

NWT Government News Releases

1999 Index

99-001	Jan. 4	Collective bargaining wraps up
99-002	Jan. 6	NWT Arts Council awards
99-003	Jan. 20	Finance Minister welcomes opening of CIBC branch in Iqaluit
99-004	Jan. 21	Minister's Conference on Education
99-005	Jan. 26	Aboriginal role models promote sport and recreation
99-006	Jan. 26	Human Rights Tribunal schedules four years for testimony – GNWT concerned hearings will not be held in the North
99-007	Jan. 28	Trade Mission to Manitoba a success
99-008	Jan. 29	Apprenticeship week
99-009	Feb. 2	Kakfwi to Lead Economic Development Strategy
99-010	Feb. 2	Premier calls for cooperation and shared vision at Building Communities Conference
99-011	Feb. 3	Premier envisions strong independent North
99-012	Feb. 4	Premier says NWT will benefit from Social Union, Health Agreement
99-013	Feb. 8	Yukon and NWT Governments sign Intergovernmental Relations Accord
99-014	Feb. 11	Tradesperson of the year
99-015	Feb. 11	First Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board named
99-016	Feb. 12	Calgary visit strengthens links between GNWT and resource sector
99-017	Feb. 24	National Aboriginal Television Network approved

99-018	Mar. 2	NWT Social Work Week – March 1-7, 1999
99-019	Mar. 3	Thousands accept Equal Pay Settlement Agreement offer – Minister extends deadline
99-020	Mar. 4	Minister's Conference to discuss future of northern education
99-021	Mar. 4	Popular homeownership pilot program extended
99-022	Mar. 9	Northern Addictions Services agrees to wind down Adult Addictions Treatment Program
99-023	Mar. 12	Tentative agreement reached on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation
99-024	Mar. 16	GNWT signs geoscience agreement
99-025	Mar. 18	Improved Access Business Incentive Policy information
99-026	Mar. 24	Education Week March 24-31
99-027	Mar. 30	Premier announces new cabinet portfolios
99-028	Mar. 30	New principal secretary appointed (Richard Bargery)
99-029	Mar. 31	New Deputy Ministers appointed (Peter Vician & Fred Koe & Charles Overvold)
99-030	Apr. 7	MACA releases Canadian Consumer Handbook in NWT
99-031	Apr. 12	GNWT asks court to protect northern environment and jobs in Royal Oak case
99-032	Apr. 16	GNWT responds to Royal Oak receivership order
99-033	Apr. 19	Finance Minister presents first budget of new NWT
99-034	Apr. 29	Appointments to NWT Development Corporation Board
99-035	May 4	Crystals and gems shine at Heritage Centre exhibit

99-036	May 6	GNWT makes financial support available for Electoral Boundaries appeal
99-037	May 10	National Nurses Week – May 10-16,1999
99-038	May 12	Alaskans agree to buy homes made in NWT
99-039	May 17	First graduates for secondary diamond industry
99-040	May 18	New terminal in Holman
99-041	May 19	MDAPP to close May 31
99-042	May 20	Survey offers valuable insight for tourism market
99-043	May 20	GNWT supports feature movie production
99-044	May 26	Dust control increased on the Dempster
99-045	May 26	Progress report-Phase 1 National Child Benefit
99-046	May 28	Northern leaders to discuss co-operation agreements
99-047	Jun. 1	Minister of Education meets with Education Council Chairs
99-048	Jun. 1	Northerner awarded for outstanding achievement (Jack Tootoo)
99-049	Jun.2	GNWT to seek judicial review of Tribunal venue decision
99-050	Jun. 3	Equal pay settlement agreements deadline extended
99-051	Jun. 4	NWITA requests mediation in contract negotiations
99-052	Jun. 9	Alberta nurses' strike will not endanger Northerners
99-053	Jun. 10	Minister release child abuse protocol review
99-054	Jun. 10	NWT nurses recognized for contribution to Northern nursing (May Ellen Hoyles, Faye Stark, Rosalie Adams)

99-055	Jun. 11	Northern furs to take centre stage
99-056	Jun. 15	New appointments – Status of Women Council
99-057	Jun. 15	Diavik talks postponed
99-058	Jun. 16	Kakfwi says Sirius Diamonds facility is a milestone
99-059	Jun. 16	New family housing for Thebacha campus
99-060	Jun. 17	Program attracts and keeps health professionals in the NWT
99-061	Jun. 22	Merkosak appointed acting chairperson of Power Corp.
99-062	Jun. 22	Safety is number one focus of the Department of Transportation
99-063	Jun. 28	Minister's appoints Forum on Health and Social Services
99-064	Jun. 28	National Legal Aid meetings to be hosted by NWT
99-065	Jun. 30	Funding available for market gardens
99-066	July 8	Economic strategy panel begins work
99-067	July 8	Youth ambassadors learn about the northern environment and forests
99-068	July 19	Scholarships to be available for NWT students
99-069	July 19	Minister's forum on Health and Social Services ready for consultations
99-070	July 28	Alberta and NWT to partner on oil and gas development
99-071	July 28	Government of the Northwest Territories and TransCanada partner to encourage natural gas reserves development
99-072	July 30	Minister responds to forum on Education
99-073	July 30	NWT Premier to meet with Minister of Indian Affairs & Northern Development

99-074	Aug. 3	Premier Antoine welcomes new Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
99-075	Aug. 6	National Association of Chief Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors to meet in NWT
99-076	Aug. 11	Premier says APC results will benefit the NWT
99-077	Aug. 11	GNWT to certify northern diamonds
99-078	Aug. 11	Tsiighetchic buys back shares in local store
99-079	Aug. 11	Premier's conference supports northern control over resources and services (full communiques from the Annual Premiers' follows this news release)
99-080	Aug. 11	Update on the forest fire between Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic
99-081	Aug. 12	August 12 update on fire between Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik
99-082	Aug. 12	August 12 afternoon update on Tsiigehtchic fire
99-083	Aug. 12	Dempster Highway reopens
99-084	Aug. 13	Update on Tsiigehtchic fire (Friday AM)
99-085	Aug. 17	New forest fire in Edzo area
99-086	Aug. 18	Chronology of Edzo forest fire
99-087	Aug. 18	Edzo fire update August 18 th 11am
99-088	Aug. 18	Edzo fire update August 18 th 4pm
99-089	Aug. 19	GNWT to implement new probation services
99-090	Aug. 19	Review of Community Justice released
99-091	Aug. 19	Edzo fire update August 19 th 11:00 AM
99-092	Aug. 20	Edzo fire update August 20 th 11:00 AM

99-093	Aug. 20	H&SS and MACA launch physical activity guide for older adults
99-094	Aug. 30	Improved access to greenhouse gas emissions strategy
99-095	Aug. 30	Premier Jim Antoine joins Team Canada mission to Japan and Australia
99-096	Sept. 1	NWT liquor prices to increase September 1, 1999
99-097	Sept. 2	Premier congratulates new NWT Senator Nick Sibbeston
99-098	Sept. 3	GNWT and Diavik sign MOU on supply of rough diamonds
99-099	Sept. 7	Joint program to help lower heating costs in Inuvik
99-100	Sept. 8	Community administrators to train via the Internet
99-101	Sept. 9	RFP issued for Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre
99-102	Sept. 10	Minister of Transportation honours employee for national win
99-103	Sept. 10	Natural gas arrives in Inuvik
99-104	Sept. 15	NWT Arts Council grants approved
99-105	Sept. 16	NWT Development Corporation partners team up to for donation
99-106	Sept. 16	Great Bear Lake Lodges successful thanks to NWT Development Corporation
99-107	Sept. 29	Economic Strategy Panel elects co-chairs
99-108	Sept. 29	Public service pension review
99-109	Sept. 29	Workers have support from GNWT
99-110	Sept. 30	NWT Protected Areas Strategy approved

99-111	Oct. 1	Cabinet approves Diavik Socio-economic Agreement
99-112	Oct. 2	October 2-9 th is Literacy Week
99-113	Oct. 4	Minister says equal pay issues can be settled in a reasonable manner
99-114	Oct. 4	GNWT confident upcoming mediation with the NWTTA will be productive
99-115	Oct. 7	Minister confident that strike will not be necessary
99-116	Oct. 8	Minister and chairs agree a strong NWT education system is critical
99-117	Oct. 12	Northern forum on career development
99-118	Oct. 13	Bertha Allen of Inuvik receives award in commemoration of the "Person's Case"
99-119	Oct. 14	BC and NWT discuss working together
99-120	Oct. 14	1999 ferry season winding down
99-121	Oct. 18	GNWT focuses on resource development in the Mackenzie Valley
99-122	Oct. 18	Women's History Month celebrates Francophone women
99-123	Oct. 18	NWT Highway Strategy Summary Report
99-124	Oct. 19	Department of ECE to meet request for more special-needs training
99-125	Oct. 20	Federal Government equal pay decision has little bearing on GNWT
99-126	Oct. 20	Oct. 24-31 is National Immunization Awareness Week
99-127	Oct. 21	Tools for 2000 NWT Principals Conference on Strategies for Leadership

99-128	Oct. 21	Essential Services Agreement would ensure the safety of students
99-129	Oct. 25	ECE Minister announces appointments to the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board
99-130	Oct. 26	GNWT releases updated financial results for 1998-99
99-131	Oct. 28	Northerners are above-average volunteers
99-132	Oct. 28	New web site to resource information in the Beaufort-Mackenzie area
99-133	Oct. 29	Public Works and Services hosts Project Management Conference
99-134	Nov. 1	New guide to support NWT high school teachers
99-135	Nov. 1	Take our Kids to Work Day – Nov.3 rd , 1999
99-136	Nov. 1	New curriculum to meet the needs of adult learners in the NWT
99-137	Nov. 5	Dave Paul appointed to WCB Appeals Tribunal
99-138	Nov. 8	Premier supports two-minute wave of silence
99-139	Nov. 8	GNWT and NWTTA reach tentative agreement
99-140	Nov. 9	Official Language in Education Agreement signed
99-141	Nov. 8	Support for preservation and advancement of aboriginal languages
99-142	Nov. 9	Panel determines principles for developing NWT economic strategy
99-143	Nov. 12	Meeting of Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Finance
99-144	Nov. 12	NWT recognized for contribution in building national information highway

99-145	Nov. 16	Ministers of Finance reach consensus on investment of federal surplus
99-146	Nov. 17	Wha Ti school celebrates grand opening
99-147	Nov. 17	First international sale of made in the NWT housing materials packages completed
99-148	Nov. 18	Fort Smith Public-Private Partnership Project wins national award
99-149	Nov. 19	Cabinet authorizes signing of Dogrib Agreement-in-Principle
99-150	Nov. 22	Government to file notice of appeal in Royal Oak bankruptcy case
99-151	Nov. 24	Nunavut Government to contract management of electric power service
99-152	Nov. 26	New web site highlights progress of economic strategy panel
99-153	Nov. 30	GNWT teachers turn down collective agreement
99-154	Nov. 30	Agreements signed for secondary diamond development
99-155	Dec. 1	GNWT targets support to promising oil and gas activity
99-156	Dec. 2	Provincial/Territorial position on federal surplus is good news for Northerners
99-157	Dec. 3	Service disruption at the Fort Providence – Mackenzie River ferry crossing
99-158	Dec. 6	Day of remembrance and action on violence against women
99-159	Dec. 8	Environmental assessment of Giant Mine surface available to public
99-160	Dec. 8	Safe use of portable generators
99-161	Dec. 8	Decision to keep INAC jobs in south counterproductive to northern development

99-162	Dec. 9	Designers identified for North Slave Correctional facilities
99-163	Dec. 9	New strategic plan update to guide education in the NWT
99-164	Dec. 13	Department of Health and Social Services releases Health Status Report
99-165	Dec. 14	Minister seeks review of Legal Services Act
99-166	Dec. 14	GNWT will not appeal Giant court decision
99-167	Dec. 14	Museum Assistance Program supports Dogrib Caribou Lodge project
99-168	Dec. 16	Funding to help establish new Dene company
99-169	Dec. 17	Extraordinary school enrollment funded
99-170	Dec. 17	Consultation begins on wildlife legislative initiatives
99-171	Dec. 20	Minister disappointed by lack of progress in negotiations with NWTAA
99-172	Dec. 21	Geographic tracking of government expenditures available to public
99-173	Dec. 22	Panel to outline economic strategy and recommendations



99-001

Collective Bargaining Wraps Up

YELLOWKNIFE (January 4) – The Government of the Northwest Territories has accepted all mediator recommendations in the interest of concluding a collective agreement for its employees.

The GNWT's position for concluding its Collective Agreement with the UNW was outlined this morning by its negotiator. It incorporates all of the recommendations included in the Mediator's report of December 31, 1998 wrapping up fourteen months of collective bargaining.

The recommended Collective Agreement provides an overall average increase of 9.8% or \$20,000,000 to the total compensation package in the first year of a two-year agreement and a further 2% in the second year.

Individual employees will receive between 2% and 31% in base-wage increases in the first year. In addition, the proposed agreement provides Northern Allowance increases of between \$421 and \$4,096 plus a \$500 lump sum Northern Allowance payment in each of the two years.

The proposed Collective Agreement also provides a joint and independent process for both parties to work together in good faith to ensure gender-neutral job evaluations.

There is urgency in concluding a Collective Agreement for ratification by employees. A Collective Agreement must be ratified and signed by March 31, 1999 in order for employees to receive the \$20,000,000 in increases that are offered for 1998/99.

For more information, please contact:

Herb Hunt
Director Labour Relations
Financial Management Board Secretariat
(867) 920-8900



99-002

NWT Arts Council Awards

YELLOWKNIFE (January 6) - Artists and organizations interested in securing funding for arts projects in the 1999/2000 fiscal year must apply to the NWT Arts Council before February 15, 1999.

Each year, the GNWT, through the council, awards funding to NWT artists or groups interested in completing creative and culturally based projects.

“Cultural activities in the Northwest Territories are essential to exemplify the rich and varied society we have here in the North,” says Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. “The NWT Arts Council plays an essential role in encouraging northern artists.”

In 1998/99, the Council allocated \$193,000 to 25 individuals and 8 arts groups throughout the NWT.

For more information, please contact:

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Education, Culture and Employment
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Fax: (867) 873-0205

Backgrounder

NWT Arts Council Awards

Artists and organizations approved for Arts Council funding in 1998/99 include:

- Brenda Natseck, Chesterfield Inlet, to produce approximately 25 drawings which depict Inuit culture and way of life, past and present.
- Sandy Sanderson, Fort Smith, to record a full-length album of 12 original songs.
- Tracey Riley, Yellowknife, to research and write a series of comedic sketches and songs, and then to workshop and perform this musical revue which explores the follies and delights of one woman's experiences living in the north.
- Karole Pittman, Pangnirtung, to create a series of 21 oil paintings depicting Inuit traditional sites and activities in and around Cumberland Sound on Baffin Island.
- Yellowknife Theatre Cooperative, Yellowknife, to present a series of six different 1-2 day workshops in drama and theatre.
- Jesse J. Gon, Rae, to record original songs.
- Katauyaiit Choir, Coral Harbour, to travel to northern communities to perform.
- Randy Sibbeston, Yellowknife, to travel from Fort Simpson to Nahanni Butte by canoe in order to sketch still life, scenery and wildlife, and then to create 15-20 watercolours and 4-6 large acrylic paintings.
- Helene Croft, Fort Smith, to produce eight acrylic paintings representing the work, past and present, of the Rangers in the north, paying special attention to the work they do in the communities.
- John Miya, Yellowknife, to write and develop a two-hour feature length screenplay, including a version for TV and a series TV pilot, based on events that occurred in the Baffin in the 1920s.
- Lucie Idlout, Iqaluit, to record a demo of original music.
- Michael Kusugak, Rankin Inlet, to write an adult novel, *Nappaq*, about the relationship between a young worldly Inuk pilot who returns north after an accident and his traditional uncle Nappaq.
- John Poirier, Yellowknife, to photograph the NWT landscape and present his own view through intimate landscapes and natural details, to print these photographs himself, and to exhibit completed works.
- Steve Lacey, Yellowknife, to record original music.
- Angus Beaulieu, Fort Resolution, to record traditional fiddle music.
- Taluq Youth Dancers, Taloyoak, to travel to perform in other northern communities.
- Folk on the Rocks, Yellowknife, to hold three developmental music workshops for northern musicians attending the 19th annual Folk on the Rocks music festival.

- Richard Van Camp, Fort Smith, to write three books: *Burn to Sunlight*, 12 short stories and novellas; *Born With the Light*, a children's book and its sequel.
- Kicking Caribou Theatre Company, Arctic Bay, to hold a professional development workshop in theatre arts for the troupe.
- Terry Pamplin, Yellowknife, to create approximately 50 large pastel and collage works based on a series of outdoor sketches, and to exhibit these completed works.
- David Nanauq, Baker Lake, to take photographic images of life around Baker Lake before the creation of Nunavut.
- Great Northern Arts Festival, Inuvik, to hold a series of developmental workshops for visual artists attending the 10th annual Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik.
- Addena Sumter-Freitag, Yellowknife, to travel to Ottawa and Montreal to perform a 90 minute one woman play, *Stay Black and Die*, at their Fringe Festivals.
- Amber Lemouel, Yellowknife, to record a ten song CD of original music.
- Sheila Hodgkinson, Yellowknife, to produce between 20-24 oil paintings, approximately 6 large and 15-20 small to medium works, entitled *Winter in the Boreal Forrest*.
- Kelly Foye, Fort Smith, to record a five song demo CD of original music.
- Dennis Kenny, Inuvik, to research and produce three realistic detailed acrylic paintings on masonite board of endangered wildlife species in the NWT.
- NWT Pipe Band, Yellowknife, to facilitate a weekend piping and drumming workshop for members and interested public.
- Vicki Swann, Yellowknife, to produce, direct and perform hands on non-linear editing during the creation of a music video of *If I Had A Chance*, a song performed by northern musician Tom Hudson.
- John Sabourin, Fort Simpson, to produce 16 large acrylic paintings, entitled *Going Within*, which explores the four elements: earth, air, wind and fire, as symbols human emotions.
- Zinour Fathoullin, Cape Dorset, to research and create six oil and acrylic painting portraits of elders, past and present.
- Baker Lake Drum Dance Club, Baker Lake, to hold a three day drum and dancing workshop, where the traditional drum will be the main focus, for elders and youth involving eight communities.
- Timothy Atherton, Yellowknife, to undertake a photographic exploration of the extraordinary everyday lives of people living with mental disability and to produce and exhibit 25-35 works.



99-003

Finance Minister Welcomes Opening of CIBC Branch in Iqaluit

YELLOWKNIFE (January 20) -- Finance Minister John Todd is pleased at today's announcement by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce that it will be opening a branch in Iqaluit on April 1st 1999.

"We are pleased that the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce shares our vision of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut as a place where profitable business opportunities exist, and that they are willing to support the growing economy of Nunavut. They are to be congratulated," said Mr. Todd.

This will be the seventh branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in the NWT, and the second in what will become Nunavut on April 1st, 1999.

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce currently has branches in Yellowknife, Fort Simpson, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Rankin Inlet. Mr. Todd noted that the Iqaluit branch will increase access to financial services for the people of Nunavut.

For further information, please contact: Margaret Melhorn
Deputy Minister
Department of Finance
(867) 873-7117



99-004

Minister's Conference on Education

YELLOWKNIFE (January 21) – Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), will host a conference on education, March 9 and 10, in Fort Smith.

“The conference is part of the Department’s Strategic Plan Review,” said Mr. Dent. “Participants will review and discuss the reports from the Minister’s Forum as well as other consultations currently being carried out in the Western NWT”. In addition, research carried out during the initial stage of the review will be presented.

The conference will be a stepping stone for refining strategic directions, priorities and recommendations for the continuing development of the education system in the Western NWT. Presentations and small-group discussions will examine key issues in education, and explore ways to improve educational services in the future. The conclusions of the conference will help form the foundation of an updated departmental strategic plan.

Delegates to the conference will include representatives from district education authorities and divisional education councils, ministerial forum members, elders, aboriginal organizations, employers, educators, college and department officials, as well as parents and students from across the western NWT.

For further information, contact:

Chuck Parker

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99-007

Trade Mission to Manitoba a Success

YELLOWKNIFE (Jan. 28) -- A trade mission to Manitoba by business and community leaders from the Kivalliq Region of Nunavut proved successful in building new partnerships, according to Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs Maniok Thompson and Manitoba Rural Development Minister Len Derkach.

The two ministers announced a number of business arrangements have been concluded and positive discussions are continuing on several other fronts. The trade mission started Monday, January 18, and concluded on Thursday, January 21st.

"This Kivalliq Trade Mission to Manitoba has provided our delegates with an excellent opportunity to network with Manitoba government and business and help build stronger relationships and new partnerships between Kivalliq and Manitoba," Ms. Thompson said. "Through this trade mission and through continued efforts between Nunavut and Manitoba, we have shown that this can be an equal partnership where both parties can benefit."

"Manitoba has enjoyed a business and community relationship with the Kivalliq Region for some time," Mr. Derkach said. "The visit to Manitoba by Kivalliq leaders has helped us identify some of their needs and how we can best work together to build and strengthen our existing relationships."

Manitoba hosted the five-day Kivalliq (Keewatin) Trade Mission to continue building and strengthening economic ties with communities in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. A total of 80 delegates travelled to Manitoba to discuss opportunities in tourism, arts and crafts, retail services, construction, manufacturing, energy and transportation, community services, training and health. Delegates toured plants and visited a number of rural communities, including Steinbach, Stonewall and Portage la Prairie.

Highlights of the trade mission:

- Several Manitoba businesses discussed opportunities to undertake investments and partnerships in a number of Kivalliq communities. They include Arctic Beverages of Flin Flon, the Canadian College of Taxidermy of McCreary, the Winnipeg Fur Exchange and Acklands-Grainger, an industrial supplier to the heavy construction and mining industries.

.../2

Trade Mission to Manitoba a Success: Page 2

- To help further northern economic development, the Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie will send staff to Rankin Inlet and Coral Harbour in the next few weeks to discuss the feasibility of processing northern foods such as caribou, scallops and kelp.

- A number of opportunities for youth will be pursued, including a northern Junior Achievement project and bringing a team of northern youth to Rural Forum '99, Manitoba's rural development trade show.

- A number of opportunities have been identified to improve the flow of information between Manitoba and the Kivalliq Region, including exchanging telephone directories, and developing a joint web site and newsletter.

- A memorandum of understanding was signed between Churchill, OMNITRAX (rail company) and the Winnipeg Airport Authority to promote Churchill as the supply port to Nunavut.

- Kivalliq leaders are also discussing the possibility of establishing a Kivalliq arts and crafts sales office in Winnipeg.

A commemorative birth record and companion card was also unveiled. This acknowledges the fact that many residents in the Northwest Territories were born in Manitoba. The first three recipients to receive their birth records are Moses Kayuryuk, Ron Appak Alikashuak and Stanley Adjuk. Northwest Territories residents who were born in Manitoba can apply for their birth records through Manitoba Vital Statistics. In future, birth records will be issued along with birth certificates.

"The Kivalliq Trade Mission is a continuation of the ongoing efforts by both Manitoba and the Northwest Territories to build and strengthen relations," Mr. Derkach said. "Manitoba will reciprocate with a trade mission to the new Territory of Nunavut in the early Spring of 1999."

A memorandum of understanding on co-operation and development signed between the two governments in 1998 continues to serve as the foundation for ongoing efforts.

For further information, please contact: Graeme Dargo

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Community Development
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99-005

Aboriginal Role Models Promote Sport and Recreation

YELLOWKNIFE (January 26) – The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs and its partners are proud to be sponsoring a tour of Aboriginal role models to northern communities this week.

Ted Nolan, former coach of the Buffalo Sabers, and Sharon Firth, four time cross country ski Olympian, are visiting northern communities as Aboriginal role models to promote positive lifestyles through sport, culture and recreation. They will be visiting Dettah, Yellowknife, N'dilo, Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Norman Wells, Deline, Fort Providence, Rae/Edzo and Yellowknife.

“We have an important role to play in encouraging active living, sport and recreation in our communities,” says Manitok Thompson, GNWT Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. “Through successful role models such as Mr. Nolan and Ms. Firth we can advocate the benefits of increased participation in sport and recreation to our youth.”

Mr. Nolan has coached in the Ontario Hockey League and the National Hockey League and played 78 NHL games over the course of five seasons with Detroit and Pittsburgh. An Ojibway Indian, Mr. Nolan is currently employed by the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa. His duties include visiting aboriginal communities across Canada to advocate the benefits of remaining in school, and saying “NO” to drugs and alcohol.

Sharon Firth was the first Aboriginal woman to represent the NWT and Canada on the Canadian National Cross-Country Ski Team from 1968 to 1984. She has competed in three World Ski Championships, four Winter Olympic Games and numerous Canadian and US championships. Ms. Firth is proud to be participating on the tour to promote the benefits of sport to Aboriginal youth.

Other contributing partners in this tour include the Assembly of First Nations, the Aboriginal Sports Circle of the Western Arctic, the Dene Nation, the Metis Nation and the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

For more information, contact:

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(867) 920-6966



99-006

**Human Rights Tribunal schedules four years for testimony – GNWT concerned
hearings will not be held in the North**

YELLOWKNIFE (January 26) - The Human Rights Tribunal dealing with a pay equity complaint concerning the Union of Northern Workers has scheduled over 200 hearing days over the next four years to hear testimony in the case.

The hearings will allow the tribunal to hear evidence on a complaint made by Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) that the wages it negotiated as agents for the UNW in collective agreements with the Government of the Northwest Territories discriminate on the basis of sex.

The over 200 days scheduled do not include the time required for the tribunal to hear legal arguments that will be raised at the beginning of the hearings and once all the evidence has been presented. The schedule also does not include appeals that may result from the tribunal's rulings on any legal issues. Other cases involving equal pay complaints have involved appeals to the Federal Court, the Federal Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada. Such appeals would add many more years to the time already scheduled by the tribunal for the eventual resolution of this complaint.

The Tribunal said that it would like to start the process for hearing evidence in June of 1999. However, the Canadian Human Rights Commission said that it has not decided on a lawyer to present evidence on behalf of the Commission and to cross-examine witnesses who present evidence on behalf of the PSAC and the GNWT. It is not clear if the schedules for the Tribunal members and the lawyers can be accommodated in order for hearings to start in June.

The Tribunal did schedule hearings for a two-week period starting on August 23, 1999. The plan set out by the Tribunal was to hold two consecutive weeks of hearings every month for the next four years to hear evidence. The plan provides for breaks over Christmas and over the summer for vacations. The Tribunal also recognized the need for flexibility in the event of illnesses or other unforeseen events. The Tribunal also gave direction on administrative matters such as the process for exchanging documents and disclosure of evidence.

No location has been set for the four years of hearings on the evidence. However, the tribunal has indicated it would meet in Yellowknife for three days in March to hear preliminary legal arguments. These include:

- Whether the PSAC can legally file a complaint because it negotiated the wages that it is now complaining about.
- Whether the UNW and/or the PSAC are legally liable if the wages they negotiated with the GNWT do not comply with their joint legal obligations under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.
- Whether the guidelines issued by the Canadian Human Rights Commission go beyond the equal pay provision in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

The location for the Tribunal proceedings is a major issue of concern for the GNWT. The GNWT believes all the hearings should be in the North and suggested a hearing be held in Yellowknife at the end of February so that witnesses could give evidence on this important matter. The lawyer for the Commission argued that a hearing was not needed and that for "educational purposes" the hearings could start and finish in the Northwest Territories but that the bulk of the hearings should be held in Ottawa. The lawyer for the PSAC argued that the individuals it represents in this complaint want all the hearings to be held in Ottawa.

The Tribunal denied the GNWT's request for a hearing so that witnesses could explain the importance of the matter of the location for the hearings. The Tribunal told the lawyers to make written submissions instead. Although the Tribunal recognized the legal precedent for holding hearings where the cause of action arose which, in this case, is in the Northwest Territories, the Tribunal said that it must be concerned with its own costs. The Tribunal said that as a "gesture" some of the hearings should be held in the Northwest Territories.

The GNWT is considering how best to respond to the denial of its request for a hearing that would provide an opportunity for witnesses to explain the importance of the location for the hearings.

For more information, contact:

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Equal Pay and Negotiations
(867) 920-8900



99-008

Apprenticeship Week

YELLOWKNIFE (January 29) – February 1 to the 5 is Apprenticeship Week in the Northwest Territories, Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment announced today.

“The NWT Apprenticeship Program continues to be successful in preparing a trained northern workforce. Since 1964, over 4000 northerners have obtained the skills and knowledge to fill a wide range of jobs – from carpentry to cooking. Today there are approximately 380 apprentices. They, together with their employers, make a vital contribution to our northern economy,” says Mr. Dent.

To mark Apprenticeship Week, events are planned in all NWT regions. On Monday, Feb. 1, in Yellowknife, “The Best Seat in the House” competition will see teams compete against each other and the clock to design and build the best chair they can without power tools.

Top apprentices and apprenticeship graduates will be recognized at the “Not a Wine and Cheese Party and Apprenticeship Awards Ceremony”, February 5th in the Legislative Assembly’s Grand Hall. The ceremony will include presentation of the “Tradesperson of the Year”.

For further information, contact: Hilary Jones
Coordinator, Program Development
Education, Culture & Employment
Tel: (867) 920-3422
Fax: (867) 873-0200

The Best Seat in the House Contest

Witness the creation of the
Greatest Chair Ever Built

Monday, February 1ST 1999

11:30 - 1:00 pm

In Centre Square Mall (across from L'Attitudes)

Four teams of high profile, talented and enthusiastic
locals will work against the clock to build the
Greatest Chair Ever, right before your eyes.

No Power Tools

Teams of Two
One and a half hour time limit
No set design standards

Special teams include:

Students Team • Politicians Team • Apprenticeship Board Team • Media Team
To be Judged by local contractors

Support Apprenticeship Week, February 1-5, 1999

apprenticeship
works
northwest territories/nunavut





99-009

Kakfwi to Lead Economic Development Strategy

YELLOWKNIFE (February 2) - Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development, will lead the development of a new Northern Economic Development Strategy for the Western Northwest Territories, Premier Jim Antoine announced today.

Development of a Northern Economic Strategy is one of the key components in the government's Western Agenda.

"The development of a strategy must be undertaken in partnership with other levels of government and stakeholders in the Western NWT," Mr. Kakfwi said. "Without support from Aboriginal leaders, municipal governments and industry, no strategy can be successful as a blueprint for future economic development."

A recent discussion paper called **Harnessing our Economic Development** provides a basis for discussion, but it should not be considered a strategy, Mr. Kakfwi said.

"The next step will be a series of planning meetings and consultations which are expected to be held during the next few months, " he added. "We need to approach this as an opportunity for northerners to be involved in planning our economic future. I look forward to facilitating a joint effort to develop a vibrant economy for the new Northwest Territories."

For more information, contact: Doug Doan
Assistant Deputy Minister
Resources and Economic Development
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 873-7115



99-010

Premier calls for Cooperation and Shared Vision at Building Communities Conference

HAY RIVER RESERVE (February 2)-- All northerners must share the same vision of the future if the Northwest Territories is to develop successfully after April 1, Premier Jim Antoine told participants in a community development conference this morning.

The **Together - Building Communities** brings municipal and aboriginal leaders from around the South Slave region together with territorial government representatives.

The new Northwest Territories is challenged with improving its economic performance and addressing social issues at a time when funding remains tight. All northerners need to cooperate to make the best use of the resources available and to build a strong territory, Mr. Antoine said.

"Northerners have worked together for centuries -- as a matter of survival." Mr Antoine said. "We live and work together and our children go to school together. And together we are facing changes in the way we relate to each other."

"If we can agree on a vision for the future and if we can agree to work together to achieve it, then we are halfway there," Mr. Antoine said.

The February 2-4 conference is coordinated by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and is being hosted by Chief Pat Martel and council on the Hay River Reserve.

For further information, please contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Government of the NWT
(867) 669-2302



99-011

Premier Envisions Strong Independent North

YELLOWKNIFE (February 3) -- The Premier of the Northwest Territories foresees a North where government respects the rights of all people and where people take greater control of their future and more responsibility for their well being.

Premier Jim Antoine shared his vision of the future in a televised speech last night to the people of the Northwest Territories.

“The North is in a good position to take advantage of the opportunities and changes that lie ahead,” he said. “Our people and our resources hold great potential for developing and sustaining a viable and independent economy.”

Mr Antoine pledged to step up negotiations with Ottawa, in partnership with aboriginal governments, to control the pace of development in the North and to gain a share of the taxes and resource revenues that come from development. He also promised to seek out more money for education, health care and social programs. “All of our residents must be able to access the programs and services that they need,” he said.

Mr. Antoine told viewers that he’s committed to restoring public confidence in government. All interests must work together he said. “It will take the shared imagination and resources of all our society to bring lasting change to the North.”

For more information contact:

Judy Langford
Office of the Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2302



99-012

Premier says NWT will Benefit from Social Union, Health Agreement

OTTAWA (February 4) -- Premier Jim Antoine says the Social Union agreement signed by Canadian first ministers this morning will lead to improved social programs for the Northwest Territories.

"The Social Union document gives the provincial, territorial and federal governments a framework for cooperation and social development. This commitment to work together will undoubtedly lead to better social programs in the North and throughout the country," Mr. Antoine said. "As a territorial leader, I was also pleased that the NWT and the Yukon were on an equal footing with the provinces."

Mr. Antoine noted the agreement contains a definite commitment to work with aboriginal peoples.

"I am especially encouraged that the agreement specifically recognizes the special place aboriginal peoples have in Canada. The Social Union recognizes aboriginal rights, including those negotiated through treaty or self-government arrangements. It says that governments will work with aboriginal peoples to find solutions to social issues."

The first ministers also reached an agreement on health care funding. Exact details will not be available until the federal budget is announced. However, it is clear there will be more money allocated to health care over the next three years.

"Our health care system has suffered through funding restrictions in recent years," Mr. Antoine said. "Any increase in health care dollars will be an improvement but we still have to wait to see the final figures."

