



JUN - 1 2017

MR. KEVIN O'REILLY  
MLA, FRAME LAKE

**Oral Question 503-18(2) Northern Frontier Visitors Centre**

This letter is further to my commitment made in the Legislative Assembly on February 3, 2017, regarding the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre (NFVC). During our discussion, I committed to double check to see if the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) has identified any funding in the 2017-18 Capital or Operations and Maintenance budget for additional assistance to support the NFVC. I also committed to keep the House apprised of the next steps to be taken with respect to how ITI can assist the NFVC, once the report came back from the engineering firm and once the business case was received from the communications agency.

Furthermore, I committed to provide you with information on how ITI funds and operates other tourism centres in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

The Northern Frontier Visitor's Association (NFVA) receives \$161,000 from ITI and \$90,000 from the City of Yellowknife annually for operations and maintenance. More recently, ITI has supported the NFVA with additional resources to study and evaluate the visitor centre's foundation issues and to look at different business models as options for future operations. ITI's focus has been to ensure that any decisions made by the NFVA were based on solid and up-to-date findings.

Several business case options were presented by the NFVA to preserve the future of the NFVA and visitor-information services in Yellowknife as shown below:

- Dismantle the NFVA, remove existing building, and cease visitor services (\$50,000);
- Temporary fix to the existing building until a permanent solution can be put in place (\$300,000). This option may not be viable depending on current shifting of the building;

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- Move the visitor centre to a temporary location downtown (with rent paid by City of Yellowknife);
- Build a new smaller visitors centre at the current site (\$2-3 million);
- Build a new visitor centre, larger than existing one (\$4.5 million); and
- Build a new much larger visitor centre (multi-purpose tourism centre) \$3.77 - 5.25 million.

In regards to keeping the House apprised of the next steps to be taken with respect to how ITI can assist the NFVC, the engineering assessment reports and the business case report are expected to be completed this summer, at which time I will share with the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has been working in partnership with the City of Yellowknife and the NFVA to respond to the closure of the NFVC. The immediate priority has been to re-establish visitor services in an alternate location. A temporary location has now been identified at the Prince Of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and a Memorandum of Understanding has been provided by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) to the NFVA for consideration. This space will allow for visitor information services to continue, while other options are considered. ITI will cover costs associated with NFVA's move to the new location and the interim storage of its assets. The City of Yellowknife has and will continue to be a key funding partner for the NFVA and we commend them for their contribution of additional resources.

Once immediate service delivery concerns are addressed, ITI and partners will turn our collective attention to finding a longer-term solution. The identification of a more permanent location and next steps will require the identification of a business model for visitor information services that can be effectively delivered and sustained.

Lastly, I committed to provide you with information on how ITI funds and operates other tourism centres in the NWT. I offer the following information:

The table below outlines the funding provided by ITI in the area of visitor information services/centres in 2016-17 and 2017-18:

Region	Service/Centre	2016-17 ITI Funding	2017-18 ITI Funding
Beaufort Delta	Western Arctic Regional Visitors Centre, Inuvik	\$105,000	\$127,000
	Dempster Delta Visitors Centre, Dawson City, Yukon (YK)	\$115,000	\$102,000
Sahtu	Norman Wells Historical Centre, Norman Wells	\$20,000	TBD
North Slave	Northern Frontier Visitor Centre, Yellowknife	\$161,000	\$161,000
Dehcho	Fort Simpson Visitor Information Centre, Fort Simpson	\$50,000	\$50,000
South Slave	60 <sup>th</sup> Parallel Visitors Centre, NWT/Alberta (AB) border	\$104,000	\$99,000
	Hay River Visitor Centre Hay River	\$0	\$0

The table below outlines the annual operating costs, staff and operating season for visitor information services/centres in the NWT.

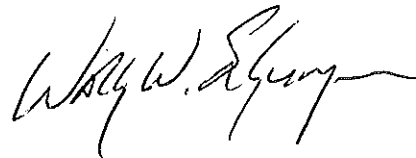
Region	Service/Centre	Operating Costs	Staff	Operating Season	Hours of Operation
Beaufort Delta	Western Arctic Regional Visitors Centre, Inuvik	\$105,000	4 Seasonal (S)	May to September	Mon-Fri 9:00 am - 7:00pm
	Dempster Delta Visitors Centre, Dawson City YK	\$115,000	3 S	May to September	Seven days a week: 9am - 7pm
Sahtu	Norman Wells Historical Centre, Norman Wells	\$191,000	2 Full-time (FT) 2 Part-time	Year round	<b>Summer hours</b> (June 1-Aug 31): Mon-Fri 10 am- 5:30 pm Sat 10 am- 4 pm, Sun 12 pm- 4 pm <b>Winter hours</b> (Sept 1-May 31): Mon-Fri 10 am- 5:30 pm Sat 10 am- 4 pm
North Slave	Northern Frontier Visitor Centre, Yellowknife	\$1,512,430	6 FT 8-10 S	Year round	n/a
Dehcho	Fort Simpson Visitor Information Centre, Fort Simpson	\$100,000	4 S	May to September	(May) Mon - Fri 8:30 am - 5 pm Sat - Sun 12 pm - 5pm (After June 1) Mon - Fri 8:30 am to 8 pm Sat - Sun 9 am to 5 pm
South Slave	60 <sup>th</sup> Parallel Visitors Centre, NWT/AB border	\$104,000	2 S	May to September	Seven days a week: 8:30 am - 8:30 pm

The table below indicates four operating models and building ownership for visitor information services/centres in the NWT.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Service/Centre</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Operator</b>
Beaufort Delta	Western Arctic Regional Visitors Centre, Inuvik	GNWT - ITI	GNWT - ITI
	Dempster Delta Visitors Centre, Dawson City YK	Parks Canada	GNWT - ITI
South Slave	60 <sup>th</sup> Parallel Visitors Centre, NWT/AB border	GNWT - ITI	Contractor
Sahtu	Norman Wells Historical Centre, Norman Wells	Norman Wells Historical Centre	Norman Wells Historical Centre
North Slave	Northern Frontier Visitor Centre, Yellowknife	Northern Frontier Visitor Association	Northern Frontier Visitors Association
Dehcho	Fort Simpson Visitor Information Centre, Fort Simpson	Village of Fort Simpson	Village of Fort Simpson

I assure you that the GNWT remains committed to supporting the NFVA.

Thank you for your questions and interest in this matter. I trust this response addresses your questions.



Wally Schumann  
Minister  
Industry, Tourism and Investment

c. List Attached

Honourable Alfred Moses  
Minister, ECE

His Worship Mayor Mark Heyck  
City of Yellowknife

Mr. Tom Jensen  
Deputy Minister, ITI

Mr. Tim Mercer  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings  
Legislative Coordinator