting medical appointment travel, mileage, meal & accommodation requests to FNIHB. We also arrange Doctor visits here in Pic River, with the visiting Doctor from Marathon Family Health Team. As well as all of the many other office duties associated with this position.

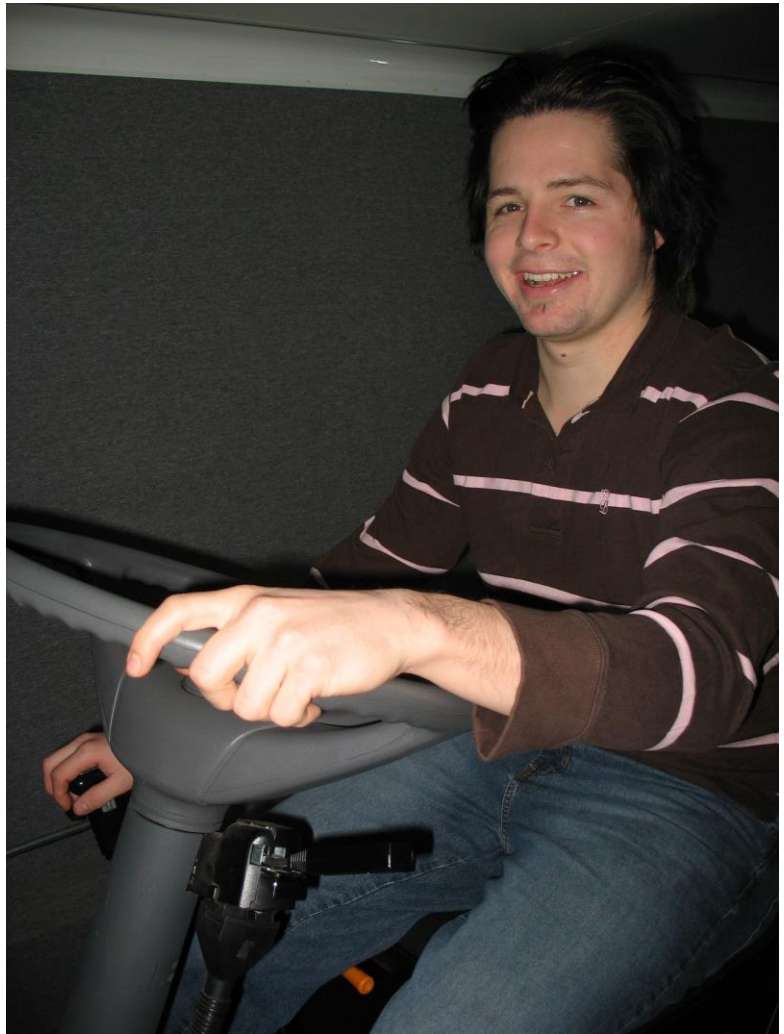
I would like to take this time to thank AETS and Patricia Desmoulin, my trainer, for giving me the opportunity to have the experience of working at the Pic River Health Centre. The Wage Subsidy has given me an opportunity to have a secure, full time position with the Pic River Health Centre, as the Health Clerk.

Bryan Bouchard **– Pays Plat First Nation**

Bryan spent literally all of his life playing hockey, both recreational and professional. He enjoys the sport, however, by the time he reached the age of 22 he realized that hockey wasn't going to get him the pay cheques or career he desired. But he was indecisive on exactly what career to pursue. Then Bryan completed a Career Decision Making exercise and came up with several options.

Bryan decided on the occupation of Dump Truck Driver. His next step was to seek out a training provider. When he met with the trainers at Northwestern World Wide Training he was told of the AZ license, the advantages of driving the big rigs and the career opportunities. So in the spring of 2006, Bryan enrolled in the Class AZ Truck Driver Training program.