For further information, please contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-013

Yukon And NWT Governments Sign Intergovernmental Relations Accord

YELLOWKNIFE (Feb 8) -- Premier Jim Antoine and Yukon Government Leader Piers McDonald have signed an Intergovernmental Relations Accord between the two territories. The two leaders signed the accord while they were in Ottawa for the recent social union meeting.

"This accord adds strength to our existing relationship," Mr. Antoine said. "It gives us a framework to address our mutual concerns."

"The governments of Yukon and the NWT have a history of co-operation in many areas," Mr. McDonald said. "Northerners face many needs and concerns different from the peoples of the south," he added. "This agreement sets the stage for northern people to work together to meet northern concerns."

The Intergovernmental Relations Accord reinforces existing co-operation in areas such as highway maintenance, tourism marketing and promotion. It provides a forum to share information in areas such as recreation, wildlife studies, resource and energy management and education.

"The accord also fits with two elements of the GNWT's western agenda – harnessing our economic potential and improving our social well being," Mr. Antoine said. "With all we share in terms of history, demographics and economic potential, it makes sense that Yukon and the NWT should work together."

In 1998, the Government of the Northwest Territories signed MOUs with the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba.

For more information, contact:

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Press Secretary
Dept. of Executive
Government of the Northwest Territories
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Media Liaison
(867) 667-8411
Yukon Territorial Government
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99-014

Tradesperson of the Year

YELLOWKNIFE (February 11) - Robert (Bob) Hanna of Fort Simpson and Jack Kupeuna of Cambridge Bay were each recognized last week with Tradesperson of the Year awards in ceremonies marking NWT Apprenticeship week.

Mr. Hanna holds Journeyman Trade certificates as a welder, residential oil burner mechanic, steamfitter-pipefitter, gasfitter and plumber. In addition to his work, he is a village counsellor, a sergeant in the Rangers, and an avid promoter of trades and apprenticeship.

Mr. Kupeuna is a certified carpenter who has served for many years on the NWT Apprenticeship Board and as a trainer for young apprentices. Kupeuna has been involved in local politics in many northern communities. He is a past member of the Northern Canadian Rangers and the former mayor of Holman.

“Both Mr. Hanna and Mr. Kupeuna exemplify the important contribution that journey persons and apprentices make to building our communities as well as our economy,” Mr. Dent said. “They are excellent role models for anyone thinking of pursuing a career in the trades.”

For more information, contact:

Hilary Jones

Co-ordinator, Program Development

Education, Culture and Employment

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99-015

First Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board Named

YELLOWKNIFE (February 11) -- Minister of Health and Social Services, Kelvin Ng today announced the appointment of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board's first trustees.

The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, created by the Minister in 1997 under the *Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act*, will establish policies to direct the activities of Yellowknife Health and Social Services.

Yellowknife Health and Social Services is responsible for all public health, home care, health promotion, health nutrition and social service programs operated in the communities of Dettah, Ndilo and Yellowknife. It employs approximately 60 people and has an operating budget of approximately \$7 million. It also provides \$6 million in funding for programs run by health related non-government organizations.

"This gives local residents of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah an opportunity to help shape health and social services in their community," said Mr. Ng. "Collectively, the new board members have extensive knowledge and skills that will allow them to successfully meet the important challenges before them."

Longtime Yellowknife resident Ruth Spence will chair the new nine-member Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board. Its members are: Rosemary Cairns, Anne Enge, Leonie Erasmus, Jan Stirling, Terry Chang, Susan Ashton, Sheila Hart and Helena Laraque.

Yellowknife Health and Social Services' mission is to provide a holistic (emotional, mental, social, spiritual and cultural) integrated range of services of health and social service programs to residents of Yellowknife, Dettah and Ndilo.

Its first public meeting is scheduled for March 24, 1999.

For further information, contact:

Mr. Chris Keeley
Director, Planning and Board Support
Department of Health and Social Services
Tel: (867) 920-3297

Mr. Al Woods
Chief Executive Officer
Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board
Tel: (867) 873-7276

Backgrounder

First Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board Named

Ruth Spence is a long-time Yellowknife resident with a long and active involvement with the Yellowknife City Council. She presently sits on the Stanton Regional Health Board. The Minister is pleased to announce that Ruth has been appointed the first **Chairperson** of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board.

Rosemary Cairns, who was nominated by the voluntary and non-government agencies of Yellowknife, is a writer, and was appointed as the Executive Director of the Status of Women Council of the NWT in 1997. Ms. Cairns will serve as the **Vice Chairperson** for the Board.

Anne Enge has recently retired after working 30 years for the Department of Health and Social Services. She brings with her extensive knowledge and experience in the many programs and services that the Department provides.

Leonie Erasmus has a strong commitment and interest in the community's wellbeing, in addition to over 20 years experience serving on local committees and boards representing Aboriginal peoples' interests.

Jan Stirling, who recently retired after 26 years in nursing, remains actively involved in several organizations and many community activities. Yellowknife Health and Social Services are housed in the Jan Stirling Centre, which was named in recognition of Ms. Stirling's contribution to health programs in the Yellowknife area.

Terry Chang is a Yellowknife resident of 23 years and is involved in the private business sector. She contributes many hours of service time to various organizations for the betterment of her community.

Susan Ashton worked in Yellowknife to establish the Psychiatry Unit at Stanton Hospital in 1988. She later returned to live and work in Yellowknife and is presently a Health Consultant who has worked with or for most of the boards in the Northwest Territories.

Sheila Hart is a long-time Yellowknifer who has worked closely with a variety of populations. She is currently the co-facilitator of Family Projects at the Diocese of Mackenzie, as well as fulfilling a variety of roles at St. Patrick School in Yellowknife.

Helena Laraque has resided in Yellowknife for 28 years. In her current role of Traditional Knowledge Coordinator for the Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development, she promotes and facilitates the growing recognition and use of traditional knowledge.



99-016

Calgary visit strengthens links between GNWT and resource sector

YELLOWKNIFE (Feb. 12) -- Premier Jim Antoine says his visit to Calgary this week was a definite success. Mr. Antoine concluded a visit with representatives of Alberta's oil and gas industry yesterday by meeting with Alberta Premier Ralph Klein.

"It's another step for the GNWT towards partnering with aboriginal, provincial and federal interests in the North," Antoine said. "Harnessing our economic potential and taking control of our resources are essential components of our Western Agenda - but by achieving this goal we will also benefit the country as a whole, particularly Alberta."

Mr. Antoine and Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development minister Stephen Kakfwi met this week with Alberta-based energy companies and industry groups, including the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and the chairman of the National Energy Board. Mr. Antoine also took time to meet with northern stakeholders in the resource sector.

"It was an excellent opportunity to discuss our vision of the future with the individuals and companies operating in our backyard," Antoine said. "The development of the oil and gas sector will mean a better quality of life for both aboriginal and non aboriginal northerners."

Mr. Antoine said he's encouraged by the support he received from Mr. Klein, and representatives of the oil and gas industry. He hopes that by fostering partnerships with aboriginal groups and building on connections made in Calgary, the territorial government can advance discussions on resource royalties with the federal government.

"I'm optimistic, he said, "that by continuing in this spirit of co-operation and partnership, agreement will be reached on this vital issue."

It was the first such visit for Mr. Antoine since his election as Premier of the NWT. "It's always good to meet face to face," he said.

For more information contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive – GNWT
(867) 669-2302



99-017

National Aboriginal Television Network Approved

YELLOWKNIFE (February 24) – The Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has announced that the application for a national Aboriginal programming network, to be known as the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), has been approved.

On February 22nd, the CRTC announced its approval of the application by Television Northern Canada (TVNC) to operate a new network for basic cable service and direct-to-home satellite systems across Canada, effective September 1999.

“This decision recognizes the integral and vital role that Aboriginal people play in our nation,” said Charles Dent, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. “Just as TVNC programming has helped build cultural pride and an understanding of Aboriginal issues within the non-Aboriginal population in the North, APTN will provide both a voice for all Canadian Aboriginal cultures and a positive exposure to non-Aboriginal Canadians.”

Mr. Dent says he’s particularly excited by the training and employment opportunities the new national network will offer. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is working with the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), the Native Communications Society of the Western NWT (NCS) and the Inuvialuit Communications Society (ICS), to identify and meet immediate training needs.

The Department, in partnership with the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. (Cancom), TVNC and the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, has produced an advanced training program for northern Aboriginal producers, directors, writers and technicians. Scholarships will be offered to 12 northern Aboriginal broadcasters who will participate in an intense, two-week, advanced production training pilot program. The course, scheduled to begin in late May, will mark an evolution in its approach to training and support for the career development of Northern Aboriginal Broadcasters.

For further information, contact: **Peter Crass**
Broadcasting Coordinator
Education and Culture Branch
Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7499
Fax: (867) 873-0155



99-018

NWT Social Work Week - March 1-7, 1999

YELLOWKNIFE (March 2) -- Minister of Health and Social Services, Kelvin Ng and President of the Northwest Territories Association of Social Workers, Nuelle Novick, are encouraging all Northerners to recognize the valuable contribution that social workers make to our communities during NWT Social Work Week, March 1-7, 1999.

Approximately 120 social workers are employed across the Northwest Territories. Many work for regional health and social services boards and provide important services in the areas of mental health, community wellness, child protection, counseling, crisis intervention and community development. Social workers can also be found in hospitals, correctional centres, treatment centres, family violence shelters, local Band offices and providing private counseling.

"Social workers are a vital part of the health and social services system," said Mr. Ng. "We need to recognize the important role they play in our community and offer them our thanks and support for the work they do to keep our communities well." Ms. Novick echoes the Minister's supportive comments: "We need to appreciate the roles social workers play in our communities," she says.

The NWT Association of Social Workers was re-established in October 1998 as an independent professional association intended to promote the profession of social work in the Northwest Territories. The Association currently has approximately 82 registered members across the NWT.

Social Work Week is being celebrated this month by provincial and territorial social work associations across Canada. A number of activities are planned in communities across the NWT to honour social workers. Please contact your local health and social services board or the NWT Association of Social Workers for more information about how you can get involved in local Social Work Week activities.

For more information, contact:

Chris Keeley

Director, Human Resources and Board Support
Department of Health and Social Services
Government of the Northwest Territories
Phone: 867-920-3297
Fax: 867-873-0461

Blair Dunbar

Northwest Territories Association of Social Workers
Phone: 867-873-5707
Fax: 867-873-8976



99-019

Thousands Accept Equal Pay Settlement Agreement Offer – Minister Extends Deadline

YELLOWKNIFE (March 3) - Finance Minister, John Todd announced today that:

- the deadline for accepting the Individual Equal Pay Settlement Agreements has been extended to March 31, 1999, and
- equal pay payments will be made to excluded employees in female-dominated class codes based on the same methodology that is used to calculate payments for employees who may be covered by the equal pay complaint.

Mr. Todd went on to say that over 3,000 current and former employees have told the GNWT that they would be accepting their Equal Pay Settlement Agreement offers. Over 2,100 have already accepted. Another 300 to 500 acceptances are expected by March 5. With this high rate of acceptance, the Minister of Finance expressed confidence that a long, expensive and disruptive litigation of the equal pay complaint could be avoided.

For further information, please contact: Herb Hunt
Director
Equal Pay and Negotiations
(867) 920-8900



99-020

Minister's Conference to Discuss Future of Northern Education

YELLOWKNIFE (March 4) – Culturally based education, community high schools and school-to-work transitions will be among the topics discussed at the upcoming Minister's Conference on Education in Fort Smith March 9-10.

Entitled *Mapping our Future*, the conference, hosted by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Charles Dent, will review the comments received by the recent Minister's Forum on Education. The results of this conference, and input from the public, will be used to update the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Strategic Plan and establish an implementation plan for the improvement of education in the North.

"This is a unique opportunity for delegates to consider the goals and priorities identified by NWT residents," Mr. Dent says, "and directly influence the educational opportunities our children will have in the future."

The Minister's Forum visited 11 western communities in the last two months to receive feedback on how residents would like to see education developed in the future. In addition to public meetings, members of the forum interviewed local leaders and educators, and conducted focus group meetings on specific issues.

"With the creation of two territories now imminent, it is a good time to take stock of past successes, and consider what new directions may be taken," Mr. Dent noted.

The two-day conference will feature an intensive schedule of workshops and plenary sessions. Topics will include Placing Education in Regional and Local Control; Building Solid Foundations; Special Needs of our Students; and Employers Needs and the Employment of Northerners.

Conference delegates will consist of representatives of aboriginal governments, public governments, communities, schools, northern business, elders, parents and students from the NWT.

For further information, please contact:

Chuck Parker
Strategic Plan Co-ordinator
Education, Culture and Employment
Phone: (867) 920-6112
Fax: (867) 873-0459



CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

As we prepare for the creation of a new territory in the Western NWT it is important that we provide clear direction for the development of an education system that is designed to prepare the youth of our territory as leaders and productive citizens. The success of the NWT is highly dependant on ensuring that we have a well educated population ready to take on the tasks of administering and leading our businesses, communities and the region as a whole. Equally important is the development of a qualified and competent workforce that can ensure our people are fully benefiting from the employment opportunities that are available.

The Minister's Conference on Education – Mapping Our Future - brings together leaders, educators, parents, students and business representatives to discuss our shared accomplishments in this regard and the challenges that remain in our system of education. We have gathered an excellent group of presenters and facilitators that will guide the sharing of information, stimulate discussions on key topics and, where possible, attempt to reach consensus on future directions. On each of the two days of the conference there will be a plenary session that provide delegates with an overview of current trends and issues in the Western NWT and how they impact the education system. As well, both afternoons of the conference include opportunities for delegates to attend small group sessions/workshops in areas of special interest. Each of these sessions/workshops will include brief presentations and allow time for delegates to explore and discuss the topic in greater detail.

Based on our consultation efforts to date, the organizers expect that consensus can be reached on many of the goals of the education system. This conference provides one of the many ways in which we plan to explore our needs in the future. Over the coming months, we will need to develop and express a clear vision for our education system. However, to accomplish this objective we also require the support and partnership of many other organizations in the north to continue to improve our educational services. Throughout the conference presenters and facilitators will be asked to seek out ways in which organizations and individuals can establish partnerships and make contributions toward.

The organizers of the conference are pleased with the response received from the many organizations that have been invited to send delegates to the Conference. It is expected that this conference will be talked about for years to come as one of the primary foundations responsible for *Mapping Our Future* as a new Western Territory.



99-021

Popular Homeownership Pilot Program Extended

YELLOWKNIFE (March 4) -- In response to the overwhelming popularity of the Minimum Downpayment Assistance Pilot Program (MDAPP), the Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Goo Arlooktoo, confirmed today that the GNWT has extended the deadline for applications until June 30, 1999.

This program has been very successful, Mr. Arlooktoo said. "Thanks to this grant, many families, that would not have otherwise been able to buy houses, have done so and can now truly call the North their home."

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation introduced MDAPP on December 1, 1998. The pilot program, original set to close March 31, 1999, provides grants to potential NWT homebuyers to assist them with the down payment on a new home.

Residents in the West are eligible for grants of \$10,000, while those in Nunavut can receive \$15,000. Individuals buying homes in the western communities of Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk, Holman Island and Tuktoyaktuk can also receive the higher grant due to the increased cost of housing in their communities.

Since its launch, more than 300 families have taken advantage of the MDAPP program to buy homes. This has resulted in over \$39 million worth of real estate transactions in the past three months.

"Even these figures do not show the full extent of economic activity that this program has created," Mr. Arlooktoo noted, "There has also been increased opportunities for related industries like painting companies, flooring specialists and furniture sales for example."

For more information contact: Doug Johnson
Public Affairs Coordinator
NWT Housing Corporation
(867) 873-7854



99-022

Northern Addictions Services Agrees to Wind Down Adult Addictions Treatment Program

YELLOWKNIFE (March 9) — The Minister of Health and Social Services, Kelvin Ng, announced today that the Department of Health and Social Services and Northern Addictions Services (NAS) have agreed to look into options for restructuring its current Alcohol and Drug Addictions Treatment Program to better meet the needs of the people of the NWT.

As part of ongoing reforms to the way Northerners receive addictions services, NAS has voluntarily agreed to wind down its current adult addictions treatment program and to consider options for reprofiling its treatment facility in Dettah. NAS will continue to work with the department to define a role for its continued involvement in alcohol and drug services.

A territory-wide addictions reform initiative has been underway since April 1997 to improve all aspects of addictions services in the NWT. Changes under this initiative include the move to per-diem based-funding and the introduction of a single point of entry to addictions services. Other reforms include standardising assessment and placement methods, developing new standards for treatment services and improving funding for community- and facility-based services.

Northern Addictions Services will continue to work with the department, health and social services boards and other stakeholders as part of this reform process. A working group has been established to look into alternative means for providing NWT residents with the most effective addictions treatment services possible. The working group will make recommendations on future options and addictions treatment models to the Minister by March 31, 1999.

Northern Addictions Services has agreed to work with the Department of Health and Social Services to identify and address any possible safety concerns clients might have. The department has agreed to provide additional resources to NAS to increase staffing levels at its Alcohol and Drug Treatment facility in Dettah to help ensure the safety of all NAS clients as it winds down its adult addictions treatment program.

For more information, contact:

**Catherine Praamsma
Assistant Deputy Minister
Dept. of Health and Social Services
Phone: (867) 873-7737**



99-023

Tentative Agreement Reached on the Northwest Territories Power Corporation

YELLOWKNIFE (March 12) - The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Charles Dent, announced today that a tentative agreement has been reached on the future operation of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

Officials for the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Interim Commissioner of Nunavut, the Western Coalition and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated have been holding discussions for the past year on the future of the Corporation after Division. Following a further round of meetings in Iqaluit earlier this month, a consensus was reached on a two-year Transition agreement.

"I am very pleased that we have been able to deal with the very complex issues concerning the future operation of the Corporation," Mr. Dent said. "All parties are to be commended for the efforts they made to reach this consensus".

The agreement provides for the corporation to continue operations as it does today, as a single corporation providing electrical power in both territories. This agreement provides a one-year period for the two new governments to assess their options for the long-term delivery of power in their respective territories, including a long-term agreement on a joint corporation. If an agreement is not reached during this period, the agreement allows for a further one-year period to allow for the orderly wind-down of a single corporation.

"The issue of cost-effective power has been a critical principle guiding the Government of the Northwest Territories during these negotiations. I am extremely pleased that we will be able to look at a long-term agreement for a joint corporation once the Government of Nunavut formally comes into existence on April 1, 1999", Mr. Dent said.

A number of important steps remain before the transition agreement can be finalized including the passage of implementation legislation in the Legislative Assembly. In addition, pursuant to the *Nunavut Act* the agreement must receive Governor in Council approval by the federal government. Both these steps must be taken prior to April 1, 1999.

For further information contact: Richard Bargery
Assistant Deputy Minister
Division Secretariat
(867) 920-3322



99-024

GNWT Signs Geoscience Agreement

YELLOWKNIFE (March 16) – The Government of the Northwest Territories signed a geoscience agreement today at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Annual Meeting in Toronto. The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi, and officials from RWED are attending the meeting, which draws together representatives of the Canadian mineral exploration and development industry.

"This agreement means a closer working relationship between the agencies involved in providing geoscience and geological services in the Northwest Territories," Mr. Kakfwi said. "This will benefit not only the mining industry but also the northern business community through increased exploration activity."

The Tri-lateral Geoscience Accord establishes a general framework for co-operation and collaboration between the GNWT, the Geological Survey of Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The five-year agreement allows the territorial and federal governments to co-ordinate and maximize their geoscience operations in the Northwest Territories.

One of the first projects covered by the Accord is the establishment of the CS Lord Northern Geoscience Centre. The centre will be located in Yellowknife. It will provide a broad range of geoscience and geology services to support the mineral exploration industry and various public agencies in land use planning decisions.

For further information contact: Joseph Handley
Deputy Minister
Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048
Fax: (867) 873-0563



99-025

Improved Access Business Incentive Policy Information

YELLOWKNIFE (March 18) – For the first time, northern business owners and the public will soon have instant access to information about the Business Incentive Policy through the Internet website of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

The Business Incentive Policy (BIP) provides a preference and a bid adjustment for registered northern businesses bidding on Government of the Northwest Territories contracts.

Beginning April 1, the website (www.gov.nt.ca/RWED/ti/bip) will provide detailed information about the BIP, the criteria for northern business status, how the incentive is applied and an electronic registration form. In addition, more than 2,000 approved northern businesses are listed in the BIP registry. They represent various economic sectors in the NWT including; Travel and Tourism; Fisheries; Forestry; Trade and Services; Construction; Manufacturing; Agriculture; Transportation; and Communications.

“The Business Incentive Policy is an important element of the government’s support for northern business owners,” Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Stephen Kakfwi said. “Using technology to provide a central source of information makes it easier to meet the needs of government and industry.”

The website also features, for the first time, a list of products made in the Northwest Territories and their manufacturers and information on the Canada/NWT Business Service Centre.

For further information, please contact: Joseph Handley
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048
Fax: (867) 873-0563



99-026

Education Week March 24-31

YELLOWKNIFE (March 24) – March 24 to 31 is Education Week in the Northwest Territories, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Charles Dent announced today.

“The celebration of education week is the perfect opportunity for us to recognize the efforts and hard work of all those involved in the provision of quality education to our residents,” Dent said. “The purpose of education week is to increase the public’s understanding of the importance of education, and highlight the components of a well-rounded education.”

The theme for this year’s Education Week is “Creating Two Territories”. Schools throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut received packages with promotional items and a book containing suggestions for school and family activities.

Some activities planned in northern schools to celebrate this important theme include breakfasts or elders teas, career talks, fashion shows, plays, school visits by elders or MLAs and science fairs. Schools have also been encouraged to involve their communities with guided tours and job shadowing opportunities.

For further information, contact: **Fiona O’Donoghue**
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Early Childhood and School Services
Education, Culture and Employment
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99-027

Premier Announces New Cabinet Portfolios

YELLOWKNIFE (March 30) -- Premier Jim Antoine today announced new portfolios for the Northwest Territories' Executive Council. The Premier made the announcement following the swearing-in ceremony for the two new members of Cabinet selected yesterday: Nunakput MLA Vince Steen and Thebacha MLA Michael Miltenberger.

"The members of this Cabinet come from every region of the new Northwest Territories," Mr. Antoine said. "They reflect a wide variety of political and life experiences -- each member brings their unique and valuable perspective to Cabinet. This will be vital as we build a new Northwest Territories that reflects the aspirations of all people."

Mr. Steen and Mr. Miltenberger were chosen by their colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to replace the four departing members of Cabinet who represent eastern districts.

"The next few months will test all members of Cabinet as we make the transition to a new territory," Mr. Antoine said. "I thank Mr. Steen and Mr. Miltenberger for taking up this challenge. I am sure their constituents, and all northerners, will be proud of them."

The portfolios:

Hon. Jim Antoine: Premier; Executive; Aboriginal Affairs

Hon. Floyd Roland: Health and Social Services; Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation; Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi: Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED); Justice; Minister Responsible for National Constitutional Affairs

Hon. Charles Dent: Finance; Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board Secretariat; Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation; Minister Responsible for the Women's Directorate

.../2

Premier announces new Cabinet portfolios: Page 2

Hon. Michael Miltenberger: Education, Culture and Employment; Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board; Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board; Minister Responsible for Youth

Hon. Vince Steen: Transportation; Public Works and Services; Municipal and Community Affairs

In addition to the statutory positions listed above, Mr. Antoine will also be responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Roland will be the Deputy Premier and will be responsible for Social Policy Renewal, Mr. Dent will be the Government House Leader.

For more information contact: Judy Langford

Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-028

New Principal Secretary Appointed

YELLOWKNIFE (March 30) - Premier Jim Antoine announced today a change in the composition of his senior staff.

Richard Bargery, formerly the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Division Secretariat, has been appointed as Principal Secretary effective March 31, 1999.

"Richard brings a wealth of experience to the position. Most notably he was instrumental in the negotiation of agreements that will allow for the smooth transition to two new territories," Mr. Antoine said.

Mr. Bargery replaces Paul Bachand. Mr. Bachand is a long-time northern lawyer, both in private practice and with the Department of Justice. Prior to becoming Principal Secretary, he was the Executive Assistant to the Honourable Goo Arlooktoo. Mr. Bachand will be returning to his position as Legal Counsel with the Department of Justice, once he recovers from serious injuries sustained in a recent accident.

"Paul has done an excellent job, both for me and Acting Premier Goo Arlooktoo. I have benefited greatly from his sound advice, common sense and sense of humour," Mr. Antoine said.

The Principal Secretary is the Premier's most senior advisor, a position that requires long hours and frequent travel.

"This is an extremely demanding position and, in all fairness, I could not ask Paul to continue while he is recovering from his accident," Mr. Antoine said. "I look forward to his returning to work for the territorial government in another capacity when his health permits and I wish him a speedy and complete recovery."

For more information contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-029

New Deputy Ministers Appointed

YELLOWKNIFE (March 31) – Premier Jim Antoine today announced changes to the senior management of the public service.

Peter Vician replaces Ron Williams as Deputy Minister of Transportation. Mr. Vician has had a long career with the department. Most recently he was the Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations.

Fred Koe moves from the position of Deputy Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to replace Glen Soloy as the President of the NWT Development Corporation. Charles Overvold will be the Acting Deputy Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

For more information contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-030

MACA Releases Canadian Consumer Handbook in NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (April 7) – The GNWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs participated in the joint release of a new Canadian Consumer Handbook today.

The Canadian Consumer Handbook offers information and advice to help consumers learn about their rights, make informed decisions and protect themselves from unscrupulous dealers.

“As consumers, it is important that we understand our rights and be aware of the standards we can expect,” said Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Vince Steen. “I am pleased that the GNWT was able to participate in the development of this resource - particularly in light of its benefit to northern consumers.”

Ministers responsible for consumer affairs at the territorial, provincial and federal levels produced the handbook to provide consumers with reliable information when making difficult decisions in today’s competitive marketplace.

The handbook covers a wide range of information from how to write an effective complaint letter to information on travel and consumer privacy. A unique feature of the new book is a Canada-wide directory of contacts in government, business and consumer associations.

An electronic version of the handbook is located on Industry Canada’s Consumer Connection web site at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/oca>.

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is distributing the handbook to all community governments, seniors organizations, the RCMP, the NWT Chamber of Commerce, schools and libraries throughout the NWT.

For more information, contact:

Michael Gagnon
Consumer Affairs Officer
Municipal and Community Affairs
(867) 873-7125



99-031

GNWT Asks Court To Protect Northern Environment And Jobs In Royal Oak Case

YELLOWKNIFE (April 12) – The territorial government is asking the Ontario Court to protect the northern environment and preserve the viability of the Giant Mine in Yellowknife if Royal Oak Mines Ltd. is declared bankrupt this week.

Key Royal Oak creditors are due in court this afternoon. They may ask the court to declare the company bankrupt. If this happens, GNWT lawyers will ask the court to order that nothing be done that could prevent the Giant Mine from operating.

“We are deeply concerned with the environmental impact of Giant Mine and want to see reclamation begin as soon as possible,” Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi said. “We also want to see every attempt made to keep the mine operating and save the 280 jobs there.”

Representatives of the GNWT, the NWT Power Corporation and the City of Yellowknife are working on a plan that would let the clean up start this year and keep the mine operating for a fixed period while seeking a buyer. Mr. Kakfwi will meet this afternoon with Indian and Northern Affairs minister Jane Stewart to determine whether her department will participate.

“It will take time to work out the feasibility of our idea,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “We at least want a chance to do that. We also believe it is essential that INAC participate since, by their own estimates, the department is responsible for \$250 million in environmental clean up.”

For more information, contact:

Joseph Handley
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 920-8048



99-032

GNWT Responds to Royal Oak Receivership Order

YELLOWKNIFE (April 16) -- The NWT's Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi, says he's encouraged by today's court order regarding Royal Oak Mines Ltd.

Justice James Farley of the Ontario Court has appointed a receiver to oversee Royal Oak's operations. The receiver, Price Waterhouse Coopers, will keep open the properties currently in operation. This includes the Giant Mine near Yellowknife.

"We are very pleased to see that the mine will continue to operate," Mr. Kakfwi said. "Justice Farley has also shown that he recognizes the importance of Giant to the NWT by saying that the receiver needs the permission of both the territorial and federal governments or a further court order before they can close the property."

The territorial government will continue to work with all stakeholders to seek a plan to deal with the environmental concerns at Giant.

"I believe that, with careful thought and cooperation, we can find a way to deal with the environmental issues that will be acceptable to government, industry and the people of the NWT," Mr. Kakfwi said.

For more information, contact: **Joseph Handley**
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 920-8048



99-033

Finance Minister Presents First Budget of New NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (April 19) --Finance Minister Charles Dent delivered the first budget of the new NWT in the Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

“The success of our new territory will be measured by the ability of our citizens – men and women, young and old, aboriginal and non-aboriginal – to lead healthy and productive lives,” he said. The 1999-2000 financial plan reflects this vision and focuses on health care, job creation, and training.

The \$742 million budget anticipates expenditures to exceed revenues in the territory’s first year. However, Mr. Dent says this will be offset by a \$34 million dollar surplus from the GNWT’s last fiscal year. “It will give us a year to make progress on restructuring our fiscal relationship with Canada,” he said.

The economy has been affected by the global downturn in the demand for resources, the finance minister acknowledged. This has translated into slow revenue growth for the NWT. “My priority is to secure the financial tools the North must have to meet our future head on, and to succeed at making our vision for tomorrow a reality,” he said.

In the long term, Mr Dent warned, government will need additional revenue to finance growing expenditure pressures and to invest in economic development and diversification, job creation, education, health promotion and other initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for northerners.

The greatest potential for revenue growth lies in the development of the Northwest Territories’ non-renewable resources. “We need control over our resources and a greater share of the benefits they generate,” Mr. Dent said. “New fiscal arrangements and economic development will generate additional revenues that we can invest in the future of our children.”

The finance minister says the Government must work in partnership with aboriginal governments to achieve these goals. Both Mr. Dent and Premier Jim Antoine will be meeting with aboriginal leaders over the next few months to discuss these issues.

For further information, contact:

Margaret Melhorn
Deputy Minister of Finance
GNWT
Tel: (867) 873-7117

Lew Voytilla
Secretary, Financial Management Board
GNWT
Tel: (867) 873-7211

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**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
1999-2000 BUDGET
HIGHLIGHTS**

Fiscal Overview

- Results for 1997-98 are substantially improved over last year's forecast. The Government finished 1997-98 with an \$84 million accumulated surplus, largely as a result of a one-time population-related adjustment to prior years' Formula Financing Grant entitlements.
- The Government anticipates a budgetary deficit of \$22 million for fiscal year 1998-99, which will allow the Government to close the year with an accumulated surplus of \$62 million, rather than the \$21 million accumulated deficit forecast in last year's budget.
- The surplus will be allocated between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut and therefore the Government of the NWT will start its new existence with a \$34 million accumulated surplus.
- The 1999-2000 budget for the new Northwest Territories includes planned expenditures of \$742 million, about 60 per cent of the 1998-99 expenditures of the combined territories. These expenditures will be financed by revenues of \$708 million, and by the accumulated surplus of \$34 million.
- Recent economic conditions in the Northwest Territories have resulted in revenues which are low compared with spending needs.

Meeting Economic and Social Challenges

- The Northwest Territories faces numerous challenges in the coming decades – ensuring there are jobs for our large population of young people; ensuring these young people have the education and skills required for these jobs; providing access to adequate health care and housing for all residents, young and old; and improving our corrections and community justice systems.
- The 1999-2000 Budget contains measures designed to address these challenges now, and to lay the groundwork for future success. Key initiatives include:
 - \$3 million over the next two years to providing salary incentives to attract and retain nurses;
 - \$3.2 million for other initiatives to address the shortage of health and social services professionals in the NWT – scholarships, training and other measures which will make providing care in the NWT a more attractive career choice;
 - \$1.4 million to promote the establishment of a diamond value-added industry in the NWT;
 - \$1.2 million to maintain the pupil-teacher ratio in NWT schools;

- \$1 million to extend the Working Together program for a further year – this program provides employers with a wage subsidy to hire northern students and youth;
- \$1 million to continue the Investing in People Program – providing adult basic education and job-related skills training to income support clients as well as financial support to community-based work activity projects;
- \$1.5 million to support the implementation of a comprehensive plan for community justice and corrections services; and
- \$700,000 for community fire prevention and safety measures.

Meeting Fiscal Challenges

- Current economic conditions in the NWT mean that revenues will grow slowly over the next few years, but expenditure pressures for education, health care and other social programs will grow quickly.
- Without a new source of revenues, the Government will be unable to fund these spending demands. Nor will the Government have the resources to invest in the growth and diversification of the NWT economy to ensure that there are jobs in the future.
- However, the budget includes no tax increases. Tax increases would generate only a small portion of the revenues needed, and would hinder economic growth by making the NWT less competitive with other jurisdictions.
- To increase the revenues available for investment in the future of the NWT, northerners must gain control of their resources and must restructure fiscal arrangements with the federal government.
- The development of the NWT's vast store of resources has the potential to generate significant fiscal benefits. However, under current fiscal arrangements, little of these benefits will stay in the north. The federal government will gain over 90 per cent of the fiscal benefits from current and projected diamond production.
- Furthermore, because they have little say in the management of their resources, northerners lose out. Greater northern control will increase the size of the fiscal pie, not only for northern governments, but also for the federal government.
- The Minister of Finance has called on Aboriginal governments to work together with the Government of the NWT to redefine the federal government's role in northern development and to show how northerners can do better with control over their resources.



99-034

Appointments to NWT Development Corporation Board

YELLOWKNIFE (April 29) -- The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi, today announced three appointments to the NWT Development Corporation board of directors.

The three new members are: Harry Elias of Inuvik, Liz Wyman of Yellowknife and Pat Ekpakohak of Holman Island. They join directors Joy Stewart of Hay River, Eric Menicoche of Fort Simpson, Larry Firth of Fort McPherson, Denise Yuhas of Fort Smith and Danny McNeely of Norman Wells.

Today's appointments bring the number of directors to eight. The legislation that governs the Development Corporation requires a board of between seven and 12 members.

