

Northwest Territories LA News Releases | 2012

12-01	Feb. 7	Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II
12-02	Feb. 28	Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny Holds Press Conference to Discuss GNWT Tobacco Tax Collection System
12-03	March 14	Standing Committee on Social Programs' Priorities
12-04	March 20	Action on Early Childhood Development Can't Wait, says Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley
12-05	Apr. 12	Legislative Assembly Welcomes Elder Parliamentarians
12-06	May 2	Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny Concerned About Contract for Ingraham Trail Realignment
12-07	May 9	Elders Parliament Motions
12-08	May 9	Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins Concerned about the Decision To Sole-Source Highway 4 Realignment
12-09	May 10	Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche Concerned About Impact of Recently Announced Parks Canada Reductions
12-10	May 24	Budget Fails to Attack Energy Cost Burden, says Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley
12-11	June 14	Diamond Jubilee Shrub Planting Ceremony
12-12	June 18	Members Appointed to Human Rights and Equal Pay Commissions
12-13	July 4	Frame Lake MLA Wendy Bisaro Announces Kevin O'Reilly as a Recipient of Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal
12-14	Aug. 24	Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya Pleased With Creation of Naats'ihch'oh National Park Reserve
12-15	Sep. 17	Deline one step closer to political independence
12-16	Sep. 18	Hay River MLAs are pleased with increased funding for agriculture
12-17	Sep. 28	Hay River MLAs meet with Premier and Minister to discuss Hay River topics
12-18	Oct. 9	Online ePetitions Available on the Legislative Assembly Website
12-19	Oct. 9	Range Lake MLA Concerned About Cost Overruns for New

Northwest Territories LA News Releases | 2012

"Super School" in Inuvik

12-20	Oct. 12	Official Opening of the Inuvik School
12-21	Oct. 19	Standing Committee on Government Operations Focuses on Accountability
12-22	Oct. 23	Establishment of Electoral Boundaries Commission and Guidelines

Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II

(Yellowknife) February 7th, 2012 – The Legislative Assembly and the Government of the Northwest Territories are celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the throne. This anniversary is known as a Diamond Jubilee.

To start off the week of celebrations, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories joined other legislatures around Canada in flying Queen's royal standard from sunrise to sunset on Monday, February 6th. The official Diamond Jubilee flag will be flown at the Legislative Assembly throughout the remainder of the Diamond Jubilee Week, February 6th-10th.

The Legislative Assembly has passed a motion of congratulations to the Queen. The text of the motion was:

As only the second United Kingdom monarch to reign for 60 years, the Northwest Territories joins the rest of Canada in celebrating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in her Diamond Jubilee. Celebrations of such an achievement reinforce the sovereign's role as a focus for national identity and unity for the people across the Commonwealth. A message is being sent to Her Majesty congratulating her and continuing to welcome her and the Royal family to our land with their examples of devotion and duty to the welfare of the Canadian people.

The motion will be printed and framed for display in the Legislative Assembly and will eventually be forwarded to Buckingham Palace.

"We have hosted her Majesty and members of the Royal family in the Northwest Territories many times," said Premier Bob McLeod. "We are pleased to join with the rest of Canada and the Commonwealth in honouring Her Majesty and her commitment to public service during her Diamond Jubilee."

"It is always an honour to celebrate Her Majesty, especially on such a grand occasion," said Speaker Jackie Jacobson. "We have strong ties to the royal family here in the North and we look forward to strengthening these in the future."

A public reception to honour the Queen was held at the Legislative Assembly today and the first Northwest Territories Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medals were awarded. The Diamond Jubilee Medals have been established by the Government of Canada to recognize Canadians who have made a significant contribution to their province, territory, community or region or who have made a significant achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada. In the Northwest Territories, the Government of the Northwest Territories will be accepting nominations from the public throughout 2012.

Northwest Territories residents can send congratulatory messages to the Queen by writing in one of two books that will be prepared along with a video presentation of photos from past royal visits to the NWT. One book and video presentation will be set up in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly, while a second book and presentation will be set up in public locations in communities across the NWT throughout 2012. At the end of the year, both books will be forwarded to Buckingham Palace.

Public events to mark the Diamond Jubilee will be organized in the Northwest Territories communities throughout the year. Information on upcoming events and Northwest Territories Diamond Jubilee initiatives can be found on the Government of the Northwest Territories website at www.gov.nt.ca

Today, February 7th, 2012 the Diamond Jubilee recipients were:

Mr. Anthony (Tony) Whitford
Mr. Bobby Drygeese
Ms. Patricia O'Connor
Mrs. Esther Braden,
Mrs. Barbara Bromley
Mr. Georges Henry Erasmus
Ms. Sharon Firth

Ms. Shirley Firth-Larsson
Ms. Arlene Haché
Bishop John R. Sperry

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Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny Holds Press Conference to Discuss GNWT Tobacco Tax Collection System

(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, February 28th, 2012 – Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny held a news conference today, February 28th to discuss the issues surrounding the GNWT tobacco tax collection system.

