

# Northwest Territories LA News Releases | 2014

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## Legislative Assembly now on Direct-to-Home Satellite

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Monday, January 27, 2014 – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, Honourable Jackie Jacobson, is pleased to announce that Legislative Assembly sessional proceedings, in addition to the current broadcasting network, will be carried on direct-to-home satellite providers Bell ExpressVu and Shaw Direct.**

“This is a very exciting announcement for the Legislative Assembly. Northerners will now have another option for how they can view the proceedings and I am happy to say that this option will be available during the upcoming February/March session,” says Speaker Jacobson.

The public can view the proceedings on channel 513 with Bell ExpressVu, channel 289 with Shaw Directs advanced package and, channel 489 with Shaw Directs classic line-up. The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories and the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut will share the channels. The satellite providers will update the guides accordingly.

Broadcasting information can be found on the Legislative Assembly website at [www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/documents-proceedings/broadcasting](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/documents-proceedings/broadcasting).

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### **Yellowknife Centre MLA Advocates for Nonpartisan Senate**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, January 30, 2014 – Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins is calling upon the Prime Minister of Canada to follow Liberal leader Justin Trudeau’s actions and exclude his Senators from the Conservative Caucus.**

In doing so we would create the opportunity to reconfigure the Senate in a fashion similar to the consensus model used by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, thereby alleviating the pressures of partisanship by allowing Senators to sit as independent members.

According to MLA Hawkins, the ability of Senators to provide sober, second thought to legislation is hindered by binding partisanship. He says, “the success of consensus government stems from its ability to be responsive to the issues people face every day. Canadians have come to realize that the current structure of the Senate does not allow for structural changes without amending the Constitution. The lack of accountability has rendered it a sinking ship.”

MLA Hawkins suggests the Prime Minister allow the provinces and territories to devise their own methods of selection, or as suggested by Mr. Trudeau, by establishing an independent appointment committee, thereby allowing the Prime Minister making appointments based on these recommendations. This would operate within the current structure while providing a more accountable framework to Canadians.

MLA Hawkins adds, “the public is tired of hearing about the lack of accountability within the Senate, which continues to be mired in scandal and political posturing. Reform in keeping with a consensus model would dissolve these barriers and bring traditional adversaries together to debate and review legislation based on merit alone. Opposing parties rarely stand together on substantive issues; this could create an environment for unparalleled cooperation.”

Mr. Hawkins further adds, “if we continually tolerate politics in this manner, it is of little wonder why voter apathy continues to rise as frustration builds with politics that is far too partisan and self-serving. To that end, I will be writing a letter to the Prime Minister as well as the Honourable Pierre Poilievre, Minister of State for Democratic Reform, to encourage them to examine the opportunities that consensus government could offer the Senate.”

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### Legislative Assembly Announces Scholarship Fund

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Friday, March 14, 2014 – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, Honourable Jackie Jacobson, and the Yellowknife Community Foundation are pleased to announce the establishment of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Scholarship.**

The scholarship, which will be awarded annually, is intended to assist individuals pursuing post-secondary studies in political science or a related field.

Factors taken into consideration when reviewing applications will include academic achievement, community involvement, extracurricular activities, and a written statement. Funding for the scholarship came from a surplus remaining after the Legislative Assembly Building Society completed payment on the building mortgage.

“This scholarship is designed to support and encourage our students to pursue their academic interest in government and politics, particularly as it pertains to the Northwest Territories. I am pleased to announce this scholarship and the opportunities it will provide for future generations,” said Speaker Jacobson. “I also want to thank the Board of the Legislative Assembly Building Society whose careful stewardship of funds made this scholarship possible.”

“We are pleased to welcome the Legislative Assembly’s Scholarship into our group of funds, now numbering over 25, to support northerners in furthering their education. Our call for scholarship applications is now open, and we look forward to receiving many qualified applications,” said Charles Dent, President of the Yellowknife Community Foundation.

The Yellowknife Community Foundation is the leading philanthropic organization in Yellowknife. A registered charity, the Foundation was formed in 1993 to provide residents (and former residents) with a means of supporting projects in our community for the enduring future. The Foundation is not singularly dedicated to any specific area of support. It embodies a simple concept – that people working together can make a difference. Donations to the Foundation are eligible deductions for income tax purposes. The money, invested over time, will grow and will continue to have an impact long after the original gift is made.

The deadline for applications is May 15<sup>th</sup> each year. For details on the application process, please visit [http://www.yellowknifecommunityfoundation.ca/html/funds/24\\_legislative\\_assembly.html](http://www.yellowknifecommunityfoundation.ca/html/funds/24_legislative_assembly.html).

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### **Commissioner of the NWT to Assent to Devolution Bills**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, March 25, 2014 – The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Honourable George Tuccaro, is expected to assent to ten devolution bills tomorrow. The bills received third reading earlier this month during the Legislative Assembly’s winter sitting.**

The Commissioner’s assent to the ten devolution bills was delayed as Bill C-15, the *Northwest Territories Devolution Act*, did not receive royal assent until March 25<sup>th</sup>.

While it has been practice in the Northwest Territories for the Commissioner to give assent to bills in the Legislative Assembly Chamber during session, assent outside of session is common practice elsewhere in Canada and the Commonwealth.

The assent is scheduled to take place at 10:00 am in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly building. The public and media are welcome to attend this event.

For more information, please contact:

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## Standing Committee on Government Operations Wants to See Improvements on Child and Family Services in the NWT

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, April 29, 2014** – A searing report by the Office of the Auditor General has shed light on the dismal state of child and family services in the Northwest Territories. The Standing Committee on Government Operations is determined to see dramatic improvements in the delivery of these services.

According to Michael Nadli, Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, “we’re at a critical juncture. The system is broken. Accountability is very weak. Workers in the field aren’t being properly trained or supervised. Child protection workers aren’t assessing long-term risks of abuse and neglect. The situation is unacceptable. And the really heartbreaking part is that the Department has known about the systemic problems for years.”

The Standing Committee on Government Operations reviewed the report with Assistant Auditor General Mr. Ronnie Campbell and top officials from the Department of Health and Social Services at a special meeting held April 23-24, 2014. During the proceedings, Deputy Minister Debbie DeLancey conceded there has been substantial failure in the delivery of child and family services.

The report of the Auditor General states that many of the problems outlined in the report are clearly within the Department’s control to address.

