

## Benchmark & New Brunswick(NJ) Mayor Jim Cahill Announce Unique Hiring Initiative

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### \$110 Million Mixed Use Property Creates Up to 300 Jobs, Opens in March

A unique hiring initiative has been announced for The Heldrich, the new \$110 million mixed use property being constructed in the heart of revitalized New Brunswick, New Jersey. The city's mayor, the Honorable James Cahill, made the announcement.

'The Heldrich is another important step forward in transforming our city,' said Mayor Cahill. "Job creation is one of the most far-reaching and significant aspects of the redevelopment program and so we're very excited to announce this initiative for this remarkable property.'

The new hiring initiative reaches out to all residents of the metropolitan area by placing a preference on hiring employees from New Brunswick. The hiring initiative is a partnership between the City of New Brunswick; the New Brunswick Development Corporation, which has spearheaded The Heldrich project; New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT), a private, non-profit organization dedicated to fostering public/private networks of organizations that are enriching the lives of the people of New Brunswick; and Benchmark Hospitality International, which will operate the property.

'This is a wonderful partnership between key parties important to the success of The Heldrich,' stated Mike Taylor, Benchmark's general manager for the new property. 'The beneficiaries will be the people of New Brunswick and our guests who will receive local knowledge of the city ... and local personality.' Taylor went on to say, 'We're so glad to actively involve the citizens of New Brunswick in this exciting project and look forward to hiring a first rate team of hospitality professionals for this first class property.'

Also providing comments on behalf of Benchmark Hospitality International were Eileen Santoli, vice president of human resources, who addressed Benchmark's Core Value System, and Mario Herrera, the inaugural recipient of the Benchmark Chairman's Award of Excellence, a company-wide initiative to recognize extraordinary employee contributions to their communities and the organization. Mr. Herrera is a New Jersey resident and employed at Benchmark's North Maple Inn in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

The Heldrich's unique hiring initiative will help ensure that New Brunswick residents interested in working at the property will receive hiring preference for the hotel and conference center, which is scheduled to open in March of 2007. It is anticipated that 200 to 300 new positions will be available at the property upon opening. Jobs that are part of the initiative range from entry-level to management positions and offer competitive salaries and benefits.

The initiative includes a formalized central intake process whereby job seekers will register and be pre-screened to assess their work readiness. Individuals will also be evaluated to determine if they might benefit from basic skills training or a hospitality orientation program specifically crafted for the initiative, and training will be made available where possible. Registrants will be tracked during this process and receive periodic updates. Those not suited for the hospitality industry will receive referrals to alternate employment opportunities throughout the city and beyond.

The comprehensive hiring initiative is being promoted through a public awareness campaign targeted to and involving community and faith-based organizations throughout New Brunswick. It is anticipated that Benchmark will begin accepting applications and conducting interviews in early January and February, 2007, with actual employment phased in starting in February. The Heldrich is expected to open in March.

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