On Friday, February 17th, MLA Daryl Dolynny spoke in the House of a potential loophole in the way the GNWT is collecting tobacco tax. In his Member's Statement MLA Dolynny said, "I don't think we're collecting all our taxes on this product, because I believe we have an open door in the tobacco tax collection process itself that is half open, and this half-open door could be potentially exploited."

In 2010 Statistics Canada reports 14,703 smokers in the Northwest Territories, and using the Canadian average rate of consumption at 15.3 cigarettes a day would equal 410,544 cartons in a year; at a tobacco tax rate of \$57.20 per carton, the revenues should be \$23,483,116.

The NWT Bureau of Statistics confirms that the smoking rate amongst aboriginal communities in Canada is at times double that of national average and since there no actual statistics on consumption in the NWT, should consumption in the NWT be a conservative three cigarettes higher than the national daily average, the tobacco tax revenues would include an additional \$4,604,538 yearly.

However, according to the NWT Bureau of Statistics, the GNWT is currently collecting revenues of \$17,500,000 on 305,000 cartons per year. This figure is 25% below the national average suggesting a shortfall of approximately \$6,000,000 per year and factoring a more realistic consumption smoking rate for the NWT would only increase this disparity to over \$10,000,000 annually. "This discrepancy proves that the system of manual self-reporting is outdated and unreliable. It does not reflect the actual amount of tax that should be collected on products brought into the territory," says MLA Daryl Dolynny.

Mr. Dolynny suggests that the solution is "a one-source distribution system for all tobacco coming into the Northwest Territories which will provide a proper flow of tax memos to the GNWT from the tobacco manufacturers, thereby returning full control of tax collection monies to the GNWT."

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Standing Committee on Social Programs' Priorities

YELLOWKNIFE (March 14, 2012) – Alcohol and drug treatment and an anti-poverty strategy are the two top priorities of the Standing Committee on Social Programs in the 17th Assembly.

“Addictions and poverty are the biggest problems we’ve got in the Northwest Territories, and there is no one who is not touched by them,” said committee chair Alfred Moses. “We are determined to make concrete progress. The government has been coasting on these issues for too long. Now that an Alcohol and Drug Treatment Strategy is being developed, we have good reason to think the current cabinet will be on side.”

Addictions and poverty are integral to many of the challenges identified by the Standing Committee on Social Programs including low incomes and unemployment, school attendance and low educational achievement, poor health outcomes, inadequate housing, as well as crime and rehabilitation.

The standing committee’s five members met in Hay River from February 29 to March 2 for an intensive planning session and visits to local facilities, including the South Mackenzie Correctional Centre, Nats’eejee K’eh Treatment Centre, H.H. Williams Hospital, and the Family Support Centre. The committee is responsible for the regular MLAs’ oversight of the Departments of Health and Social Services; Education, Culture and Employment; Justice; and the NWT Housing Corporation (NWTHC).

“We were very impressed by the good work being done in the facilities we visited,” Moses said. “We really appreciated the dedication and frankness of the staff everywhere we went.”

The committee believes there is a solid foundation for government departments to cooperate and collaborate on services with broader impact. “To make headway on our priorities we need Education, Justice, Housing, and Health to work together,” added committee member Wendy Bisaro. “For example, Corrections might need an alcohol treatment program in one of its facilities, and that would involve the health department at the very least.”

Committee members noted that their predecessors in the 16th Assembly had also emphasized prevention, early intervention, and a good education starting at an early age. “We will build on their work,” Moses said, “and follow up on the recommendations they provided.”

The committee is undaunted by the fiscal challenges facing the new government. “Sure, we wish there was more money,” Moses said. “We have a lot of ideas. But we will take it one step at a

time, and press the government to do things that really make a difference – even small things. We believe we can help people in ways that will also save money.”

Another way to help accomplish this is for the government to partner with non-profit and volunteer organizations in more meaningful ways. The committee plans to hear from these groups in the course of its work as well.

The departments and agencies that fall under the mandate of the Standing Committee on Social Programs account for 60 percent of the GNWT’s annual spending. Committee members look forward to working with the ministers in charge, all of whom were members of the committee in previous assemblies.

“We are also looking forward to the government’s business plans, and seeing how our priorities are addressed,” Moses said.

The current committee consists of MLAs Alfred Moses (Inuvik Boot Lake), Daryl Dolynny (Yellowknife Range Lake), Wendy Bisaro (Yellowknife Frame Lake), Norman Yakeleya (Sahtu), and Jane Groenewegen (Hay River South).

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Action on Early Childhood Development Can't Wait, says Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley

YELLOWKNIFE (March 20, 2012) - Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley says that despite years of promises to address the critical need for a new early childhood development (ECD) framework, the Minister of Education Culture and Employment is failing to deliver, with a renewed framework promised for last September now years away.

Last month Minister Lafferty told Mr. Bromley in the Legislative Assembly that ECD recommendations were being finalized, and the Minister hoped to bring them forward for funding in this year's budget.

"Incredibly, just a few days later," Bromley says, "the Minister announced a review committee has just been appointed, and he hopes to have a plan for public consultation next September, effectively delaying implementation until 2014/15. This is not acceptable."