"This board of directors reflects the diversity of the Northwest Territories," Mr. Kakfwi said. "Its members come from every region of the NWT and bring with them a variety of business and life experiences."

For further information, please contact:

Fred Koe
President
NWT Development Corporation
(867) 920-7700



99-035

Crystals and Gems Shine at Heritage Centre Exhibit

YELLOWKNIFE (May 04) – Explore the world of crystals and gemstones at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre from April 16 to June 23.

“From Crystals to Gems” is a travelling exhibit, sponsored by the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND). It features treasures from the Canadian Mineral Collection and instructional activities for kids of all ages.

Visitors will learn more about the world of crystals, how they grow, and their diversity in form and colour. They will be introduced to gemstones, including diamonds, and discover where these minerals are found in Canada.

Northern geologists will act as guides for school tours. School tours of the exhibit are being co-ordinated by the Princes of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

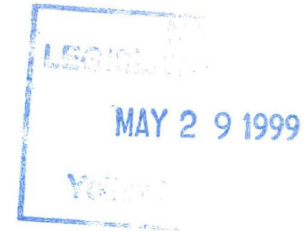
For further information, contact:

Scott Matheson

Mineral, Oils and Gas Division
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-3217
Fax: (867) 873-0254

Wendy Stephenson

Curator, Education and Extension Services
Prince of Wales Heritage Centre
Tel: (867) 920-3255



99-036

GNWT makes financial support available for Electoral Boundaries appeal

YELLOWKNIFE (May 6) – The Government of the Northwest Territories is offering financial support to two parties involved in a possible appeal of the recent court decision concerning the NWT’s electoral boundaries.

The court action was initiated by a group of northern residents called the Friends of Democracy. In March, Mr. Justice Mark de Weerd of the NWT Supreme Court ruled that the electoral boundaries for two districts in Yellowknife and the one for Hay River violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The intervenors in the case (the Aboriginal Summit, Métis Nation, the Dene Nation, the North Slave Métis Alliance, Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, and the Lutsel K’e Dene Band) are now asking the court’s permission to appeal the decision. The intervenors do not have an automatic right of appeal.

“Ever since the court made its ruling, we have said we would provide assistance if the other parties involved wanted to go ahead with an appeal,” Premier Jim Antoine said. “After careful review of the decision, the government has chosen not to appeal. However, the intervenors may have issues of concern to all residents of the NWT that should be considered by the courts. In the interest of resolving those issues, we are prepared to offer limited financial assistance to the intervenors and to the Friends of Democracy.”

The government is offering each group a further \$50,000 to offset their legal costs for an appeal. The government has also made available \$50,000 to offset previously incurred legal costs.

“We are offering to help the Friends of Democracy because we recognize that, as a group of private individuals, they do not have the means to pay extensive legal costs and would suffer personal financial loss for taking part in this debate,” Mr. Antoine said.

In compliance with Justice de Weerd’s decision, the government introduced **Bill 15 An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act**. This bill proposes to add three additional seats to Yellowknife and one each to Inuvik and Hay River. This bill is currently before the Standing Committee on Government Operations for review.

For further information, please contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-037

National Nurses Week — May 10-16, 1999

YELLOWKNIFE (May 10) – This is National Nurses Week and May 13, 1999 has been identified as Aboriginal Nurses Day. GNWT Minister of Health and Social Services Floyd Roland is encouraging all Northerners to recognize the valuable contribution that nurses make to their communities.

“Nurses continue to provide professional health care in the face of demands on their time and resources,” said Mr. Roland. “Increased vacancy rates and turnover across the NWT mean that nurses must work harder to provide the care that people need. We all need to offer them our support and recognize them for the work they do in helping to keep all Northerners healthy.”

Nurses are a vital part of the NWT health and social services system, helping all Northerners lead healthy and productive lives. Through public health, health promotion and disease prevention activities, they play an important role in keeping our communities healthy. When needed, nurses provide assessment, diagnosis, treatment and even emergency care in health centres and hospitals across the NWT.

Nurses are the first point of contact with the health and social services system for many people in the NWT. Northern nurses make up almost 85% of NWT health care workers. They must have specialized training and broader experiences to provide the wide range of services expected of them.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is taking action to support northern nurses. A \$1.9 million recruitment and retention initiative is focused on recruiting more nurses and health and social services professionals for the NWT, providing increased support for front-line workers and encouraging Northerners to pursue health and social services careers. In addition, the Government of the NWT has committed \$3 million in compensation over the next two years to help reduce nursing vacancies and high turnover.

For more information, contact:

Chris Keeley

Director, Human Resources and Board Support

Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 920-3297

Fax: (867) 873-0461



99-038

Alaskans Agree to Buy Homes Made in the NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (May 12) - The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC), Floyd K. Roland, announced today that the Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation Development Company (UICDC) of Alaska's North Slope has agreed to purchase six housing packages from the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Roland said, "The Housing Corporation showed the Alaskans that it could provide homes for a lower cost than their suppliers in the lower 48 States."

The estimated value of the sale is over \$680,000. Contracts for these six housing packages are expected to be signed in the near future following final design changes. The packages will contain products manufactured in the Northwest Territories, assembled by NWT suppliers and shipped to Alaska down the Mackenzie River on the barges of the Northern Transportation Company Limited. The packages are expected to hit the beach in Barrow, Alaska in July.

This sale is the first direct result of marketing activities carried out by the NWT Housing Corporation for more than a year. It is expected that more sales will follow.

"As more housing packages are sold to the Alaskans there will be a direct benefit to our residents as the profits from these sales will be used to improve social housing here in the NWT," Mr. Roland said. "This sale shows that the NWT does have a viable economy and that skills, technologies and services developed here can be sold to other parts of the world."

For more information contact:

Doug Johnson
Public Affairs Coordinator
NWT Housing Corporation
(867) 873-7854



99-039

First Graduates for Secondary Diamond Industry

YELLOWKNIFE (May 17) – A Celebration of Learning was held Friday evening for the first graduates of the Aurora College Introduction to Diamonds program. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, joined representatives of the diamond industry, department officials, family and friends in honouring the students in a ceremony held in the Legislative Assembly's Great Hall.

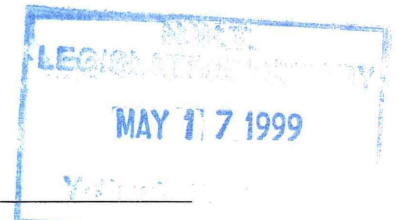
“This is a first step to ensuring northerners are ready for jobs in the secondary diamond industry,” Miltenberger said. “Both Sirius Diamonds and Deton’cho Diamonds Inc. are looking North for employees trained in diamond-related occupations. It’s important that we have individuals with the necessary training.”

The course, delivered at the Yellowknife Campus of Aurora College, in conjunction with the Diamond High Council of Antwerp (HRD), is the first of its kind in North America. Graduates received a Certificate of Achievement from Aurora College and will be recognized as certified polished diamond graders by the Diamond High Council of Antwerp.

This extremely popular sixteen-week course sports a long waiting list of willing participants. The Yellowknife Campus will offer two more courses - in September 1999 and January 2000. Participants in the course learn applied diamond crystallography, computer skills, theoretical knowledge of diamonds, the diamond industry and economics.

In attendance at the event was Jan De Kesel, Executive Director of The Diamond High Council of Canada and General Manager of The Hoge Raad Voor Diamant of Antwerp.

For further information, contact: **Hilary Jones**
Co-ordinator, Program Development
Apprenticeship, Trade and
Occupations Certification
Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 920-3422
Fax: (867) 873-0200





99-040

New Terminal in Holman

HOLMAN (May 18) -- An official ceremony was held today to open the new community air terminal building in Holman.

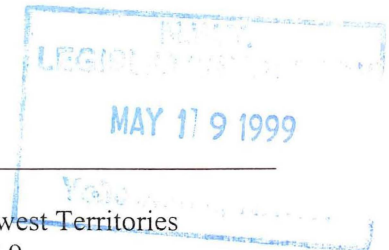
"This new facility is another example of how communities and the Department of Transportation are working together for the benefit of the travelling public and the people of Holman," said Vince Steen, Minister of Transportation and MLA for Nunakput.

The \$1.2M facility replaces the old building, built in 1979 under Transport Canada and, which has now outlived its capacity. It will provide improved passenger and baggage processing, an expanded waiting area and better accommodations for the Community Aerodrome Radio Station (CARS).

The Community of Holman was involved throughout the design and construction process with employment provided through the general contractor, Treeline Construction. Seventeen local residents, over 40% of the project's labour force, benefited from employment on the project.

The community hosted ceremonies this afternoon to commemorate the occasion. Presentations and an official ribbon cutting will be followed this evening by a social evening and dance.

For more information contact: Gurdev Jagpal
Superintendent, Inuvik Region
Department of Transportation
(867) 777-7348



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99-041

MDAPP to Close May 31

YELLOWKNIFE (May 19) - The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Floyd Roland, announced today that the Minimum Downpayment Assistance Pilot Program (MDAPP) will end May 31, 1999 because funds for the pilot program are nearly exhausted.

"When this pilot program was launched December 1, 1998, it was made clear that funding would be provided on a 'first come, first served basis'. Because of its popularity, funds for the pilot program will be exhausted by May 31, 1999," said Mr. Roland.

This date is only two weeks in advance of the Corporation's planned closing date for applications of June 15, 1999.

Since its original launch, MDAPP has helped 420 families in the Northwest Territories purchase their own homes – including 122 after the program's extension on April 1st of this year. At the present time there is only enough funding available to assist about 90 more families.

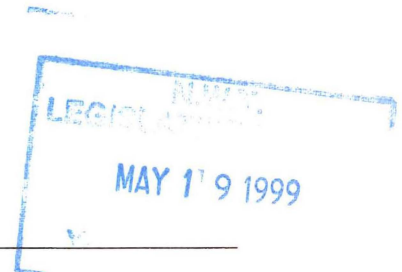
MDAPP was introduced as an economic development initiative. To date, \$4.2 million has been provided to residents in the western NWT under the pilot program. This, in turn, has generated over \$50 million in economic activity.

"The funding provided for the program is in addition to the Corporation's budget for social housing. If the pilot program were to continue, the Corporation would be forced to use funds currently set aside for social housing," Mr. Roland said.

As long as the Corporation receives their applications by May 31, 1999, prospective homeowners will have until June 30 to complete their transactions. The Corporation will be conducting a survey of all MDAPP clients as part of its evaluation of the pilot program.

For more information contact:

Doug Johnson
Public Affairs Coordinator
NWT Housing Corporation
(867) 873-7854





99-042

Survey Offers Valuable Insight for Tourism Market

YELLOWKNIFE (May 20) - The results of an extensive survey released today will provide Northern businesses with a better understanding of the NWT tourism market.

The survey gathered data about visitor demographics, activity and expenditure patterns. It was conducted between June 1 and September 30, 1998 in six different NWT communities – Yellowknife, Fort Providence, Hay River/Enterprise, Fort Simpson, Inuvik/Tsiigehtchic and Norman Wells.

“Tourism is a vital part of our northern economy,” said Stephen Kakfwi, the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. “The survey results will help tourism managers make decisions that improve their businesses and ultimately benefit all NWT residents.”

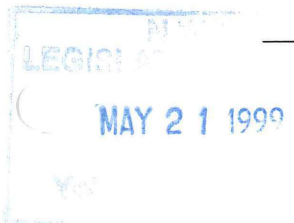
Survey results indicate an estimated 49,000 non-resident visitors traveled to the western NWT during the 1998 summer season, an increase of more than 13 percent from 1994. Their average stay was nearly nine days, during which they spent an average of \$858.02 per person.

A total of 3,386 surveys of non-resident NWT visitors were conducted in various tourism-related facilities such as community airports, visitor’s centres, campgrounds and hotels. The results reflect the opinions, activities and behaviors of some 8,076 people.

The survey showed that most people started thinking about coming to the NWT nearly 24 months in advance of their travel date. Seventy-three per cent of those surveyed indicated they would visit the NWT again. Seventy-six per cent of respondents came for pleasure and/or to visit friends and relatives, while twenty-four per cent were in the NWT for business purposes. Seventy-eight per cent of the respondents were from Canada, a five percent increase from 1994, while the number of respondents from the United States dropped in 1998 from 17 to 15%.

For further information contact:

Dan Grant
Parks and Tourism
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-3245
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Email: daniel_grant@gov.nt.ca





99-043

GNWT Supports Feature Movie Production

Yellowknife (May 20) – The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is investing in a feature movie about the relationship between an 18th century governor of the Northwest Territories and his aboriginal companion.

“The Wounding” is based on a 1986 stage play about Samuel Hearne and his Chipewyan friend, Matonabee. It was written and produced by Yellowknife resident, Alex Czarnecki, President of Tri-Vanguard Pictures.

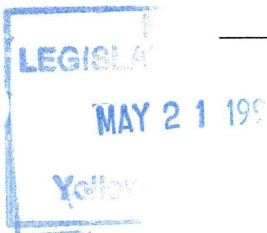
The GNWT has committed \$100,000 for further script development, location scouting, casting, and other pre-production activities associated with “The Wounding.” Funding is being provided to Treeline Trappings Ltd., a subsidiary of the Dene Cultural Institute, which will be a limited partner in the venture. The contribution must be fully repaid if “The Wounding” goes into production. The government’s support is conditional upon Tri-Vanguard obtaining adequate financing to complete the \$1.1 million pre-production phase of its motion picture. The company plans to seek financing for the production and distribution of the film from other sources.

If the project proceeds to the production stage, it is anticipated that a major portion will be filmed in the Northwest Territories.

“This is a unique opportunity to present a significant part of Canadian history as it relates to Aboriginal Canadians,” said the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi. “The potential economic benefits of filming in the North and the related spin-off benefits are substantial. This combination provided a compelling reason to provide assistance in this manner,” Mr. Kakfwi said.

Academy Award nominee, Zachary Sklar, who wrote the Oliver Stone movie, “JFK”, is writing the screenplay for “The Wounding,” which is set in the Northwest Territories and England in the 18th century and today.

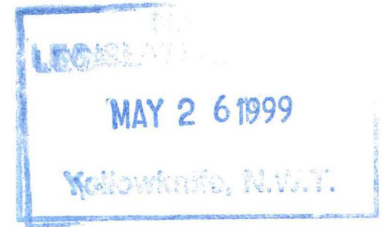
For further information, contact: **Mr. Joseph Handley**
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048
Fax: (867) 873-0563



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99-044



Dust Control Increased on the Dempster

INUVIK (May 26) - The GNWT Department of Transportation will increase its level of dust control on the Dempster Highway this season, Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen, announced today.

“This reinforces our commitment to provide safe, upgraded road systems for the traveling public and communities along the highway,” he said.

Between June 9th and June 23rd, the length of highway receiving dust palliatives will be increased from the current 29 kilometres to a total of 106 kilometres.

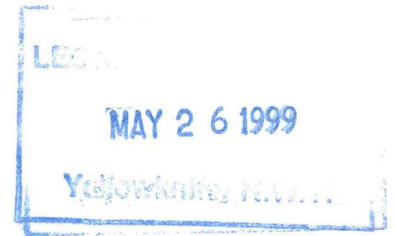
The increased control will reduce dust clouds in the treated sections and provide added visibility to motorists on the highway. This will substantially reduce the stress of driving on the Dempster and is expected to increase the volume of tourist traffic while, reducing the loss of crushed gravel by the department.

For more information contact:

Gurdev Jagpal
Superintendent, Inuvik Region
Department of Transportation
(867) 777-7348



99-045



Progress Report - Phase I National Child Benefit

YELLOWKNIFE (May 26) – GNWT Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger today released a Progress Report on Phase I of the National Child Benefit (NCB) Program. It was introduced earlier this month at the Social Services Minister's Meeting in Quebec City.

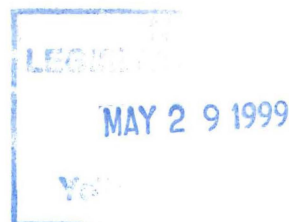
Public accountability is an essential part of the NCB program. The Government of the Northwest Territories, along with other federal provincial and territorial governments, has said that it is committed to reporting on the progress of the NCB in an open and transparent manner.

The National Child Benefit (NCB) is a joint federal/provincial/territorial program that was introduced in Canada on July 1, 1998. In the Northwest Territories, funding freed up by Phase I of the NCB was reinvested in the Northwest Territories Child Benefit (NWTCB), including the Territorial Workers Supplement.

Phase II of the NCB is slated to begin on July 1, 1999. This year in the NWT, funds freed up by Phase II will be reinvested into the Healthy Children Initiative: a program that provides funding for community based early childhood and early intervention programs.

For further information, contact:

Linda Ecklund
Program Analyst
Income Support Division
Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7746
Fax: (867) 873-0443



99-046

Northern Leaders to Discuss Co-operation Agreements

YELLOWKNIFE (May 28) -- The leaders of Canada's northern territories want to explore joint approaches to issues that affect their jurisdictions. The three territories have a number of interests, conditions and priorities in common that, through collaborative action, could further the interests of northern residents while building on federal and provincial relations.

"We were very pleased to take this first step in meeting together to identify issues of concern to northern people," Mr. Antoine said. "We are committed to finding common ground so we can move forward on the issues our territories share."

Premiers Jim Antoine of the Northwest Territories and Paul Okalik of Nunavut met briefly with Yukon Government Leader Piers McDonald during the Western Premiers' Conference in Drumheller to exchange preliminary thoughts on a pan-territorial cooperation agreement. The leaders agreed to meet in Iqaluit in early August to conclude a formal cooperation agreement on common priority areas. These include: northern regional economic development, federal-territorial funding and the transfer of federal powers to the territories.

Other possible areas for collaboration include trade and trade missions as well as Arctic Council and Circumpolar initiatives and priorities.

"Each of our jurisdictions has unique needs and aspirations," Mr. McDonald said. "At the same time, there are many areas where joint action may provide the best solution to the common challenges we face as northerners."

Officials from the three jurisdictions were directed to identify options for cooperation action before the leaders meet again in August.

"Working together to address our mutual interests will allow us to pool our resources," Mr. Okalik said. "I look forward to hosting my northern colleagues in Nunavut in August."

For further information, contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
GNWT Department of Executive
Tel: (867) 669-2302



99-047

Minister of Education Meets with Education Council Chairs

YELLOWKNIFE (June 1) -- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger met last week with Chairs from each of the NWT's Education Councils. The three-day meeting focused on the recently released Report of the Minister's Forum on Education, sharing information on key issues and successes, and building an accountability framework.

Mr. Miltenberger emphasized the need for action and a strong working relationship between his office and the chairs of the education councils. "We've done the studies and we know the issues. Now we need to show progress in addressing the issues," he said.

"There remains a deep concern that aspects of the school system require additional financial support," Mr. Miltenberger said. "However, there is a recognition that reinvestment in education will have to be phased in over the next few years. We have agreed to act on those issues that we can address now." Special-needs topped the list of issues that the chairs felt needed attention immediately.

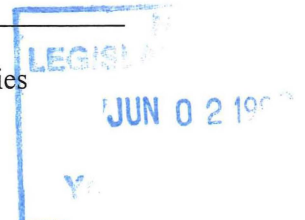
Participants at the Yellowknife meetings also discussed plans for education councils, district education authorities and the Department of Education to work together and to encourage families and communities to take a stronger role in supporting education.

"Educators and parents have shown me some really exciting and effective programs that are being used in individual schools. As a result of our discussions, we will begin sharing these ideas between education councils," Mr. Miltenberger said.

The chairs were also supported creating an accountability framework that would include an annual report of results on the education system.

Mr. Miltenberger says he plans to table a formal response to the forum report during the July sitting of the Legislative Assembly. Both parties agreed to meet again this fall to further the positive and proactive work begun at their meetings.

For further information, contact: **Mark Cleveland**
Deputy Minister,
Education Culture & Employment
Tel: (867) 920-6240





99-048

Northerner Awarded for Outstanding Achievement

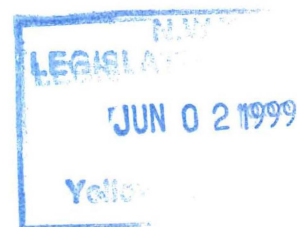
YELLOWKNIFE (June 1) -- Jack Tootoo has been awarded the first ever Karl Meyer Memorial Award for outstanding achievement in the millwright and heavy duty equipment mechanic trades for the 1997/98 school year. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger, announced today.

The award, sponsored by BHP Diamonds, will now be presented annually in memory of Karl Meyer, a long time northerner and journeyman millwright and mechanic who worked at Ekati mine until his untimely passing in February this year.

Mr. Tootoo received his Certificate of Qualification with Inter-provincial Red Seal as a heavy-duty equipment mechanic in May of 1998 and is currently employed by the Hamlet of Baker Lake. He receives a plaque and \$500 donated by BHP Diamonds.

The Karl Meyer Memorial award is one of several presented each year by the department's apprenticeship program to recognize achievements in a variety of trades.

For more information, contact: **Bryan Johnson**
Manager, Apprenticeship Program
Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7553
Fax: (867) 873-0200





99-049

GNWT to Seek Judicial Review of Tribunal Venue Decision

YELLOWKNIFE (June 2) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories will seek a judicial review of the April 30, 1999 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision to hold equal pay complaint hearings almost exclusively in Ottawa.

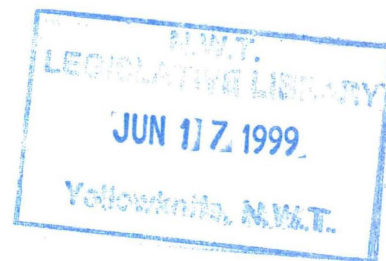
"Given that the complaint was filed against the Government of the Northwest Territories on behalf of employees in the NWT, it is difficult to understand why the Tribunal would consider holding these hearings anywhere other than the Northwest Territories." said Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board.

The Government of the Northwest Territories spent considerable time and resources providing evidence to the Tribunal concerning the importance of holding these hearings in the North. The Tribunal has acknowledged that the outcome of the hearings is at least three years away.

The Government of the Northwest Territories will argue in its application for judicial review that there were errors in law made and that the Tribunal did not arrive at the correct decision given the evidence before it.

For more information please contact:

Karen Bergman-Illnik
Executive Assistant to Charles Dent
Tel: (867) 669-2355





99-050

Equal Pay Settlement Agreements Deadline Extended

YELLOWKNIFE (June 3) -- An agreement reached with the Government of Nunavut has paved the way for the GNWT to extend its deadline for equal pay settlement agreements, Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board, Charles Dent announced today.

“The original deadline of March 31st was determined by Division,” said Mr. Dent. “Now that an agreement has been reached with the Government of Nunavut, we can accept those equal pay settlement agreements that have arrived after the deadline.” The extension applies to current and former employees in both the NWT and Nunavut. Employees that have not yet responded will be notified that they have another opportunity.

Eighty per cent of employees who received a settlement offer signed and returned their agreements by the March 31st deadline. Most have either received their payment or will receive their payment shortly. The GNWT continues to search for about 900 former employees that have not been located.

“The response to the equal-pay settlement agreements has been overwhelmingly positive,” Mr. Dent said. “We want to ensure that all eligible employees are given the opportunity to accept these offers as full settlement of their complaint.”

The Public Service Alliance of Canada filed the equal pay complaint in 1989. Several unsuccessful attempts have been made by the GNWT to negotiate a settlement. A Canadian Human Rights Tribunal will hear opening statements related to this complaint in June.

It is expected that the Tribunal Hearing will take 3-5 years. The Tribunal, which recently decided to hold their hearings almost exclusively in Ottawa, will be asked to determine if wages negotiated by the GNWT and the Union of Northern Workers were discriminatory. To date, there has been no decision that discrimination has occurred.

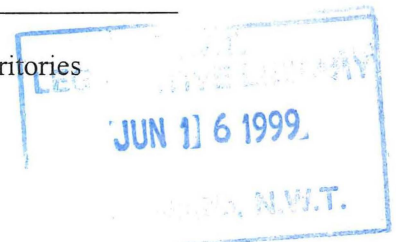
“The GNWT and the GN are continuing their efforts to resolve the equal pay complaint”, said Mr. Dent. “Continuing to accept equal pay settlement agreements is a positive step towards a final settlement.”

For more information please contact:

Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
(867) 873-7786

Karen Bergman-Illnik
Executive Assistant to Charles Dent
(867) 669-2355

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99-051

NWTTA requests Mediation in Contract Negotiations

YELLOWKNIFE (June 4) -- The NWT Teachers' Association is requesting an end to bargaining and say they want to proceed to mediation in current contract negotiations with the GNWT.

The NWTTA and the Government of the Northwest Territories began negotiations for the renewal of the collective agreement on May 4 and 5, 1999.

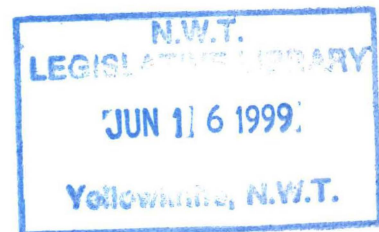
During the first round of negotiations, both parties had settled several non-monetary items. Many other issues were resolved when bargaining resumed yesterday. The current agreement expires August 31, 1999.

Mediation is provided for under the *Public Service Act* to assist the parties in resolving issues that arose during negotiations. The NWTTA and the GNWT must now reach agreement on a mediator to inquire into the differences of each party and attempt to resolve them.

The mediator will have 14 days, or as much time as parties agree to, from the date of his or her appointment in which to provide a report to the parties recommending resolution of their differences.

For further information contact: **Pat Thomas**
President
NWT Teachers' Association
Tel: (867) 873-8501

Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 873-7786





99-052

Alberta Nurses' Strike Will Not Endanger Northerners

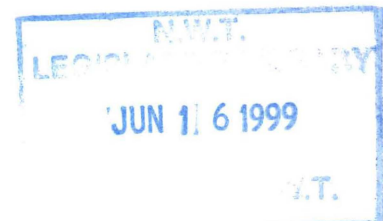
YELLOWKNIFE (June 9) -- The Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland wishes to assure all Northerners that a possible strike by Alberta nurses will not pose a threat to the health and safety of NWT residents who are currently receiving treatment or care in the province of Alberta, or who may require referral outside the NWT during a possible strike.

Alberta Health has assured the department that Northerners requiring medical services in Edmonton will continue to receive the high-quality care they need. Northerners currently receive a number of specialized medical services and acute hospital care under a contract between the Department of Health and Social Services and Edmonton's Capital Health Authority.

If it becomes necessary, Alberta Health has made arrangements to transport patients to a number of locations in the United States to receive care. Alberta Health will cover additional travel and per diem rates for patients and escorts who have to be cared for out-of-province as a result of a nurses' strike.

Critical NWT cases will continue to be referred South as required. Elective surgery and treatment from specialists may have to be delayed until the labour situation in Alberta is resolved.

.../2



Alberta Nurses' Strike Will Not Endanger Northerners: Page 2

The Department of Health and Social Services and NWT health and social services boards will continue to work closely with Alberta Health to ensure that Northerners are informed about the possible effects of a nurses' strike and continue to receive the best care possible.

For more information, please contact:

Penny Ballantyne

Deputy Minister

Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 920-6173

Fax: (867) 873-0266

or

Warren St. Germaine

Director, Financial and Management Services

Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 920-8931

Fax: (867) 920-4969



99-053

Minister Release Child Abuse Protocol Review

YELLOWKNIFE (June 10) -- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, today released the recommendations of the Child Abuse Protocol Review.

The independent review was initiated after parents raised concerns regarding the protocol employed to investigate issues of child abuse in Yellowknife schools. The review considered the application of protocol in all territorial schools including Yellowknife and provides a series of recommendations.

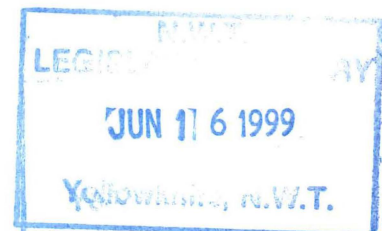
"I am working with the Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland, to consider these recommendations," Mr. Miltenberger said. "Together, we are developing a response for the Legislative Assembly in July. In meetings with the Chairs of the NWT Education Boards, I have already discussed the need for better staff orientation regarding our present protocol. They agree that this is something we need to work on."

Dan Schofield, Chair of Yellowknife Education District #1, says he's pleased with the review. "There have been questions about the protocol in our district. These recommendations will help clarify what we as board members need to do to ensure proper protocol is followed in our schools.

Mr. Miltenberger thanked everyone who participated in the review. "The established protocol is designed to protect all children," he said. "This review will ensure that our children are heard and improve the way we handle reports of abuse in the future."

For copies of the Child Abuse Protocol Public Summary or for more information, contact:

Lynn Elkin
Executive Assistant to Michael Miltenberger
Tel: (867) 669-2309





99-055

Northern Furs To Take Centre Stage

YELLOWKNIFE (June 11) - Northern wild fur will take centre stage at a fashion show celebrating the launch of the "Genuine Mackenzie Valley Furs" label.

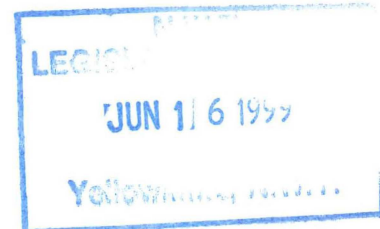
"Northern wild fur is some of the finest in the world, " says Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED). "Marketing it as a unique, high grade commodity will breathe new life into the NWT trapping industry."

The show, sponsored by RWED and the NWT Metis Nation, will feature garments and accessories manufactured exclusively with northern wild fur. It will be held in conjunction with the Fur Institute of Canada's Annual General Meeting in Yellowknife June 10-13, and will showcase the work of several northern designers and companies, including D'Arcy Moses of Fort Simpson, Dene Fur Clouds from Fort Providence, Aklavik/Tuk Furs and Kristina Bourque of Yellowknife.

The NWT Fur Fashion Show will be held June 11 7:00 PM at the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre in Yellowknife.

For more information, contact: **Francois Rossouw**
Fur Management Officer
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 873-7478

Gary Bohnet
President
Metis Nation, NWT
(867) 873-3505





99-056

New Appointments – Status of Women Council

YELLOWKNIFE (June 15) -- The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Charles Dent today announced the appointment of four new members and re-appointed two existing members to the Status of Women Council of the Northwest Territories.

The four new members of the council are Theresa Etchinelle of Tulita, Harriet Geddes of Fort Providence, Jean Ekpakohak of Holman and Bernadette Lockhart of Lutsul K'e. Re-appointed to the board are Vi Beck of Yellowknife and Tessie Gonzales of Hay River.

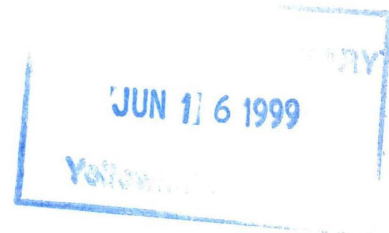
“Each of these members has shown a proven commitment to improving the quality of life for their communities and brings a wealth of experience to their new appointments,” Mr. Dent said. “I am confident that they will meet their challenges with the same level of energy and commitment that characterized the last council.”

Many outstanding women were nominated for positions on the council. Among those chosen are women who have established their own businesses and held political office. Most have been active on a variety of boards and with numerous local agencies.

The Board will meet in Yellowknife June 26 & 27 to decide on a new President and Vice-President.

For more information contact:

Bertha Norwegian
Special Advisor to the
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
(867) 920-3106.





99-057

Diavik Talks Postponed

YELLOWKNIFE (June 15) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories is postponing discussions on a socio-economic agreement with Diavik Mines Inc. (Diavik) until a meeting occurs with Diavik's parent company: Rio Tinto Inc. and Aber Resources to set out expectations for the agreement.

Diavik is currently seeking federal government approval to establish a second diamond mine in the Northwest Territories.

The socio-economic agreement is an agreement among the five affected aboriginal organizations, the GNWT and Diavik that seeks to address four principal areas of interest: maximizing territorial employment opportunities; maximizing territorial business opportunities; ensuring secondary industry and value-added opportunities; and monitoring and mitigating community, cultural and social impacts.

It is unlikely that the GNWT will resume discussions until Diavik is given a clear mandate to finalize agreements on socio-economic matters and, particularly, on the provision of diamond rough to northern manufacturers.

"We need a firm commitment on the provision of rough diamonds to northern manufacturers," Mr. Kakfwi said this morning. "Resolution of this issue is critical to the continued support of this project by the Government of the Northwest Territories."

Although the responsibility for northern resource development remains with the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the federal government recently announced it would not make the provision of rough diamonds to northern manufacturers, a condition of project approval.

The GNWT is now forced to act on its own behalf to ensure that northern interests are represented. "We have proven that a viable cutting and polishing industry in the north is achievable," Mr. Kakfwi said. "We're not prepared to allow the economic opportunities from this development to just slip by."

For more information contact: **Hon. Stephen Kakfwi**
Minister,
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 669-2366

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99-058

Kakfwi says Sirius Diamonds Facility is a Milestone

YELLOWKNIFE (June 16) – The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED), Stephen Kakfwi, spoke Monday at the ceremony opening the NWT's first diamond cutting and polishing facility.

“The opening of the Sirius Diamonds facility is a milestone in the development of the diamond industry in the NWT,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “Instead of simply exporting rough diamonds, the Northwest Territories is working towards obtaining benefits from our diamond resources in both the primary and secondary industries. The opening of Sirius Diamonds symbolizes the commitment of both the public and private sector to explore the opportunities, to take risks and to dream.”

Sirius Diamonds NWT Ltd. is the first company to cut and polish diamonds in the North. The company employs 19 people, including 15 recently trained northern residents. The plant will process diamonds from Ekati, Canada's first diamond mine, located north of Yellowknife.

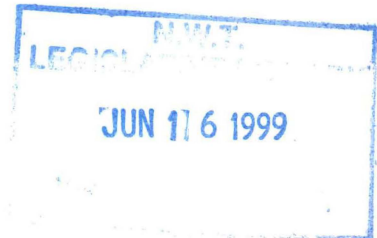
For more information, contact:

Martin Irving

Director, Diamond Projects

Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development

(867) 920-3125





99-059

New Family Housing for Thebacha Campus

YELLOWKNIFE (June 16) -- The Minister of Education Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger turned the sod this afternoon to begin construction of a new family housing complex for the Aurora College Thebacha Campus.

