

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	1.0	Corporate Policy
Sub Program:	1.1	Building Commitment to Corporate Aboriginal Policies
Template:	1.1.7	Aboriginal Relations Strategy
Sponsor(s):	<i>ATCO Electric Ltd.</i>	

1. Objective

To provide clear internal direction regarding ATCO Electric's relationship with the 27 First Nations and six Métis Settlements in the company's service area in northern and eastern Alberta.

2. Description

A framework that outlines the principal components of the ATCO Electric's Aboriginal strategy:

- Building and supporting community relationships
- Maintaining an appropriate business relationship in the short term
- Identifying efforts that lead to longer-term opportunities

Objectives: as outlined above

Principles:

- Successful implementation depends on senior management commitment.
- ATCO Electric recognizes First Nations and Métis Settlements as local authorities.
- The company is committed to ensure its relationships with all communities are based on building a climate of trust, cooperation and mutual benefit.
- Successful implementation of the policy is directly linked to meeting the company's business objectives.
- While senior management is ultimately accountable for the policy, local responsibility and delivery is critical to its success.

Policies:

1. **Building and supporting community relationships.** This section of the policy defines what is meant by "positive community relationships", underlines a commitment to coordinate our activities with other ATCO subsidiaries, notes the objective of assigning specific individuals in each region to be responsible for relationship building, and refers to the intent of developing community relationship plans. To support the commitment to build relationships, the company will recruit employees who have the skills to work with Aboriginal communities (including liaison people with specialized skills to work with our employees and communities), make suitable cross-cultural training available to staff, identify accountability and success measures in business plans, and work collaboratively with other resource companies and communities to address priority community needs.

2. **Maintaining an appropriate business relationship in the short term (contracted work).**
Where contract work is required, the company will respect the desire of the community to undertake work on reserve lands, traditional lands, land claim and Métis Settlements areas, if capable and competitive. The company will provide the necessary assistance to ensure the work is performed safely. The company will also encourage capable and competitive contractors, including Aboriginal contractors, to bid on ATCO Electric work outside their communities.

Respecting environmental concerns. The company commits to respect Aboriginal concerns regarding the environmental impact of activities, with particular attention to rights-of-way.

Consultation and internal coordination. Before consulting with the community, the company will define and understand the activity and know the options and impacts. Community consultation will be done through or in conjunction with ATCO Electric's designated Aboriginal liaison resources.

Good-neighbour agreements. Where appropriate, ATCO Electric will develop good-neighbour agreements with First Nations and Métis Settlements to clarify our relationship regarding project consultation, contracting, other economic opportunities and community relationships.

3. **Identifying efforts that lead to longer-term opportunities.**

Employment. The strategy outlines the company's long-term objective to have its workforce reflect the make-up of the communities we serve. To this end, ATCO Electric will work on efforts to encourage Aboriginal students to stay in school, participate in career awareness efforts and develop job-shadowing initiatives.

Links with educational institutions. We are committed to work with community colleges, technical institutes and universities to develop programs that will encourage students to pursue careers with ATCO Electric. This includes developing appropriate student awards and participating in career information events.

Making the workplace ready. We will pursue efforts to ensure ATCO Electric establishes an appropriate workplace environment that allows the company to retain Aboriginal employees.

Supplier opportunities. The policy outlines a commitment to include Aboriginal suppliers in meeting the company's procurement needs.

Identifying internal barriers. Internal policy or procedural barriers that affect any aspect of our relationship with Aboriginal communities will be identified and addressed.

3. Implementation

The policy/strategy was issued by ATCO Electric's president in February 2004; it was initially communicated to employees by the president as part of a spring 2004 "road show". Implementation is challenging and has focused on identifying objectives in departmental business plans, reviewing resources required for effective community relationships, consulting with Aboriginal communities about planned maintenance, contracting with First Nations and Métis brushing and clearing companies (particularly for major transmission and distribution work, e.g., the Dover-Whitefish transmission line), supporting community projects (usually through in-kind donations), negotiating good-neighbour agreements and developing relationships with educational institutions.

4. Timeframe for Results

Annual business plans include targets. However, the policy/strategy is a long-term commitment.

5. Measurable Criteria

- Feedback from Aboriginal customers regarding service quality (reliability, response time to any outages)
- Ability to meet new installation in-service dates on reserve/settlement
- Through regular contact, at all levels of ATCO Electric management and staff, attempt to gauge the quality of our relationship
- Participation and support for Aboriginal community initiatives
- Value of contracts with Aboriginal suppliers
- Number of consultations with Aboriginal communities regarding opportunities for the supply of contracted services; concerns related to construction and maintenance work on traditional lands
- Number of Aboriginal employees hired

6. Budget

Contractor budgets for brushing and clearing are managed through ATCO Electric's forestry department. (We aim to maximize Aboriginal contracting, if terms are mutually acceptable, but there is no set-aside budget.) Support for post-secondary awards and planned technical programs are supported through the engineering and construction department. The distribution department generally is the source for community project support (often in-kind support).

7. Partners and Sponsors

ATCO Frontec (which runs the North Warning System) has joint ventures with Aboriginal companies; Northland Utilities (in NWT) is partly owned by the Denendeh Development Corporation.

8. Experience with the Program

See Section 3, Implementation

9. General Applicability

This policy may be of interest to companies that have widely dispersed operations and typically have a large proportion of smaller projects.

10. Additional Information or Support

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