Research in the last decade reveals that a person's development potential largely occurs within the first few years of life. A recent World Bank report concludes "...investing early is investing smartly. No other development investment boasts a higher payoff for people and for economies than ECD." Those first few years of life "decide each child's lifelong capacity to grow, to learn, to stay healthy, and to interact well with others."

"Language development and the basis for sound mental and physical health are all laid down during this brief period, especially from age 0 through 3," Bromley notes.

"I continue to call for policies and programs to support parents, extended families, and communities in building the loving and caring relationships that enable children to build the brain structures and foundation needed to achieve their full potential."

Bromley notes this fits with our situation in the NWT. "Teachers report that students are starting school without the basic skills that promote learning. Student achievement measures confirm that we are not making progress on these issues, and mental and physical health issues are way above national rates."

Even the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative recognized the fundamental prerequisite of improved early childhood development.

"Each year of delay is costly to another year's cohort of our children, and means ever accelerating costs through the future. In contrast, programming implemented now means lifetime gains in all aspects of their lives," Bromley says.

"We know clearly what is needed. ECD is a priority of the 17th Legislative Assembly. Let's get it done."

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Legislative Assembly Welcomes Elder Parliamentarians

(Yellowknife, NT) April 12, 2012 – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Jackie Jacobson, will be hosting the second biennial Elders Parliament the week of May 6 – 11, 2012. Through an application process, nineteen individuals over the age of 50 from across the North have been selected to take part in this exciting program. The participants will attend meetings and briefings during this week-long event in preparation for Elders Parliament session, in which they assume the role of a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Elders Parliament follows on the heels of a very successful educational outreach program, Youth Parliament, which the Legislative Assembly has hosted for 12 years. During Elders Parliament, the participants will have two opportunities to sit in the Chamber. The first opportunity will be on Tuesday, May 8 when the participants take part in a mock ‘Territorial Leadership Committee’ (TLC). Each participant who wishes to be part of the Executive Council will have the opportunity to make a short speech about what they would do if they were a Minister in the NWT. Once all participants have had the opportunity to speak, seven names will be picked by random draw and of those names chosen, six will become Ministers on the Elders Parliament Executive Council and one will become the Premier of Elders Parliament. The second opportunity to sit in the Chamber will be on Thursday, May 10. The participants will sit in the Chamber for the Elders Parliament ‘Session’ where they will read their statements and debate issues of their choice.

participants, by constituency, are:

Deh Cho – Georgina Fabian	Frame Lake – Yvonne Quick
Great Slave – Cornelius Van Dyke	Hay River North – Delores Downey
Hay River South – Audrey Berens	Inuvik Boot Lake – Lillian Elias
Inuvik Twin Lakes – Shirley Kisoun	Kam Lake – Robert O’Rourke
Mackenzie Delta – Ruth Stewart	Monfwi – Mary Koyina-Richardson
Nahendeh – Dolphus Codille	Nunakput – Edward Ruben
Range Lake – Anna Clark	Sahtu – Margaret McDonald
Thebacha – Don Sutherland	Tu Nedhe – Adeline Jonasson
Weledch – Wayne Balanoff	Yellowknife Centre – Kathryn Youngblut
Yellowknife South – Paul Gard	

Chamber sittings are at the following times:

- Mock ‘TLC’ - Tuesday, May 8, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.
- Elders Parliament Session – Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 1:30 p.m.

The public is invited to come watch the Session from the Public Gallery and can also view proceedings on the Legislative Assembly’s television broadcasting network. Media are encouraged to arrange interviews with the participants prior to the sitting day.

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**Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny Concerned About Contract for Ingraham Trail
Realignment**

(Yellowknife) Wednesday, May 2nd, 2012 - Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny is concerned with the lack of transparency with the procurement process on the Ingraham Trail Realignment.

On Thursday, February 9th, 2012, MLA Daryl Dolynny spoke in the House about his concern of the procurement guidelines relating to the Giant Mine Bypass Road Project. In his Member's Statement MLA Dolynny said, "It's come to my attention via some very concerned businesses in my riding and the riding of Kam Lake that the Department of Transportation has entered into some preliminary negotiations with a group of proponents for the contract of the Giant Mine Bypass Road Project...Is it wrong for a business to be considered for a project? Is it wrong for a business to ask for an opportunity to do business for the public with the use of public funds and in a transparent environment?"

Although neither the Department of Transportation nor the Minister's office have given clear direction on how they are dealing with the GNWT's Negotiated Contracts Policy, correspondence has been sent to various other potential qualified local and northern contractors that expressed interest in this project. These contractors have been informed that only one company was deemed eligible under the GNWT's Negotiated Contracts Policy and that the Department of Transportation was instructed to commence negotiations with that company.

Mr. Dolynny is very concerned and dismayed at the lack of an open, fair and transparent GNWT procurement process and maintains that all qualified local and northern companies, large and small, deserve the ability to operate under the notion of opportunity rather than exclusivity.

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Elders Parliament Motions

(Yellowknife, NT) May 9, 2012 – The Legislative Assembly’s Elder Parliamentarians have chosen the three motions that they will debate during the “mock” session to be held tomorrow in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly building. The three topics were chosen during discussions in “Caucus” meetings involving all the elders.