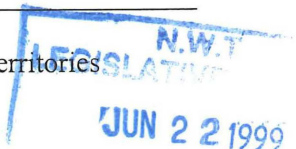
The \$3 million dollar project, built under the P3 (public private partnership) initiative, is the first such project to proceed to the contract stage. It involves the construction and leasing of twenty 3-bedroom and five 4-bedroom residential units for students and their families attending school in Fort Smith.

“The P-3 initiative has provided an opportunity for Aurora College to work closely with developers to design and develop needed accommodation for college students,” Mr. Miltenberger said. “This has resulted in a fine facility that will serve to enhance the quality of education provided by the Thebacha campus well into the next millennium.”

The P3 approach establishes partnerships between the GNWT and private sector for the provision of public infrastructure. Four companies joined together in partnership with the government to design, build, own and operate the new residential housing units in Fort Smith: Freund Building Supplies, Arcan Construction, Ferguson Simek Clark and Cambridge Consulting.

The new facility will be ready for occupancy in time for the 2000-2001 school year.

For more information contact: **Mark Cleveland**
Deputy Minister
Education Culture and Employment
(867) 920-6240





99-060

Program Attracts and Keeps Health Professionals in the NWT

Yellowknife (June 17) - Minister of Health and Social Services Floyd Roland announced today that over 40 Northerners pursuing health and social services careers have received assistance from the department's Northern Development Program.

The Northern Development Program is part of the Department of Health and Social Services Recruitment and Retention Strategy. It offers assistance to college and university students seeking summer employment and work experience practicums, as well as assistance to graduate students looking for job opportunities. The program also offers high school students the opportunity to explore possible careers in health and social services.

“Students who are trained and have job experience in the North will better serve and understand unique northern needs,” Mr. Roland said. “They will be a vital asset to the professional development of the territory.”

To date, the Northern Development Program has successfully placed all students requesting assistance. This includes 15 practicum students, 20 summer employment students and 5 graduate students. The program will also assist approximately 12 students graduating within the next few months.

Beginning next month, high school students interested in health and social services careers will have the opportunity to enter a five-week career exposure program. Students from across the NWT will job shadow health and social services professionals throughout the Western Arctic. Students will acquire first-hand experience and knowledge of what these careers have to offer.

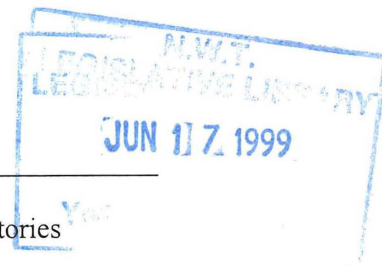
“The Northern Development Program is a long-term investment in health and social services in the North,” Mr. Roland said.

For more information, please contact:

Nell Vrolyk
Manger,
Recruitment and Retention
Health and Social Services
Phone: (867) 920-8901
Fax: (867) 873-0461

or

Rick Upton
A/Director
Human Resources and Board Support
Health and Social Services
Phone: (867) 920-3074
Fax: (867) 873-0461



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99-061

Merkosak Appointed Acting Chairperson of Power Corp

HAY RIVER (June 22) -- Pond Inlet businessman Simon Merkosak has been appointed Chairman of the NWT Power Corporation on an acting basis effective July 1.

Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, and Ed Picco, Minister Responsible for the Nunavut Power Corporation made the announcement today at a Corporation Board meeting in Hay River.

Mr. Merkosak, 44, was first appointed to the Board in May 1996, and was appointed vice-chairman in December 1997. He assumes the chair from Pierre Alvarez, who had held the position since April 1996. Mr. Alvarez was recently appointed president of the Calgary-based Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, but will be staying on the Power Corporation Board as a regular member.

"This is an important period of transition for the Corporation," said the ministers in a joint statement. "We are both pleased that Mr. Merkosak has accepted this challenging role and are confident that the Corporation will continue to receive sound and professional direction."

The governments of the two territories recently restarted discussions on the future of the Corporation, and possible long-term joint ownership. The Corporation has operated as a single entity, serving both Nunavut and NWT, since the new territories were created on April 1st 1999. The governments have set March 31st 2000, as the deadline for resolving this matter.

The Corporation has annual revenues of approximately \$100 million. Its 295 employees serve 25,000 customers in 54 communities with energy and related services.

For more information contact:

Karen Bergman Illnik

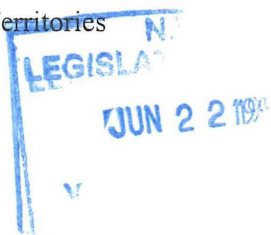
Executive Assistant to Hon. Charles Dent

Tel: (867) 669-2355

Marianne Demmer

Executive Assistant to Hon. Ed Picco

Tel: (867) 975-5003



Backgrounder

Merkosak Appointed Acting Chairperson of Power Corp

Simon Merkosak

Vice-Chairman, NWT Power Corporation

Profile:

Simon Merkosak was born at Guys Bight, traditional camp east of Pond Inlet in 1954. Married to Jeeteetah Merkosak with six children, two girls and four boys.

Education:

1962 – 1969	Primary education, Federal Day School, Pond Inlet, NU
1969 – 1972	Churchill Vocational Centre, Churchill, MB
1972 – 1975	High School, Algonquin College, Ottawa, ON
1980 – 1981	MacMaster University course, Municipal Administration, Rae-Edzo, NT
1976 – 1987	Numerous training workshops related to municipal administration

Employment History:

1975 – 1976	Hotel Manager, Toonoonik Sahooonik Co-op Ltd., Pond Inlet, NU
1976 – 1977	Assistant Senior Administration Officer, Hamlet of Pond Inlet, NU
1977 – 1987	Senior Administration Officer, Hamlet of Pond Inlet, NU Paralegal Worker, Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik
1985 – 1988	Taxi business, Merkosak Taxi
1987 – 1994	Cable business, Pond Inlet Cable T.V.
1987 – present	Construction business, Merkosak Construction Ltd.
1995 – present	Sporting goods retail store with wife, J.M. Sportswear

Elected Positions:

Chairperson, Okpik Youth Club
Director, Toonoonik Sahooonik Co-op Ltd.
Mayor, Hamlet of Pond Inlet – 1997 to 1998
Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce

Appointments:

Deputy Fire Chief
Anglican Church layperson
Community Futures Board
Community Sponsored Development Sub-committee, ED & T
NWT Power Corporation, member and vice-chairman, May 1996



99-062

Safety is Number One Focus of the Department of Transportation

YELLOWKNIFE (June 22) -- The GNWT Department of Transportation will continue to concentrate on highway inspections to maintain acceptable levels of safety on NWT highways. In a recent blitz, the percentage of NWT trucks and drivers that passed safety inspections was lower than it has been in recent years.

The annual safety inspection of commercial vehicles known as Roadcheck '99 was conducted, across Canada, the United States and Mexico June 1-3 by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) in co-operation with provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Ninety trucks and buses were inspected in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Enterprise. Twenty-three vehicles and seven drivers were removed from the highway until major defects were corrected. Twenty-six charges and three warnings were issued as a result of the violations.

"We will, at all times, ensure the safety of the travelling public," said Vince Steen, Minister of Transportation. "If individual drivers or the industry cannot take responsibility for maintaining their vehicles and driving safely they will be dealt with under highway safety-enforcement programs. We will not tolerate unsafe vehicles travelling on NWT roads."

In the Northwest Territories, heavy trucks and buses and their drivers were selected randomly and inspected using comprehensive and stringent Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance inspection criteria. Enforcement officers from the Department of Transportation, RCMP and Transport Canada's Dangerous Goods Directorate conducted the one-hour inspections.

The majority of violations in the NWT concerned brake components and driver compliance with hours of work and dangerous goods legislation.

Nationally, 77% of vehicles and 98% of drivers inspected passed inspections as part of the 72-hour joint effort to promote commercial vehicle safety.

For more information contact:

Mark Schauerte
Assistant Director
Motor Vehicles Division
Department of Transportation
867-874-5007



99-063

Minister's Appoints Forum on Health and Social Services

YELLOWKNIFE (June 28) - Floyd Roland, Minister of Health and Social Services, today appointed nine members to the Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services.

They are: Ms. Rita Cli - Fort Simpson, Mr. Don Blaquiere - Fort Smith, Mr. Duncan McNeill - Hay River
Ms. Gina Dolphus - Deline, Ms. Hazel Nerysoo - Fort McPherson, Ms. Glenna Hansen - Inuvik, Dr. Ross
Wheeler - NWT Medical Association, Ms. Dee McCallum - NWT Registered Nurses' Association and
Mr. Blair Dunbar - NWT Association of Social Workers.

"I am very pleased with the calibre of individuals nominated for the Forum," Mr. Roland said. "I am confident that they will form a very capable team."

Forum members will consult with health and social services boards, community leaders, stakeholder groups and the public on the current health and social services system and hear their views on how it can be sustained and improved in the future.

"I am very concerned about the sustainability of our health and social services system," Mr. Roland said. "I believe Northerners need to understand the costs and issues that we face. I want to make sure that all Northerners continue to have access to a high quality, responsive system that meets their needs, but is also affordable."

The Minister's Forum offers a unique opportunity for communities to recommend ways to improve the health and social system in terms of improved governance, human resources management, financial sustainability and programs and services.

The Forum will host consultation meetings in one community in each constituency beginning in September. The Forum will be divided into two teams to allow meetings to be held in northern and southern communities at the same time.

The Minister's Forum will also host a conference in the fall to share results of the community meetings and hear the views of professional associations, boards, aboriginal and non-government organizations.

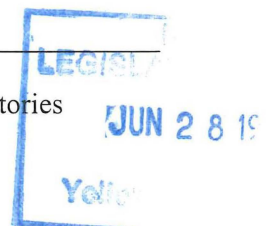
For more information, contact:

Penny Ballantyne
Deputy Minister,
Health and Social Services
(867) 920-6173

or

Rick Upton
A/Dir. Human Resources and Board Support
Health and Social Services
(867) 920-3074

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99-064

National Legal Aid Meetings to be Hosted by NWT

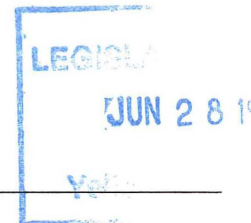
YELLOWKNIFE (June 28) -- Representatives from the Association of Legal Aid Plans of Canada will gather in Ndilo this week to discuss national concerns about the provision of legal aid in Canada.

The Legal Services Board of the Northwest Territories is hosting the annual general meeting June 29-30th. It will bring together over 35 delegates from those territories and provinces that maintain legal aid plans in Canada. Participants are also expected from the United States.

This year's meeting will bring particular recognition to the role played by the Northwest Territories in the association and offer an opportunity for delegates to discuss aspects of legal aid and related public relations issues that are of a national interest.

Meetings will be held at the Smoke House Café in Ndilo.

For more information contact: **Gregory Nearing**
Executive Director
Legal Services Board
Tel: (867) 873-7450



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99-065

Funding Available for Market Gardens

YELLOWKNIFE (June 30) – A new program is supporting the development of small-scale foods and market garden production in the Northwest Territories. The Community Market Garden Development Program was announced recently by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi.

“Market gardens can play a vital role in northern life,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “With committed support from the department, not only will community residents learn more about the food production industry, they will also provide a valuable and stable community service providing fresh produce at reasonable prices.”

A maximum of \$5,000 is available to cover capital and start-up costs for market gardens and/or greenhouse operations. The market garden or greenhouse operation may be owned and operated by an individual, group of individuals, a community organization or business. A market gardener or greenhouse operator must produce, harvest and sell all fruits and vegetables locally to qualify for funding.

Capital costs associated with the collection, processing and marketing of wild edibles, such as mushrooms, cranberries, cloud berries and rosehips, may also be eligible for funding.

Funding applications are available from regional or area Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development offices.

For further information, please contact: Judy McLinton

Communications Planning Specialist
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 873-7379

For applications contact:

Inuvik Region (867) 777-7286
Sahtu Region (867) 587-2310
Fort Simpson Region (867) 695-2231
Fort Smith Region (867) 872-6400
North Slave (867) 920-6134



99-066

Economic Strategy Panel Begins Work

YELLOWKNIFE (July 8) - A panel, recently appointed by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister, Stephen Kakfwi met June 28-29th to begin developing an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories.

"Consultation will play a key role in the development of the strategy," Mr. Kakfwi said. "The panel will solicit the ideas and suggestions of Northerners and consider all previous discussion papers and research in their work."

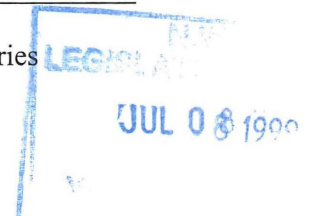
Panel members include representatives from aboriginal organizations and development corporations, government, business, industry and environmental groups.

"This first meeting provided an opportunity for panel members to understand the nature of the task, identify preliminary issues and outline a process for addressing them," said Interim Panel Chairman Doug Doan.

The panel will meet again later this summer to develop a work plan.

For more information, contact:

Doug Doan
Interim Chairman
Economic Strategy Panel
Tel: (867) 873-7115
Fax: (867) 873-0014





99-067

Youth Ambassadors Learn About the Northern Environment and Forests

YELLOWKNIFE (July 8) – Thirteen young Canadians will have the opportunity to learn more about the north's environment and forests when they visit the Northwest Territories next week.

The high school students, including, Yellowknife's Nina Fox, represent each Canadian province and territory. They are participating in the Let's Root for Canada Program, which promotes Canada's diverse ecosystems, and the vital role they play in the health of the environment.

"This visit will allow the youth of Canada to learn about the North and the importance of the environment in the lives, culture and traditions of the people who live here," says Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi.

With the involvement of the federal and territorial governments, scientists, industry and aboriginal people, the young ambassadors will learn about northern environmental issues, research and the importance of both scientific and traditional knowledge in the development of natural resources. In keeping with the tree-planting mandate of the program, the students will plant white spruce seedlings in a harvested area near Inuvik.

The NWT portion of their tour begins July 12th in Yellowknife and includes visits to the communities of Rae-Edzo, Norman Wells, Inuvik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic. The young ambassadors will also visit Nunavut and the Yukon.

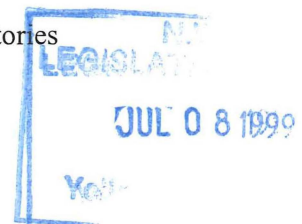
For more information, contact:

Ken Caine

Extension Forester
Forest Management Division
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Hay River
Tel: (867) 874-2009
Fax: (867) 874-2009

Brenda Hans

Public Education Specialist
Policy, Legislation and Communications Division
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Yellowknife
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Fax: (867) 873-0114





99-068



Scholarships to be Available for NWT Students

YELLOWKNIFE (July 19) – The Department of Education, Culture and Employment and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation have signed an agreement that will enable students in the Northwest Territories to access up to \$4.3 million over the next 10 years from the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

The federal government established the Canada Millennium Scholarship fund in 1998 to assist and encourage students enrolled in post-secondary studies. Students enrolled in full time post-secondary studies in the 1999-2000 academic year will be the first in the NWT eligible to receive the \$3,000 awards.

Scholarships will be awarded in two main categories. One hundred and thirty-three general awards will be issued based on financial need and academic merit. Under the exceptional merit category, which also considers leadership, academic excellence and community service, five awards will be determined at the community level and two more at the territorial level.

“Canada Millennium Scholarships are an important demonstration of co-operation between Canada and the NWT to invest in the future of education,” says Michael Miltenberger, GNWT Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. “The Government of the Northwest Territories is looking forward to working in partnership with the foundation to support the financial needs of northern students in post-secondary programs of studies.”

The names of recipients of territorial level awards will be forwarded to the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation for the selection of a single national level scholarship.

Students wishing to apply for the Millennium Scholarships must fill out a needs-assessed application form. Candidates will be identified by the end of October 1999 and cheques issued in January 2000 once recipients are confirmed in a post-secondary program of studies.

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation is an autonomous organization created by the Parliament of Canada, to promote access to post-secondary education. It oversees a \$2.5 billion fund received from the Government of Canada.

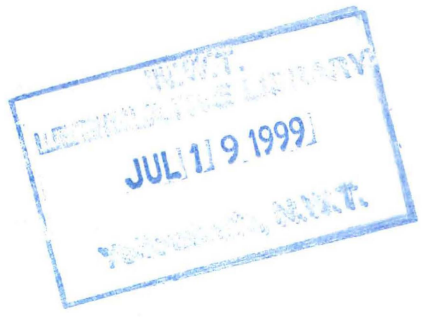
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Scholarships to be Available for NWT Students: Page 2

The awards will be issued as an additional resource to the students, and will not affect their eligibility for their regular entitlements under the NWT Student Financial Assistance Program.

For further information, contact: **Lesley Allen**
Assistant Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment
(867) 873-7252

Norm Riddell
Executive Director
Canada Millennium Scholarship
(514) 284-7231



99-069

Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services Ready for Consultations

YELLOWKNIFE (July 19) – The Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services is ready to begin consulting on ways to sustain and improve the health and social services system in the NWT.

The forum held its first meeting in Yellowknife July 13-15 at which members received an orientation from the Department of Health and Social Services on the health and social system, its costs, challenges and critical issues.

"Members are keen on getting on with the process," said Dee McCallum, nominee of the NWT Registered Nurses' Association, "We're interested in finding ways to encourage people in the communities to become more involved in their health care."

The forum is independent from the Department of Health and Social Services. "This forum is for the public – the bureaucracy is not running it, they're only providing information and administrative support to us", said Rita Cli, forum member from Fort Simpson.

Forum members have been divided into two teams so that concurrent meetings can occur in northern and southern communities. The teams are:

North Slave/Beaufort Delta Team

South Slave/Deh Cho Team

- Co-Chair – Mr. Duncan McNeill
- Ms. Rita Cli
- Mr. Don Blaquiere
- Dr. Ross Wheeler
- Ms. Dee McCallum

- Co-Chair – Ms. Glenna Hansen
- Ms. Gina Dolphus
- Ms. Hazel Nerysoo
- Mr. Blair Dunbar

The forum will be looking for ways to ensure that northerners have access to a high quality, responsive system that meets the needs of northerners and is affordable. Community meetings will be held from August 31 to September 9. Information on meeting times and locations will be advertised in early August.

"We are very excited about the work ahead of us," said Co-Chairs Glenna Hansen and Duncan McNeill. "Health and social services affect everyone in our communities and the forum will provide an important opportunity for all people to express their views."

.../2

Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services Ready for Consultations: Page 2

The community meetings will look at leadership (governing the system), people (human resources), money (financial sustainability), and program and service delivery. Everyone will have the opportunity to prepare and submit recommendations to the forum.

Members of the Minister's Forum will also participate in a territorial health and wellness conference planned for October at which they will present an interim report on the results of their community meetings. The forum will then prepare a final report and submit their recommendations for sustaining and improving the health and social services system to the Minister of Health and Social Services in December 1999.

"The Minister's Forum is off to a great start and I am confident that they will do an excellent job," said Floyd Roland, Minister of Health and Social Services. "I look forward to receiving their recommendations."

For more information, contact:

Floyd Roland

Minister of Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 669-2333

Fax: (867) 873-0399

or

Ms. Glenna Hansen, Co-Chair

Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 777-2673

Fax: (867) 777-3029

or

Mr. Duncan McNeill, Co-Chair

Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services

Phone: (867) 874-6497

Fax: (867) 874-3000



99-070

Alberta and NWT to Partner on Oil and Gas Development

YELLOWKNIFE (July 28) – The Governments of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Alberta agreed today to co-operate on oil and gas development in the NWT. Stephen Kakfwi, GNWT Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and Alberta's Associate Minister of Forestry, Mike Cardinal signed the agreement today in Yellowknife.

The agreement lays out an action plan that will see: improved information sharing on geological research, royalties, market and supply analysis, and land access; a co-ordinated approach to the development of natural gas transportation systems; enhanced environmental management, harmonized regulatory approaches and potential joint value-added activities; and non-discriminatory access and tolls for gas produced outside of Alberta in Alberta-regulated pipelines.

The two regions have also committed to working with other federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada to clarify pipeline jurisdiction.

"This agreement commits both governments to working together to realize the development of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin," said Mr. Kakfwi. "It commits both governments to working for the benefit of all residents of the NWT and Alberta."

Alberta Resource Development Minister Steve West said the agreement supplements a memorandum of understanding for co-operation and development signed by both governments last October. "Alberta and the Northwest Territories have a lot to gain by encouraging petroleum development in the northern Alberta/southern NWT region. This agreement lays a foundation for increased co-operation between our two jurisdictions."

The agreement remains in effect until 2003.

For more information contact:

Joe Handley
Deputy Minister
GNWT Department of RWED
(Tel) 867-920-8048

Joanne Rosnau
Alberta Resource Development
Government of Alberta
(Tel) 780-427-1083



99-071

Government of the Northwest Territories and TransCanada Partner to Encourage Natural Gas Reserves Development

YELLOWKNIFE (July 28) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and TransCanada PipeLines Limited announced today an agreement to work together, as partners, to encourage the economic and timely development of natural gas reserves in the southern Northwest Territories (NWT) and the Mackenzie Delta Region.

As part of the agreement, GNWT and TransCanada will work together to encourage development of a cost effective, competitive natural gas transmission infrastructure in the southern NWT and, eventually, the Mackenzie Delta Region, providing these sources of new gas supply a direct connection to Trans Canada's mainline system.

The memorandum of understanding between the GNWT and TransCanada acknowledges northern development will only occur with the proper respect for and the involvement of affected communities. Both partners agree development must proceed having regard for the environment and for the socio-economic benefits and effects of natural gas development on these communities.

"This agreement is a first step in ensuring that all northerners benefit from the development of our natural gas resources," said Stephen Kakfwi, GNWT Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. "Our government intends to maximize economic opportunities for northerners while minimizing the social and environmental impacts associated with natural gas development."

"This agreement creates significant long-term benefits for the economies of the Northwest Territories and Alberta, as well as producers and gas consumers," said Doug Baldwin, TransCanada's President and Chief Executive Officer and a member of the TransCanada Board of Directors. "It affords TransCanada access to significant amounts of new gas supply that can be transported economically to growing markets across North America."

Bob Reid, TransCanada's Senior Vice-President of Northern Development, said TransCanada is working with natural gas producers in the southern NWT in an effort to serve their needs for connecting new natural gas discoveries in the area to TransCanada's pipeline system. The southern NWT has proven reserves of one trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas and the potential for three Tcf to five Tcf of natural gas. "By building facilities to transport the natural gas reserves in the southern Northwest Territories, TransCanada will enhance the competitiveness of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin and offer producers low-cost access to a variety of growing markets," Mr. Reid said.

.../2

TransCanada is also exploring a longer-term opportunity to invest in pipeline and midstream facilities for gas reserves from the Mackenzie Delta Region. This production area has proven reserves of 10 Tcf of natural gas and the potential for up to 65 Tcf of natural gas. Future market demand and gas prices are expected to be high enough to support development in the Mackenzie Delta Region.

Discussions between TransCanada and the GNWT began in May, after the GNWT filed a letter with the National Energy Board (NEB) requesting the NEB assert jurisdiction over TransCanada's Alberta System. Under the agreement with TransCanada, the request will be withdrawn and the GNWT will encourage intergovernmental efforts by all governments in Canada to reach a timely, political solution on open questions of natural gas pipeline regulation and jurisdiction.

TransCanada is a leading North American energy company. Its \$26 billion asset base and its people support businesses in transmission, power generation, marketing, and midstream services in North American and international markets. TransCanada's common shares trade under the symbol TRP, primarily on the Toronto, Montréal and New York stock exchanges. Visit TransCanada on the Internet at www.transcanada.com for more information.

For further information, please contact:

Joe Handley

Deputy Minister, GNWT
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 920-8048

or

Media Inquiries:

Gary Davis, TransCanada, (403) 267-3340
Glenn Herchak, TansCanada, (403) 267-6299

Analyst Inquiries:

David Moneta, TransCanada, (403) 267-8521
Dave Mitchell, TransCanada, (403) 267-2665

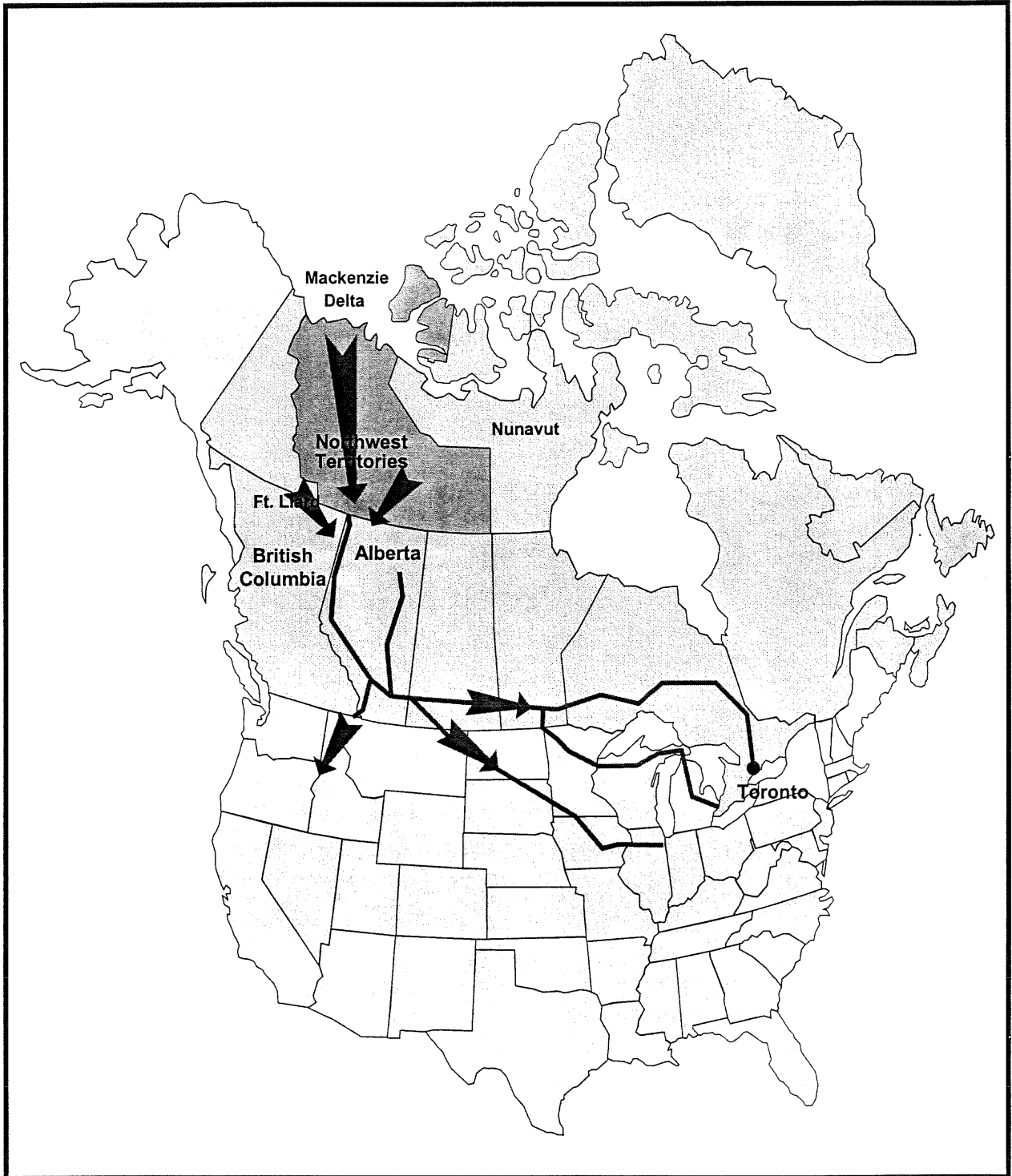
Note to Editors:

A black and white map displaying TransCanada's assets in North America is attached. A colour version of the map is available at: <http://www.transcanada.com/graphics/maps/NWT.jpg> A complete copy of the agreement can be found at: <http://www.transcanada.com/MediaRoom/news/mouaa9.htm>



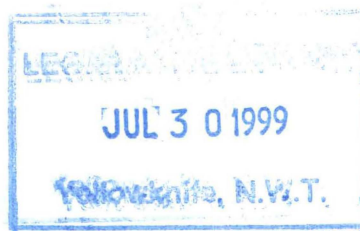
TransCanada

TransCanada Partners with N.W.T.





99-072



Minister Responds to Forum on Education

YELLOWKNIFE (July 30) -- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, J. Michael Miltenberger, has released a response to the report by the Minister's Forum on Education. "This response will demonstrate the Government's commitment to addressing the Forum's recommendations," the Minister said. "The actions are positive and realistic within our current resources and will contribute to the continuing growth and development of our education system."

The response addresses nine priority areas identified by the Forum. The planned actions will be lead by the department and supported by the Divisional Education Councils and District Education Authorities through activities at the regional and community levels.

"Some of the Forum's recommendations will need additional resources if they are to be fully implemented," Mr. Miltenberger said. "These needs will be reflected in the department's future budgets and decisions. In the meantime, we have identified a number of actions which will have a positive impact on priority areas."

As part of its process to update the department's 1994 strategic plan, the Minister's Forum on Education was appointed to hear the views of NWT residents on the NWT education system. The Forum undertook a broad consultation process across the NWT, visiting 11 communities and receiving a number of written submissions.

The Forum report outlined both the strengths of the current system and areas in which NWT residents would like to see improvement. While the Forum's results are intended to be part of the longer-term strategic plan, a number of areas were identified where more immediate and short-term action are possible.

"We decided it was important to provide a swift response to the Forum's recommendations, in particular, highlighting what could be done right away," Mr. Miltenberger said.

For copies of the report or more information contact:

Lynn Elkin

Executive Assistant to J. Michael Miltenberger
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 669-2309



99-073

NWT Premier to meet with Minister of Indian Affairs & Northern Development

YELLOWKNIFE (July 30) – Premier Jim Antoine says he’s looking forward to meeting with the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jane Stewart, during her visit to Yellowknife next week (Aug. 4-6).

“It will be a pleasure to meet again with Ms. Stewart to discuss ways that we can develop strong intergovernmental relations, not only between the territorial and federal governments but with aboriginal governments as well,” Mr. Antoine said.

Ms. Stewart will be the guest speaker at a Business Club Luncheon hosted by the NWT Chamber of Commerce. She will speak on “Building Strong Intergovernmental Relationships: A Government-to-Government-to-Government Approach”. Other special guests include Premier Jim Antoine and Western Arctic MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

“I look forward to meeting with our territorial, aboriginal and business partners,” Ms. Stewart said. “This is an exciting and dynamic time for the territory and I look forward to continuing our discussions towards shaping the future of governance in the NWT.”

The luncheon will take place on Thursday, August 5th, Noon, at the Explorer Hotel. The tickets are \$20. For reservations, call (867) 873-4174.

For further information, please contact:

Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2302

Zoe Raemer
Director of Communications
DIAND -- NWT Region
Tel: (867) 669-2575



99-074

Premier Antoine welcomes new Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs

KAKISA (August 3) – Premier Jim Antoine congratulates Bob Nault on his appointment as Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. Mr. Antoine also wishes departing INAC Minister Jane Stewart all the best in her new role as Minister of Human Resources Development.

“I look forward to meeting Mr. Nault and continuing the open and cooperative relationship this government enjoyed with Ms. Stewart,” Mr. Antoine said from Kakisa, where he is attending the annual Deh Cho First Nations assembly. “We have a great deal to discuss, in particular how we can develop strong relations between the federal, territorial and aboriginal governments.”

Mr. Nault is from the northern Ontario riding of Kenora-Rainy River. Before the 1993 election, while an Opposition MP, he served as Associate Critic for Aboriginal Affairs and Associate Critic for Energy, Mines and Resources.

“I’m pleased to see that Mr. Nault has experience with the type of issues we face here in the North,” Mr. Antoine said.

For more information, contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-075

National Association of Chief Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors to Meet in NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (August 6) - Chief boiler & pressure vessel inspectors from every province and territory will gather in Yellowknife this week to discuss common issues and concerns in their industry.

Joining delegates at this meeting will be representatives of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the national Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors along with consultants and government representatives from each of the provinces and territories. The Department of Public Works & Services is hosting the event.

Boiler inspectors ensure that all commercial boilers installed in Canada are professionally inspected annually and ensure that all personnel who operate and maintain boilers are properly trained on all equipment, safety practices and up to date operating procedures.

The meetings will be held at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife.

For more information contact:

Stephen Donovan
Chief Boiler Inspector
Electrical/Mechanical Safety
Tel: (867) 920-3257



99-076

Premier says APC Results will Benefit the NWT

QUEBEC CITY (August 11) -- Premier Jim Antoine says agreements reached at the Annual Premiers' Conference are good news for the Northwest Territories.

So far at their annual conference, the premiers and territorial leaders have unanimously agreed to advocate a reduction in federal taxes and the full restoration of the Canada Health and Social Transfer program (CHST). The CHST provides provinces and territories with funds to support health care, post-secondary education, and social programs.

"I am very pleased that the leaders reached consensus to take a balanced approach to tax cuts," Mr. Antoine said. "The agreement to work towards restoring the CHST has a special importance to the North, where this funding is absolutely crucial. I am also pleased by discussions regarding improvements to infrastructure, including a national highways strategy. New and upgraded infrastructure is a vital part of building a strong future for the NWT."

The Annual Premiers' Conference ends this afternoon.

For more information, contact:

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judy_langford@gov.nt.ca



99-077

GNWT to Certify Northern Diamonds

YELLOWKNIFE (August 11) - The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is developing a certification program for northern diamonds. The program was introduced Monday at a special session titled Diamonds in the North at the World Jewellery Expo Show in Toronto.

The GNWT program, developed with diamond cutting and polishing companies in the NWT, will issue certificates for only those diamonds mined, cut and polished in the NWT. The program also includes a monitoring process by which the GNWT will track NWT diamonds from purchase to finished product.