~~The Committee will be closely observing the Department’s next moves. Few improvements were made to the system following several earlier reports, including the Standing Committee on Social Programs’ 2010 review of the *Child and Family Services Act*. “We’re concerned that this report will have the same fate as the others,” Mr. Nadli stated.~~

In response to the Auditor General’s recommendations, the Department has promised to produce a comprehensive action plan by the end of June, 2014, to conduct quarterly compliance audits on the regional authorities, and to develop system-wide performance indicators.

Wendy Bisaro, Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, stated, “we are going to recommend that future contribution agreements with the regional authorities have a performance component. Funding should be conditional on the authorities demonstrating compliance with the Act.”

The Standing Committee looks forward to further public dialogue with the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Minister of Health and Social Services, and is preparing a response to the Auditor General’s report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly during the May/June sitting.

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## Elders' Parliament 2014

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, May 1, 2014 – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Honourable Jackie Jacobson, will be hosting the third biennial Elders' Parliament from May 5 – 9, 2014. Through an application process, eighteen individuals over the age of 50 from across the North have been selected to take part in this outreach program. While in Yellowknife, the participants will attend meetings and briefings in preparation for the Elders' Parliament Model session, in which they will assume the role of a Member of the Legislative Assembly.**

“This is a wonderful opportunity for respected elders in the territory to voice their opinions on the floor of the Legislative Assembly Chamber,” says Speaker Jacobson. The participants will sit in the Chamber for the Model Session on **Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 1:30 pm.**

The participants, by constituency, are:

Deh Cho – Samuel Gargan	Frame Lake – Jean-Pierre Isoré
Great Slave – Bill Reid	Hay River North – Tom Makepeace
Hay River South – Julia Trennert	Inuvik Boot Lake – Mary Beckett
Inuvik Twin Lakes – Rosa Kayotuk	Mackenzie Delta – Eileen Koe
Monfwi – Mary Rose Charlo	Nahendeh – Albert Moses
Nunakput – Jean Gruben	Range Lake – Elaine Coumont
Sahtu – Edward Oudzi	Thebacha – Ron Holtorf
Tu Nedhe – Violet Beaulieu	Weledeh – Carole Robinson
Yellowknife Centre – Be'sha Blondin	Yellowknife South – Melody McLeod

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

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## Elders' Parliament Model Session

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Wednesday, May 7, 2014 – Elders from across the territory are in the Legislative Assembly this week preparing for a Model Session to be held tomorrow on the floor of the Chamber. During the week elders attended meetings, were given various presentations promoting physical activity and healthy eating amongst elders, and participated in the unveiling of a new video from the Department of Health and Social Services.**

On Tuesday, May 6, the participants chose their Executive Council; each participant was given the option to put their name forward for Premier or Minister. The names were then placed in a ballot box and chosen at random.

The Executive Council consists of the Premier and six Cabinet Ministers and are as follows:

Premier Melody McLeod – Yellowknife South  
Minister Tom Makepeace – Hay River North  
Minister Mary Beckett – Inuvik Boot Lake  
Minister Jean Gruben – Nunakput  
Minister Rosa Kayotuk – Inuvik Twin Lakes  
Minister Eileen Koe – Mackenzie Delta  
Minister Julia Trennert – Hay River South

The participants then identified three motions that they wish to put forward and debate during the Model Session. The topics were chosen during discussions in meetings involving all the elders.

The three motions that are scheduled to be discussed are:

1. Moratorium on Fracking
2. Sustainability Forum to Address High Cost of Living
3. Community-Based Traditional Knowledge Centres

“This has been a very exciting week for both the elders and the Members of the Legislative Assembly. The participants have been hard at work preparing for the Model Session which is taking place on the Chamber floor 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](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca) for a community channel listing.

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## **Standing Committee on Government Operations Presents Report on Auditor General's Findings on Child and Family Services**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, May 29, 2014** – Today the Standing Committee on Government Operations presented its report in response to the Auditor General's findings on child and family services. The Committee's report contains 30 recommendations and is scheduled to be discussed in the House during the May/June sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

Michael Nadli, Chair of the Standing Committee, emphasizes that this is a critical juncture, "the Department must go beyond making minor adjustments and overhaul the entire system. It must assess resource needs, fix the accountability framework, improve standards and procedures, and provide better training to child protection workers."

The Standing Committee on Government Operations discussed the Auditor General's findings with Assistant Auditor General Ronnie Campbell and senior officials from the Department of Health and Social Services at a special meeting held April 23-24, 2014. During the proceedings, Deputy Minister Debbie DeLancey conceded there has been substantial failure in the delivery of child and family services.

The Committee will closely monitor the Department's next moves. Few improvements were made to the system following several earlier reports, including the Standing Committee on Social Programs' 2010 review of the *Child and Family Services Act*. "Continued inaction is unacceptable. We intend to make sure the Department keeps its promises," says Mr. Nadli.

To that end, the Standing Committee had further dialogue with the Honourable Glen Abernethy, Minister of Health and Social Services, on May 26, 2014. The Minister has promised to produce a comprehensive action plan by the end of June 2014, to conduct quarterly compliance audits on the regional authorities, and to develop system-wide performance indicators.

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### 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly Term of Office

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, June 3, 2014 – The Prime Minister has advised the Premier of the Northwest Territories of his government’s intention to introduce amendments to the *Northwest Territories Act* to allow the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly to vary its term. Members of the Legislative Assembly will determine whether to change the October 2015 territorial election date after further discussion in the fall and public consultation.**

On March 10, 2014, the Legislative Assembly passed a motion asking the Premier to communicate to the Prime Minister a request for an amendment to the *Northwest Territories Act* that would authorize the Legislative Assembly to vary its term.

The Premier has received from the Prime Minister a letter indicating that his government will be bringing forward an amendment to the *Northwest Territories Act* as requested. The amendment, if passed by the Parliament of Canada, will give the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly the ability to vary its term. If the federal election proceeds as currently scheduled and overlaps with the Northwest Territories election in October 2015, the Legislative Assembly will consider a change to the 2015 election date to avoid a conflict with the overlap. If the federal election proceeds at a different time, there will be no need to consider changes to the territorial election date.