The three motions that are scheduled to be discussed are:

1. Care and Respect for Elders
2. Creation of an Elders Ombudsman Office
3. Proposed Public Housing Rent Scale Changes

“It has been an exciting week so far here at the Legislative Assembly. The halls are bustling with our elders, and the meeting rooms are alive with their discussions. They have been hard at work preparing for the big ‘mock’ session that is taking place tomorrow afternoon. This event has brought together some incredibly wise minds from all over the territory and I am really looking forward to the debate tomorrow, where our elders will share their vision and knowledge with us all,” says the Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The media and general public are invited to watch the proceedings from the public gallery of the Legislative Assembly building beginning at 1:30 p.m. with a break in the Great Hall at approximately 3:00 p.m. The session will also be broadcast live on the Legislative Assembly broadcasting network, and will continue to be re-broadcast over the coming months. Please visit the Legislative Assembly’s website at www.assembly.gov.nt.ca for a community channel listing.

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Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins Concerned about the Decision to Sole-Source Highway 4 Realignment

(Yellowknife) Wednesday, May 9th, 2012 – Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins is concerned about the divisive attitude from Minister David Ramsay, the Department of Transportation, and the McLeod Government for its decision to sole-source the Highway 4 realignment near Yellowknife. This equates to market disruption which favours one contractor over several other well-established local northern businesses in a thriving market.

MLA Robert Hawkins says, “Minister Ramsay has been consistently critical of sole-source contracts as a Member in this Assembly, but now that he’s in Cabinet he reverses his position and says it’s okay to meddle in a healthy, well-established and vibrant local industry. By trying to justify his new position with dismal justification like ‘they approached us; [sole source] is better for the taxpayers; we are building capacity’, he and his department finally shed light on what little respect they truly have for the everyday taxpayer and industry.”

“It is my belief that if the McLeod Government wanted to be truly open and transparent, Premier McLeod would immediately instruct Minister Ramsay, before any final deal is inked, to put this contract out to public tender and get the best price the market can provide. Any justification that the taxpayer is better served by the sole-sourcing of public funds is an embarrassment and an insult to the publics’ intelligence.”

“Frankly, the approach to sole-source this project to a single company without allowing others an opportunity to bid is a shameful decision by Minister Ramsay. Where overconfidence seems to be a natural fit so are backdoor politics to become the norm? Simply put, this attitude puts well-established local businesses and local families at risk. I don’t believe that the Minister takes this into account as the Department of Transportation creates a situation of market disruption. My fear is that some businesses are clearly being hand-picked over others, so where does this stop?. There is no competition so how can the government guarantee this was the best company when none were given an opportunity to bid?”

Finally, MLA Hawkins notes, “There is simply nothing stopping this company from coming forward and being competitive like any other business because every time government meddles in sole-sourcing, they put other established companies, their local employees and their families at risk. This is not a case of spreading opportunities around, but a case of keeping opportunities from others.”

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MLA - Nahendeh

Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche Concerned About Impact of Recently Announced Parks Canada Reductions

(Yellowknife) Thursday, May 10th, 2012 – Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche is concerned about the impact the recently announced reductions to Parks Canada operations will have on the Nahanni National Park Reserve and the Deh Cho region.

“For small communities like Nahanni Butte and even larger communities like Fort Simpson, every single job makes a big difference to the local economy. Shortening the park season and the amount of time people are working in the park each year is going to hurt not just the park employees, but the entire community and region which benefits from the tourism the park attracts.”

Menicoche is particularly concerned about the cutbacks in light of federal government promises of job creation made only a few years ago during discussions on the Nahanni National Park Reserve expansion. Menicoche says, “there were promises and commitments made just a few years ago when the federal government was lobbying the region to support the expansion of the park boundaries. One of the benefits promised was job creation.”

“These cutbacks amount to broken promises to the people of the Deh Cho,” says Menicoche. “I hope that the federal government will take another look at the promises of jobs and other benefits repeated by the Prime Minister himself right here in the Deh Cho only a few years ago, and reconsider any changes to the Nahanni National Park Reserve operations in light of those promises. I hope that this was just an oversight that can be corrected.”

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Northwest
Territories Legislative Assembly

MLA – Weledeh

Budget Fails to Attack Energy Cost Burden, says Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley

YELLOWKNIFE (May 24, 2012) Weledeh MLA Bob Bromley says that today's territorial budget fails to help people and businesses fight the high costs of energy.

Bromley says the huge cuts to renewable energy programs and the lack of an aggressive energy strategy leaves the NWT at the mercy of unpredictable and mounting fossil fuel and transportation costs.

“Energy costs will go on soaring until we get serious about renewable energy,” Bromley says. “We’re putting 65 million tax dollars into NTPC electricity rate subsidies over the next three years. If we put an equivalent amount into developing renewable energy, the long-term savings for consumers, businesses, communities and the environment would be enormous.”