“Certificates will provide retailers with a verification of authenticity,” says the Minister of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi. “This will enable them to promote the Arctic Canada Diamond to their customers with the assurance that the gems are from Canada’s north.”

Canada’s only diamond mine, BHP Diamonds’ Ekati Mine, is located in the NWT. The mine is about 200 kilometres north of Yellowknife. The new certificate was on display today in Toronto.

For more information, contact:

Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
(867) 669 2302

Martin Irving
Director, Diamond Projects
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 920-3125



99-078

Tsiighetchic Buys Back Shares in Local Store

YELLOWKNIFE (August 11) -- The council of the Charter Community of Tsiighetchic has redeemed \$100,000 in preferred shares from the NWT Development Corporation.

The Development Corporation originally invested the money in preferred shares to kick-start the development of a community store facility in Tsiighetchic in January 1994. The community formally bought back the NWT Development Corporation's shares recently when Chief Grace Blake handed a cheque to NWT Development Corporation President and CEO Fred E. Koe.

Chief Blake says the transaction undertaken nearly six years ago has served the community's needs very well. "When we made the decision to bring the NWT Development Corporation in as an investor, the financial agreement was that the preferred shares would earn a gradually increasing dividend rate. It gave us a "head start" on building a sound financial base for the community store. Our community is now in a position where we are able to obtain financing at more competitive rates from conventional sources."

The Minister responsible for the NWT Development Corporation, Stephen Kakfwi says that's the way that NWT Development Corporation investments should work. "The NWT Development Corporation should come in as an equity participant early in the development of a viable business. When things are going well, and better financing can be arranged, it's only sensible that the NWT Development Corporation's investment is bought out. That money then becomes available to invest in other businesses."

For further information contact:

Glenna Cayen
Executive Assistant
NWT Development Corporation
(867) 920-7700

Elwood Johnston
Charter Community of Tsiighetchic
(867) 953-3201



99-079

Premiers' Conference Supports Northern Control Over Resources and Services

QUEBEC CITY (August 11) -- In their final communiqué issued today, leaders at the Annual Premiers' Conference support the efforts of the three northern territories to gain more control over their resources and government services.

The Premiers also agreed that adequate resources must accompany the transfer of federal government responsibilities to the territorial governments. Premier Jim Antoine welcomed this and other statements that address northern concerns.

"It is very encouraging to have the support of colleagues in the rest of Canada as we work to build a stronger and more self-reliant North," Mr. Antoine said. "I am also pleased that the Premiers agreed on the need to improve infrastructure across the country and, in particular, a need for more funding for highway systems. They recognized the special challenges we face in the North in developing our transportation infrastructure."

The full communiqués from the Annual Premiers' follows this news release.

For more information, contact:

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**40^e CONFÉRENCE ANNUELLE
DES PREMIERS MINISTRES**

**40th ANNUAL PREMIERS'
CONFERENCE**

QUÉBEC 1999

CANADIAN SHIPBUILDING POLICY

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Due to the increasing globalization of the world economy Premiers and Territorial Leaders noted the importance for Canadian industries to be competitive with their counterparts in other countries; shipbuilding is no exception in this regard. Currently, foreign competitors have a pricing advantage over Canadian shipyards, in Canadian and international markets, due to support programs provided by their governments. Premiers and Territorial Leaders noted that the federal government has a role in ensuring a level playing field for Canadian industries with their international competitors. As a priority, Premiers and Territorial Leaders called on the federal government to pursue within upcoming WTO negotiations, the objective of eliminating government subsidies to shipbuilders in foreign countries. In the absence of WTO resolution of this problem on subsidies to shipbuilding, Premiers and Territorial Leaders called on the federal government to establish a comprehensive national policy.

Although long-term industrial and trade policies are required to solve market access and government subsidy problems, there is an immediate need to counter the pricing advantages of Canada's major shipbuilding competitors. Canadian shipbuilders must have access to improved financing.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders once again called on the Government of Canada to revise the Canadian Shipbuilding Policy in consultation with industry stakeholders and the provinces with the goal of promoting this vital sector of the Canadian economy. Given the capacity of many shipyards to take on additional work, Premiers and Territorial Leaders urged the federal government to ensure that plans to expand the Canadian fleet, including Coast Guard and military requirements, be implemented as expediently as possible.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders also called on the Prime Minister to identify a federal lead to work with provinces and industry stakeholders in establishing a shipbuilding policy which will help to increase the competitiveness of the industry.



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QUÉBEC 1999

BUILDING THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY TOGETHER

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – The importance of the ongoing construction of the “information highway” to Canada's future development and to its global competitiveness is clear to all Premiers and Territorial Leaders. Governments at all levels in Canada have embraced the expanded use of information technology (IT) as an important means of enhancing public sector productivity and services, a key economic growth sector, and a fundamental infrastructure enabling future economic and social development. Investments by governments are helping to make Canada a world leader in the use of IT.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed during their discussions that improved Federal/Provincial/Territorial coordination and consultation will be necessary to maximize the potential benefits of government IT investments and to avoid duplication of efforts among jurisdictions.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders recognize that where the federal government has worked collaboratively with provinces and territories in a number of IT areas like Y2K, e-commerce security, and the Community Access Program, substantial benefits have been realized by these partners.

Given the growing importance of information technology to all government jurisdictions, the Premiers and Territorial Leaders call on the Federal government to incorporate meaningful consultation with Provincial and Territorial governments into all Canada-wide, IT-related project and policy implementation processes. Premiers and Territorial Leaders recommend that the existing Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council, which reports to ministers responsible for the information highway, become the primary vehicle for such consultations.



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QUÉBEC 1999

ENHANCING NORTHERN COMPETITIVENESS

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – In keeping with the Premiers' and Territorial Leaders' position on a balanced approach to improve competitiveness, Premiers supported the efforts of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut to gain greater control over their resources and government services so that programs and services can be more responsive to northern priorities, reduce dependencies, increase efficiencies and provide opportunities for northern peoples. Premiers also agreed that the transfer of current federal responsibilities to territorial governments must be accompanied by adequate resources.



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QUÉBEC 1999

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders expressed concern that changes made by the federal government to Employment Insurance regulations in the 1990's have significantly reduced the eligibility, level and duration of benefits for the unemployed, while producing a large surplus in the EI account.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders expressed particular concern for the hardships being faced by low income seasonal and part-time workers as a result of the EI program changes, and expressed regret that the federal government had declined to work with provinces and territories to develop policy options to help low income seasonal and part-time workers.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders reiterated their call on the federal government to work collaboratively with provinces and territories to find long-term solutions to address the problem of seasonal unemployment.

They also urged the federal government to make available additional Part II funds as provided for under the EI Act, to fund new measures to extend employment opportunities for seasonal and part-time workers. Premiers and Territorial Leaders also agreed on the importance of the federal government increasing the overall funding package made available to provinces and territories for the financing of active measures to the maximum set out in the Employment Insurance Act, namely 0.8% of the total insurance earnings on an equitable basis.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders reaffirmed their call made at the last APC urging the federal government to continue to reduce EI premium rates to previous levels, given the large and growing surplus in the EI account.



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QUÉBEC 1999

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders noted that the negotiations, implementation and management of international agreements increasingly affects areas of provincial responsibility.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that, because of the direct impact of international agreements on their jurisdictions, provinces and territories are pressing the federal government to involve provinces and territories at every stage leading up to the conclusion of international agreement from the negotiation, implementation and management of international agreements. While there have been some federal-provincial-territorial discussions on the formalization of the provincial-territorial role with respect to international agreements, no federal-provincial-territorial agreement on this topic has been reached.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders therefore reiterated their long-standing support for an immediate formalized federal-provincial-territorial agreement on the provincial-territorial role in the negotiation, implementation and management of international agreements. They called on the Prime Minister to provide direction to appropriate federal Ministers to work expeditiously with their provincial and territorial committee of Ministers responsible for International Trade to conclude such an agreement before the launch of the new round of multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization at the end of this year.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders called on the federal government to give clear directions to the new Ambassador to the WTO on the next round of multilateral negotiations of the WTO with special emphasis on agriculture and shipbuilding issues. They also called upon the new Ambassador to acknowledge the formal role of the provinces and territories at every stage of those negotiations.

Given the importance and potential of the economic market of the Americas, Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that provinces and territories must actively participate in all stages of the organization of and discussions about the Summit of Americas which will be held in Québec City in 2001. The terms of participation should, as soon as possible, be jointly determined with the federal government.



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QUÉBEC 1999

CHILD PROSTITUTION

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders noted there are differences in child welfare laws across Canada that make it difficult for officials to apprehend children involved with prostitution in one jurisdiction to be returned to their families in another jurisdiction.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders expressed their commitment to the safety of children and recognized that children engaged in prostitution are victims of child abuse. Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed to ask officials to review child welfare legislation with a view to harmonizing provincial laws as they relate to the apprehension and protection of children engaged in prostitution.



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QUÉBEC 1999

INTERNAL TRADE STATUS REPORT

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers recognized that maintaining and enhancing Canada's competitiveness requires enhancing conditions for doing business across Canada and improving trade flows between provinces.

Premiers accepted the status report on activities under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and reaffirmed their governments' commitments to the goals of the Agreement and to its full implementation.

Premiers encouraged Ministers of Internal Trade to continue to make progress in implementing the outstanding commitments under the AIT. Premiers are pleased that Ministers are continuing in their efforts to conclude negotiations as soon as possible on procurement by commercial Crown corporations and the Energy Chapter of the AIT. In addition, Ministers will consider ways to strengthen the Code of Conduct on Investment Incentives at their next meeting in the fall, based on the report of the Working Group on Investment.

Premiers also directed Ministers of Internal Trade to continue to consider practical ways to work cooperatively together to strengthen the Canadian economy and Canada's competitiveness.



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QUÉBEC 1999

EARLY YEARS & CHILDREN'S ISSUES

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers discussed their various efforts to address children's issues. All provinces and territories have identified children's issues as a top priority and, consistent with children's health and education being primarily areas of provincial responsibility, have taken their own steps in addressing the key children's issues within their jurisdictions. Through these actions, provinces and territories are together demonstrating leadership in this area.

The Premiers noted the cooperative work of governments in the successful launch of the National Child Benefit and the progress being made in the implementation of the program.

Premiers reviewed the key findings in the *Early Years Study, Reversing the Real Brain Drain*, a recent report on children's issues funded by the Government of Ontario, and co-authored by Dr. J. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain. Premiers agreed that one of the important lessons from their own efforts on behalf of children, and affirmed by Dr. Mustard and Ms. McCain's report, is that early childhood learning is not the sole responsibility of government but must involve parents, educators and business leaders.

Premiers also discussed recent media reports on the possibility of a new federal children's initiative. Premiers noted that they expect the federal government to meet commitments to undertake early and meaningful collaboration with the provinces and territories on any federal plans for new children's programs so that any new federal initiatives are not duplicative of work already underway in the provinces and territories.



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QUÉBEC 1999

INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that the development and maintenance of a strong infrastructure base is a key component supporting a competitive economy. Premiers and Territorial Leaders discussed a range of infrastructure issues, some of which were of concern to all regions in Canada, others of which had particular regional significance.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that funding for highway systems should be a major component of a strategy, and infrastructure investment should be flexible to address other transportation priorities such as trade corridors, border crossings, intermodal facilities, urban transit and intelligent transportation systems.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders acknowledged the challenges faced by remote northern regions which rely on transportation infrastructure for access, tourism, and economic development. Premiers and Territorial Leaders stressed the importance of land link between Northern Manitoba to Nunavut.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that infrastructure investment should be based on the following principles:

1. Investments in infrastructure should be based on concrete strategic criteria, including return on investment, prospects for long-term economic growth and enhanced competitiveness.
2. Each provincial or territorial government must be able to select and approve the appropriate projects that best build on their competitive strengths. It must be consistent with provincial or territorial infrastructure priorities. Provinces and territories would assume full management.
3. It must be flexible enough to address both hard infrastructure needs (e.g. international gateways, urban transportation, highways), soft infrastructure and strategic investments in telecommunications infrastructure (e.g. environmental services, information technology, health and education equipment, communications).

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4. It should also be flexible enough to allow for the participation of other sectors, including innovative private-public partnerships and, as appropriate, for varying degrees of municipal participation determined by provinces and territories.
5. Funding arrangements should be consistent with existing provincial fiscal plans, the investments that provinces and territories have already made in their regular budgets for infrastructure would be accounted for as part of their contribution.
6. Design must allocate federal funding among provinces and territories equitably.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders asked Finance Ministers to work with their federal colleagues to consider options for infrastructure development that will focus on advancing Canada's global competitiveness.



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QUÉBEC 1999

AGRICULTURE

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders discussed the farm income crisis being faced by most farmers and agreed that this is a national concern. Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that current safety net programs must be reformed to effectively deal with this farm income crisis brought on by low prices, natural disasters, international subsidies, and rising input costs.

Across the prairie provinces, net farm income has been forecast at a negative position. For example, compared to the five year average, Saskatchewan's 1999 realized net farm income is forecast to decline by 107 per cent. Manitoba's 1999 realized net farm income is forecast to decline by 72 per cent.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that Canadian farmers, especially producers of grains, livestock and oilseeds, continue to face unfair competition from international competitors nearly five years after the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that subsidies paid to producers by Canada's major competitors creates an unlevel playing field that puts Canadian producers at a competitive disadvantage.

In the absence of WTO resolution of this problem of agriculture subsidies, Premiers and Territorial Leaders called on the federal government to establish a comprehensive national policy that addresses this inequity.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders urged the federal government to take aggressive action to negotiate the international elimination of trade distorting export agricultural subsidies and barriers to market access in the next round of WTO negotiations, scheduled to begin at the end of this year.

Returns to producers in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan are further reduced by unprecedented rainfall not covered by crop insurance. Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed that the federal government has an obligation to cooperate

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with provinces to provide targeted disaster relief to producers in such circumstances, caused by extreme weather conditions, preserving the integrity of existing safety net programs.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders discussed the status of federal reforms to the grain handling and transportation system, and agreed that reforms are required to improve system performance and maximize net returns to producers.

All Premiers and Territorial Leaders supported the western provinces in calling for an integrated and comprehensive, "farm gate-to-customer" approach to grain handling and transportation reform. They emphasized that any move toward a more commercial system must:

- Direct efficiency gains to producers;
- Retain freight rate regulation until effective competition is in place; and,
- Utilize commercial tendering where it maximizes net returns to producers.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders also renewed their call for a moratorium to railway branch line abandonment, at least until the "Kroeger Process" tables its recommendations to the federal government.



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QUÉBEC 1999

PRIORITY HEALTH SECTOR ISSUES

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Health and health care issues are the pre-eminent concerns of Canadians. The delivery of health services, single-tier and publicly funded, is cherished by Canadians and respected worldwide. During the Conference, Premiers and Territorial Leaders discussed ways of ensuring that the health care system will continue to meet the health needs of Canadians into the 21st century.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders agreed on three priority areas of health: sustainability, with its components of adequate and predictable federal funding, reliable health professional staffing to meet projected needs, and improved information decision support systems; population health including the improvement of health of all Canadians; and clear roles and responsibilities.

Funding is the key issue for health sustainability. Premiers and Territorial Leaders therefore request that the federal government fully restore Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) funding to 1994/95 levels with an appropriate escalator for the CHST cash transfer that keeps pace with cost and particular demand pressures.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders also agreed to direct their provincial and territorial Ministers of Health to work together to develop practical recommendations for ensuring a sustainable, affordable, single-tier, publicly funded health care system for the 21st century. Ministers will report back to Premiers and Territorial Leaders with recommendations by June 2000.

All areas of Canada are faced with the need to ensure an adequate and reliable supply of health professionals, including doctors and nurses. A quality health and health care system cannot be maintained without adequate numbers of trained personnel to meet service needs, i.e., the right provider, in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders directed their Ministers of Health to work in partnership to address health human resources issues in a timely and cost effective way to ensure an adequate, reliable and affordable supply of health professionals. Ministers of Health will report back to Premiers and Territorial Leaders with recommendations by June 2000.

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The Premiers and Territorial Leaders directed their Ministers of Health to ensure health information and research support improved management and decision-making at all levels of health care delivery and health outcomes for Canadians.

Information to support timely decision making is important at all levels of the health care system. Most importantly, enhanced information systems have direct applications in patient care and improved health system management. The federal government has made a funding commitment to improve health information systems. Premiers and Territorial Leaders urged that the federal government funding commitment continue and fully support the needs of these information systems as identified by provincial/territorial jurisdictions.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders acknowledged the need to improve population health in all regions of Canada. They therefore request that provincial and territorial Ministers work together to identify and provide options on how to address these matters.



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QUÉBEC 1999

PROGRESS REPORT ON SOCIAL POLICY RENEWAL

QUÉBEC CITY, AUGUST 11, 1999 – Premiers and Territorial Leaders, with the exception of the Premier of Quebec*, reviewed the Fourth Progress Report of the Provincial/Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal, which is attached, and endorsed its recommendations. The Report provides information and recommendations on the various elements of the social policy renewal, including: the Social Union Framework Agreement; National Children's Agenda; National Child Benefit; Health; Benefits and Services for Persons with Disabilities; Labour Market; Education; Aboriginal Affairs, Status of Women; Housing; and Finance and Fiscal Issues.

* Note: While sharing essentially the same concerns, the Government of Quebec does not intend to adhere to the federal/provincial/territorial approach or the provincial/territorial approach to social policies. Furthermore, Quebec did not sign the Social Union Framework Agreement. Consequently, any reference to joint federal/provincial/territorial positions or provincial/territorial positions in this document do not include the Government of Quebec.



99-080

Update on the forest fire between Inuvik and Tsiigehtchic

YELLOWKNIFE (August 11) -- Note: As we did during the Tibbitt Lake fire last year, the Office of the Press Secretary will provide updates on this situation twice a day, as long as is necessary. Please do not contact front-line RWED personnel directly for information as this interferes with their fire fighting efforts.

The fire now measures 140,000 hectares and is 12 km from Tsiigehtchic. Today, it moved close to the "Sunny" NorthwesTel microwave tower about 60 km Northeast of Tsiigehtchic. Fire crews and NorthwesTel staff cleared brush around the tower, installed sprinklers and used foam retardant to protect the facility.

The community of Tsiigehtchic is preparing for any adverse change in the conditions. Particular attention is being paid to the needs of the elderly and people with respiratory problems. An Emergency Measures Organization employee will go to Tsiigehtchic on Thursday to support the community's emergency preparedness efforts.

The Dempster highway remains open and is being closely monitored. A checkpoint has been set up on the Inuvik side of the fire. It is staffed by RWED and Department of Transportation employees to provide information to travellers.

The next update will be released Thursday morning around 10:30 -11:00

Inquiries can be directed to:

Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Government of the Northwest Territories
(867) 669-2302
cell: (867) 669-1720
judy_langford@gov.nt.ca



99-081

August 12 update on fire between Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik

YELLOWKNIFE (Aug. 12 11:30 AM) -- Motorist are being cautioned that there is smoke on the Dempster highway between kilometre 150 and 192. That's in the Rengling River area. The highway is considered to be in fair driving condition. The checkpoint is still in place on the Inuvik side of the fire.

The Arctic Red River ferry continues to operate on its normal schedule.

Fire crews are holding their morning briefing right now. Further information will be available this afternoon.

Inquiries can be directed to:

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(867) 669-2302
cell: (867) 669-1720
judy_langford@gov.nt.ca



99-082

August 12 Afternoon Update On Tsiigehtchic Fire

YELLOWKNIFE (Aug. 12 2:00 PM) -- Light rain/drizzle is falling on the western and northern sides of the fire. Crews are spending the day checking previously-constructed lines on the west side, which is the closest to Tsiigehtchic, to make sure they are holding.

Crews are once again checking on cabins in the Tsiigehtchic area to make sure they are alright. They will also check on NorthwesTel's "Grassy" microwave tower. Measures were taken earlier this week to protect the cabins and the microwave tower.

The Dempster Highway is now closed between kilometre 143 and kilometre 248 due to heavy smoke. Drivers are asked to phone 1-800-661-0752 or in Inuvik 777-2678 for updates on the road conditions. The Arctic Red River ferry continues to operate on its normal schedule.

Next scheduled update will be Friday morning.

Inquiries can be directed to:

Judy Langford
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Government of the Northwest Territories
(867) 669-2302
cell: (867) 669-1720
judy_langford@gov.nt.ca



99-083

Dempster Highway Reopens

YELLOWKNIFE (Aug. 12 4:00 PM) -- The Dempster Highway has reopened. A section of the highway near Tsiigehtchic was closed earlier today due to heavy smoke. Conditions are variable, so motorists are asked to call the Department of Transportation's information line at 1-800-661-0752 or, in Inuvik, 777-2678 before travelling.

Next scheduled update is Friday morning.

Inquiries can be directed to: **Judy Langford**
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(867) 669-2302
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99-084

Update On Tsiigehtchic Fire (Friday AM)

YELLOWKNIFE (August 13 11:45) -- RWED, RCMP and MACA officials met with officials in Tsiigehtchic last night to review the status of fire conditions and current arrangements. The community is experiencing light rain today and rain and drizzle are forecasted for the next couple of days.

Drying conditions are expected afterwards for a few days before hotter temperatures return.

RWED crews are working on reinforcing fire lines on the leading edge of the fire to the northeast of the community and back-burning between a chain of lakes to connect the continuous line of fire breaks on the side of the fire toward the community. The last firebreak in the line joins with the Mackenzie River.

Kathryn Youngblut of MACA's Emergency Services Division is in the community working with the Local Authority on preparedness arrangements in the event that the situation deteriorates and the community needs to activate evacuation arrangements. This is a precautionary measure only and does not indicate evacuation procedures are underway. The community has a plan to transport local residents immediately if the situation warrants.

The Dempster Highway is open with visibility reduced due to smoke and fog. Checkpoints are established at the intersection with the Inuvik airport road, at the Peel River crossing in Fort MacPherson and at the Arctic Red River ferry crossing. Travellers are being advised of current conditions at all of these checkpoints. Please call the Department of Transportation's information line at 1-800-661-0752 or, in Inuvik, 777-2678 for the latest conditions.

Next scheduled update is Friday afternoon.

For more information contact:

Judy Langford
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Tel: (867)669-2302
Cell: (867)669-1720
judy_langford@gov.nt.ca



99-085

New forest fire in Edzo area

YELLOWKNIFE (August 17) -- A lightning strike started a forest fire in the Edzo area around 3:00 this afternoon. The fire is approximately five kilometers west of the community and measures about 25 hectares.

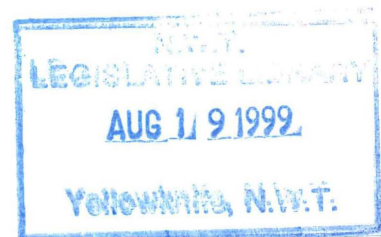
Two CL215 water bombers, a DC-4 air tanker, a helicopter and ground crews are on the scene and all available resources are being dispatched. The regional assistant fire marshall has asked the local fire department to report for duty to initiate measures to protect the community and to assist with precautionary evacuation procedures. The location of the fire does not affect use of the highway.

Further information will be released, as it becomes available.

For more information, contact:

Eric Bussey

Director, Emergency Services Division
Dept. of Municipal and Community Affairs
Tel: 920-6133
Pager: 920-5739





99-086

Chronology of Edzo Forest Fire

YELLOWKNIFE (August 18) – This is a chronology of the forest fire near Edzo, for those reporters who may be looking for background details. Fire crews hold their daily briefing in the late morning. The Office of the Press Secretary will send out an update in time for noon newscasts.

August 17 3:00 PM - Lightning started a forest fire approximately five km west of Edzo. The extremely dry conditions and wind blowing from the west created an immediate threat to the community. The fire grew to 25 hectares from seven hectares in less than an hour.

RWED immediately deployed two CL-215 water bombers, one DC-4 air tanker, a helicopter and ground crews. The community fire departments of Rae and Edzo, with the assistance of the regional assistant fire marshal, responded immediately to protect the community from the advance of the fire and to coordinate evacuation procedures. There are approximately 270 people living in Edzo.

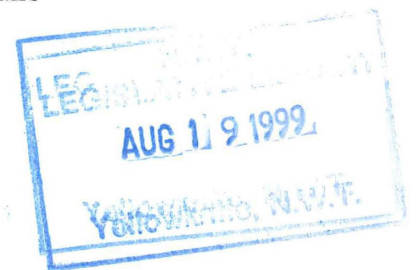
August 17 6:00 PM - The Hamlet of Rae-Edzo organized the reception of the evacuees. Some people were billeted in private homes and the Elizabeth Mackenzie school and the Rae Sportsplex were used to house the other evacuees. The evacuation was complete by 6:00 PM. The Hamlet declared a State of Local Emergency at 6:00 PM. The community fire departments from Rae and Edzo stood by, ready to respond to any immediate threat caused by the fire.

The fire advanced to the Wha Ti winter road access where RWED established a fireguard and started back burn operations. Highway three was closed between Fort Providence and south of the Rae access road.

By 6:00 PM fire had grown to 100 hectares and by 10:30 PM it was reported to be 600 hectares.

For more information, contact:

Eric Bussey
Director, Emergency Services Division
Dept. of Municipal and Community Affairs
Tel: 920-6133
Pager: 920-5739





99-087

Edzo Fire Update August 18th 11am

YELLOWKNIFE (August 18) -- The forest fire burning southwest of Edzo is now within one km of the community's centre. It is approximately 500 hectares in size and burning parallel to the highway on the South side.

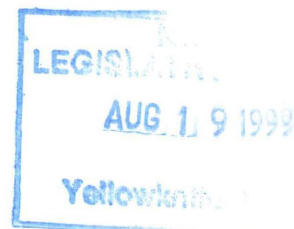
Fire crews are working to get an accurate mapping of the fire. Additional ground crews have been moved into the area from other regions. Efforts will be made today to protect a Northwestel microwave site that is now about two km from the fire's edge.

Officials with the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development say conditions remain favorable for high intensity crowning in black spruce forest. Current southeasterly winds are putting pressure on the fire line protecting the community but are not threatening the highway.

Given the right conditions, there is the potential that this fire will cross the highway. Officials are considering establishing a communication system that will allow travelers on the highway to pass through the fire zone in escorted convoys. Until this can be established, however, the highway remains closed. Roadblocks are in place at the junction to Rae and also at the Fort Providence turn off.

For highway updates travelers are asked to phone 1-800-661-0750.

For more information, contact: **Rick Lanoville**
Fire Behaviour Specialist
Resources Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 669-1826





99-088

Edzo Fire Update August 18th 4pm

YELLOWKNIFE (August 18) -- Light winds and relatively high humidity reduced crowning activity and helped fire fighters in their efforts to suppress the forest fire burning southwest of Edzo.

The fire, now measured at 800 hectares, did not make any significant advancement towards the community and remains approximately one kilometre from the hamlet's outskirts.

Favorable weather conditions allowed for a back-burn operation which commenced around 3:00 this afternoon. Such burns allow fire fighters to establish what is known as a "black line" from which to attack the fire while reducing fuel and slowing the progress of the fire itself.

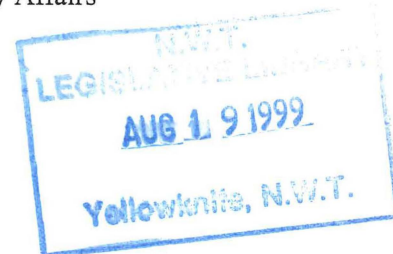
The evacuation order for the community is still in effect and emergency officials are still in the community prepared to respond as needed.

Highway #3 will open tonight from 10 PM until 8 AM. RCMP personnel will escort travelers through the fire zone in convoys as long as smoke conditions permit. The Ferry service at the Mackenzie River crossing will remain open throughout the night.

For highway updates travelers are asked to phone 1-800-661-0750.

For more information, contact:

Eric Bussey
Director, Emergency Measures
Municipal and Community Affairs
Tel: 920-6133





99-089

GNWT to Implement new Probation Services

YELLOWKNIFE (August 19) -- The Department of Justice expects to have a new NWT Probation Service in place in the Beaufort-Delta and the Sahtu by November 1, Minister of Justice, Stephen Kakfwi, announced today.

In September of 1998, Cabinet approved the creation of a dedicated probation service, following recommendations from a 1998 report on the condition of NWT correctional services. Today's announcement is the first step in a plan to have a team of dedicated probation officers in place throughout the NWT.

"The introduction of a new probation service is an important milestone in the development of alternatives to incarceration," says Mr. Kakfwi. "It will help promote healing and the restoration of harmony between an offender and his or her community."

Three new Probation Officer positions have been created for the communities of Deline, Fort Good Hope and Fort McPherson. In addition it is anticipated that four people, currently based with the Inuvik Health Board, will be appointed by the Government of the NWT to provide service to the communities of the Beaufort Delta.

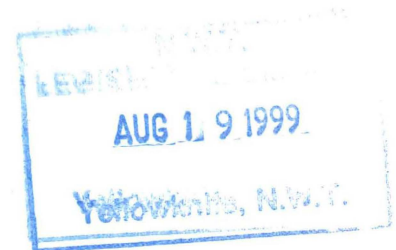
Effective November 1st, all offenders in the northern part of the territory who are on probation, serving a conditional sentence or on parole will fall under the responsibilities of the new service.

Probation and parole supervision is currently the responsibility of social workers employed by the regional health boards. It is expected that the Department of Justice will enter into contractual agreements to provide probation and parole supervision in the smaller, isolated communities where a dedicated probation officer is not resident.

The next step of the implementation plan will cover the Deh Cho, North Slave and South Slave communities, including Yellowknife. Community consultations will begin shortly in these regions. It is anticipated that several new positions will be filled and services put in place by April 1, 2000.

For more information contact:

Gerry Sutton
Assistant Deputy Minister
GNWT Department of Justice
Tel: (867) 920-6418
Fax: (867) 873-0307





99-090

Review of Community Justice Released

YELLOWKNIFE (August 19) -- A review of the NWT's Community Justice Program has concluded that the program has much merit in both its intent and execution. It also indicates that the Department of Justice, in partnership with the RCMP and others, still has work to do.

The Minister of Justice, Stephen Kakfwi tabled the report, "A Framework for Community Justice in the Western Arctic" in the Legislative Assembly on July 30th.

"The evaluation clearly affirms that there are many positive examples of community involvement in alternative justice and confirms the importance of the Department's co-ordinating supportive role in this area." Mr. Kakfwi says.

The review was carried out from January to April 1999 by the team of Campbell Research Associates to identify how the Department of Justice can best support community justice in the new Western Territory.

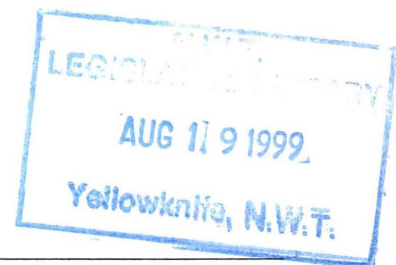
The Community Justice Program was first introduced in 1994 to facilitate community participation in the justice system and to promote the development of community alternatives to the formal justice system. There are two major components to the program. The first is the assignment of regional justice co-ordinators (formerly called regional justice specialists) to assist communities in their desire to take over more responsibilities in the justice system. The second is a program of grants to allow communities to fund community justice committees and community justice projects and programs.

Community respondents who participated in the review have made very specific suggestions for program improvements. They include devolving further responsibility for the program to regional and community levels and redefining and clarifying the role of the Regional Justice Co-ordinators to better serve the objectives of the program.

"I am optimistic that many of these improvements may be accommodated within current funding," Mr Kakfwi said. "I want to thank those people who gave their time and suggestions to the study. I look forward to working with all partners in community justice to improve this program and enhance the support provided to communities in the coming year."

For more information contact:

Gerry Sutton
Assistant Deputy Minister
GNWT Department of Justice
Tel: (867) 920-6418
Fax: (867) 873-0307





99-091

Edzo Fire Update August 19th 11:00 AM

YELLOWKNIFE (August 19) -- Fire Crews got some help from Mother Nature last night with up to 3mm of rain falling on sections of the fire burning 0.5 kilometres WSW of Edzo.

As a result, the evacuation order was lifted at 9:10 PM and residents of the community were allowed to return home.

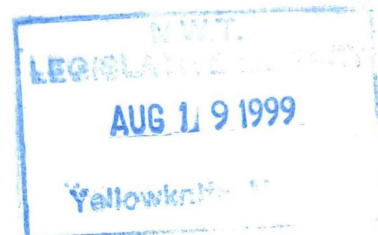
The fire continues to be fought aggressively. Fire crews will continue burnout operations today and concentrate on bringing the fire on the south side of Highway #3 under control. Burnout operations completed yesterday and last night were successful.

Approximately 65 fire personnel are currently involved in the suppression effort.

Highway #3 will remain open until further notice and as long as smoke conditions permit. RCMP will continue to escort convoys through the fire. Travelers are advised that they may encounter delays.

For highway updates travelers are asked to phone 1-800-661-0750.

For more information, contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: 669-2301





99-092

Edzo Fire Update August 20th 11:00 AM

YELLOWKNIFE (August 20) -- Fire crews are working to secure and contain the perimeter around the 1400-hectare fire near Edzo. Approximately 60 people are still involved in the fire operation.

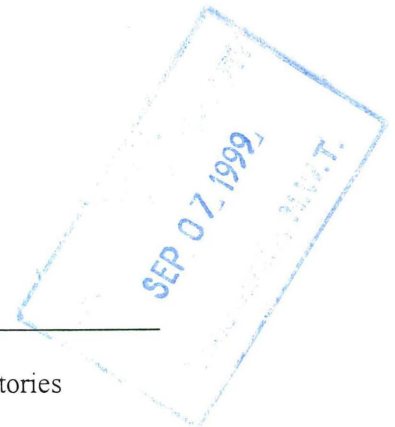
Highway #3 will remain open as long as fire conditions permit. RCMP and Department of Transportation personnel will continue to escort convoys through the fire zone to ensure the safety of fire personnel working in the area and to act as guides through occasionally smoky conditions.