Amendments to the territorial *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* and *Elections and Plebiscites Act* would be required to change the territorial election date to a time other than October 2015. No decision has been made on whether to proceed with any changes. Members will review legislation from other jurisdictions that will trigger changes to their election dates to avoid overlap with the federal election in the event that it proceeds in October 2015, and will discuss the matter further this fall to determine whether further consideration of the territorial election date is needed. If any changes to the territorial election date are to be considered there will be no decision made on those changes prior to public consultation.

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### **Standing Committee on Government Operations Releases its Report on Establishing an Office of the Ombudsman for the Northwest Territories**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 5, 2014)** - The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories' Standing Committee on Government Operations released its report on *Establishing an Office of the Ombudsman for the Northwest Territories* yesterday. The report was tabled in the House in response to Motion 12-17(4) of the Legislative Assembly which referred the matter of an office of the ombudsman to the Standing Committee for research, review, and analysis.

“The idea of establishing an ombudsman for the Northwest Territories was first raised in the Legislative Assembly over 20 years ago. With the recent achievement of devolution, the GNWT has marked a significant milestone in its evolution and has reached a new level of complexity,” said Committee Chair, Michael M. Nadli. “Our Committee strongly supports the creation of an ombudsman for the Northwest Territories at this time. This office would provide a single point of contact for NWT residents who are concerned that they have been treated unfairly by the government, and would help to ensure that the GNWT meets the commitment to accountability and transparency it has made to the people of the Northwest Territories.”

Committee Members chose to table the report now, so that there would be an opportunity for the public to review the report over the summer and provide their comments and feedback in advance of the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly in October 2014 at which time the report will likely be debated in the Legislative Assembly. A copy of the report will be posted on the Legislative Assembly website.

Committee Members look forward to discussing the merits of an ombudsman with the public as they travel this summer. In early autumn they will be advertising formal opportunities for public consultation and written comments. In the interim, members of the public are invited to contact any of the Committee members, listed below, with their comments, feedback and questions.

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Committee Members chose to table the report now, so that there would be an opportunity for the public to review the report over the summer and provide their comments and feedback in advance of the next sitting of the Legislative Assembly in October 2014 at which time the report will likely be debated in the Legislative Assembly. A copy of the report will be posted on the Legislative Assembly website.

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### Legislative Assembly Announces Scholarship Recipients

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 6, 2014) – The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, Honourable Jackie Jacobson, and the Yellowknife Community Foundation are pleased to announce the recipients of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly Scholarship.**

Tunchai Redvers, of Yellowknife, is currently enrolled in the University of Guelph where she is in a Bachelor of Arts program with a Major in International Development. Ms. Redvers has been involved in various international and community volunteering opportunities. Most recently, she volunteered at an after-school program in Guelph focused on low-income families. This winter, Ms. Redvers will be spending a semester in Guatemala in a program on international and community development.

Trisa Ngo, of Yellowknife, is completing Grade 12 and will graduate from École Sir John Franklin High School this year. She has been accepted into the University of Victoria, where she will work towards her Political Science and Sociology degrees. Ms. Ngo volunteers much of her time to the Salvation Army, the Yellowknife Food Bank, the Relay of Life Foundation, and also coaches youth volleyball.

The scholarship is awarded annually and is intended to assist individuals pursuing post-secondary studies in political science or a related field.

“This scholarship was designed to support and encourage our students to pursue their academic interest in government and politics, particularly as it pertains to the Northwest Territories. I am pleased to announce the recipients of this scholarship, these young ladies are a benefit to the North and are much deserving of this scholarship,” said Speaker Jacobson.

“We were pleased with the response to our call for applications for this Fund, and look forward to following the careers of Ms. Redvers and Ms. Ngo,” said Charles Dent, President of the Yellowknife Community Foundation.

The Yellowknife Community Foundation is the leading philanthropic organization in Yellowknife. A registered charity, the Foundation was formed in 1993 to provide residents (and former residents) with a means of supporting projects in our community for the enduring future. The Foundation is not singularly dedicated to any specific area of support. It embodies a simple concept – that people working together can make a difference. Donations to the Foundation are eligible deductions for income tax purposes. The money, invested over time, will continue to have an impact long after the original gift is made.

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### Legislative Assembly Library Announces *Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series*

(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, July 10, 2014 – The Legislative Assembly Library is pleased to announce the launch of *Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series* in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly. Permafrost scientist Steve Kokelj will make the opening presentation on July 16, 2014, at 3:30 p.m.

Modeled on the famous “TED Talks,” *The Knowledge Series* will showcase current ideas, science and issues relevant to the Northwest Territories and beyond. *Ledge Talks* will serve as a forum for a wide variety of speakers and provide an opportunity for learning beyond one’s normal work and life surroundings. *Ledge Talks* will focus primarily on northern knowledge, from aboriginal rights to zoology (yes, a frozen 8,000-year-old steppe bison can tell us a lot.).

Lively and down-to-earth (pun intended), Steve Kokelj is the Legislative Assembly Library’s first-round draft choice for *The Knowledge Series*. He has documented significant changes in Arctic ecosystems due to its rapidly warming climate, focusing on the consequences of thawing permafrost – and what this unprecedented change means to all of us.

Kokelj has more than 60 scientific publications to his credit, and some of his findings have been featured on CBC Television and radio. Traditional knowledge has been an important part of his work. Kokelj is the permafrost scientist for the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment’s Geoscience Office, and an adjunct professor at University of Victoria and Carleton University.

A hallmark of Kokelj’s work is that it often has broad application, impact and use in other areas. Sharing such ideas is one of the most important goals of *The Knowledge Series*. Accordingly, *Ledge Talks* will be particularly relevant to GNWT employees, but will also be open to the public and media.

Links to two of Steve Kokelj’s publications and presentations:

<http://arctic.synergiesprairies.ca/arctic/index.php/arctic/article/view/4214/4193>

[http://wlwb.ca/sites/default/files/documents/5BFT\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Dec2010.pdf](http://wlwb.ca/sites/default/files/documents/5BFT_Climate_Change_Dec2010.pdf)

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**Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series – The Inconvenient Truth About Autism Spectrum Disorder**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Friday, July 25, 2014** – The “inconvenient truth” about autism is the subject of the Legislative Library’s second presentation of *Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series*, on July 30, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly Building.