“Our revenues are up 9.5 percent or about \$130 million, and our increased debt limit gives us ample room to invest, yet this government has chosen to roll back the very programs that would buy us a stable, cost-efficient and environmentally sound energy future. With essentially every renewable energy and energy efficiency project to date, we have helped create a new industry and jobs, while reducing costs to taxpayers.”

“We’re giving priority to a highway that, according to analysis, isn’t economically worthwhile without the Mackenzie Gas Project. Meanwhile, families and businesses struggle with energy prices they can’t predict or control. Our priorities are out of whack, and need to change.”

“There’s nothing theoretical about community-based renewable energy solutions,” Bromley says, “They’re commonplace in Scandinavia, where they provide reliable, cost-efficient heat and power to small markets, as well as creating skilled local employment and investment opportunities.”

Bromley says there are documented NWT opportunities for local hydro development, wind, geothermal and solar power, and most feasibility studies for replacing fossil fuels with biomass consistently demonstrate strong cost benefits.

“Right now, we ship our money south to oil company coffers, with no growth return for our economy. We’ve paid for studies that point to proven alternatives. It’s time to act on those opportunities and help our people.”

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Diamond Jubilee Shrub Planting Ceremony

(Yellowknife, NT) June 14, 2012 –The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Jackie Jacobson, and the Premier of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Bob McLeod, participated in a shrub planting ceremony today at the Legislative Assembly to mark the 60th anniversary of the Queen’s Jubilee. These shrubs were gifted to the Northwest Territories by the Province of Manitoba.

“Our relationship with Her Majesty is a special one; on April 21, 1994, Queen Elizabeth II dedicated our Legislative Chamber to all the people of the Northwest Territories, and now we get to honour her by planting these shrubs on our legislative grounds,” says Speaker Jacobson. During her 2010 visit to Canada, Her Majesty participated in a planting ceremony in Manitoba for this newly created shrub, the Amber Jubilee Ninebark, which was named to honour Queen Elizabeth’s Diamond Jubilee.

“The Amber Jubilee Ninebark will be a beautiful addition to our Legislative Assembly grounds and to other communities,” says Premier McLeod. “I am pleased to continue the tradition of planting shrubs in honour of the royal family. Last summer, Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, planted Potentilla shrubs at the Garden of Hope in the Yellowknife Civic Plaza during their visit.”

This shrub planting ceremony starts off a series of planting ceremonies to follow in other southern NWT communities. These communities were chosen due to their longer growing season.

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Members Appointed to Human Rights and Equal Pay Commissions

(Yellowknife, NT) June 18, 2012 – The Honourable George L. Tuccaro, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, on the recommendation of the Legislative Assembly, has appointed three members to the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission, reappointed the Equal Pay Commissioner and appointed a new Director of Human Rights.

Ms. Marion Berls of Fort Smith, and Mr. Charles Dent and Ms. Bronwyn Watters of Yellowknife have all been appointed as members of the Northwest Territories Human Rights Commission for a term of four years. Mr. Yacub Adam of Yellowknife has been re-appointed to the Commission.

Ms. Deborah McLeod of Yellowknife has been appointed Director of Human Rights for a term of four years. Ms. McLeod currently serves as the Deputy Director and replaces Therese Boullard, the first director of Human Rights for the NWT.

Ms. Nitya Iyer of Vancouver has been reappointed as the Equal Pay Commissioner for a term of four years. Ms. Iyer has been the Equal Pay Commissioner since 2004.

“Each of these individuals who have been appointed are very well suited to the roles they have been chosen for,” says Speaker Jacobson. “We look forward to working with each and every one of them. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Therese Boullard for all of the excellent work that she has done during her tenure as the Director of Human Rights.”

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**Frame Lake MLA Wendy Bisaro Announces Kevin O'Reilly
as a Recipient of Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal**

(YELLOWKNIFE) July 4, 2012 - Wendy Bisaro, MLA Frame Lake, is pleased to announce Frame Lake constituent Kevin O'Reilly as a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. Mr. O'Reilly has resided in Yellowknife for over 25 years and worked for a variety of non-governmental, Aboriginal, federal and territorial government organizations on environmental issues. He has volunteered for many years with Alternatives North as well as MiningWatch Canada, which he helped found in 1998.

"I served with Mr. O'Reilly on Yellowknife City Council and know that he always comes prepared to meetings with thoughtful questions, ideas and solutions," said Ms. Bisaro. "His passion and commitment to the principles of accountability, transparency and sustainability are well known and respected."

To be eligible to receive the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal, a person must have made a significant contribution to a particular province, territory, region or community within Canada. Awarding of the medal should focus on the achievements of people who have helped build the Canada of today, and to have distinguished themselves from others in the same field through their achievements and sustained contribution.

Mr. O'Reilly played an important role in the environmental review of the Ekati diamond mine in 1995-96 and the development and implementation of a public environmental watchdog, the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency, where he continues to serve.

Through Alternatives North, he coordinated its interventions on the Mackenzie Gas Project with the Joint Review Panel and National Energy Board, in the interest of providing independent technical evidence to ensure northern benefits and environmental protection.