He did successfully complete the program but worried that being only 22, that jobs may be scarce considering insurance rates on young drivers. But with his excellent driving abstract and shortage of truck drivers [as the instructors told him and according to labour market statistics] Bryan now drives a transport trailer, long haul from Thunder Bay to western Canada and back for a local trucking company. His early years of self-discipline and hard work on the ice have paid off both throughout his training and now while he is on the road.



Kevin Shchepanik – Animbiigoo Zaagi’igan Anishinaabek

Kevin applied to AETS in October of 2006 for 4-week Common Core Program at NORCAT Sudbury. He was unemployed and on employment insurance. Kevin’s previous employment was in the occupation of “lumber sawmill worker”. He felt stuck in his position with no future or limited advancement opportunities.

Kevin was approved and completed the Common Core program on December 1, 2006. He is gainfully employed as a “Miner 4” at Musselwhite Mine as of March 22, 2007. It’s the starting position but there is plenty room for advancement. He is two weeks on and two weeks off. He says he absolutely loves it, so much to learn, the pay is awesome and “who doesn’t like to blow stuff up?”



**2006 – 2007
Course Purchase**



Michipicoten First Nation Member, Patricia Souliere, writes to us from Alberta:

When I moved to Alberta with my children, and partner in 1999, I was shocked to discover a min. wage job only paid \$5.90/ hour. I quickly learned that my hairdressing skills were not going to be enough to make ends meet. After months of searching and not being able to find the job he was going to be satisfied with, my partner decided to move back to Ontario. Now I was alone, with five kids, working in an underpaid job. I knew I needed to acquire skills and become employed in a trade of some sort. Alberta really is a working province!

I chose carpentry. It had been many years prior that I had taken woodworking in school, and the love of woodworking has never left me.

I began this journey by enrolling in a 5 month pre-employment program for women. This refreshed my mind and gave me the confidence & skills I needed to start a career in woodworking. My next move was a 1 year contract job with a gov't shop called Job Corps. For that year I built picnic tables which are all across Alberta Provincial Parks. (Some even have my name on them somewhere). We also did outhouses. These were constructed with the same techniques you would use to build a regular home or garage. The altar and baptismal font my instructors and I created for a local church, will be enjoyed by many people for many years. It still remains one of my favorite and finer pieces of work.

Upon completing the contract, I was yet again unemployed but I had one year of hours in my blue book. Looking for the proper employer to take me on as a cabinetmaker was my new role. Almost immediately I found one. I stayed there for about four months building mantles and was also forced to see, for the first time, that not all men will accept a woman

in a non-traditional job. We had to work harder and our mistakes were somehow magnified. I have to say that these men with their hang-ups are becoming scarcer with each passing year. Women are becoming a viable asset in the trades .

The mantles were unfulfilling and I was not satisfied doing this job (the starting wage was \$12/hr), so I kept my ear to the ground hoping something would come along. It did. Another gov't job was posted and this time the target audience was aboriginal persons. I signed up to the AAAP(Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project) and applied. I was contacted for an interview and awarded the position; this time as a carpenter not cabinetmaker.

I have been employed with the gov't for 4 1/2 years.The first three years I worked solely out of the shops. We did work for the law courts, MLA's, ministers at the Legislature Bldg and any other gov't office that we could accommodate. Work ranged from building kiosks for the Ukranian Village to custom cabinets to the security desk which is still in use at the Leg. Bldg. This has also become my permanent location since the shops closed last year. I have met many good people here.

Next month I start school,there is usually one or two women enrolled each year I have attended classes. Hopefully all exams will go well. I intend to have my journeymans ticket and Red Seal by the time November is here. My wage will be just under \$30/hr. at that time. The financial independence, the sense of accomplishment and being able to do what I like has made this a great time in my life.

Although my contract will be coming to and end with the gov't soon, I can see other doors of opportunity opening up. I may just try to open my own business one of these days!

As always, I would like to thank AETS for their continued support and faith in me (especially Andrew Nawagesic). I hope one woman's story can help someone out there who is hesitating. **Just do it!**

Meegweech. Patricia Souliere