The evening’s speaker will be Dr. Scott Selleck, Head of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at The Pennsylvania State University. A leader in the field of neuroscience, Dr. Selleck will discuss the current understanding of the genetics of autism, the possibility that environmental and genetic factors contribute to susceptibility, and the feasibility of pharmaceutical treatment for a set of diseases that are affected by hundreds to thousands of different genes. The lessons learned from the study of autism, Dr. Selleck suggests, have implications for research of other complex human traits, including schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s, cancer and heart disease.

There will be time for questions and discussion following Dr. Selleck’s presentation. Media and the public are welcome.

*Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series* is a forum for a wide variety of speakers to present current ideas, science, traditional knowledge, and issues relevant to the Northwest Territories and beyond. *Ledge Talks* will also showcase research done by the many GNWT employees – often with collaborating partners – who are making substantial contributions to the world’s understanding of the North.

For information on Dr. Scott Selleck:

<http://bmb.psu.edu/directory/sbs24>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWllqX6jalM&safe=active>

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### Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Monday, September 22, 2014** – The Legislative Library will be hosting a Ledge Talk on Wednesday, September 24 at 7:30 pm. The focus of the talk is the emerging field of impact investing and why it may be relevant to government, non-government organizations, and the private sector players in the Territories. “Impact investing” is a new way to advance social change. A growing number of charities, non-profits and social entrepreneurs are building businesses financed by private investors, enabling the launch of new and innovative programs to meet a broad range of community needs and stimulate economic growth.

The evening’s speakers will be Adam Jagelewski and Sarah Doyle. Mr. Jagelewski leads the outcome of finance practice at the MaRS Discovery District. As an Associate Directory for the Centre for Impact Investing, his team is exploring new funding models for governments and nonprofit organizations, particularly Social Impact Bonds. Ms. Doyle leads policy initiatives at the Centre for Impact Investing. She is responsible for working with community, government, and private sector stakeholders to develop and advance policy that supports the build-out of a Canadian impact investing marketplace.

There will be time for questions and discussion following the presentation. Media and the public are welcome.

*Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series* is a forum for a wide variety of speakers to present current ideas, science, traditional knowledge, and issues relevant to the Northwest Territories and beyond. *Ledge Talks* will also showcase research done by the many GNWT employees – often with collaborating partners – who are making substantial contributions to the world’s understanding of the North.

For more information on the MaRS Discovery District:

<http://www.marsdd.com/>

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## **Cabinet Power Rate Solution Misses Target, Ignores MLAs**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Friday, September 26, 2014** – With yet another power subsidy of 20 million dollars added to the taxpayer’s burden this year, Cabinet has failed once again to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Bob Bromley, MLA for Weledeh, notes, "just imagine the lasting reduction in power bills that the 20 million dollars could have given to rate payers by supporting solar panel installations, which provide huge savings and clean power for more than a generation."

Instead, Cabinet's unilateral decision to subsidize rates, at an additional cost to taxpayers on top of existing high subsidies, will undermine citizens' decisions to install solar generation at their homes and businesses. Subsidies such as this hide the true costs associated with burning diesel and remove the motivation for people to seek self-sufficient solutions.

"This is typical of many decisions that have been made in the seven years that I have been serving the constituents of Weledeh," Mr. Bromley said. "Over that period, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent on subsidies while power rates continued to soar. Imagine what hydro, wind, and solar infrastructure could have been installed with these resources. I am tired of seeing the unnecessary rise in the cost of living that our residents and small businesses must apparently suffer while cost-effective and climate-friendly remedies are ignored."

There are a number of off-the-shelf, renewable energy options available on the market that government has been aware of for years. While another energy planning session, such as the one announced, offers some potential for wise guidance in this area, government's record of failing to hear the progressive voice of experts is not good. "When will this government learn from these repeated lessons," asked Mr. Bromley. "Certainly, Cabinet shows no desire to act as a consensus government, or to seek input from duly elected representatives of the people."

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**Sahtu MLA Applauds Nunavut MP for Standing up for  
Trappers after RCMP Fur Hat Flap**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Wednesday, October 1, 2014** – Sahtu MLA, Norman Yakeleya, has been tracking the federal debate regarding the Royal Canadian Mounted Police phasing out its standard issue muskrat hats. “Whether you’re an elder in Colville Lake, or an RCMP officer in Hay River, after the snow falls you’ll see people in the NWT wearing their muskrat hats,” exclaimed Norman Yakeleya.

Yesterday the debate came to an unofficial close in Ottawa when Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette MP, Robert Sopuck, asked the Federal Environment Minister, Leona Aglukkaq, what was happening with the iconic winter headgear.

The debate started when the RCMP said it would switch from its iconic fur hats after the Association for the Protection of Fur Bearing Animals said muskrats caught in traps can suffer before they die, but MP Sopuck defended trapping yesterday in Parliament.

“Like Mr. Sopuck, I represent a remote rural part of Canada, and many of my constituents trap. We cannot let animal rights activists sweep this sustainable renewable industry under the rug. ~~The Muskrat hat is almost as symbolic with the RCMP as the Stetson,~~” said Yakeleya.

In closing Yakeleya said, “I want to congratulate the MP for Dauphin-Swan River-Marquette and the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq for standing up for the Fur Trade, and for our iconic winter headgear.”

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### **Sahtu MLA Questions Fracking Protestors' Knowledge of Economic Hardships**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Friday, October 10, 2014** – While concerns about water safety and environmental stewardship are important, Sahtu MLA, Norman Yakeleya, is urging the public and the anti-fracking movement to look at the economic and social impacts hitting his riding.

“We are all in a time of constant transition. We have lived through a 20 year land freeze that ended in 1993, while we negotiated our Land claim. At that same time we developed our own regulatory bodies and Land use plans that have enabled us to setup responsible development, which we hope will benefit us all.” said Yakeleya.

While discussions and legal questions persist around the NWT Regulatory System, and the proposed single land and water board, permitting and briefings from both government and industry have taken place across the Sahtu. “We realize we can’t put all our eggs in one basket, but we are seeing the social impacts in our communities before the boom from industry happens. Break-ins, elder abuse, stealing gas, petty crimes to fuel people’s addictions and habits,” added Norman Yakeleya.

Striking an environmental and economic balance continues to be a huge challenge across the NWT. “Water safety is paramount, and cumulative impacts need to be addressed in the Sahtu, but the Land and Water Board addresses that, and to think we are blindly putting all our chips on fracking is insulting” Yakeleya said.