Mr. O'Reilly's involvement in environmental issues at the Giant Mine dates back to 1988. He filed (with Chris O'Brien) the first request for an investigation under the *Environmental Rights Act* of the Giant Mine roaster stack emissions. During the development of the remediation plan, he was an active participant in workshop and meetings. Along with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation and other residents of Yellowknife, he encouraged the City of Yellowknife to make a mandatory referral of the Giant Mine Remediation Plan for an environmental assessment.

"Kevin's leadership and collaboration with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation on the issues of perpetual care and oversight at the Giant Mine are particularly commendable," said Ms. Bisaro. "For these contributions, the residents of Yellowknife are thankful and future generations may judge us a little better."

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12-13



Northwest
Territories Legislative Assembly

MLA – Sahtu

Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya Pleased With Creation of Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve

(Yellowknife) Friday, August 24, 2012 – On Wednesday, August 22, Prime Minister Harper announced the creation of the Nááts'ihch'oh National Park Reserve which covers 4,850 square kilometers in the Sahtu Settlement Area. Norman Yakeleya, MLA Sahtu, is pleased with this creation, “a dream came true for many elders today, some of those elders are no longer with us, but their voices were heard through the creation of this park reserve.”

The boundaries of this newly created park protect 70 percent of the upper portion of the South Nahanni River and touch Yukon's border. It is adjacent to the Nahanni National Park which is now Canada's third largest national park after it was expanded in 2009; the Nahanni and the Nááts'ihch'oh national park reserves protect about 86 percent of the entire South Nahanni watershed. Nááts'ihch'oh National Park is named after a mountain that has spiritual significance for residents in the Sahtu Settlement Area.

“Our people, rightful owners of the Sahtu lands, negotiated for six years to ensure that our land was protected. Now there is no need to fear the potential hazards from things such as out-of-control mining; we have moved to protect our land and legally block any sort of activity that may harm our water, land, and air. It is also a large benefit to our people that we are still able to hunt, fish, and trap and carry on our traditions in this park,” says Mr. Yakeleya.

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Déljne one step closer to Political Independence

(YELLOWKNIFE) Monday, September 17, 2012 – After fifteen years of negotiation with the Territorial and Federal Governments, the Déljne negotiation teams have arrived at a point where they are willing to put forward a draft “Self-Government” deal so their people can decide if this is an acceptable move towards “Political Independence.”

Even when the Sahtu Comprehensive Dene and Métis Land Claim was signed in 2003, some Sahtu residents still felt that an important piece of aboriginal rights was missing. That piece was the right to be self-governing on Sahtu lands.

Throughout the life of the Sahtu negotiations, many leaders, elders, and community members participated in various discussions and meetings. It is with great hope that the Self-Government negotiations release this draft deal. They are confident that it will send a clear message to other governments that the Déljne people want history to be made.

“I want to send out my congratulations to the leaders, the elders, and all levels of government on reaching this stage in Déljne’s political evolution in the Sahtu region,” says Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya.

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Hay River MLAs are Pleased with Increased Funding for Agriculture

(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, September 18, 2012 – Hay River MLAs Robert Bouchard and Jane Groenewegen are pleased with the increase in agricultural funding announced yesterday by Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment David Ramsay.

Both Bouchard and Groenewegen support agriculture in the North, saying that this funding will support growth within their community as well as aiding in sustaining a healthy lifestyle.

“Many people in our community have devoted themselves to demonstrating the viability of food production in the North,” says Groenewegen. This increase in funding will support local economies and small businesses by creating new jobs and making healthier food options more readily available for all at a lower cost.

Supporting local agriculture also means supporting the environment. “This keeps with our government’s priority on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by keeping food supply local, where it is currently being shipped from long distances,” says Bouchard.

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MLA – Hay River North
Hay River South

Hay River MLAs Meet With Premier and Minister To Discuss Hay River Topics

(YELLOWKNIFE) Friday, September 28, 2012 – Hay River Mayor Ken Latour, Senior Administrative Officer Mike Richardson, and Hay River Chamber of Commerce President Janet-Marie Fizer joined Hay River MLA's Robert Bouchard and Jane Groenewegen in meetings with Premier Bob McLeod and Minister Dave Ramsay at the Legislative Assembly in Yellowknife on Thursday.

The meetings were to discuss issues of interest to Hay River, such as Devolution and Decentralization as well as other topics and opportunities for the people and businesses in Hay River.

The Town of Hay River, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Hay River MLAs would like to thank the Premier and Minister Ramsay for their time and discussions and look forward to continuing to work together in the future.

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Online ePetitions Available on the Legislative Assembly Website

YELLOWKNIFE (October 9, 2012) – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Jackie Jacobson, has announced that the Legislative Assembly’s ePetitions site will be available to the public on Wednesday, October 10. The online ePetitions site can be found on the Legislative Assembly’s website under the ePetitions link.

Following the success of an ePetition pilot project, the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories adopted a motion on June 14, 2012, to implement an ongoing electronic petition service to operate in conjunction with traditional petitions.

“The people of the Northwest Territories benefited from having access to online petitions during the pilot project. By providing this service, people can sign petitions easily even if they live in remote communities,” says Speaker Jacobson.