Travelers are advised that they may encounter delays. For highway updates travelers are asked to phone 1-800-661-0750.

Unless the situation changes, this will be the final update issued by the Office of the Press Secretary.

For more information, contact:

Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 669-2302





99-093

H&SS and MACA Launch Physical Activity Guide for Older Adults

YELLOWKNIFE (August 20) -- The Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Health and Social Services have teamed up in the NWT to promote the use of a new guide to physical activity in an ageing society.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults and other resource materials will be distributed to a wide range of health care providers, schools, municipal fitness and recreation coordinators, as well as recreation and sport organizations.

The Guide explains why physical activity is important, and offers tips and suggestions on a wide range of issues. It is unique in addressing the physical activity needs of older Canadians. The release of this guide coincides with the designation of 1999 as the International Year of the Older Persons (IYOP) by the United Nations General Assembly

"Active living is essential in maintaining a high quality of life," says Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland. "It's great to see such a resourceful tool, specific to older adults now available."

"There is a need among older adults for more education and promotion of the health benefits that can be realized from active living," says Vince Steen, Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. "With our ageing population, this guide will help older adults become and stay active, ultimately resulting in a population of healthier and happier people."

Gradual physical decline used to be considered a natural part of the ageing process. Research now suggests that as much as one half of the physical decline between ages 30 and 70 can instead be attributed to a sedentary lifestyle.

Many older adults remain physically inactive due to a number of factors, notably fear of injury, lack of opportunity and lack of knowledge. As a result, many people miss the opportunity to enjoy health benefits and an improved quality of life

For more information, contact:

Gillian Burles
Manager, Health Promotion
Health and Social Services
(867) 873-7371

Gary Schauerte
Sport and Recreation Programs Advisor
Municipal and Community Affairs
(867) 920-6192



99-094

Improved Access to Greenhouse Gas Emissions Strategy

YELLOWKNIFE (August 30) – A new website has been launched to give the public instant access to information concerning the development of a Northwest Territories (NWT) Strategy to Control Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

The website address is www.ssimicro.com/~ghgs. The site features information on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change and updates on the development of the NWT strategy. It will also be used to solicit input from northerners on the development of the strategy.

Representatives of business, industry, environmental groups, aboriginal organizations and governments are working together to develop a made-in-the-north strategy to control greenhouse gas emissions in the NWT. Greenhouse gas emissions are one of the contributing factors to climate change.

The strategy will identify measures to control emissions in the NWT while supporting actions to reduce emissions nationally.

"Global climate change is no longer simply a scientific theory but a very real and serious threat to the northern environment and the ability of northerners to lead healthy and productive lives," said Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi. "Individuals, governments and industry must all play a role in developing ways of controlling northern emissions of greenhouse gases - one of the major causes of climate change."

For further information, contact:

Joseph Handley

Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048
Fax: (867) 873-0563

Lloyd Henderson

Manager, Energy Programs
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
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99-095

Premier Jim Antoine joins Team Canada mission to Japan and Australia

YELLOWKNIFE (AUG. 30) -- Premier Jim Antoine will be part of the 225-person Team Canada trade mission to Japan and Australia on September 11th. He will head a five-person contingent from the NWT that includes two northern business representatives.

“It is an honour to be invited by the Prime Minister to join this mission,” Mr. Antoine said. “It is a tremendous opportunity to support NWT companies already active in the Japanese market and help include new NWT exporters. It is also a valuable opportunity to get to know and solicit the support of my federal colleagues, the Prime Minister and business people from across Canada.”

While in Japan, the Premier will focus his opportunities on promoting the NWT’s tourism, construction and high tech industries. While in Osaka, Premier Antoine is expected to join western-Canada representatives at a reception of Japanese business people interested specifically in business opportunities in western Canada and the NWT.

In Australia, the Premier will be a resource in discussions regarding aboriginal rights and land claims. He will also pursue opportunities to meet with representatives from Australia’s mining industry.

The Japanese tourism industry in the NWT has grown significantly in recent years from virtually nothing in 1990 to over 6,000 Japanese residents visiting the NWT last year. A number of NWT construction companies are also active in the Japanese market.

Meanwhile, the development of the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories means that the NWT now receives more investment dollars from Australian companies than it does from the rest of Canada.

For further information, contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
Dept. of Executive
Tel: (867) 669-2302
Fax: (867) 873-0111



99-096

NWT Liquor Prices to Increase September 1, 1999

YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 01) – Effective today, the mark-up on liquor products in the Northwest Territories will increase, Minister of Finance Charles Dent, announced today.

The effect of this increase on liquor prices will differ depending on the product, but prices for most products will increase from three to seven per cent. The increase is expected to generate additional annual revenues of \$1.3 million for the government.

“It will mean higher revenues for the government at a time when we are facing a difficult fiscal situation,” Mr. Dent said.

The last increase in liquor mark-ups occurred in 1995.

For further information contact: **Margaret Melhorn**
Deputy Minister of Finance
Yellowknife, NWT
Tel: (867) 873-7117

or

Ron Courtoreille
General Manager, Liquor Commission
Hay River, NWT
Tel: (867) 874-2100



99-097

Premier Congratulates New NWT Senator Nick Sibbeston

YELLOWKNIFE (Sept. 2) -- Premier Jim Antoine congratulates Nick Sibbeston of Fort Simpson on his appointment today as the first Senator for the new Northwest Territories.

"Nick Sibbeston is an excellent choice to be the Senator for the new Northwest Territories," Mr. Antoine said. "I know him to be dedicated to the preservation of the NWT's languages and cultures and committed to the future of this territory. This, combined with his experience as an MLA and Government Leader, his work in the fields of community justice, health care and social services equip him to be a well-rounded representative of the NWT in the Senate."

The NWT has been without a Senator since Division on April 1. The former NWT Senator, Willie Adams, now represents Nunavut.

Mr. Sibbeston is a lawyer who was born in Fort Simpson. He served as an MLA from 1970-74 and from 1979-91, including six years as a cabinet minister and two as Government Leader. Since leaving territorial politics, Mr. Sibbeston worked as a Justice Specialist for the GNWT and as the Public Administrator overseeing the creation of Deh Cho Health and Social Services and its transition to an elected board. He has also served as an advisor to the television program North of 60.

For further information contact: **Judy Langford**
Press Secretary
Dept. of Executive
(867) 669-2302



99-098

GNWT and Diavik Sign MOU on Supply of Rough Diamonds

YELLOWKNIFE (September 3) – The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Diavik Diamond Mines on the supply of rough diamonds to northern manufacturers.

The signing of the MOU was announced today by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi.

The MOU confirms Diavik's intention, in conjunction with Aber Resources, to establish an off-site diamond sorting facility in the NWT. The company has also agreed to enter discussions with existing or potential NWT-based companies for the supply of rough diamonds.

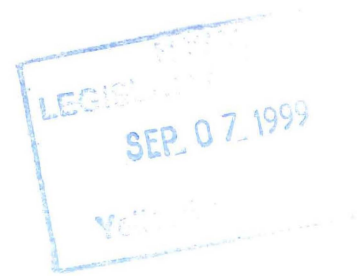
"This MOU is a first step in ensuring diamond manufacturers in the NWT have access to a supply of rough diamonds from Diavik." Mr. Kakfwi said.

For its part, the GNWT has agreed to prepare an annual report on the developments and changes in the status of the secondary diamond industry in the NWT. This report will be made available to Diavik and other existing and potential rough-diamond producers in the NWT.

The GNWT has also agreed to act as a clearinghouse for all inquiries regarding the supply of rough diamonds from the NWT.

The MOU is only one part of the on-going negotiations towards a socio-economic agreement between the GNWT and Diavik. Those negotiations are continuing.

For more information, contact: **Stephen Kakfwi**
Minister,
Resources Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 669-2366



99-099

Joint Program to Help Lower Heating Costs in Inuvik

INUVIK (September 7) – The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and Inuvik Gas Ltd. have teamed up to provide heating conversion grants for Inuvik homeowners. The grants will allow homeowners to switch from oil heating to natural gas heating.

The natural gas conversion program was announced today by Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) Minister, Stephen Kakfwi and Inuvik Gas Ltd.

Inuvik Gas is distributing natural gas from the Ikhil field to commercial and residential consumers in the community. The Ikhil natural gas field and pipeline was developed in partnership by the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation, AltaGas Ltd. and Enbridge Ltd.

"This project is a good example of how northerners can benefit from resource development in their own backyard," said Mr. Kakfwi. "Not only did residents benefit through employment, training and business opportunities during the development of the Ikhil field, they are now reaping the benefits of a less expensive and cleaner burning fuel."

"We are very pleased to be working with the GNWT in this final phase of the Inuvik Gas Project," said Lyle Neis, General Manager of Inuvik Gas Ltd. "By providing funding for the Conversion Incentive Program, RWED is demonstrating its commitment to reduce entry barriers for new NWT-produced energy sources."

RWED has committed up to \$300,000 in 1999/2000 and another \$200,000 in 2000/2001 to the Inuvik Natural Gas Conversion Program. The funding will cover up to one third, to a maximum of \$1350, to homeowners who wish to convert from oil heating to natural gas heating. Inuvik Gas Ltd. will match that grant for each residential heating conversion.

Natural gas is cleaner burning and less expensive than heating oil or diesel and results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

Applications for the Inuvik Natural Gas Conversion Program are now being accepted by Inuvik Gas Ltd.

For more information, contact:

Doug Matthews

or

Lyle Neis

Director

General Manager

Mineral, Oils and Gas RWED

Inuvik Gas Ltd.

Tel: (867) 920-3222

Tel: (867) 777-7055

Fax: (867) 873-0254

Fax: (867) 777-3339



99-100

Community Administrators to train via the Internet

YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 8) - Community Administrators in the NWT will receive training thanks to a specialized Intranet site beginning this fall.

This collaborative pilot project involves the development of a web based Intranet site by the NWT Association of Municipalities (NWTAM), and the delivery of courses via this site by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs' School of Community Government. The Office of Learning Technology, Human Resource Development Canada is providing funding for this one-year pilot project.

"Providing access to technology-based distance learning opportunities and demonstrating how they can be incorporated into the workplace will allow us to work towards meeting the training needs of community government employees and eventually all residents of the NWT," Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Vince Steen said.

The School of Community Government was established by MACA under part of a broader strategy called "Building Communities". The school offers a new approach for training at the community government level and is designed to build community capacity by providing education and learning opportunities for community governments, their staff and the organizations that support them.

"The NWT Association of Municipalities has a vision for bringing our communities into the new millennium using digital technology. This vision will allow community governments to embrace the 21st century with the proper learning tools to remain competitive," President of the NWT Association of Municipalities, George Roach said. The NWTAM represents 23 communities in the NWT. Its major goal is to promote the exchange of information between NWT communities and to provide a united front for the realization of municipal goals.

The project will be evaluated upon its completion to determine the effectiveness of using distance learning technology to train community government staff.

For more information, contact:

Rob McPhee **or**
NWT Assoc. of Municipalities
Tel: (867) 873-8359

Dan Schofield
School of Community Government
Municipal & Community Affairs
Tel: (867) 873-7755



99-101

RFP Issued for Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre

YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 09) -- Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland, Chairman of the Financial Management Board, Charles Dent and Chairperson of the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board, Nellie Cournoyea announced today that a Request for Proposals has been issued for the new Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Centre.

The new facility will be built under the Government of the Northwest Territories' Public-Private Partnership (P3) initiative. The P3 approach was introduced by the GNWT in 1998, as a means to increase the government's current annual investment in public infrastructure. Under the P3 approach, the government enters into lease arrangements with private sector partners who design, construct, own, operate, maintain and finance public infrastructure.

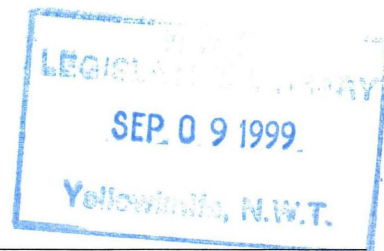
In November 1998 the Department of Health and Social Services requested that interested firms submit their bidding qualifications for the Inuvik project. The review process focused on the completeness of each company's team including their experience, depth of skills, financing strengths and the potential proponents each might bring to the project.

The following developers were short-listed: McNamara of Canada of Edmonton Alberta; a joint venture between the Gwich'in Development Corporation, the Inuvialuit Development Corporation and Clark Builders of Inuvik and Yellowknife; and Ninety North Partners of Yellowknife.

These three developers have been invited to submit proposals on the project. The Request for Proposals is scheduled to close on January 7th, 2000 at which time the GNWT will evaluate proposals and sign development and lease agreements with the successful developer.

For more information contact:

Keith Morrison
P3 Implementation Team Chairman
(867) 873-7769





99-102

Minister of Transportation Honours Employee for National Win

YELLOWKNIFE (September 10) -- Curtis Mercredi, an airfield maintenance technician at the Yellowknife Airport was recognized in the Legislative Assembly yesterday by the GNWT's Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen. Mr. Mercredi won the title of Canadian National Grand Champion at the 1999 Airforce Maintenance Rodeo in July.

"We are proud to have Mr. Mercredi as part of our team. Stepping up from a second place win last year to win first overall this year in a competition against Canada's best is a great accomplishment and a credit to his hard work," said Mr. Steen. Mr. Mercredi's performance is exemplary of the department's commitment to excellence throughout the NWT transportation system.

Mr. Mercredi qualified for the National Rodeo by winning a similar regional competition in Fort Smith. Both events require competitors to drive three different pieces of equipment through obstacle courses designed to resemble situations they would encounter during on-going airfield maintenance. The technician with the highest combined points after three events is named the overall winner.

Mr. Mercredi was born and raised in the NWT and is a long-time resident of Yellowknife. He has been employed by the Yellowknife Airport since 1987 when he began as a trainee in the federal Department of Transportation Public Service Commission Northern Training Program. He has previously represented Yellowknife in a number of regional rodeos and competed nationally in 1992 and 1998.

For more information contact: **Jim Windsor**
Director, Arctic Airports
Department of Transportation
Tel: (867) 873-7725



99-103

Natural Gas Arrives in Inuvik

INUVIK (September 10) -- Residents in Inuvik are celebrating the arrival of a new source of energy this week. The first commercial natural gas began to flow Thursday from the Ikhil gas field North of Inuvik.

The development of natural gas in the Inuvik region has been a joint project of the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation, Alta Gas Services Incorporated, and Enbridge Incorporated.

The NWT Power Corporation will be the biggest customer for the new natural-gas system. The Corporation's planned conversion from diesel driven generators was a key economic component of the plan. It is estimated that the use of natural gas to generate power will save Inuvik power customers \$20-25 million over the minimum 15-year life of the project.

In addition, greenhouse gas emissions will be cut by 32 per cent thanks to cleaner and more efficient gas-driven engines.

"This project is a great example of what can be achieved when government, business and aboriginal groups work together," said Deputy Premier and Inuvik MLA, Floyd Roland. "I hope it will set the stage for similar projects in other NWT communities located near natural gas discoveries or pipelines."

For residents of Inuvik, the availability of natural gas will also mean businesses and homeowners will be able to convert to the new energy source for heating and other uses.

"I especially would like to acknowledge the NWT Power Corporation who are the anchor tenant for this project and the role of the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) in the original feasibility study and for providing funding for the gas conversion project," Mr. Roland said.

Form more information, contact: **Mike Aumond**
Executive Assistant to
Hon. Floyd Roland
Tel: (867) 669-2308





99-104

NWT Arts Council Grants Approved

YELLOWKNIFE (September 15) – The NWT Arts Council has approved a total of 24 awards totalling \$140,000 for 1999/2000.

Carvings, paintings, raku pottery, books, CDs and multi-media displays are only a few of the things that will be produced by recipients of this year's NWT Arts Council Awards.

"The range of funding proposals received again this year is indicative, not only of the rich culture which exists in the NWT, but an environment that inspires creativity," says Education, Culture and Employment Minister, Michael Miltenberger. "The Arts Council is pleased to support the work of those who add such richness to our lives."

This year the recipients include:

- Jerome Thomas – Ekinla , of Fort Simpson, who will produce a series of soapstone, wood and antler carvings and two paintings which will portray the history of the people who live along the Deh Cho.
- Astrid Kruse, a well-known Yellowknife potter, will create, bisque fire, glaze and raku fire a series of 30 clay sculptures.
- Susan Marie of Yellowknife will recreate a dress worn by Dene women in the early 1900's.
- Ishmael Alunik of Inuvik will co-author a book called Neolithic to Nunavut: The Complete History of Canada's North.
- Eric Fuglsang of Yellowknife will produce a CD of original music.
- John Guest of Fort Smith will carve from stone, a series of picture and mirror frames and clocks which will feature the images of northern animals.
- Dennis Allen of Yellowknife will produce a short, fictional drama video called Someplace Better.
- Archie Beaverho of Wha Ti will create a series of painting and carvings that depict life in the north.
- Aaron Hernandez of Yellowknife will record a CD of original music.

- John Rombough Jr. of LutselK'e will produce a series of acrylic paintings which chronicle the lives of Dene people.
- Richard Holtorf of Fort Smith will record a full length CD called Last Call.
- Marnie Hilash of Inuvik will combine airbrush and watercolour with pencil and ink drawings to create a 10 part series.
- Yellowknife's Anthony Antoine will use various stone to create 10 carvings to portray division of the NWT.
- Leslie Leong of Fort Smith will participate in the Millennium Project using photos, poems and introspective stories to illustrate themes of nature, ecology and world peace.
- Sister Agnes Sutherland of Fort Smith will write a book about her experiences of growing up in the north.
- Anne Lynagh of Yellowknife will produce a multi-media exhibit entitled Life on the Rocks: fear, faith and a reef.
- Linco Schoenne of Yellowknife will sculpt a series of clay figures of women across the north.
- David Bourke of Ft. Smith will produce a series of soapstone carvings and paintings.
- The NWT Pipe Band will hold a piping and drumming workshop for its members and the public.
- Folk on the Rocks received a contribution to be used toward a series of developmental workshops for northern musicians at this year's Folk on the Rocks Festival in Yellowknife.
- The Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik held a series of developmental workshops for visual artists during this summer's festival with funding received from the NWT Arts Council.
- The NWT Music Teacher's Association received a grant for a five-day educational music workshop that will take place in January 2000.

For more information, contact:

Charles Arnold

Director, Culture, Heritage & Languages

Education, Culture and Employment

Tel: (867) 873-7551

Fax: (867)873-0205



99-105

NWT Development Corporation Partners Team Up to for Donation

YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 16) -- Two companies, supported by the NWT Development Corporation, have donated \$2,500 in logs to the Deninu Ku'e First Nation for their centennial commemoration of the signing of Treaty 8 in the NWT.

In response to a request from the community of Fort Resolution, Great Slave Lake Forest Products Ltd. and Mackenzie Wood Products Ltd. will donate 100 logs to build an arbour for the commemoration next July. The two companies announced an agreement today to purchase and mill logs currently in the mill yard.

“The commemoration of Treaty 8 is a significant event for the Northwest Territories and the community of Fort Resolution, Minister Responsible for the NWT Development Corporation, Stephen Kakfwi said. “I’m pleased that Great Slave Lake Forest Products Ltd. and Mackenzie Wood Products Ltd. are able to contribute to the community as it prepares for the ceremony.”

It is anticipated that all Treaty 8 communities and government officials will attend the commemoration.

For more information, contact: **Fred Koe**
President
NWT Development Corporation
Tel: (867) 920-7700



99-107

Economic Strategy Panel Elects Co-chairs

YELLOWKNIFE (September 29) - Richard Nerysoo and Darrell Beaulieu have been elected co-chairs of the GNWT's 16-member Economic Strategy Panel. They were elected at the panel's second meeting September 21-22nd in Fort Simpson.

The panel, appointed this summer by Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi, is developing an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories. It includes representation from eight regional aboriginal groups, industry, territorial, federal and municipal governments, Ecology North and the Council on the Status of Women.

Panel members have identified key issues, principles, and objectives for the panel's work. They have also outlined how to proceed with more detailed reviews of issues. Key issues identified by the panel include oil and gas and mineral development, education and training, the role of land claims, transportation, tourism and renewable resources, decreased federal funding, and environmental and social issues.

"We are working to establish a strategic plan that can guide the involvement of the people of the Northwest Territories in developing both our human and natural resources," said Mr. Nerysoo. "The future of the Northwest Territories is bright, despite some of the difficult issues we are dealing with today, and this plan should form the basis of a collective will to ensure the success of the NWT."

The panel will meet again October 28-29th to begin more detailed reviews of priority areas identified during the Fort Simpson meeting. Monthly meetings will be held to deal with other issues.

For more information, contact:

Richard Nerysoo	or	Darrell Beaulieu
Gwich'in Tribal Council		Deton'cho Corporation
Inuvik		Ndilo
Tel: (867) 777-4869		Tel: (867) 873-6533
Fax: (867) 777-4538		Fax: (867) 873-5308

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99-108

Public Service Pension Review

YELLOWKNIFE (September 29) -- The Federal Minister of Finance, the Honourable Paul Martin has committed to provide interim funding through the Formula Funding Agreement to offset the costs of the GNWT's increased contribution rate for the Public Service Superannuation Plan, Minister of Finance, Charles Dent, announced today.

This commitment should provide the GNWT with the time it needs to review alternate pension arrangements for the Public Service and fully consult with employees and unions to ensure that employees continue to receive the same pension benefits at reasonable costs to both employees and the employer.

On September 14 1999, Bill C-78, a Bill respecting changes to the *Federal Government Public Service Superannuation Act (PSSA)*, the Act that legislates the Public Service Superannuation Pension Plan, received Royal Assent in Parliament. Bill-C78 has resulted in changes to employee contributions to the PSSA and to employer contributions, as well as other changes such as survivor benefits to same sex couples.

The Federal Government maintains that it has subsidized the GNWT's participation in the PSSA by requiring the GNWT to match only the single rate contributions paid by employees. According to the Federal Government, actual employer costs are closer to 2.25 times the rate of employee contributions or about 17% of payroll.

Under the new PSSA changes, the GNWT will be required to pay the full employer contribution rate calculated by the Federal Government effective April 1, 2000. This would mean a dramatic increase of 114% over the GNWT's current contributions or \$13 million dollars per year. Minister Martin's decision to provide interim funding means that the GNWT will avoid a large additional cost at a time when it is already under significant fiscal pressure.

GNWT and Federal officials will commence discussions soon on how the funding under the Formula Funding Agreement will be adjusted to deal with this issue.

For more information contact:

Lew Voytilla
Secretary
Financial Management Board
GNWT
Tel: (867) 873-7211

or

Margaret Melhorn
Deputy Minister
Department of Finance
GNWT
Tel: (867) 873-7117

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SEP 30 1999
Yellowknife, N.W.T.



99-109

Workers Have Support From GNWT

YELLOWKNIFE (September 29) – The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is working with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Canadian Auto Workers to help workers preparing for layoffs at Yellowknife’s Giant Mine.

Department officials, in co-operation with HRDC have been working closely with the union to answer any immediate questions workers may have regarding Employment Insurance and career development opportunities as quickly as possible.

In addition, a referrals system for dealing with family and social issues will be established with the City of Yellowknife and other support organizations including the Department of Health and Social Services and the Chamber of Mines.

Once applications for Employment Insurance have been completed and submitted, career development officers from the Canada/NWT Service Centre in Yellowknife will take over.

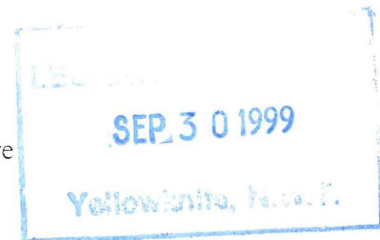
“The Career Development Officers will play a key role in advising workers of the full range of benefits and measures they are eligible for under the Employment Insurance Act,” Minister of Education Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger said. These benefits can range from retraining for alternative employment to brushing up on job application and resume writing skills.”

A transition centre, will be established independent from the company and government. Services available at the drop in centre will include crisis and credit counselling, co-ordination of job search activities, materials for preparing and mailing out resumes and job applications, as well as career planning and job skill assessments and information on training and educational opportunities.

Employees at the North Slave Career Centre are committed to providing whatever support is necessary to help all of the workers affected by the situation at Giant Mine.

For more information contact:

Rose O'Donnell-King
Superintendent
Canada/NWT Service Centre
Phone: (867) 766-5105



News Release/Communiqué

99-110

NWT Protected Areas Strategy Approved

YELLOWKNIFE (September 30) - Robert Nault, federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Government of the Northwest Territories, today announced the approval of the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy.

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) sets out a broad framework to guide the work of identifying and establishing protected areas in the Northwest Territories. The strategy represents a consensus amongst members of the PAS Advisory Committee, which included Aboriginal organizations, industry, environmental groups, and government.

"This strategy sets out some clear direction on how to protect areas of land and water with special natural and cultural values while providing greater clarity about status, access and development options for industry in these areas," said Mr. Kakfwi. "Community consultation played an important part in developing the Protected Areas Strategy and it will be an important element of its implementation."

"Creating a system of protected areas is one way of ensuring that the biodiversity and cultural significance of the North will continue," said Minister Nault. "The NWT Protected Areas Strategy will not only contribute to the conservation of our natural areas for future generations, but it has the potential to add to the social well-being of the people of the Northwest Territories".

Implementation of the strategy will vary from region to region, depending on each region's unique environmental, cultural and land claims context. Communities, regional organizations, and land claim bodies will take the lead in identifying and recommending specific sites for consideration, with technical and administrative support from a newly mandated PAS Secretariat.

"Here in the Northwest Territories, we need to take steps to ensure that the cultural integrity and unique ecosystems of the North will continue," said Ethel Blondin-Andrew, MP for the Western Arctic. "The NWT Protected Areas Strategy acknowledges this need, and will assist Northerners in selecting and managing protected areas."

.../2

NWT Protected Areas Strategy Approved: Page 2

In August, 1996, during the final phases of the BHP diamond mine approvals, the Government of the NWT and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development committed to develop a Protected Areas Strategy for the Northwest Territories, in partnership with Aboriginal groups, environmental organizations, and other interested parties. Implementation of the strategy is the next phase of the project and will be ongoing through the year 2000.

For more information, contact:

Robin Reilly or
Project Manager
Protected Areas Strategy
RWED
Tel: (867) 873-7902
Fax: (867) 873-0163

Zoe Raemer
Communications Director
DIAND
Tel: (867) 669-2575
Fax: (867) 669-2715

99-111

Cabinet Approves Diavik Socio-economic Agreement

YELLOWKNIFE (October 1) – Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED), Stephen Kakfwi today announced that Cabinet has approved a Socio-economic Agreement with Diavik Diamond Mines Inc. (DDMI).

"This agreement, along with the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with the company commits DDMI to working with both the GNWT and affected aboriginal organizations to maximize training, employment and business opportunities for residents of the NWT," Mr. Kakfwi said. "It also allows all parties the opportunity for on-going involvement in the monitoring of this project."

The socio-economic agreement calls for the establishment of an Advisory Board, composed primarily of affected community representatives, to monitor the active fulfilment of the commitments made in the agreement. It includes provisions for pre-employment, skill development, on-the-job and apprenticeship training for northern and aboriginal residents. Targets for northern and aboriginal employment and business opportunities are also identified.

The recently signed MOU confirms DDMI's intention, in conjunction with Aber Resources, to establish an off-site diamond sorting facility in the NWT. The company has agreed to enter discussions with existing or potential NWT-based companies for the supply of rough diamonds.

"I applaud DDMI's commitment to reasonable levels of training for northerners, to giving priority to NWT businesses and to establishing value added industries in the NWT," said Mr. Kakfwi. "The successful conclusion of these negotiations reaffirms the GNWT's position that sustainable development of natural resources is essential to the long term economic, cultural and social well being of all northerners."

The Diavik Diamonds Project is still awaiting approval from the federal Minister of the Environment. An official signing of the Socio-economic Agreement will be held at 5 p.m. Saturday, October 2nd in the Legislative Assembly's Great Hall.

For more information, contact:

Joe Handley
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048



99-112

October 2-9th is Literacy Week

YELLOWKNIFE (October 2) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger, has declared the week of October 2-9th as NWT Literacy Week.

“One of the most important gifts we can give our children is the ability to read. Reading can open doors at school, at work and at play,” said Mr. Miltenberger. “It is never too late to learn. The literacy levels of NWT residents increase every year.”

The NWT Literacy Council plays a key role in promoting literacy all year long. Community libraries and language communities provide services for all community members. There is a very strong focus on reading skills for children in the schools and early childhood programs while Aurora College, along with its many partners, support literacy development for adults. Literacy Week is an opportunity to recognize their work and celebrate achievements in history.

Special activities are planned to mark Literacy Week throughout the NWT. Events like the “Read for 15 Challenge” will promote literacy and life long learning.

“Literacy touches every aspect of our lives,” said Mr. Miltenberger. “It’s more than being able to read. Literacy allows individuals to write, calculate and speak. It enhances our ability to communicate with each other. I encourage everyone to celebrate Literacy Week, by taking part in the activities planned for their community.” he said.

For more information, call:

Gloria Iatridis,
Co-ordinator,
Literacy and Adult Basic Education
Department of Education, Culture & Employment
Tel: (867) 920-3482



99-113

Minister says Equal Pay Issues can be Settled in a Reasonable Manner

YELLOWKNIFE (October 4) – The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent says the Bell Canada equal pay settlement with unions representing its employees illustrates that fair, reasonable and responsible negotiated settlements are the best way for parties to resolve equal pay disputes.

Bell Canada reached a tentative settlement over equal pay last Wednesday with 20,000 current and former employees. The tentative \$59 million offer is reported to translate into settlements averaging between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per individual.

“While generous, Bell’s offer still pales beside the equal pay settlement offer made by the GNWT in December of 1998, to the Union of Northern Workers and its parent organization - The Public Service Alliance of Canada,” Mr. Dent said.

When the UNW and PSAC rejected the GNWT’s December offer, individual settlement offers, totalling over \$27 million, were made to 5,333 current and former GNWT employees. The average overall settlement for GNWT employees was approximately \$5,100 while some individual payments exceeded \$40,000 depending on an individual’s position and years of service with the Government.

“We believe our individual settlement offers were very reasonable,” said Mr. Dent. “Clearly, so did the 82 per cent of current and former employees who received and accepted them. Still, the UNW and the Public Service Alliance of Canada are continuing to force a lengthy and expensive Canadian Human Rights Tribunal process. We have already had to spend in excess of \$1.5 million in legal fees defending the interests of the Northwest Territories from the union claims, which total \$300 million,” he said.

With only 18% of the individual offers yet to be accepted, Mr. Dent says now is the time for union officials to reconsider the mutual benefits of a negotiated solution to the equal pay issue.

“We cannot afford to spend another 10 years on this matter,” Mr. Dent said.

For more information contact:

Shaleen Woodward
Manager, Equal Pay
Labour Relations and Compensation Services
Financial Management Board Secretariat
Tel: (867) 873-7502



99-114

GNWT Confident Upcoming Mediation with the NWTTA will be Productive

YELLOWKNIFE (October 4) – The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, says he’s confident significant progress can be made towards reaching a collective agreement with the Northwest Territories Teachers’ Association (NWTTA) once the mediation process commences on November 3rd.

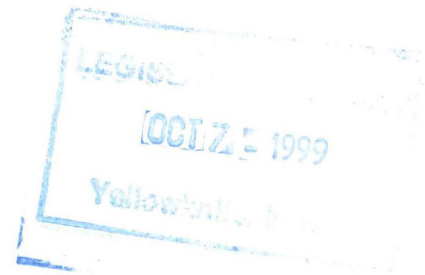
“At this point the GNWT has not tabled its final position and there should be enough flexibility remaining on both sides to make mediation productive,” Mr. Dent said.

To date, two rounds of bargaining have been held between the NWTTA and the GNWT with a number of issues being resolved. Monetary issues including Northern Benefits were discussed briefly during the last round of bargaining prior to the NWTTA breaking off negotiations and requesting the parties proceed to mediation.

Mr. Dent says that the strike vote scheduled for later this week is a part of the bargaining process and should be an opportunity for the NWTTA to provide a full and accurate status report to its membership.

For more information contact:

Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Financial Management Board Secretariat
Tel: (867) 873-7786



99-115

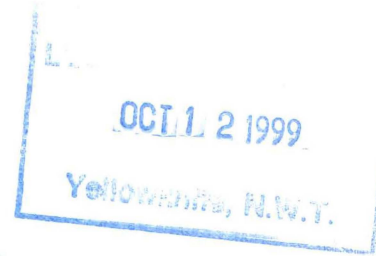
Minister Confident that Strike will not be Necessary

YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 7) -- The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent responded this morning to the results of yesterday's NWT Teachers' Association strike vote.

"The polling of Association members to give the bargaining team a mandate is not unusual and is contemplated in the *Public Service Act*." Mr. Dent said. "The Government of the NWT will do its utmost to negotiate a collective agreement when mediation begins next month so that job action can be avoided and students are not disrupted."

Mediation is scheduled to take place from November 3-5th with a mediator who was appointed in July.

For further information contact: **Sylvia Haener**
Director
Labour Relations and Compensation
Tel: (867) 920-8900



99-116

Minister and Chairs Agree a Strong NWT Education System is Critical

YELLOWKNIFE (Oct. 8) -- There was unanimous agreement earlier this week on the need to continue to develop a strong education system at a meeting between Minister of Education, J. Michael Miltenberger, and the Chairs of all regional Divisional Education Councils and Yellowknife District Education Authorities.

“If we want to ensure our future as a territory, we must ensure our children get the best education we can provide,” Mr. Miltenberger said. “The Chairs were very strong in their support for reinvestment in our schools, particularly to address the issues of special needs and large class sizes.”

The Minister and Chairs discussed a range of issues during a two-day meeting in Rae-Edzo. Significant time was spent on special needs, an update of the work underway to address the Minister’s Forum on Education, formula funding issues, efforts to support the recruitment and retention of teachers, and supporting the transition from school to work or post-secondary education. Other items on the agenda included the strategic plan update and the current NWTTA-GNWT collective bargaining process.