While economic and industry practices vary across the NWT, Yakeleya said in closing, “the Dene/Metis leaders of Sahtu have never publically criticized other communities or regions for their economic opportunities, even when we know mining impacts Caribou and migratory species. I urge all northerners to seriously look at the poverty and economic impacts we face with no development. We can only curb environmental and social impacts through innovation, investment and responsible development, not fear mongering.”

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## Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, October 16, 2014** – The Legislative Library will be hosting a Ledge Talk on Wednesday, October 22 at 7:30 pm in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly building. The focus of the talk will be *Calm, Alert and Learning: a Practical Guide to Self-Regulation in Homes and Classrooms* by Ms. Christine Robinson. Ms. Robinson has been working as an occupational therapist for over twenty years, specializing primarily in the areas of early intervention and school-based practice. She joined the MEHRIT Centre in 2007 working alongside Dr. Stuart Shanker.

In her presentation, Ms. Robinson will highlight the paradigm and strategies of Dr. Stuart Shanker's five-domain model of self-regulation, as described in his book, *Calm, Alert and Learning*. This interactive presentation will present the journey of an elementary school as they shift from a behavioural to a self-regulation approach to classroom management for students who are experiencing significant self-regulation difficulties. Exploring this case study together, Chris will look at the "how-to's" of applying Dr. Shanker's five-domain model to the real life of parenting and teaching.

There will be time for questions and discussion following the presentation. Media and the public are welcome.

*Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series* is a forum for a wide variety of speakers to present current ideas, science, traditional knowledge, and issues relevant to the Northwest Territories and beyond. *Ledge Talks* will also showcase research done by the many GNWT employees – often with collaborating partners – who are making substantial contributions to the world's understanding of the North.

For more information on the MEHRIT Centre, visit: [www.mehritcentre.com](http://www.mehritcentre.com).

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### **Delay of Territorial Election will Depend on Timing of Federal Election**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, October 16, 2014** – The Caucus of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has clarified its position on the timing of the next territorial general election. If, by April 1, 2015, the date of the federal election continues to overlap with the campaign period for the territorial election, the date of the territorial election will be postponed to **November 23, 2015**. If an announcement is made to change the timing of the federal election prior to April 1, 2015, the territorial election will proceed as planned on October 5, 2015.

Both Canada and the Northwest Territories have adopted fixed election dates. At present, the federal election is scheduled for October 19, 2015. The Prime Minister has the ability to call an election earlier than this date. Municipal elections for tax-based communities and school board elections in Yellowknife are also scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup>. The general election for the NWT Legislative Assembly is currently scheduled for October 5, 2015. The result will be a three and a half week overlap in the campaign periods for the two elections between September 14 and October 5, 2015.

“There are many reasons why an overlap in the two campaign periods should be avoided,” said Caucus Deputy Chair and MLA for Inuvik Boot Lake Alfred Moses. “Foremost among these is the reality that in many of our small communities, the same staff serve as election officials for both Elections Canada and Elections NWT. The same can be said for the many campaign staff and volunteers that help candidates get their respective messages out and provide a clear choice to the voter. As well, overlapping campaign periods create the risk that partisan politics at the federal level will overshadow and influence the non-partisan nature of territorial politics.”

The provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island have adopted similar measures to avoid an overlap with the federal election. In each of those jurisdictions, the provincial election will be delayed to April 2016 if the date of the federal election remains unchanged. A bill will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly in the upcoming sitting that will establish April 1, 2015 as the “trigger date.” “If the timing of the federal election changes before then,” noted Deputy Chair Moses, “we will stick with our October 5, 2015 election date. If nothing’s changed at the federal level by April 1, 2015, this measure will automatically bump our date back six weeks to avoid the overlap.” General elections have previously been held in the Northwest Territories in late November and early December as recently as 1999 and 2003.

The bill establishing the “trigger date” will be contingent upon the passage of amendments to the *Northwest Territories Act* by the Parliament of Canada. It is expected that this amendment will be introduced in the House of Commons during the current Fall sitting of Parliament.

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## **New Chief Electoral Officer appointed by the Legislative Assembly of the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Friday, October 24, 2014) – The Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories today appointed Ms. Nicole Latour of Yellowknife as the Chief Electoral Officer for the NWT. The appointment is pursuant to Section 5 of the *Elections and Plebiscites Act* and Ms. Latour’s four year term takes effect on November 1, 2014.**

In previous roles, Ms. Latour served as Deputy Chief Electoral Officer and the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. She was born and raised in the Northwest Territories and attended Royal Roads University where she obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

As Chief Electoral Officer, Ms. Latour will be responsible for the conduct of territorial elections and plebiscites. In addition, the Chief Electoral Officer will establish policies and procedures, manage the Register of Territorial Electors, supply training and guidance to electoral officers, and provide advice and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly regarding election legislation and policy.

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## **Nahendeh MLA Disappointed with Postponement of Wrigley RCMP Detachment Opening**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, October 28, 2014 – The MLA for Nahendeh, Mr. Kevin Menicoche, is disappointed with the announcement released today that the opening of the Wrigley RCMP detachment will be indefinitely postponed.**

“From 2009 to 2012, there were a total of 855 calls made for RCMP assistance in Wrigley. That is approximately 285 calls per year. For a population of 133 people, this is very high. Of those calls, 42% were alcohol related. This community needs a permanent RCMP presence, weekly visits are important, but not enough to ensure the safety of residents,” said Mr. Menicoche.

“This is something that I have been passionate about since I was elected in 2003. In 2007, the RCMP issued a statement telling the people that they would be building a detachment in Wrigley by 2011. In 2010, they decided to put it off for another three years. Now, they have decided to put the opening of this detachment off indefinitely. Why do the people in my constituency have to wait this long, only to have someone tell them that it isn’t going to happen? I am utterly disappointed with the fact that this has happened and I will be raising this issue in the legislature to the Minister of Justice,” said Mr. Menicoche.

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### Legislative Assembly Agrees to Extend the Review Period for Bill 12

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, October 30, 2014** – Today the Legislative Assembly adopted a motion introduced by Mr. Michael Nadli, Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations, to extend the review period for Bill 12: *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act* for a further 120 days.

