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MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, August 28, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KIIKENOMAGA KIKENJIGEWEN EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES AND
LABOURERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA, LOCAL UNION 607 SIGN
COOPERATION AGREEMENT**

THUNDER BAY, ON:) Joe Baxter, Board President of Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment & Training Services (KKETS) and Terry Varga, Business Manager of the Labourers' International Union of America, Local Union 607 ("LiUNA Local 607") today announced the signing of a Cooperation Agreement ("Agreement") committing to work to work together on economic/employment development strategies to develop Indigenous human resource potential within Matawa First Nations membership.

Specifically, the Agreement commits to working together to provide training and apprenticeship opportunities for the trades of Construction Craft Worker and Cement Finisher as well as employment opportunities with employers bound to a collective agreement with Local 607 or other affiliated Local Unions of LiUNA.

Similar to an agreement with the Assembly of First Nations which was renewed at the LiUNA national convention last summer—the *KKETS and LiUNA Local 607 Agreement* recognizes First Nations governments and related socio-economic development needs as a key principle. It is also signed with the understanding that it is intended to enhance and support economic development processes and opportunities that are without prejudice to, and not intending to replace or supersede any existing initiative, agreement, or objective, between any First Nation and other key stakeholders.

Representing 120,000 Canadian workers, mostly in construction LiUNA International is one of Canada's largest construction union and have accepted that construction projects will not proceed when First Nations are in opposition.

KKETS and LiUNA Local 607 have been [partners](#) for a number of years, and more recently, have been working together over the past year leading up to the current Agreement so that Matawa First Nations members can receive training and unionization, where appropriate.

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For more information, please contact Carol Audet, Matawa Communications Manager at (807) 632-9663 or by email at caudet@matawa.on.ca or Terry Varga, LiUNA Business Manager at (807)622-0608 or tvarga@liunalocal607.ca

Established in 2012, **KKETS** is an Aboriginal Skills Employment Training Holder for Matawa First Nations. It assists Matawa members in attaining trades skills and other training including independent programming, employment integration, employment readiness/life skills training, basic employment certifications, and academic upgrading. Like them on Facebook (Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services – KKETS). **Labourers' International Union of North America, Local 607** is a construction craft union located in Thunder Bay and affiliated with the Labourers' International Union of North America (LiUNA) that represents, inter alia, union construction workers. Like them on Facebook (Liuna Local 607)

QUOTES

“The signing of this Cooperation Agreement with LiUNA is another step in the right direction for KKETS as we continue to create a foundation in bettering our membership’s lives. With this Agreement we are building beyond “projects for work” to “life-long work in the trades and elsewhere” for our membership. LiUNA is a cutting-edge labour association, one with a proven track record of working and dealing with Indigenous organizations and communities with positive benefits and results. We are looking forward to developing our relations with LiUNA now and into the future.”

—Roger Wesley, KKETS Executive Director

“I am proud to have assisted in bringing the Matawa First Nations and LiUNA together. Generational change is more than just about jobs. It’s about building careers and giving our youth hope for the future. It’s about giving the parents a chance at a career and changing the past socio-economic status to a modern one. Our children and grandchildren will truly see the benefits of the work we have started together in this Cooperation Agreement.”

—Shane Fugere, LiUNA Indigenous Relations Representative