“We share a common interest in having effective schooling so much of the discussion and decisions focused on how to work together and share resources.” Mr. Miltenberger said. He pointed to the location for the meeting, Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, as an excellent example of a school that offers students a strong educational program in an environment which respects and promotes the Dogrib culture. “There are some really exciting programs happening in this school and others and we want to share that knowledge to benefit all NWT students.”

The Board Chairs and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment meet on a regular basis to discuss common issues and to develop joint strategies to support education in the Northwest Territories. In addition to bi-monthly conference calls, the next in-person meeting will be held in Spring 2000.

For more information contact: Lynn Elkin
Executive Assistant to Hon. Michael Miltenberger
(867) 669-2309



99-117

Northern Forum on Career Development

YELLOWKNIFE (October 12) - The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is hosting the first Northern forum on career development, entitled *On Track: Finding Purpose, Passion in the New Millennium*, in Yellowknife this week.

“Career development is the often unnoticed but critical link between people’s skills, hopes and dreams and the many employment opportunities around us,” Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger said. “This conference will be a chance for participants to share their knowledge, skills and best practices and to learn more about how to help other northerners in making important career and life decisions.”

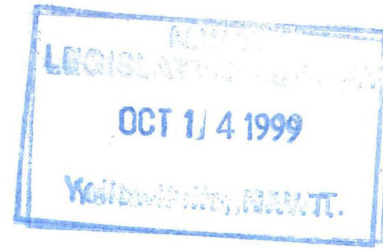
The forum gives northern career development practitioners an opportunity to hear about national and local initiatives in career development, policy and theory. Teachers, career counsellors, employment officers, adult educators and human resource practitioners from across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are among the delegates hearing from northern and southern experts in the field.

One of the challenges in career development work is supporting people as they make the transition from school to work or post-secondary education.

“Strong career development services which provide good information are critical to helping our youth make wise and informed decisions. We need to help them look at both their inner strengths and interests and the many opportunities surrounding them,” Mr. Miltenberger said.

This forum will be a first chance for many participants to meet each other, to share ideas and to develop the important contacts with others doing similar kinds of work. Organizers hope participants will conclude the sessions by establishing a NWT/Nunavut Chapter of the Career Development Association of Alberta.

For more information contact: Lesley Allen
Assistant Deputy Minister
Colleges & Career Division
Education, Culture and Employment
(867) 873-7252



99-118

**Bertha Allen of Inuvik Receives Award in Commemoration
of the "Person's Case"**

YELLOWKNIFE (October 13) -- Bertha Allen of Inuvik is one of five Canadian women to receive the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Person's Case. The award is in recognition of Ms. Allen's outstanding contributions towards promoting equality of women in Canada.

On October 18, 1929, the British Privy Council decided that women were "persons" under Canadian law, and therefore eligible for appointment to the Senate. This decision was rendered after a lengthy legal and political struggle, known as the "Persons Case". Each year, the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case are presented on or around this date.

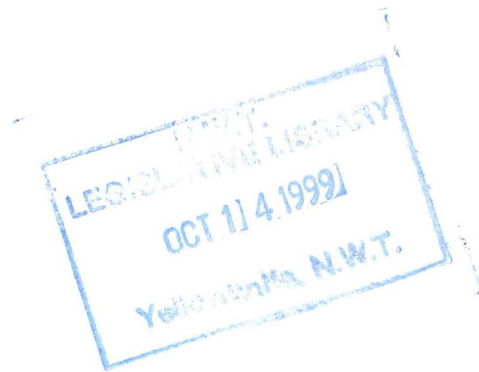
Ms. Allen was one of the founding members of Native Women's Association of the NWT and the Status of Women Council. While much of her work concerned the social, political and economic equality of women, Ms. Allen was also a voice for all people throughout the North.

Ms. Allen has been a member of the NWT Constitution Commission (Bourque Commission), National Aboriginal Advisory Committee to the RCMP, President of the NWT Arts & Crafts Society, President of Native Women's Association both territorially and nationally, and President of the Advisory Council of the Status of Women NWT. In addition, Ms. Allen also did voluntary work for numerous community groups and was awarded the Commissioner's Volunteer Award at the highest level in 1987.

"Bertha Allen has represented the Northwest Territories with great dignity. She has earned our deepest respect through her demonstration of leadership and her lasting contributions to the North", said Charles Dent, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Ms. Allen will receive her award at a ceremony in Calgary on October 18th, at the Palliser Hotel.

For more information contact: Bertha Norwegian
Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible
for the Status of Women
(867) 920-3106



99-119

BC and NWT Discuss Working Together

VANCOUVER (October 14) — Premier Jim Antoine has met with BC Premier Dan Miller to discuss how their jurisdictions can work together on matters of mutual interest, including economic development and the infrastructure needs of their natural gas and oil industries.

“The Northwest Territories has made similar arrangements successfully with other jurisdictions,” Mr. Antoine said. “I am confident an agreement with BC would be mutually beneficial. The peoples along our shared border live as neighbours and expect us to work together on their concerns and to promote their aspirations for the benefit of both our jurisdictions.”

“We intend to conclude a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would provide a framework under which initiatives for various sectors, such as natural gas and forestry, could be developed,” said Mr. Miller, who is also Minister of Energy, Mines and Northern Development. “The communities of the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories and the northeast area of BC should be able to work as partners, not competitors.”

The premiers said an MOU would enable each jurisdiction to stimulate the economies of communities along the BC-NWT border. While each jurisdiction would continue to manage its resources, they would share infrastructure and expertise to help make development as effective as possible.

The premiers’ discussions, while wide-ranging, focused mostly on the recent growth of oil and gas activities in their common border area and on the infrastructure needed to foster continued growth in that industry.

For more information contact: Judy Langford or Jean Wolff
Press Secretary Press Secretary to the Premier
Gov’t of the NWT Gov’t of BC
Yellowknife, NT Victoria, BC
(867) 669-2301 (250) 387-1718



99-120

1999 Ferry Season Winding Down

YELLOWKNIFE (October 14) – The Department of Transportation wishes to remind the traveling public that the highway ferries at all locations are scheduled to close earlier than in past seasons. At the Peel River near Fort McPherson, the Mackenzie River near Tsiigehtchic and at the Mackenzie River N'dulee crossing, service will end with the last crossing on October 15, 1999. At the Mackenzie River crossing near Fort Providence, ferry service will end when the ice crossing has reached a 30,000 kilogram load capacity and at the Liard River crossing near Fort Simpson at the first sign of ice. Service at all crossings may close earlier due to low water.

The Department wishes to inform the public that this extraordinary measure has been taken as one of several territory-wide initiatives to reduce spending and thereby contribute to government's economizing measures during difficult financial times.

Ice bridges at all river crossings will be opened as soon as conditions permit.

For more information contact: Dale Thomson
Manager, Safety and Public Affairs
Department of Transportation
(867) 873-7712



99-121

GNWT Focuses on Resource Development in the Mackenzie Valley

YELLOWKNIFE (October 18) – A new initiative for resource development planning in the Mackenzie Valley will allow the territorial government to prepare for the increased interest in exploration for natural gas and oil reserves in the NWT.

"As a government we welcome the renewed interest in exploration for these reserves in the Northwest Territories," Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Stephen Kakfwi said. "I look forward to working with my colleagues both within the GNWT and in Aboriginal organizations, industry and other levels of government to ensure that we are adequately prepared to maximize all available opportunities arising from exploration and development."

Chuck Parker has been appointed to take the lead role in coordinating the Mackenzie Valley Resource Development Planning Project for the GNWT. Mr. Parker is a former president of Aurora College and has worked extensively with northern communities.

Mr. Parker will be responsible for identifying the necessary resources and working with government departments to assign staff to various aspects of the project. He will also be travelling to each region in the Mackenzie Valley to discuss the planning project with Aboriginal organizations, industry and other levels of government and to encourage their participation in it.

"The government wants to ensure training programs are in place so northerners are prepared to take full advantage of available job and business opportunities," Mr. Kakfwi said. "At the same time, we must work with communities to ensure possible negative social and environmental impacts are identified and to work together to minimize these impacts."

For more information contact: **Bob McLeod**
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
(867) 920-8048

Mackenzie Valley Resource Development Backgrounder

- the demand for natural gas is growing in both the United States and southern Canada
- the Northwest Territories possesses vast resources of natural gas in the Mackenzie Valley
- 14 exploration leases have been issued in the Fort Liard area
- the Sahtu region has 15 active leases
- four bids have been accepted for exploration in the Mackenzie Beaufort Delta
- 11 new wells are expected to be drilled in the NWT during the 1999/2000 season
- significant discoveries of natural gas in the Fort Liard area are leading to development applications for pipeline construction to connect new wells with existing pipelines in northeastern British Columbia
- oil and gas companies are expected to spend more than \$200 million on exploration and project development in the NWT during the next three years
- increased investment in further exploration and pipeline construction in the NWT is expected

For more information, contact:

Chuck Parker
Coordinator
Mackenzie Valley Resource Development Planning Project
(867) 920-6112



99-122

Women's History Month Celebrates Francophone Women

YELLOWKNIFE (October 18) -- Women's History Month was established in October 1992 to celebrate the contribution of women to Canadian society. This celebration provides an opportunity to recognize the achievements of women from all backgrounds and in all areas of endeavours.

This year's theme, "Yesterday and Today: Francophone Women in Canada", gives due recognition to Francophone women for their perseverance and conviction in the shaping of Canada as a nation. Their achievements include women's increased access to education, social justice, and political participation representation.

"Francophone women have played a significant role in the growth of the Northwest Territories. Their dedication to raising the standards of program delivery, particularly in education, and health and social services, has helped to shape the North to what it is today," the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Charles Dent, said. "The presence of Francophone women in the NWT has passed its first century and our cultural diversity encompasses their strength and character which we carry forward into the new millennium."

For more information, contact:

Bertha Norwegian
Special Advisor to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
(867) 920-3106

For further information or Women's History Month materials, please contact:

Anne Schroder
Status of Women Canada
(613) 943-1729
schrodera@swc-cfc.gc.ca



99-123

NWT Highway Strategy Summary Report

YELLOWKNIFE (October 18) – The Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen, announced today the release of the NWT Highway Strategy Summary Report.

Since May of 1998 the Department of Transportation has examined the economic feasibility and environmental implications of new highway developments in the Northwest Territories. The Summary Report is a synopsis of three stakeholders' meetings, 22 community consultations on environmental impacts and 13 technical studies the department has conducted. The consultations and studies looked specifically at the practical dimensions of new road developments into the Slave Geological Province, the completion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Road and the acceleration of the Highway #3 Reconstruction.

"This work has established the essential knowledge base on which the further extension of land transportation in the Western Arctic will depend," Mr. Steen said. New highway infrastructure is a necessary component for the North's economic development. The Highway Strategy Summary Report and its technical background will supply the transportation element for RWED minister Stephen Kakfwi's Economic Strategy Panel.

The Department of Transportation will distribute copies of the NWT Highway Strategy Summary Report to all those who participated in the Stakeholders' Workshops. Additional copies are available from the department.

For more information contact: **Peter Vician**
Deputy Minister
Department of Transportation
(867) 920-3460



99-124

Department of ECE to Meet Request for More Special-Needs Training

YELLOWKNIFE (October 19) – A pilot project, designed to help Student Support Assistants and Teacher Assistants develop and enhance skills specific for working with children with challenging needs, will be delivered by Aurora College for the first time this fall.

The project was initiated in response to the public's strong message, voiced during the Minister's Forum on Education about the need for classroom personnel to have special training.

"Aurora College will work with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Divisional Education Councils, District Education Authorities and schools and principals in the NWT to deliver this professional development program," said Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger. "The program will increase the skills and broaden the knowledge of education support staff to meet the diverse needs of students in the NWT."

The pilot project will consist of two courses from the University of Calgary's three-year Teacher Assistant Certificate Program: Roles and Responsibilities of the Teacher Assistant and Working with the Emotionally and Mentally Challenged Child. The courses will be delivered in 23 locations through the Distance Learning program and enhanced through on-the-job application and practice.

Eligibility has been based on current employment as a Student Support Assistant or Teacher Assistant. The courses, which have already met their maximum enrolment of 60 students, got underway in mid-October. Funding for the program comes from the one-year extension of the Skills for Work Program (formerly Investing in People).

For more information, contact:

Lesley Allen
Assistant Deputy Minister
Advanced Education & Careers
Department of Education, Culture & Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7252



99-125

Federal Government Equal Pay Decision Has Little Bearing on GNWT

YELLOWKNIFE (October 20) – A Federal Court decision on the lengthy legal dispute over an equal pay complaint involving the Federal Treasury Board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) promises to add little to the case involving the GNWT, the PSAC, and the Union of Northern Workers (UNW).

“This decision leaves us with more questions than answers. It neither clarifies many of the ambiguous and often challenged parts of the *Act*, nor does it address how the *Act’s* equal pay provisions should, and can, be practically applied,” said the Minister of Finance, Charles Dent.

The decision should not be interpreted as a precedent in the GNWT – PSAC/UNW case, which is substantially different from the Federal case in terms of circumstances and facts.

“We strongly agree with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. It is a fundamental practice we have followed for some time,” Mr. Dent said.

The GNWT has pursued, and continues to pursue, every reasonable, responsible and fair manner to resolve this matter outside of the litigative process. The leadership of the southern-based PSAC and the UNW continue to reject all such offers despite the fact that 82 per cent of former and current employees contacted have accepted individual settlement offers.

For more information contact:

**Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Financial Management Board Secretariat
(867) 873-7786**



99-126

Oct. 24 - 31 is National Immunization Awareness Week

Yellowknife (October 20) – The Department of Health and Social Services has recognized October 24 to 31 as National Immunization Awareness Week. This week offers an opportunity to focus the attention of Northerners on the importance of making sure children receive all their immunizations on time.

“I take this opportunity to remind all people of the Northwest Territories that it was only a short generation ago that diseases like measles, polio, diphtheria and whooping cough -- which are now preventable by vaccination -- were devastating the population,” the Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland, said.

“Today we might not think of these diseases as being very dangerous. Thanks to vaccines, we don’t see them very often,” he added. “Our elders, though, can tell you stories of what they have seen; how Northerners suffered and died from these childhood diseases. Even today, many children continue to die from them every year around the world.”

The Department of Health and Social Services provides routine child and adult vaccines free of charge through the public health system. This has proven to be an effective way of protecting children from vaccine preventable diseases. As an example, Health and Social Services reports Hib meningitis was the major cause of brain damage in infants prior to 1992. Since 1992, when infants began to be immunized against Hib disease, the number of deaths has dropped to one death over the past five years from 10-12 deaths annually.

In the NWT, 85-90 per cent of children are fully immunized when they enter kindergarten. While these rates compare favourably with the rest of Canada, the department aims to reach 99 per cent complete immunization coverage by the time children enter kindergarten.

Although most vaccine preventable diseases are rare in Canada, they are common in other parts of the world. Travellers can carry them from country to country, and if populations are not protected by vaccination, these diseases will quickly spread. Influenza is perhaps the most common of these diseases, and immunization programs are in place for both adults and children.

“Children are our future,” Mr. Roland said. “They deserve protection. But they aren’t the only ones who can benefit from immunization. We need to keep youths and adults immunized as well, for by preventing them from getting vaccine preventable disease, we make sure they can’t pass these diseases on to infants and children.”

The Department of Health and Social Services encourages parents and guardians to remember the message of Canada’s second National Immunization Awareness Week: **Immunize Your Kids! Boost Their Chances for Health.**

For more information, contact:

**Marnie Bell, Chair
NWT Advisory Committee on Immunization
Health and Social Services
(867) 873-7040**



99-127

Tools For 2000 NWT Principals Conference on Strategies for Leadership

YELLOWKNIFE (October 21) – School principals in the Northwest Territories will be in class themselves October 25 and 26. They will be in Yellowknife for the “Strategies for Leadership in the Next Millenium – Tools for 2000” conference.

The principals, Directors of Education and educational consultants will learn more about topics such as How to Meet the Needs of all Students, Teacher Supervision, Developing Effective Timetables, Financial Management at the School Level and Discipline Policy. The conference will also feature roundtable discussions and a session on Leadership Tools.

“School principals are key to ensuring that teachers have the support and direction they need to create an environment conducive to learning in our schools,” Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, said. “This conference will help provide the tools principals need to be effective leaders and ensure consistent educational opportunities for all students in the Northwest Territories regardless of where they live.”

The conference is also an opportunity for school administrators to meet and develop connections with their peers from around the NWT. “These connections will allow better sharing of ideas and approaches between schools and communities,” Mr. Miltenberger said. “This will support the need for increased communications that was highlighted in the Minister’s Forum on Education.”

“Tools for 2000” will be held at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. On Monday, October 25, St. Patrick High School will host a feast and drumming demonstration for the delegates.

For more information, contact:

Pauline Gordon
Assistant Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment
(867) 920-8061



99-128

Essential Services Agreement Would Ensure the Safety of Students

YELLOWKNIFE (October 21) -- The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, remains confident that, with the assistance of a mediator, a collective agreement can be reached with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA). However, an Essential Services Agreement is necessary to ensure the safety of students if mediation is not successful and the NWTTA takes job action.

The *Public Service Act* requires that an Essential Services Agreement be in place prior to the NWTTA being in a position to strike. Negotiations between the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the NWTTA commenced with the GNWT requesting that all principals and some assistant principals be declared essential in accordance with the *Public Service Act*. The Act contains provisions to declare positions as essential to ensure a continuation of minimal service to protect the health and safety of the public.

For those employees falling under the *Public Service Act*, including teachers of the GNWT, the rules concerning the conduct of a strike are very broad and do not, for example, require that notice of each rotating strike location and time be provided after the initial notice of strike is given. If the NWTTA takes job action such as a strike or rotating strike it will be necessary that these individuals be at the school to organize notifying parents of the strike and ensuring students are returned home safely. Principals and Assistant Principals currently perform these duties to ensure the safety of students when it is necessary to close schools for other reasons such as bad weather.

“Even though I believe Association members will act responsibly,” added Minister Dent, “the GNWT has statutory responsibility for students’ safety. Because of this responsibility I am taking all necessary steps to ensure student safety in the unlikely event a strike should occur.”

It is not the GNWT’s intent to have principals and assistant principals perform teaching duties normally performed by teachers but to have them ensure the safety of students.

For more information, contact:

Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Financial Management Board Secretariat
(867) 920-8900



99-129

ECE Minister Announces Appointments to the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board

YELLOWKNIFE (October 25) -- The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, is pleased to announce the appointment of three highly qualified northerners to the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board.

Melanie Ridgely of Yellowknife is a high school teacher who specializes in woodworking and computer technology. Her certification as a Cabinetmaker in 1995 has given her extensive experience with apprenticeship. Ms. Ridgely is also the president of Skills NWT, a program that encourages young people to become involved in the trades. She was the Construction Technology for Women instructor for North of 60 WITT (Women in Trades and Technology) from 1997 to 1999.

Robert Hanna of Fort Simpson comes to the Certification Board with several Journey Certifications, which include Welder, Steamfitter, Plumber and Fourth Class Power Engineer. Mr. Hanna has trained a number of apprentices and was the NWT Tradesperson of the Year for 1997/98.

Kevin Diebold of Norman Wells is an Interprovincial Red Seal Electrician and has been one of the driving forces behind the apprenticeship program and trades training in the Sahtu region since 1981. Mr. Diebold was recognized by the Norman Wells Chamber of Commerce in 1989 as Businessman of the Year. He is currently a member of the NWT Economic Strategy Board.

"The appointment of these highly qualified individuals will ensure that the Apprenticeship and Trades program in the NWT continues to be one of the most successful in Canada," Mr. Miltenberger said.

As members of a seven-person board, the new appointees will represent employees and employers from designated trades and occupations in their region.

The appointments will expire in September 2001.

For more information contact: Lesley Allen
Assistant Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment
(867) 873-7252



99-130

GNWT Releases Updated Financial Results for 1998-99

YELLOWKNIFE (October 26) – The Minister of Finance, Charles Dent, has released the government’s updated financial results for 1998-99. These unaudited interim results indicate that the government’s annual deficit for last year increased to \$51 million from the \$22 million that had been expected. This reduces the accumulated surplus as of March 31, 1999 to \$33 million.

The accumulated surplus at the end of 1998-99 must be shared with the Government of Nunavut according to the Agreement on the Division of Assets and Liabilities. The territorial government’s share of this \$33 million accumulated surplus will be \$18 million. This means the territorial government’s accumulated deficit at the end of 1999-2000 will be \$16 million provided that government spending this year is within budget.

Two major issues account for a large part of the poorer than expected results for last year:

- The decision to extend equal pay settlement offers to excluded (non-union) employees. Although this decision was made late in the last fiscal year, calculations of the total amounts were not available until after year-end.
- Revised estimates of revenue that will be received from the Government of Canada under two health care agreements – the Non-insured Health Benefits Agreement and the Hospital Care - Indian and Inuit Agreement. These revised estimates reflect more conservative estimates of what will be received under these agreements based on rejected and disputed claims covering the last four years. These claims are still under dispute.

“This new financial information emphasizes the need for the government to look hard at current year spending and take steps to avoid incurring some of the \$34 million deficit projected for this year,” Mr. Dent said.

Recent diamond and gas developments in the territories clearly illustrate the vast economic potential of the NWT. “These developments and their small impact on territorial government revenues serve to bring home the fact that without access to some of the resource royalties and other development related revenues, it will become increasingly challenging to adequately meet the needs of NWT residents,” Mr. Dent said.

For more information contact:

Lew Voytilla
Comptroller General
Government of the Northwest Territories
Tel: (867) 873-7211

Northerners are Above-Average Volunteers

YELLOWKNIFE (October 28) — Statistics confirm that Northerners lead almost all other Canadians in volunteer activity.

According to data from a recent survey, 41 per cent of Northerners aged 15 and over engaged in some kind of volunteer activity during 1998. This exceeds the Canadian rate of 31 per cent reported in the 1997 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Only Saskatchewan had a higher rate of volunteer activity than the NWT, with 47 per cent of Saskatchewan residents 15 and over reporting some form of volunteer activity.

The NWT figures are drawn from the 1999 *NWT Labour Force Survey*. During the survey, respondents were asked to report on any unpaid volunteer activities that they had taken part in through a group or organization during 1998. People who reported that they had volunteered were also asked about the type of volunteer activities they had participated in. This was the first time that the *NWT Labour Force Survey* included questions on volunteer activities.

Helping to organize or supervise events was the leading type of volunteer activity in the NWT, with 20 per cent of all volunteers in the NWT taking part in this kind of activity. This was followed by helping with religious or school activities (14 per cent), canvassing or fundraising (13 per cent) and serving as an unpaid board or committee member (11 per cent).

Some other highlights of the survey include:

- Females (44 per cent) volunteered more than males (37 per cent).
- Northerners aged 40-59 had the highest volunteer rate (46 per cent), followed by those aged 25-39 (44 per cent).
- Employed Northerners made up 46 per cent of all volunteers, while unemployed Northerners accounted for 32 per cent.
- Approximately 30 per cent of all Northerners took part in one to three different volunteer activities, while 8 per cent took part in four to six activities and 2 per cent participated in seven or more.

More detailed volunteer statistics from the 1999 *NWT Labour Force Survey* may be found on the NWT Bureau of Statistics web site at www.stats.gov.nt.ca.

.../2

Northerners are Above-Average Volunteers: Page 2

Figures from the 1999 survey may actually underestimate the rate of volunteer activity in the NWT. Survey questions focused only on volunteer activities undertaken as part of a group or organization. As a result, the survey does not report on informal volunteer activity that Northerners may have engaged in on an individual basis.

The high rate of volunteer activity in the NWT demonstrates how important volunteers are in the North today. In recognition of this fact, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs is working with other departments in the social envelope and representatives from voluntary organizations to strengthen and support volunteers and the volunteer sector in the NWT.

For more information, please contact:

Roslyn Smith

Senior Advisor, Volunteer Development
Municipal and Community Affairs
(867) 873-7756



99-132

New Web Site to Resource Information in the Beaufort-Mackenzie Area

YELLOWKNIFE (October 28) – Access to resource information in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) is now available on the Internet at www.bmmda.nt.ca.

The Minerals, Oil and Gas Division of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED), the Joint Secretariat of Inuvialuit Renewable Resource Committees and the Inuvialuit Land Corporation have established the innovative, easy to use site for the Beaufort–Mackenzie mineral development area (BMMDA).

"The Beaufort-Mackenzie area contains a wealth of natural resources including substantial oil and natural gas reserves as well as diverse renewable resources," Minister of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development, Stephen Kakfwi, said. "With the demand for natural gas growing in both the United States and southern Canada, this project with the Inuvialuit will be a prime source of information for this key resource area."

The BMMDA web site compiles a wide range of information pertinent to oil and gas companies, environmental assessors, agencies in the ISR, resource managers, researchers, and the public.

The site is a comprehensive guide to the geology, hydrocarbon and mineral resources, environmental data, economic studies and development processes in the ISR. Many organizations have contributed to the project.

Features include an interactive Geographic Information System, searchable geoscience/geotechnical and environmental science reports, extensive Web site links and economic models of known oil and gas pools.

For more information, contact:

Doug Matthews

Minerals, Oil and Gas Division

Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development

Tel: (867) 920-3214 or 920-3222



99-133

Public Works and Services hosts Project Management Conference

YELLOWKNIFE (October 29) – The Department of Public Works and Services is hosting the GNWT’s biennial Project Management Conference, to be held at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife November 2-4.

The theme of this year’s conference is *Best Project Management Practices for the 21st Century*.

Over 250 representatives from the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, including officials from crown corporations, school and health boards, consulting and contracting companies, associations and suppliers, will be attending the conference.

“The conference provides an excellent opportunity for those involved in all aspects of project development and delivery to share their experiences and to learn about new techniques and processes,” the Minister of Public Works and Services, Vince Steen, said.

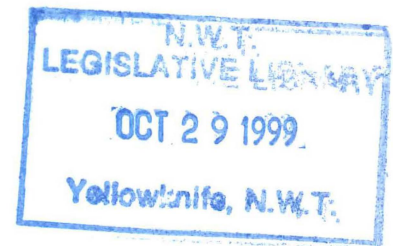
In an era of fiscal restraint, one of the major challenges facing government is how to provide and maintain public infrastructure and services despite dwindling resources. This means working more cost-effectively and finding innovative project management solutions. It also means that all participants in the construction industry must work more closely together, sharing their expertise and skills.

“By promoting closer ties within the industry, we will be better prepared to meet the challenges of the new Millennium,” Mr. Steen said.

A trade show will be held from November 2-3 in conjunction with the conference. The trade show is a venue for northern manufacturers, suppliers and service providers to promote their products, supplies and services. The show will be in Katimavik Room A at the Explorer Hotel.

For more information, contact:

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Deputy Minister
Public Works & Services
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99-134

New Guide to Support NWT High School Teachers

YELLOWKNIFE (November 1) -- High school teachers now have a new place to turn for ideas this fall. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has compiled a reference guide for those teaching grades 7 to 12 called *Promising Practices – Ideas That Work In Northern Secondary Classrooms*.

The guide is full of practical ideas that work in northern high schools. The suggestions in the book came from educators in schools across the Northwest Territories. "Teachers in individual classrooms have been using innovative and interesting approaches to teaching for years. The Promising Practices Guide shares these good ideas with other teachers," Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger said.

One of the challenges in the Northwest Territories is helping teachers find out what other teachers are doing and what works well with northern students. In the Forum's report, there was a recommendation that teachers should receive more support in dealing with the diversity of students' needs. Promising Practices is one way of providing that support.

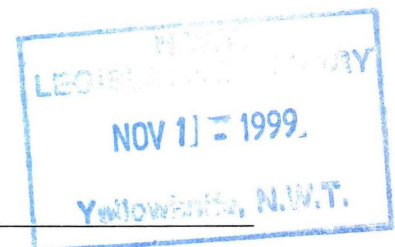
"Those who contributed their ideas and strategies to make this guide a reality have shown their commitment to excellence in education in the NWT," Mr. Miltenberger said. "This book demonstrates the wealth of knowledge and skill amongst northern educators. It also demonstrates the commitment of the department to respond to the Minister's Forum on Education."

In addition to being available in binder format, the guide will be available on the internet. The guide will be regularly updated with new ideas. As well, a similar guide will be developed for kindergarten through Grade Six.

For more information, contact:

Ellie Elliott

Director, Early Childhood & School Services
Education, Culture & Employment
(867) 920-3491





99-135

Take Our Kids to Work Day - Nov 3rd, 1999

YELLOWKNIFE (November 1) - Wednesday, November 3rd is Take Our Kids to Work Day in Canada. Grade Nine students from across the Northwest Territories will be some of the 400,000 students nationwide who follow their parents, friends and volunteer hosts through a workday.

“The Government of the Northwest Territories is pleased to support this very worthwhile effort coordinated by The Learning Partnership and supported by schools, businesses and government organizations across the NWT,” Minister of Education Culture and Economic Development, Michael Miltenberger said.

Local businesses will be among an anticipated 75,000 workplaces across Canada that open their doors to give students a glimpse of the working world.

“With its emphasis on staying in school and the importance of a career, the goals of Take Our Kid to Work Day mesh nicely with the goals of the government for a strong and self-reliant territory,” Mr. Miltenberger said.

Take Our Kid to Work Day is supported by a guidebook provided by The Learning Network. The guide suggests a course of study and some exercises to ensure students get the most out of their work place experience.

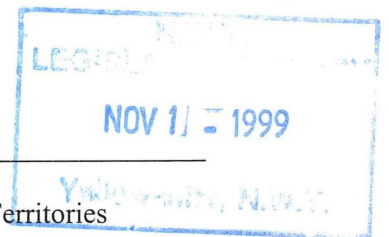
For more information, contact:

Sandra Pearce

Co-ordinator, Take Our Kids to Work

Department of Education, Culture & Employment

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99-136

New Curriculum to Meet the Needs of Adult Learners in the NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (November 1) -- Students enrolled in adult basic education classes this fall are studying under a new curriculum developed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in partnership with Aurora College, Nunavut Arctic College and other organizations and community groups.

The three-year Adult Basic Education Curriculum Development Project began in 1998 following recommendations that a comprehensive strategy for adult basic education be developed and that the course of study be standardized.

“The changes will ensure that the learning needs of adults in the Northwest Territories are better met,” Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, said.

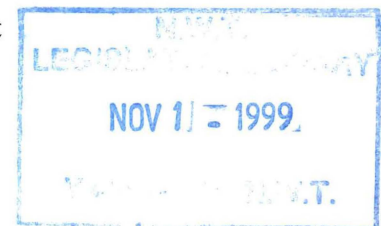
The revised curriculum now includes clearly defined learning outcomes, teaching strategies, suggested classroom assessment strategies and recommended resources. It integrates a more applied approach to learning and instruction.

Changes have also been made to existing English, Math and Science programs. Revisions will be made later this year to the Social Studies and Career and College Foundations and Preparation Courses. An ‘Introduction to Computers’ unit has also been developed.

Particular attention has been given to co-ordinating the new adult basic education with existing senior high school curricula to prepare adult students to write departmental exams in Math and English.

For more information, contact:

Lesley Allen
Assistant Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7252





99-137

Dave Paul appointed to WCB Appeals Tribunal

YELLOWKNIFE (November 5) -- The Minister Responsible for the NWT Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), Michael Miltenberger, has appointed Dave Paul to the WCB Appeals Tribunal.

A long-time northern resident, Mr. Paul has worked extensively in territorial social and correctional services as well as participating in labour activities.

"Mr. Paul knows the Northwest Territories and has been in a line of work in which he has learned to judge a situation from all sides", Mr. Miltenberger said. "His ability to consider issues objectively will be an important part of his role as a member of the Tribunal."

President of the Northwest Territories Federation of Labour, Wayne Campbell, is pleased with the appointment. "Mr. Paul's name was among those submitted by the Federation of Labour," said Mr. Campbell. "We feel confident that he will make a positive contribution on the Tribunal."

The five-member Appeals Tribunal consists of employer and worker representatives, who provide an independent and final level of appeal for WCB cases. Mr. Paul replaces Georgina Rolt-Kaiser as one of two labour representatives.

For more information, contact:

Lynn Elkin

Executive Assistant to Michael Miltenberger
Tel: (867) 669-2344

Wayne Campbell

President
NWT Federation of Labour
Tel: (867) 873-9049



99-138

Premier Supports Two-Minute Wave of Silence

YELLOWKNIFE (November 8) – Premier Jim Antoine is encouraging all Northerners to participate in a Two-Minute Wave of Silence on Remembrance Day at 11:00 A.M.

“It is critical that we remember the scale of sacrifice made by the men and women of our country during the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War and the Gulf War,” Mr. Antoine said. “I encourage everyone to participate in the Wave of Silence.”

The two-minute Wave of Silence Campaign is a Royal Canadian Legion Millennium project initiated with the support of Veterans Affairs Canada and all other major veterans’ organizations. It is hoped that all people in Canada will stop at 11 A.M. for two minutes, in remembrance of the Canadians who died during the wars.

For more information, contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of the Executive
tel: (867) 669-2302



99-139

GNWT and NWTTA Reach Tentative Agreement

YELLOWKNIFE (November 8) -- The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent announced today that the Government of the Northwest Territories and the NWT Teachers' Association have reached tentative agreement on terms for the renewal of the collective agreement.

The agreement includes salary increases of three per cent this year and two per cent next year. Similar increases will be applied to teacher allowances except for Principal and Assistant Principal allowances, which have been restructured to be based on student enrollment. The northern allowance will increase by an average of approximately 15 per cent. The parties also agreed to implement a professional allowance of \$500 per year for each teacher over the two years of the agreement.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed outlining the parties' agreement to work together to examine issues around class size with the intent to produce a report for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment by the end of this school year. The MOU requires an action plan be developed for the start of the next school year.

The NWTTA will present the tentative agreement to teachers for ratification. The deadline for ratification is Nov. 29.