Bill 12, sponsored by the Minister of Finance, sets out the legislative framework for the Northern Employee Benefits Services (NEBS) Pension Plan to continue as a multi-employer, multi-jurisdictional public sector pension plan for employees of approved public sector employers in both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The Nunavut Standing Committee on Legislation has been considering Bill 1, which largely mirrors the provisions of Bill 12. Earlier this week, the Nunavut Legislative Assembly adopted a motion to extend the period of time for their Standing Committee to report Bill 1 back to their House by a further 120 days.

“Our Standing Committee on Government Operations held a public hearing on Bill 12, in Yellowknife, on September 25, 2014. During that meeting and in the weeks that followed, Committee received both oral and written submissions expressing a variety of views. Some organizations have called upon both legislatures to withdraw the Bill, while others support the Bill as written. I speak for the Committee in saying that we are in agreement with our colleagues in Nunavut that “neither extreme is necessary or desirable at this stage,” said Mr. Nadli.

“Given the interest already expressed by our constituents, the unique nature of this bill, and the challenges proposed by its multijurisdictional nature, it will take time to do this job properly. I believe that people in the Northwest Territories would agree that this is the best way to ensure that NEBS gets the clear legislative framework that they need and the balanced one they deserve,” said Mr. Nadli.

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### **Pay and Benefits for Members of the Legislative Assembly to Remain Unchanged**

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, October 30, 2014** - The Caucus of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly has reviewed the recommendations of the 2014 Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits and has agreed to maintain the status quo with respect to MLA pay levels. The Report of the Independent Commission was tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the Speaker on May 28, 2014. The report recommends no significant changes to the pay and benefits of Members of the Legislative Assembly.

"I'd like to thank the Commission for its thoughtful work," noted Caucus Chair, Norman Yakeleya. "Compensation levels for elected officials must balance the need to attract qualified individuals to public office and ensure that elected positions are not restricted to those of independent means. The recommendations of the Independent Commission indicate that we have struck the right balance in the NWT."

The Legislative Assembly must appoint an Independent Commission to review MLA compensation within two years of the swearing in of a new Assembly. Normally, the recommendations of an Independent Commission take effect for the following Assembly. The 2014 Commission was chaired by Mr. Geoffrey Wiest and included Mr. Gregory Nyuli and former MLA for Mackenzie Delta, David Krutko. The Commission's report (TD83-17(5)) is available at the Legislative Assembly Library or on the Legislative Assembly website, [www.assembly.gov.nt.ca](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca), in Tabled Documents, under the Documents & Proceedings heading. The terms of reference for the Commission are attached.

The compensation and benefits paid to Members of the Legislative Assembly can also be found on the Legislative Assembly web site under the "Members Accountability" link and are detailed in the Assembly's Annual Report.

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## **Terms of Reference**

Pursuant to Section 35.1 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*, within two years after the polling day for a general election, the Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, shall establish an independent commission and appoint as its members three individuals who are independent, neutral, and knowledgeable.

The last comprehensive review of Members compensation and benefits occurred in 2009, with a report tabled in May 2010. The recommendations from this report resulted in a number of changes to legislation, regulations and Board of Management policies.

### **1. PURPOSE**

The Commission shall:

- Review and assess the indemnities, additional indemnities, allowances, expenses and benefits provided to Members to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the amounts provided by way of:
  - *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*
  - *Indemnities, Allowances and Expense Regulations*
  - *Legislative Assembly Retiring Allowances Act*
  - *Supplementary Retiring Allowances Act*
  - *Board of Management Policies*
- Review and assess specific items referred to the Commission by the Board of Management.
- Review and assess the reporting requirements and procedures for Members' and Ministers' expenditures to determine the level of accountability acceptable to the public.
- Review any other matter that the Commission considers relevant respecting the compensation, allowances, and benefits provided to all Members and Ministers.
- Provide to the Speaker a report setting out any recommendations for change that the commission determines should be made to Members' or Ministers' indemnities, allowances, reimbursements, and other benefits.

## **2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 1) No Member should seek to serve in public office for purely financial gain. Although the reasons may vary considerably, the underlying motivation for election must be to serve and improve the well being of people of the Northwest Territories.
- 2) The system of remuneration must be transparent, open, and provide an easy to understand system of remuneration to the Members of the Legislative Assembly and Members of the Executive Council while providing a high degree of accountability to the people they serve.
- 3) Remuneration packages, particularly with respect to living, travel and transportation costs, need to be sensitive to the regional differences of job related expenses in order to ensure these factors do not become prohibitive for any Member to represent their constituents.
- 4) The requirement to be available and accountable 24 hours a day, seven days a week, coupled with the lack of job security associated with an election every four years ensures that only certain individuals would consider running for public office. A position of such importance in our democratic system, with such wide-ranging responsibility, should be fairly compensated in order to attract qualified and committed individuals.

## **3. COMPOSITION**

The Commission shall consist of three individuals who are independent, neutral, and knowledgeable. Preferably the commission shall consist of a former Member, a professional with relevant financial or legal designations and experience, and an interested member of the public. Appointment to the Commission will also take into account regional representation within the NWT.

The Speaker, on the recommendation of the Board of Management, will appoint one of the three Commission Members to serve as Chair.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Commission will be responsible for:

Collecting and analyzing research materials from previous commissions and other legislative jurisdictions and position of comparable responsibility within the public and private sectors.

Seeking public input and soliciting Members' submissions.

Reviewing and making recommendations on the following areas of Members' and Ministers' remuneration, or any other areas the Commission considers relevant, including but not restricted to:

- Indemnities Payable to Every Member
- Indemnities Payable to Office Holders
- Non-taxable Allowance for Expenses
- Constituency Work Expense Allowance and Permissible Expenditures
- Duty Travel & Meals
- All Travel Allowances
- Northern Living Allowance
- Leave and Vacation Allowance
- Transition Allowance
- Pension & Benefits Entitlements
- Telecommunications & Computer Equipment Allowances
- Acquisition of Office Inventory Items on Expiry of Office
- Capital Accommodation and Furniture Allowances
- Automatic Adjustment to All Allowances
- Specific Items Referred by the Board of Management

#### **5. REPORT**

The Commission shall, within ten months after the day the Commission is established deliver a report to the Speaker that sets out any recommendations for change it determines should be made to the indemnities, allowances, reimbursements, and all other benefits Members are entitled to.

#### **6. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly will provide administrative services and support to the Commission as required. The Commission may seek the

## **Independent Commission to Review Members' Compensation and Benefits**

assistance of consultants to provide it with advice and analysis and to ensure an arms-length relationship with the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, will approve funding for the Commission. The Commission will ensure expenditures do not exceed the allotted funds.