On Wednesday, October 10, you can view the ePetitions site, add a petition, or sign any existing petitions by visiting www.assembly.gov.nt.ca and clicking on the ePetitions link.

For further information on ePetitions, please contact:

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**Range Lake MLA Concerned About Cost Overruns for
New “Super School” in Inuvik**

(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, October 9, 2012 - Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny is concerned about the high cost overruns for the newly opened “super school” in Inuvik.

Glen Abernethy, Minister of Public Works and Services, and Gabriela Eggenhofer, Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, are attending the official grand opening of the new school in Inuvik, NT today. Although this is a good day for the students, staff, and town of Inuvik, many are concerned about how this government handles large-scale projects, particularly when there are cost overruns.

On October 25, 2005, the replacement of the Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Samuel Hearne schools was two projects, introduced as a “joint design” at an estimated cost of \$35.5 million. Forecasts throughout the projects’ negotiated mandates soon ballooned to over \$115 million. Today, although we are celebrating a ribbon cutting, we have yet to hear about final site remediation work which would net an expected project cost of over \$121 million.

Dolynny says, “Extravagant as this figure is for an 11,900 square meter facility which will house about 1,050 students, one still has to ask: is paying over \$1000 per square foot of taxpayers’ dollars in line with what is a fair market price? Why should taxpayers continue to expect eye-popping, lucrative bids being awarded to sole-sourced or negotiated proponents, when it is clear that fair market value is not emphasized? Where does it end?” Dolynny asks. He also adds, “Interestingly, it appears that just to the south of us, in Alberta, a contractor was recently awarded the building of 12 schools for \$298 million, in other words about \$24 million per school.”

Dolynny says, “I realize that there are economies of scale in building costs, and that it is more expensive to build in the north, but one does not have to go far to make some market comparisons closer to home. Recent construction of two major class A commercial office buildings in Yellowknife came in around a cost of \$450 per square foot, so again, what are taxpayers getting for nearly double that cost in Inuvik?”

“As we rejoice with the opening of the new school in Inuvik, we hope that the government is looking into why cost overruns are hampering the public’s perception of large-scale projects. With anticipated large-scale projects like the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway in transition and fiber optic line program still in the discovery phase, now more than ever, transparency and a review of our contract awarding system are important,” says Dolynny.

Mr. Dolynny is still very concerned and dismayed on the continued cost overruns displayed by large-scale projects undertaken by the government and continues to ask these questions as he prepares for the next session starting on Wednesday, October 17, 2012.

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Official Opening of the Inuvik School

(INUVIK) Friday, October 12, 2012 - Wednesday, October 10, 2012 marked the official opening of the much-anticipated East Three School / East Three Illisavik (Inuvialuktun) / East Three Gah Tronadeh Zeh (Gwich'in) in Inuvik, NT. Many invited delegates and honourable guests attended, including the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, George Tuccaro; the Honourable Glen Abernethy; the Honourable Robert C. McLeod; Member for Inuvik Boot Lake, Alfred Moses; and Member for the Mackenzie Delta, Frederick Blake Jr.

The event had a great turnout as guests, students, and staff listened to encouraging speeches about the newly constructed facility and the importance of education. The facility itself is a great environment for learning as well as teaching. The people of Inuvik and the Beaufort Delta deserve a school that creates a strong, healthy and safe environment for all students and staff, so that all can be productive and succeed this year and years to come. The ceremony wrapped up as students Don Gruben and Julienne Chipesia joined elders Rosie Albert and Winston Moses, among other dignitaries, for the ceremonial ribbon cutting.

The commitment from the GNWT to complete East Three School supports the 17th Legislative Assembly's vision of "strong families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories."

East Three School is not just another infrastructure project for the GNWT; it is an investment into our children, youth, and families for the future of our Territory as we develop strong, educated adults. It also shows the GNWT is committed to creating infrastructure projects throughout the Northwest Territories to support our regional centers and small communities.

East Three School has been in the plans since 1997, when Samuel Hearne Secondary School was initially slated to be replaced. Sir Alexander Mackenzie School was set to be replaced shortly afterward. October 10, 2012 was the day Inuvik was able to celebrate the combined school officially opening a year earlier than anticipated and under budget.

When the initial budget was presented in 2005 for one "combined" school to replace both schools, it was \$64,751,000. The construction cost escalation in the NWT between 2005/06 and 2008/09, when the GNWT negotiated the contract for the construction of the new schools, was compounded at 50.5%, which resulted in a budget of \$98,946,000. The cost estimates were based upon community specific construction cost indices for the NWT reflecting historical construction costs that were publicly tendered. On June 20, 2008, the Executive Council authorized Public Works and Services to enter into a negotiated contract not to exceed \$95 million. In the end, the project was completed one full school year ahead of schedule and within the original \$95 million cap

on the negotiated contract. This included all change orders as well as any construction cost escalation since 2007/08.

The official opening of the East Three School is indeed a great news story of all the hard work, support and effort that community members and the GNWT have put into it. At the end of the day, this project is really about the education of our children in a safe, stable, and healthy environment.

