

Fort McDermitt Tribe Members Gain Competitive Edge Through Process Plant Training Course

2026-01-23

- Members of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe celebrate completing the Process Plant Fundamentals Training course at Great Basin College in Winnemucca. Lithium Americas is proud to invest in local workforce development as we advance Thacker Pass.
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Recently, 16 members of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe participated in a specialized Process Plant Fundamentals Training course.

The one-week intensive course at the **Great Basin College (GBC) Industrial Technical Center in Winnemucca** was spearheaded by Maria Anderson, LAC's Community Relations Director in partnership with GBC-**NORCAT** Mine Skills Training, a joint initiative between GBC and NORCAT, a leading mining training organization.

Abby Loya, Instrumentation and Electrical Systems Instructor at Great Basin College led instruction for Lithium Americas' Process Plant Training Course.

"This training represents LAC's commitment to ensuring local community members have the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue future careers at Thacker Pass," Maria Anderson said. "We're building pathways to opportunity."

The training course delivered essential mineral processing fundamentals through a curriculum custom-designed for operations at Thacker Pass. **Abby Loya, an Instrumentation and Electrical Systems Instructor at GBC** with mineral processing expertise, led participants through the flowsheet's technical concepts.

The hands-on approach resonated with students. "What I liked about the Process Plant Fundamentals Training was doing the pH testing (measuring acidity or alkalinity) and learning to solder (fusing). We also learned more about the conditions of the tools," said participant Monica P. "All the guest speakers that came in were knowledgeable and answered our questions in a very informative way."

Jim Jernigan, LAC's Training Superintendent, developed a custom workbook to support each participant's learning. "The engagement and enthusiasm we're seeing is exceptional," he said. "The participants are deeply interested in understanding how Thacker Pass works and they're bringing that curiosity to every session."

As part of the Process Plant Fundamentals Training course, a tour of Thacker Pass was provided.

The training week included a site tour of Thacker Pass, allowing participants to connect classroom learning with real-world application. "The tour of the Thacker Pass was great; it showed how the mine is coming along and how the mine will look at the start of production in 2027," said participant James F.

To ensure accessibility, Lithium Americas provided transportation for Tribe members traveling to and from Fort McDermitt and provided lunch and snacks throughout the week.

A collaboration with **Nevadaworks** also enhanced the training program's impact. Through Nevadaworks' Project CEJA (Clean Energy Jobs Academy), participants received a \$100 daily stipend, financially supporting their attendance. Thurman Roberts, Tribal Navigator and DeAnn Jackson, Senior Tech Hub Navigator at Nevadaworks, traveled to Winnemucca and Fort McDermitt last week to finalize training program details and ensure success.

"This partnership demonstrates how targeted workforce development can create meaningful opportunities for Tribal communities," Thurman Roberts said. "We're proud to support training that opens doors to quality careers."

Victoria Browning from **EmployNV** also worked alongside course participants, offering resume-building services

and preparing attendees for LAC's job fair on March 11th, 2026, at the Winnemucca Convention Center, East Hall from 12 noon – 8 p.m.

Tivi Aho with Bechtel, LAC's Engineering Procurement Construction Management (EPCM) contractor also visited with the training participants to speak about **skilled and apprenticeship opportunities** at Thacker Pass.

This initiative reflects LAC's commitment to local employment. Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe members were among the first local hires at Thacker Pass, joining as heavy equipment operators through contractor Sawtooth Mining.

"At LAC, we're proud of our commitment to employing locally to the greatest extent possible," Maria Anderson said. "The new employment opportunities at Thacker Pass allow members from the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe, along with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, to earn a good living with benefits that will provide for their families and help support their elders, without having to leave home."

Participant feedback suggests the training's impact extends beyond individual career development. "Thanks for letting us attend this class; there was a lot of good information", said participant LaRae B. "I learned something new about electrical work. I think our tribal leaders in the council should attend future sessions, and share the knowledge learned with the Elders to provide them with a better understanding of how things work at Thacker Pass. The instructor Abby was great and I loved how hands-on the teaching was."

Breana C. agreed. "I saw firsthand how it [the training] shifted perspectives amongst the community members that attended this program. I hope more classes are held in the future so our tribal leaders can learn about lithium mining and processing. As a young attendee, it has blown my mind what we can achieve with Lithium Americas. I am hoping that more of our community jumps on board and I can't wait to see what we can build together! Also, a special thanks to Maria Anderson for all that she has done for my community!"

Given strong community interest, LAC is reviewing options to offer the course again to additional tribal members, and potentially expanding access to other interested local community members. LAC is committed to enabling workforce development and hiring locally where possible.

Participants shared their experiences from the Process Plant Operator Training:

- Alfreda T.
“The Process Plant Fundamentals training was very informative. Our instructor Abby was the best...I'm glad I made the decision to attend this training. The lectures were great and process of the lithium was interesting. I would recommend this training to all our tribal members who want to learn about lithium.”
- Breena C.
“Wow, just wanted to say thanks for an eye-opening class on lithium! I saw firsthand how it shifted perspectives in our community members that attended this class, I hope more classes are held in the future so our tribal leaders can be educated on Lithium and as a young attendee, it's blown my mind what we can achieve with Lithium Americas. Hoping more of our community jumps on board and gets educated on this game changer. Can't wait to see what we can build together! Also, a special thanks to Maria Anderson for all that she has done for my community!”
- Duane M.
“Loved the training all in all, it would have been nice to provide this training to the tribe in the beginning for all to understand a bit more on the process involved with the mining project and might have led to a better relationship for the mine and tribe, after reflection I believe it was a great training and all should attend.”
- James F.
“The Mineral Process Training program, I found it very interesting and informative with great instructors. Also, the different training stations was excellent. The tour of the lithium mine was great, it showed how the mine is coming along from start till now. And how the mine will look in the start of production in 2027. Also, on how the operation on the mineral process will have the steps to achieve the end product of pure lithium. Doing a great job Maria, very excellent work.”
- Janet F.
“The class is awesome, enjoyed all the information and how Lithium is willing to teach us how to learn the different job opportunities for the next

80 years. Go Lithium Team...the instructors of the class were awesome love it..."

Jerry T.

"Congrats to you and staff for the training, it was very informative and hopefully more training will be available. Sure glad you made this happen."

LaRae B.

"Maria, thanks for letting us attend this class there was a lot of good information . I learned something new about electric stuff. What I think is our tribal leaders in council should attend that way they can bring to the elders and explain to them how this will actually work so they have a better understanding. Thank you for all you do! Breakfast, lunch, and snacks were awesome. The instructor Abby was great; I love how she did the hands-on part, along with all the others that came and introduced themselves. Great training."

Monica P.

"What I liked about the Process Plant Fundamentals Training this week was doing the ph testings and learning to do soldering and learning more about the conditions of the tools. All the guest speakers that came in all had some knowledgeable information and answered all questions in a very understanding way. I enjoyed it and look forward to other trainings in the near future."

Roberta C.

"The mineral process training class was very interesting. It was nice learning the process of how they produce lithium. Our instructor Abby and Jim answered all our questions and were very knowledgeable. Maria was also very knowledgeable and answered our questions. It was a very good class."

Yolanda G.

"Big shout out to all who took the time off work to come to class and gave their introduction on their job titles and what they do at Lithium Americas. And Mrs. Abby Loya GBC and also Jim Jernigan for giving us the knowledge

and hands on training. Big huge thank you Maria for making this happen.”