### **7. REMUNERATION**

The Speaker, on the recommendations of the Board of Management, may approve honoraria and reasonable expenses to attend meetings for Members of the Commission, including the Chair.

### **8. TERMINATION**

An appointment of an individual to the Commission terminates on the day the report is laid before the Legislative Assembly., unless the appointment is earlier revoked or otherwise terminated.

## Sahtu MLA Applauds Colleagues and Premier for Supporting MMIW Motion

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Wednesday, November 5, 2014** – A motion calling for a National Roundtable and a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls has passed through the 17th Legislative Assembly.

It was moved by Yellowknife Centre MLA Robert Hawkins, “I am grateful for the kind words of support on this sensitive issue, which faces each of our communities in the NWT and across Canada,” he said in the house after the recorded vote came to a close.

Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya seconded the motion. He had done a considerable amount of research and gathered support from First Nations and Métis Leaders from across the NWT leading up to the vote in the Assembly yesterday.

“This issue affects me personally. I have lost a cousin and an Auntie. Our family, like others, goes to bed every night wondering, “What happened? Will they ever come home,” Mr. Yakeleya stated emotionally in his address to the motion.

The vote passed with notable support from NWT Premier Bob McLeod, who has been leading the charge on this issue at the national front with the Premiers of Canada. Justice Minister, David Ramsay, also spoke in favour of the motion, along with Transportation Minister, Tom Beaulieu.

The motion passed by a landslide vote, 17 for it, 0 against, and 1 abstention.

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## Range Lake MLA Pleased That Bill 29 has Received Third Reading

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Wednesday, November 5, 2014** – Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny is pleased that Bill 29: *Human Tissue Donation Act* received third reading today in the Legislative Assembly.

After years of groundwork from himself and previous members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Dolynny is pleased to see all of the hard work being shown. The bill sets out the framework by which consent can be given for the use of human tissue for the purpose of transplantation, a therapeutic purpose, medical education, and scientific research.

“There are over 5000 Canadian patients on the organ donor transplant list and a single organ donor can save up to eight lives. Myself and my colleagues have strongly encouraged the department of Health and Social Services to work on improving the much dated act of 1988 and embark on a mission of change. We need a change that will modernize our approach to improving the *Human Tissue Donation Act*, with a comprehensive process, framework, and proper consent process,” says Mr. Dolynny.

“The experience in preparation for today has been very humbling and extremely emotional. In support of this bill today, I would like to thank all the members of the Legislative Assembly and their constituents,” said Mr. Dolynny.

The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories will give assent to a number of bills at the end of the fall sitting.

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## Range Lake MLA Questions Education, Culture and Employment Minister on French School Decision

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, November 6, 2014** – The MLA for Range Lake, Daryl Dolynny, posed questions yesterday to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jackson Lafferty, on the decisions made by the department on the future of French schools in Yellowknife.

“In September 2013, the GNWT approached YK1 and the Commission scolaire francophone, CSF, to seek an expedient and cost-effective alternative to the court ordered expansion to École Allain St. Cyr. These exploratory discussions involved the review of existing underutilized YK1 space and the needs for the CSF students to determine if alternatives to the court order for additional YK1 space could be found,” said Mr. Dolynny.

“What started as an issue of 116 francophone students and their families and the findings of this YK Facility Committee report has now affected half the city of Yellowknife, has pitted neighborhood against neighborhood, school versus school, parent versus parent, and student versus student, and this is wrong. In our eager and frugal mindset of duty, we have dehumanized our education system at the mere expense of trying to dodge a constitutional bullet and we should be embarrassed of those actions. There is no argument that YK1 is dealing with aging infrastructure and enrolment issues, but what we are about to ask of them by this government is seen as nothing more than unfair treatment and misuse of power. They have their own challenges and we are definitely not helping,” continued Mr. Dolynny.

There will be a Town Hall meeting regarding potential changes to YK1 schools and programming tonight at 7:00pm at Range Lake North School.

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**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, November 13, 2014** – On Thursday, November 6, 2014, Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly voted unanimously in favour of a motion calling on the Government of the Northwest Territories to bring forward legislation to establish an Office of the Ombudsman for the Northwest Territories

The motion was introduced by Mr. Michael Nadli, Deh Cho MLA, and Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations (SCOGO). SCOGO tabled a report on the topic earlier this year.

“An ‘ombudsman’ is a fancy word for a citizens’ defender—a peacemaker who gives a voice to the people,” said Mr. Nadli. “An ombudsman assists people, free of charge, who feel they’ve been treated unfairly by government.”

Ms. Wendy Bisaro, Frame Lake MLA, and Deputy Chair of SCOGO, has been a long-time champion of the idea of an ombudsman. In seconding the motion in the Assembly, Ms. Bisaro noted that “the office can be a good force for government, in that it can promote accountability in administration and improve government through investigations.” She observed “Over the last couple of decades, particularly with devolution, our territory has grown and we have grown up, and part of being grown up is recognizing the need to help our neighbors and our friends. The time is now to bring this legislation forward.”

Generally the ombudsman has robust powers to conduct confidential investigations but cannot change or reverse government decisions. Earlier this month, Mr. André Marin, Ombudsman for Ontario was invited by the committee to speak on the role of an Ombudsman and promoted the idea of a similar office for the Northwest Territories.

“Moral suasion is a primary tool in the ombudsman’s toolkit,” said Mr. Marin.

“This is an idea whose time has come,” Mr. Nadli emphasized. “The Government of the Northwest Territories is becoming more complex, especially now that devolution has been achieved. We hear a lot about the need for better public accountability and an ombudsman would help to ensure the GNWT is on the right track.”

In speaking to the motion in the Assembly, Premier Bob McLeod reiterated the issues raised by the Government in a discussion paper produced in 2012 and advised that Cabinet would abstain from the vote. The Government is expected to provide a response to the motion within 120 days.

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## Sahtu MLA Touts Northern Film “Crazy Water” During Addictions Awareness Week

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, November 18, 2014** – Sahtu MLA Norman Yakeleya joined a crowd at the community hall in Norman Wells last night to see the screening of Dennis Allen’s film “Crazy Water”.