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Standing Committee on Government Operations Focuses on Accountability

YELLOWKNIFE (October 19, 2012) – The number one goal of the Legislative Assembly’s Standing Committee on Government Operations is to improve government oversight and accountability, with the intent of improving services to people.

“In the past, Government Operations has been reactive, rather than proactive,” said committee chair Michael Nadli. “Now we intend to interpret our mandate more broadly and expand our work, focusing on accountability issues.”

Added deputy chair Wendy Bisaro, “We want the public to be aware of what we do, and to feel free to approach us and provide advice. The reason we work to make the government account for its spending and performance is to make life better for people in the NWT.”

Last February, the Auditor General of Canada identified three government-wide barriers to good program management in the Northwest Territories:

1. **Inadequate information** to manage programs and make decisions;
2. **Insufficient monitoring of third-party program delivery;** and,
3. **An absence of detailed action plans** clearly setting out how and when organizations intend to implement recommendations made in audit reports.

The standing committee applies the guiding principles of transparency, measurability, and accountability in looking for coordinated improvements across departments to address these gaps. The committee is pleased that Premier Robert R. McLeod and his Cabinet have recognized the need for a coordinated approach to these challenges.

“We are the ‘eagles’ for the ministers,” said committee member Norman Yakeleya. “We look for efficiencies and best practices, and let them know if we see problems.”

The standing committee met in Yellowknife on April 26 to begin developing their mission statement, guiding principles, and work plan for the next three years. The committee reaffirmed its top priorities today, and is pleased to report progress as follows:

- **An ombudsman for the NWT.** The committee supports the establishment of an ombudsman as one mechanism of public input and accountability. On June 6, the Legislative Assembly voted to recommend legislation to establish an independent parliamentary ombudsman office for the NWT. On October 17, the government

responded that the matter is under review. The committee intends to follow this issue and, further, will look into the broader concept of a Government Accountability Office.

- **Review of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act*.** In its review of the 2010-11 Information and Privacy Commissioner's annual report, the committee recommended that the GNWT undertake a comprehensive review of the Act. On October 17, the government responded that it supports the committee's recommendation for a comprehensive review of the ATIPP Act and expects to complete this in the life of the 17th Assembly. The committee is pleased with this progress, and will continue to follow the issue closely.
- **Recommendation of programs to the GNWT Program Review Office and the Auditor General of Canada for review.** The committee will provide ongoing input on programs recommended for future review and audit, in collaboration with other committees of the Legislative Assembly.
- **Resume review of the Public Accounts of the NWT.** The government's audited financial statements have not been scrutinized by a Legislative Assembly committee for many years. The standing committee has pressed the government to provide the Public Accounts earlier in the financial cycle, and will be working with staff of the Auditor General this December on how to approach this review.
- **Five-year review of the *Official Languages Act*.** The committee will undertake this review beginning in the Legislative Assembly's February sitting.

The committee's ongoing mandate includes oversight of the Departments of Executive, Finance, Human Resources, and Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations. It is also mandated to review the Auditor General of Canada's reports, official languages matters, the NWT Public Accounts, and the reports of the Assembly's Statutory Offices including the Human Rights Commission, Information and Privacy Commissioner, and Official Languages Commissioner.

The committee consists of MLAs Michael Nadli (Deh Cho), Wendy Bisaro (Yellowknife Frame Lake), Daryl Dolynny (Yellowknife Range Lake), Norman Yakeleya (Sahtu), and Alfred Moses (Inuvik Boot Lake).

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Establishment of Electoral Boundaries Commission and Guidelines

YELLOWKNIFE (October 23, 2012) – Two Motions were adopted in the Legislative Assembly yesterday, recommending the appointment of three individuals to the 2012 Electoral Boundaries Commission and providing the guidelines for the Commission members.

Justice Shannon Smallwood of the NWT Supreme Court has been recommended for appointment as the Chair of the Electoral Boundaries Commission 2012. Mr. Charles Furlong of Aklavik and Mr. Ian McCrea of Yellowknife have also been recommended for appointment.

Once formally appointed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Commission will be tasked with preparing a report that contains recommendations respecting the area, boundaries and the name and representation of the electoral districts, for the 2015 general election.

The *Electoral Boundaries Commission Act* enables the Legislative Assembly to establish guidelines or criteria that shall be taken into consideration by the Commission. Some of the main guidelines that were set for the Northwest Territories Electoral Boundaries Commission include:

1. The Commission shall recommend how electoral boundaries should be drawn if the Legislative Assembly comprises (a) eighteen members, or (b) nineteen members, or (c) twenty-one members;
2. The Commission shall prepare an interim report with proposed electoral district boundaries for review by the public and discussion at public hearings;
3. The final report of the Commission, complete with recommendations, shall be submitted in English and French to the Speaker and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly no later than seven months after the Commission is struck; and
4. The Chief Electoral Officer shall serve as Secretary to the Commission.

“I am pleased with the recommended appointments and confident these individuals will provide us with a quality report using the guidelines set before them,” said Honourable Jackie Jacobson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. “We look forward to reviewing the important work of the Commission in the coming months.”

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