“Dennis has done a great job capturing people’s stories from across Canada in this film. Some of the people have lost everything, but it shows us that we should never lose hope, and that recovery is always possible,” Yakeleya said.

The film is touring across the Northwest Territories as part of the “Healing Film Tour”, with additional screenings happening tonight in Fort Good Hope and Inuvik, and in Fort McPherson on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

“The film tour also encouraged people in the audience to share their stories, which helps people heal and creates an atmosphere of hope. Dennis told his personal stories; it helped him make amends with his father. I applaud his work, it touches a lot of us in the North,” Yakeleya further explained.

For more information about the Healing Film Tour: <http://www.healingfilmtour.com/>

If you can’t catch the tour in person you can also see the documentary online courtesy of the National Film board of Canada: <https://www.nfb.ca/film/crazywater/>

For more information please contact:

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### Nahendeh MLA Pleased Passengers on Air Tindi Plane are Safe

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, November 20, 2014** – The MLA for Nahendeh, Mr. Kevin Menicoche, expresses his relief that Air Tindi Caravan passengers and the pilot are safe and uninjured after an emergency landing on the Great Slave Lake earlier today.

According to a media advisory sent by Air Tindi, “a Caravan aircraft enroute from Yellowknife to Fort Simpson has been forced to land on the Great Slave Lake. The aircraft took off on a scheduled flight this morning from Yellowknife, and due to weather conditions was forced to turn around. The pilot contacted the Air Tindi Operations Centre at 7:21am indicating that the aircraft had landed and that there are no major injuries.”

“I am pleased that Air Tindi, the Yellowknife airport, and all emergency personnel responded so quickly and all people onboard are safe and out of harm’s way. We often use small planes to travel between communities in the Northwest Territories. This accident is a reminder as to how rapidly things can go wrong and northerners should always be prepared when traveling in the winter. I am pleased that all passengers on this aircraft are safe, my thoughts go out to the families that had to endure the stress of today’s incident,” says Mr. Menicoche.

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## Ledge Talks - Dennis Allen

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Monday, November 24, 2014** – The Legislative Library welcomes Dennis Allen, filmmaker and storyteller from the Mackenzie Delta, to the Ledge Talk “stage” on Thursday, November 27 at 7:30 pm.

Dennis will speak on “The Art of Storytelling,” an art he wields with full use of all the tools, from thoughtful sensitivity to deadly sarcasm. Not surprisingly then, Allen describes himself as a pool shark, cat skinner, muskrat trapper, roughneck, grave digger and bluesman. He may even be all of those things; we know from his *Take Two* newspaper column that he and “Chubby,” his partner in many adventures, always tell the truth as they see it. However, he may be guilty of overlooking pertinent facts on occasion. Thus, we must add writer, director, and humorist to his list of trades.

Perhaps most important, Dennis Allen is fearless in his approach to his work. His award-winning films tend to have tough issues at their core. He is just winding up the NWT launch of his latest film, *Crazywater*, a raw and emotional story of substance abuse and resilience in First Nations communities. His last film, *CBQM*, offers a brilliant and unvarnished peek at the community of Fort McPherson – a story that earned him the coveted Alanis Obomsawin Award for Best Documentary at the imagineNATIVE Film Festival.

Born in Inuvik to Gwich’in and Inupiat parents, Dennis Allen now lives in Whitehorse, where he says “you can’t swing a cat without hitting an artist.”

There will be time for questions and discussion following the presentation. Media and the public are welcome.

*Ledge Talks: The Knowledge Series* is a forum for a wide variety of speakers to present current ideas, science, traditional knowledge, and issues relevant to the Northwest Territories and beyond. *Ledge Talks* will also showcase research done by the many GNWT employees – often with collaborating partners – who are making substantial contributions to the world’s understanding of the North.

For more information on Dennis Allen, visit:

[http://www.mackdelta.com/Mackenzie\\_Delta\\_Films/Home.html](http://www.mackdelta.com/Mackenzie_Delta_Films/Home.html)

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## Sahtu MLA Welcomes Auditor General's Report on Nutrition North Program

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Thursday, November 27, 2014** – Sahtu MLA, Norman Yakeleya, welcomed the highly anticipated report from Canada's Auditor General, Michael Fergusson, on the controversial Nutrition North Program.

"I welcome Mr. Fergusson's report and recommendations. People in the Sahtu and across our northern territories are fed up with high food prices. I think the former Food Mail Program was better for putting savings in Northerners pockets," Yakeleya said after the report was released.

Mr. Fergusson's audit of the federal food subsidy program showed that there is no proof of companies passing on the savings to customers on healthy foods. Stated on CBC News website, "Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada's 60 million dollar program only gathers data on the "product landed cost," the sum of the wholesale cost of the food, ground transportation and air freight, and the selling price."

"It is extremely disturbing that there is no tool to measure the savings companies are getting. I have to ask if these savings are being passed onto customers in our small remote communities," Yakeleya added.

The audit also found the program, which was intended to promote healthy food choices, also gives subsidies on foods such as ice cream, bacon, and processed cheese spread. The auditor general's report comes days after Ottawa announced it was adding more money to the subsidy.

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## Sahtu MLA Pleased Winter Road Between Wrigley and Tulita Open to Light Traffic

**(YELLOWKNIFE) Tuesday, December 16, 2014** – Sahtu MLA, Norman Yakeleya, says students hoping to travel home to the Sahtu for Christmas received some good news this week. “As the temperature continues to drop, travel plans for our students have improved with part of the winter road opening north of Wrigley,” said Mr. Yakeleya.

Mr. Yakeleya continues, “this means they can drive from Fort Smith or Yellowknife to Tulita. This helps bring down the cost of travelling, even for our students from Déljne, who can either fly from Tulita or get a snowmobile ride.”

“People have holiday shopping to do and this gives them a chance to shop for cheaper turkey down South and experience some of the comforts enjoyed year-round in regions that have all season roads,” Mr. Yakeleya said.

Highway and road conditions are listed on the Department of Transportation website:  
<http://www.dot.gov.nt.ca/live/pages/wpPages/roadConditiononly.aspx>

Updates are also available on Twitter or by phone at 1-800-661-0750.

“I want to thank the road builders who work so hard to get our winter roads ready for the season. I also want to remind motorists to obey the speed limit and to not drink and drive. If you’re going to celebrate over the holidays, be responsible and have a designated driver,” said Mr. Yakeleya.

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