For more information, contact:

Sylvia Haener
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Financial Management Board Secretariat
(867) 920-8900



99-140

Official Language in Education Agreement Signed

YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 9) – French first-language, second-language and immersion education programs will receive more than \$1 million dollars a year in the Northwest Territories thanks to a bi-lateral agreement between the federal government and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The bi-lateral agreement is part of the protocol on the Official Languages in Education signed earlier this year by Canadian Heritage and the Council of Ministers in Education Canada (CMEC). The agreement recognizes differing needs in French-language education programs in individual provinces and territories and allows the federal government to support the delivery of French-language education programs in Canada through an annual national contribution.

“The Government of the Northwest Territories has negotiated a multi-year funding agreement within that national protocol agreement,” said Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger. “French-language education funding is now guaranteed until the end of the 2002/2003 school year.”

Funding for French-language education in the Northwest Territories will be split to support language instruction and provide professional development for teachers, Mr. Miltenberger said. “Multi-year funding gives schools an opportunity to plan a cumulative course of study built on knowledge from previous years.”

“This agreement is indicative of the strong support for the continuing evolution of French-language education in the Northwest Territories,” Mr. Miltenberger said.

For more information, contact: **Mark Cleveland**
Deputy Minister,
Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 920-6240



99-141

Support for Preservation and Advancement of Aboriginal Languages

YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 8) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger has announced a plan to transfer existing language funding from the government to aboriginal language communities across the Northwest Territories.

Representative organizations will use the money, to be provided in the form of grants, for programs designed to preserve and advance aboriginal languages throughout their language community.

“The Government of the Northwest Territories believes that language service should be tied closely to the community it serves,” Mr. Miltenberger said. “These communities share with the Department, the responsibility for maintaining and revitalizing their language. This partnership creates a process for language preservation built on a strong foundation supported by elders and other language specialists in the communities.”

The funding will be used to begin implementing language plans developed over the past year by the various language communities.

“This is another indication of the Government of the Northwest Territories living up to its commitment to support language communities and individuals as they work toward ensuring the survival and enhancement of their language,” Mr. Miltenberger said.

For more information, contact:

Pauline Gordon,
Assistant Deputy Minister
Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 920-8061



99-142

Panel Determines Principles for Developing NWT Economic Strategy

YELLOWKNIFE (November 9) – The Economic Strategy Panel, appointed in June, has completed a draft of guiding principles for the development of an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories.

"Panel members agree that all economic development projects and initiatives must provide direct benefits to NWT residents," co-chair Richard Nerysoo said. "They must also support opportunities for wealth generation, contribute to the health of communities, foster independence and manage the use of the land for future generations."

The Economic Strategy Panel met in Yellowknife on October 28 and 29 to develop the guiding principles and to begin reviewing specific sectors and issues key to the NWT economy.

Representatives from the Canadian Petroleum Producers Association, TransCanada Pipelines, Grey Wolf Explorations and RWED staff met with panel members to discuss opportunities and issues in the oil, gas and mining sectors.

"Part of our mandate is to develop a strategy that ensures development encourages economic diversity, creates jobs and business opportunities and fosters creativity and innovation," co-chair Darrell Beaulieu said. "That requires the panel to meet with industry representatives to get a sense of the current situation, opportunities and challenges facing development in the NWT."

The panel is compiling a number of recommendations on the oil, gas and mineral development sectors for review at its next meeting in Norman Wells later this month. Also on the agenda for that meeting are discussions on tourism, human resources, the Territorial government fiscal situation and options.

For more information, contact:

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Inuvik
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Darrell Beaulieu
Deton'cho Corporation
Ndilo
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99-143

Meeting of Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Finance

YELLOWKNIFE (November 12) -- Minister of Finance Charles Dent will meet with his colleagues, provincial and territorial Ministers of Finance in Toronto on Monday, November 15th. This meeting is to prepare for discussions with federal Minister of Finance Paul Martin about the next federal budget. A meeting with Mr. Martin is scheduled for early December in Ottawa.

The agenda includes discussion of a balanced approach to investing the estimated \$5.5 billion federal surplus in 2000-01. Provincial and territorial premiers recommended the balanced approach at the Annual Premiers' Conference in August.

"The federal government should continue to reduce the national debt and reduce taxes, in balance with program spending increases. Both debt and tax reductions are necessary to improve productivity and the competitiveness of our economies." Mr. Dent said. "However, investments in essential social programs which help improve the well-being of NWT residents, as well as investments in infrastructure are also key pieces of the puzzle, if the North is to become more financially self-sufficient."

"Smaller jurisdictions, such as the NWT, must be heard whenever there is discussion on how to spend the projected federal surplus," Mr. Dent said. "I look forward to sharing views with my provincial and territorial colleagues on these important issues."

For more information, please contact:

Margaret Melhorn
Deputy Minister
Finance
(867) 873-7117

Karen Bergman Illnik
Executive Assistant to Hon. Charles Dent
(867) 669-2355



99-144

NWT Recognized for Contribution in Building National Information Highway

YELLOWKNIFE (November 12) – The Department of Education, Culture and Employment has received an award from Industry Canada for its success in getting Northwest Territories schools and libraries connected to the Internet.

Deputy Minister Mark Cleveland accepted the award on behalf of the department last week in Ottawa.

Canada became the first nation in the world to connect its schools and public libraries to the Internet earlier this year. That milestone will go a long way to achieving the goal set by Connecting Canadians, to make Canada the most connected country in the world by the year 2000. Connecting Canadians is a federal government initiative, administered through SchoolNet, an online resource to help students hone their skills in Internet research and communications.

The connections to the Internet were made through the Digital Communications Network (DCN), a territorial digital communications infrastructure. DCN has substantially increased the department's ability to enhance communication among groups or organizations, to design and deliver training programs related to the use of technology in education and to develop and deliver courses through the innovative use of technology.

"This is an excellent example of how the Northwest Territories can participate in an national program that promotes the effective use of information technology to develop the skills our young people will need to compete in a global marketplace," Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment said. "It's gratifying to have the leadership role of the department recognized by our national counterparts."

For more information, contact: Mark Cleveland
Deputy Minister
Education, Culture & Employment
(867) 920-6240



99-145

Ministers of Finance Reach Consensus on Investment of Federal Surplus

YELLOWKNIFE (November 16) -- Minister of Finance Charles Dent and provincial and territorial finance ministers unanimously agree that a balanced approach to investing the projected federal surplus is necessary to improve Canada's economic competitiveness.

Mr. Dent met with his counterparts yesterday in Toronto. He says a balanced approach would include full restoration of Canada Health and Social Transfer funding, federal tax reductions and paying down the federal debt. Ministers also support introducing a new infrastructure program.

Mr. Dent says he's pleased with the support he received from other provincial ministers who recognised the North's special circumstances and acknowledged that simple per capita formulas don't meet the needs of the three northern territories when it comes to infrastructure program funding. "The NWT, Yukon and Nunavut all spoke to the fact that huge distances and small populations require a different approach," Mr. Dent said.

A consensus paper outlining the balanced approach was discussed at the meeting. The paper will be presented to federal Finance Minister Paul Martin before provincial and territorial ministers meet with him on December 8th.

For more information, please contact:

Margaret Melhorn
Deputy Minister,
Finance
Tel: (867) 873-7117

Provincial and Territorial Finance Ministers Stress the Need for Federal Tax and Social Program Competitiveness

Toronto, November 15, 1999 -- Provincial and Territorial Finance Ministers today unanimously agreed that a balanced approach to Ottawa's cumulative surplus of more than \$95 billion over the next five years is necessary to improve economic competitiveness. The Ministers stressed the need for tax competitiveness; and the immediate full restoration of Canada Health and Social Transfer funding (CHST) with an appropriate escalator; in concert with the removal of the ceiling on Equalization payments.

The consensus was reached at a meeting hosted by Ontario Finance Minister Ernie Eves in preparation for the upcoming Federal/Provincial/Territorial Finance Ministers meeting in December. The Quebec Finance Minister Bernard Landry, Chair of the Provincial and Territorial Finance Ministers' work, presented a draft of the consensus paper that stresses the need for a balanced approach.

Ministers concluded that federal tax cuts should be a priority for Ottawa in the next federal Budget. The Ministers stressed that the federal government must look at ways to cut taxes that respect provincial and territorial fiscal plans and accountability to taxpayers. Federal income tax rebates and accelerating the potential starting date for the administration of tax on income for provinces and the territories into 2000, were cited as options.

The Ministers unanimously advocated the immediate full restoration of CHST payments to their 1994-95 levels of \$18.7 billion. The Ministers called it "common sense" that the governments with the responsibility for the provision of services have the necessary funding to deliver those services.

Today's discussion builds on the agreement reached at the Annual Premiers' Conference in Quebec City in August. This consensus paper will be released prior to the meeting with the federal Finance Minister. Mr. Landry invited Provincial-Territorial Finance Ministers to reconvene on December 8, 1999 in Ottawa.



99-146

Wha Ti School Celebrates Grand Opening

YELLOWKNIFE (November 17) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger joined chiefs of the Treaty 11 Dogrib communities for a celebration marking the grand opening of the newly renovated Mezi Community School in Wha Ti yesterday.

“The enhancements to the school in Wha Ti are especially good news for Grade 10 and 11 students because it means they can stay in their home community and still receive a Grade 12 diploma,” Mr. Miltenberger said, “and it means the Government of the Northwest Territories is one step closer to realizing its goal of offering the opportunity to acquire a high school diploma in all communities. The completion of the renovations at Mezi Community School also integrates senior secondary schooling with adult education in Wha Ti.”

The decision to proceed with the expansion of Mezi Community School was made several years ago to provide the space required to offer grade extensions and to facilitate enhanced adult education opportunities in the community. The renovation added three classrooms and a community learning center for adult students to the school, as well as space for a science preparation lab and a dental therapist.

Approximately 152 students attend Mezi Community School. Fifteen are in Grade 11 this year and are expected to go on to complete Grade 12 in the 2000/2001 school year.

Among the special guests who joined the Dogrib chiefs and Mr. Miltenberger for the celebration was Rosa Zoe-Fish. Mrs. Zoe-Fish accepted a plaque, to be placed in the school, acknowledging the contribution made by her late husband, Joseph Zoe-Fish, during 20 years of service on the District Education Authority in Wha Ti.

For more information, contact: Pauline Gordon
Assistant Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment
(867) 920-8061



99-147

First International Sale of Made in the NWT Housing Materials Packages Completed

YELLOWKNIFE (November 17) -- The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) has completed its first international sale of made in the Northwest Territories housing materials packages.

The sale of seven housing packages to Barrow, Alaska is worth more than \$560,000 and is expected to be the first of many to small communities across the state.

“The NWT Housing Corporation has over 25 years of experience building homes in the Arctic,” said Floyd Roland, Minister Responsible for the NWTHC. “It is not surprising that the Alaskans would want to buy these homes.”

“It’s not just the Housing Corporation that should be proud of this sale, all Northerners should be proud as these packages contain components such as doors, windows and cabinets that were made here in the NWT,” he added.

In addition to the Alaskan sale, the NWTHC sold five housing packages to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police this year and sold housing materials packages to Parks Canada last year.

Profits from the sale of housing materials packages will help pay for social housing units.

For more information, contact: Doug Johnson
Public Affairs Coordinator
NWTHC
(867) 873-7854



99-148

Fort Smith Public-Private Partnership Project Wins National Award

YELLOWKNIFE (November 18) -- The P-3 Aurora College Family Housing project in Fort Smith has won the Award of Merit for Innovation and Excellence in Infrastructure from the Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships.

The Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships is a national organization that fosters innovative forms of co-operation between the public and private sectors. The council encourages partnerships, provides a forum for research and information exchange, and sponsors conferences and other public education initiatives. The award is one of six awards presented annually by the council. Forty-three projects were nominated for this year's honours.

The housing complex of 25 three and four bedroom townhomes is a partnership between the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Aurora Building Developers of Fort Smith. The all-northern private-sector team, created by Aurora Builders to complete the project, includes Nora and Walter Freund, Ferguson Simek Clark, Arcan Investments Ltd., Fraser Investments Ltd. and PEG NWT Ltd.

"The facility provides a neighbourhood atmosphere that will support Aurora College students with families in achieving academic success," Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger said.

"This award represents a tremendous honour for Aurora College, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and our private sector partners," Finance Minister Charles Dent said. "However, the credit must also be shared with other members of the interdepartmental team that supported development of the project – the Departments of Public Works and Services and Justice, and the Financial Management Board Secretariat - and with our external consultants, Coles Associates."

The Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Mark Cleveland and Geoff Stock of Aurora Building Developers will accept the award next week at the Council's Awards Dinner in Toronto.

For more information, contact: Mark Cleveland
Deputy Minister
Education, Culture and Employment
(867) 920-6240

Geoff Stock
Aurora Building Developers
Fort Smith
(867) 872-2155



99-149

Cabinet Authorizes Signing of Dogrib Agreement-in-Principle

YELLOWKNIFE (November 19)– The Government of the Northwest Territories has authorized the signing of the Dogrib Agreement-in-Principle. The decision was made at Thursday's cabinet meeting.

"This decision marks an exciting new chapter in self-government talks in the Northwest Territories," Premier Jim Antoine said. "The Dogrib Agreement-In-Principle is a breakthrough for Aboriginal people in the NWT because it is the first agreement to address land, resources and the inherent right of self-government."

The AIP was initialled by the territorial, federal and Dogrib negotiators in August. That allowed it to be circulated for review. When all three parties have signed the AIP, negotiations towards a Final Agreement can proceed.

"By approving the AIP, my colleagues and I are helping to maintain the momentum required to advance aboriginal and treaty rights in the NWT," Premier Jim Antoine said. Mr. Antoine is also the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and will sign the AIP on behalf of the government.

"Outstanding overlap and boundary issues between the Dogrib and their neighbours in the Deh Cho First Nations and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation must be resolved before a final agreement can be reached," Mr. Antoine said. "I have written to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs encouraging him to establish, before the AIP is signed, a process that is acceptable to the First Nations to deal with these issues."

Cabinet is satisfied that negotiation towards a final agreement can continue without prejudicing the rights of other Aboriginal people.

For more information, contact: Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Department of Executive
(867) 669-2302

Sue Enge
Communications Advisor
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
(867) 920-6989



99-150

Government to File Notice of Appeal in Royal Oak Bankruptcy Case

YELLOWKNIFE (November 22) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories has instructed its lawyers to file a notice of appeal against a recent court decision in the Royal Oak Mines bankruptcy proceedings. The government's action today meets the ten-day limit on filing notices of appeal and preserves the option of appealing the court ruling.

On November 11, Mr. Justice James Farley of the Ontario Superior Court ruled that Royal Oak's receiver was not liable for any severance pay owed to former employees. He also ruled against the government's argument that it should have received 12 weeks notice of any layoffs, as required by the NWT Labour Standards Act.

"We are keeping our options open by having our lawyers file a notice to appeal," Minister of Justice Stephen Kakfwi said. "We have instructed them to provide an in depth legal analysis and opinion of the issues in this case and will decide whether to appeal after reviewing that advice."

The government has questions about whether Justice Farley failed to properly consider provisions of the NWT Labour Standards Act and whether it applies in this situation. The decision whether to appeal Mr. Justice Farley's ruling will be made in the next seven to ten days.

"We are concerned that our legislation be respected and upheld," Mr. Kakfwi said. "We do not want to raise any false hopes because, at this point, we are not confident that any appeal would result in former Royal Oak employees receiving any compensation."

For more information, contact: Don Cooper
Deputy Minister
Justice
(867) 920-6197 (today)
(867) 444-1485 cell

Thomas Isaac
Legal Counsel
Justice
(867) 873-3248 (tomorrow)



99-151

Nunavut Government to Contract Management of Electric Power Service

YELLOWKNIFE (November 24) -- The Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, Charles Dent, confirmed today that the Nunavut Government will establish its own power corporation and contract for the management of electrical power service in Nunavut after March 31, 2001.

The Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut signed a two-year transition agreement last spring to allow the NWT Power Corporation to continue to provide power in Nunavut after April 1, 1999. The agreement provided one year for the two governments to work out a consensus for maintaining a joint power corporation in the long-term. The agreement also includes the basis for splitting the corporation.

“While the Government of the Northwest Territories would like to see the corporation continue as a single entity jointly-owned by both territories, we wish the Nunavut Government our sincere best in the route they have decided to take”, Mr. Dent said. “Both governments invested a great deal of time and effort into reaching a long-term deal.”

“The corporation will, of course, do everything it can to ensure an orderly transition for customers and employees through this change,” Mr. Dent said. “Customers in both the territories can count on the continued delivery of safe and reliable electrical power. The corporation’s employees have an outstanding record in providing an essential service and everything will be done to protect their best interests and keep them informed during this time of change.”

The Nunavut Government is expected to announce more detailed information today.

For more information, contact:

Karen Bergman Illnik
Executive Assistant to Charles Dent
Tel: (867) 669-2310



99-152

New Web Site Highlights Progress of Economic Strategy Panel

YELLOWKNIFE (Nov. 26) - The Economic Strategy Panel has developed a web site to highlight its work and progress on the development of an economic development strategy for the Northwest Territories.

The web site, located at www.infonorth.org/strategy, includes the panel's vision, goals and mandate and provides updates on the panel's deliberations. Comments from the public are also being encouraged through a discussion section on the site.

The panel recently met in Norman Wells to continue its review of northern economic issues. Discussions focused on transportation, tourism, training and the GNWT's fiscal situation.

"The panel is especially interested in exploring the potential issues of resource revenue sharing, particularly in light of the recent deficit scenario flowing out of the current funding arrangement with the federal government," co-chair Richard Nerysoo said.

Panel members also heard about the federal government's approach to a pan-northern economic strategy.

The panel's next meeting is scheduled in Yellowknife on December 14-15.

For more information, contact:

Richard Nerysoo
Gwich'in Tribal Council
Inuvik
Tel: (867) 777-4869
Fax: (867) 777-4538

or

Darrell Beaulieu
Deton'cho Corporation
Ndilo
Tel: (867) 873-6533
Fax: (867) 873-5308



99-153

GNWT Teachers Turn Down Collective Agreement

YELLOWKNIFE (November 30) – The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, says he's disappointed that the collective agreement with the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) was turned down by GNWT teachers in a ratification vote yesterday.

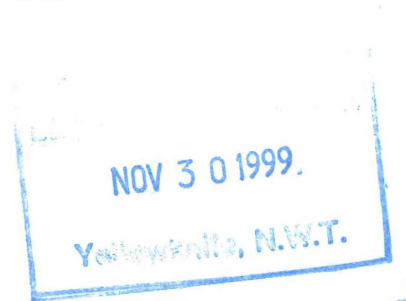
"The agreement reached with the NWTTA, and recommended to the teachers by the NWTTA, is fair and in line with agreements reached by the education boards in Yellowknife earlier this year and the tentative agreement reached last week with teachers employed by the Government of Nunavut," Mr. Dent said.

The agreement would have increased the base salaries of teachers three per cent this year and two per cent next year, and would have provided almost another one per cent through the payment of a new \$500 annual professional allowance. In addition, principal and assistant principal allowances went up on average an estimated 25 per cent. The northern allowance would have increased by an average of approximately 15 per cent.

Agreement had also been reached to work together to examine issues around class size with the intent to produce a report on this issue for the Minister of Education by the end of this school year and an action plan for the start of the next school year.

The parties are working together to set dates for further discussions.

For more information, contact: **Sylvia Haener**
Director, Labour Relations and Compensation
Financial management Board Secretariat
(867) 920-8900





99-154

Agreements Signed for Secondary Diamond Development

YELLOWKNIFE (Nov. 30) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories today signed two agreements with Arslanian Cutting Works (NWT) Ltd. officially launching the NWT's latest secondary diamond processing venture.

Finance Minister Charles Dent first signed a Memorandum of Agreement, which is the initial step in negotiating financial support for the venture. Resources Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Stephen Kakfwi then signed a Monitoring Agreement establishing provisions for the tracking of rough diamonds to eventual certification.

Once met, the provisions will allow for the future development of a Dogrib-owned polishing facility in Yellowknife and the hiring of up to 35 people to cut and polish rough diamonds for certification as NWT diamonds.

"I'm pleased to welcome Arslanian Cutting works as the North's newest corporate citizen," Mr. Dent said. "This signing opens another door to new opportunities for the future. More jobs for northerners and new economic activity are good news for all of us. We've worked hard to make this happen."

"These new agreements, not only expand our employment, training and manufacturing benefits from diamond production, they guarantee marketing for the superior gems that the North is able to provide," Mr. Kakfwi said.

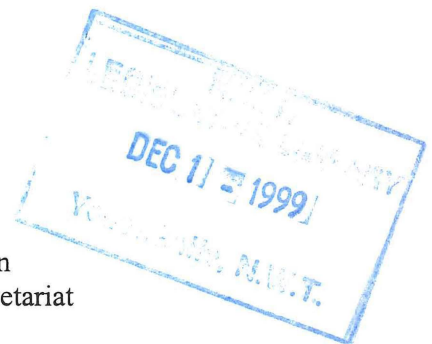
Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and Rae Band Councillor Jackson Lafferty were in attendance for the signing ceremony this afternoon along with representatives of Tli Cho Logistics who are partners in the venture.

For more information, contact:

Martin Irving
Director, Diamond Projects
RWED
Tel: (867) 873-7373

or

Debbie DeLancey
Director, Budgeting and Evaluation
Financial Management Board Secretariat
Tel: (867) 873-7211





99-155

GNWT Targets Support to Promising Oil and Gas Activity

YELLOWKNIFE (December 1) - The Government of the Northwest Territories will dedicate \$314,000 in new project funds and redirect additional existing funds to capitalize on opportunities arising from expansions in the oil and gas industry.

The move comes in response to a dramatic upswing in demand for natural gas and oil on North American markets. "A decision to put funds and programs in place now will allow us to work with communities and ensure the benefits of future development come home to northerners," Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Stephen Kakfwi said.

Heightened market interest has resulted in a vibrant economy in the Liard Valley, reconsideration of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline and avid interest in exploration rights along the Mackenzie-Beaufort Corridor. Resources from the Departments of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED), Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) are being re-directed to create opportunities for a full range of northern benefits.

"It is important to move quickly to ensure Northerners have the skills and can compete for jobs, as they arise," Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Michael Miltenberger said.

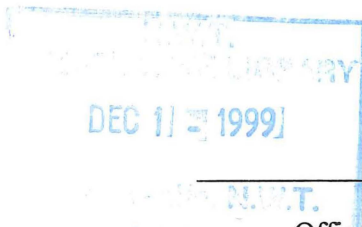
New funds will support training and human resource programs, business development for northern firms in exploration, construction and operations contracting and the creation of a framework to monitor and mitigate environmental impacts.

Workers will be hired by RWED in the Deh Cho, Sahtu and Beaufort Delta regions to funnel information to communities, businesses and residents and expand regional business capacity and community participation in development opportunities.

The funding is in addition to current employment and career programs and is part of a comprehensive approach to achieving benefits from the oil and gas expansion.

For more information, contact:

Chuck Parker
Co-ordinator, Mackenzie Valley Project
Resources Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 873-7008



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BACKGROUND
GNWT Targets Support to Promising Oil and Gas Activity

The US market for natural gas has increased 15 per cent since 1990 and is expected to continue to increase due to environmental concerns associated with the use of oil and coal, a strong US economy and cost competitiveness. However, US production levels are not changing and gas reserves in Alberta are declining. The last undeveloped reserves in North America are in the North.

Base upon information from industry, the following development activity is expected to occur:

1999-2001

- Paramount, Ranger, Chevron, Forest Oil and Suncor are expected to develop fields near Ft. Liard.
- Pipelines will be constructed to transport gas from the Paramount Field to Ft. Nelson and to connect Ranger and Chevron fields to the existing pointed mountain pipeline.
- Exploration for gas will take place around Colville Lake and in the Beaufort Region.
- If oil prices remain constant, renewed interest in exploring the Sahtu Region is expected.

2002-2005

- Additional gas fields in the Deh Cho may be developed.
- Decisions will be made on the viability of gas fields around Colville Lake and in the Beaufort Region.

2006-2010

- A pipeline may be constructed from the Beaufort Region to connect Alberta or BC trunklines
- Smaller pipelines running into the new Mackenze Valley line could then be considered



99-156

Provincial/Territorial Position on Federal Surplus is Good News for Northerners

YELLOWKNIFE (December 2) -- Finance Minister Charles Dent, joined other provincial and territorial Finance Ministers today in releasing a consensus paper calling for a balanced approach to investing the projected federal surplus. The document, entitled, 'Improving the Competitiveness and Standard of Living of Canadians' was sent to federal Minister of Finance, Paul Martin.

The paper outlines a strategy for enhancing Canadian economic effectiveness through a balanced approach including the cutting of federal taxes, the restoration of health care and education funding transfers to the provinces and territories, and a joint infrastructure program.

Mr. Dent says he's pleased that territorial and provincial colleagues supported his call for recognition of northern requirements for infrastructure development. The paper notes that special consideration should be given to the needs of the territories in developing funding arrangements for an infrastructure program.

Mr. Dent will meet with the federal minister and provincial and territorial ministers in Ottawa, December 8-9th. I look forward to meeting with Mr. Martin," Mr. Dent said. "Northerners have a real stake when it comes to discussions on how the federal surplus should be used. We'll be at the table."

For more information, or a copy of the paper, contact: Margaret Melhorne
Deputy Minister
Department of Finance
Tel: (867) 873-7117



99-157

Service Disruption at the Fort Providence – Mackenzie River Ferry Crossing

YELLOWKNIFE (December 3) – The Department of Transportation’s ferry service at Fort Providence has been forced to suspend operations since Saturday, November 20, due to exceptionally low water in the Mackenzie River. The MV Merv Hardie and its crew are standing by to resume service as soon as the river returns to its normal height. Unfortunately, the department has no way of forecasting when that may be.

There are no practical, artificial methods of making the water rise.

Under normal circumstances, the Department of Transportation would keep the MV Merv Hardie in service at least until the ice bridge at Fort Providence opens for light traffic in late December or early January. The weather has been unseasonably warm this year and the main channel of the Mackenzie River has yet to freeze over. Techniques to speed ice bridge construction, such as flooding or spraying, are ineffective without colder temperatures.

Transportation crews will do everything possible to restore regular highway service as soon as they can. At this point, the elements are not cooperating and nothing other than higher water and colder weather will help.

For further information, please contact: Les Shaw
Director of Marine Service
Area Superintendent of Transportation
(867) 695-2018



99-158

Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

YELLOWKNIFE (December 6) -- Today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Established by the Parliament of Canada, this day is set aside annually to remember the 1989 massacre at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal and encourage all Canadians to take action to eliminate violence against women in society.

"December 6th is an important date," says Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Charles Dent. "Not only do we remember the tragic loss of 14 young women, we remember all women who have died as a result of deliberate acts of violence."

Provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women in Canada are asking all Canadians to observe a minute of silence at 2:15 p.m. (EST) in memory of women whose lives have been touched by violence, and for all Canadians to take the time to consider ways in which they can personally help end violence against women.

"This day is an opportunity to recognize the excellent work of the NWT Status of Women Council, the Native Women's Association, the YWCA, the SEDNA Association of family violence workers, regional and community organizations and the countless caring individuals whose efforts benefit us all," Mr. Dent said. "Violence against women affects everyone – it is not solely a women's issue. Only by working together will we eliminate this problem."

The Status of Women Council of the NWT works with communities, other agencies, advocates, and government departments to find ways to address violence against women and children. *From Dark to Light-Regaining a Caring Community* is a resource package developed by the Council to help communities address the problem of violence including its effects on society.

This year, due to the territorial election, the annual vigil to commemorate the murders at l'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal will be held at the Great Hall on December 13th instead of December 6th.

For more information, contact: **Bertha Norwegian**
Special Advisor to the
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Tel: (867) 920-3106



99-160

Safe Use of Portable Generators

YELLOWKNIFE (December 8) -- With an anticipated increase in the sales of portable standby generators in the Northwest Territories, the Department of Public Works would like to increase public awareness to the proper use and installation of such equipment.

To be sure that any permanent installation of a generator is safe, legal, and insurable, work must be completed by a qualified electrical worker and inspected by a regional electrical inspector before use.

The following additional safety procedures should also be followed:

- Most portable generators are designed to power electrical equipment, and are not designed for homes or businesses. Do not connect one directly into a home or business without proper precautions.
- Before buying a generator, ensure that it will be the right size and voltage for your use. Ask an electrician if you're not sure.
- Buy the right accessories, including an approved transfer device, switch or panel, and a properly sized connection cord, plugs and receptacles.
- Ensure the generator and those accessories all have approval labels – *CSA, ULC*, etc.
- Hire a licensed electrical contractor to ensure the generator is properly grounded and bonded.
- Read and follow the owner's manual. If you have additional questions, ask your electrician.
- Remember your generator runs on fuel and requires proper ventilation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. **Never** run a generator in an enclosed space.

For more information, contact:

Larry Babiuk
NWT Chief Electrical Inspector
Electrical / Mechanical Safety Section
Public Works and Services
Tel: (867) 873-7957



99-161

Decision to keep INAC jobs in South Counterproductive to Northern Development

YELLOWKNIFE (December 8) -- Premier Jim Antoine says Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's decision not to move staff to the north is unacceptable and is counterproductive to the development of the north.

"The NWT, Nunavut and Yukon all support moving staff who deal with northern programs to the north," Mr. Antoine said. "We know all about the inefficiencies of the current system and we know it has to change. It is no longer acceptable to have decisions about northern resources being made in Hull. Short of transferring responsibility for northern resources to the north, the best way of doing this is to have the people who make decisions about the north live here."

Mr. Antoine noted that the Government of the Northwest Territories has waited two years for this issue to be resolved while the federal government undertook two expensive studies to determine options on how to proceed and for INAC to study those recommendations.

The decision was announced today by INAC Minister Robert Nault. Mr. Antoine intends to raise the issue with him at next week's meeting of Aboriginal Affairs ministers in Ottawa.

Mr. Antoine also intends to raise the issue with the newly elected Members of the Legislative Assembly during their first meeting in January.

"This issue is vital to the growth of the Northwest Territories and needs to be discussed by all members," Mr. Antoine said.

For more information, contact:

Judy Langford
Press Secretary
Dept. of Executive
Tel: (867) 669-2302



99-162

Designers Identified for North Slave Correctional Facilities

YELLOWKNIFE (December 9) – Ferguson Simek Clark Engineers and Architects (FSC) has been selected to provide architectural and engineering services for the planned North Slave Correctional Facilities in Yellowknife.

The Yellowknife consulting firm was one of seven that responded to a public call for proposals. A review committee from the Departments of Justice and Public Works and Services evaluated the submissions and selected three firms for more detailed interviews. Of the seven proposals, Ferguson Simek Clark's demonstrated the best combination of technical proficiency and commitment to carrying out the work in the North.

The design of these state-of-the-art correctional facilities will be guided by a steering committee that will include aboriginal and community representatives.

Two new independent facilities located on or near the site of the existing Yellowknife Correctional Centre will be linked with a common core to benefit from shared functions such as food services, stores, a gymnasium and central plant facilities.

The 24-bed young offender facility will house remanded and sentenced youth in open and secure custody. The 146-bed adult male facility will house medium and maximum-security inmates in a podular design with direct supervision.

For more information, contact:

Bruce Rattray,
Deputy Minister
Public Works and Services
Tel: (867) 873-7114
Fax: (867) 873-0264

Don Cooper,
Deputy Minister
Justice
Tel: (867) 920-6197
Fax: (867) 873-0307



99-163

New Strategic Plan Update to Guide Education in the NWT

YELLOWKNIFE (December 9) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), Michael Miltenberger, today released an update to the strategic plan that will guide the department's activities over the next five years.

"People: Our Focus for the Future – An Update" captures the recommendations and priorities of more than 1000 northerners who participated in the eight-month development of the plan. The document highlights priorities in all areas of the department's mandate from early childhood education and schools to post-secondary education and adult programs. It also addresses the crucial areas of language, culture and heritage.

"ECE plays the lead role in educating northerners to achieve the employment and governance opportunities that surround them," Mr. Miltenberger said. "In our current fiscal situation, it is critical that we focus our efforts in the right areas and in the most efficient ways,"

The report advocates a strong role for family in all aspects of education, culture and employment. "The department can support learning but the family must be the foundation," Mr. Miltenberger said. "We must also share the wealth of expertise and ideas that exist in our communities."

In addition to confirming directions set in the original 1994 Strategic Plan, the update identifies four key areas in which the department will focus its attention for the next five years: early childhood education; improving student success in schools; building careers for northerners; and developing community learning networks.

Five areas are identified as priorities for reinvestment: early childhood education, reduced class sizes, increased support for special needs, and improved links between education, employment and broader program-options for smaller schools.

"This document reflects the fact that education is a priority for residents of the Northwest Territories," Mr. Miltenberger said. "People: Our Focus for the Future – An Update" will help us achieve our vision. It will be critical to the new Assembly during the business planning ahead."

For more information, contact:

Mark Cleveland
Deputy Minister
Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 920-6240



99-164

Department of Health and Social Services Releases Health Status Report

YELLOWKNIFE (December 13) — The Department of Health and Social Services has released the most comprehensive study of the state of health and well being of NWT residents in nearly a decade. It is the first detailed report on health determinants and indicators since its predecessor: 'Choosing Health' was published in 1990.

Prepared and assembled by the department's Population Health Division, the 1999 *Health Status Report* examines patterns of illness and causes of mortality in the Northwest Territories using a "population health" approach. This approach recognizes the important role that demographic, social and economic factors play as determinants of health.

The report is intended to inform people about health trends and some of the factors that affect health. It will also be used to determine strategic priorities, and to develop public policy that promotes health and well being.

"This report outlines the gains we have made in improving the health and well being of our people. For instance, life-expectancy is increasing and infant mortality is down," said Health and Social Services Minister Floyd Roland. "Equally important, is that this report illustrates the role that individual choices play in improving the health of all Northerners."

Chief Medical Officer of Health for the NWT, Dr. Andre Corriveau, says the report's findings are positive and encouraging.

"What emerges from this report is a picture of a population whose health has been steadily increasing," Dr. Corriveau said. "With some exceptions, illness and disease in the Northwest Territories have declined significantly over the last several decades."

For more information, contact:

Penny Ballantyne
Deputy Minister
Department of Health and Social Services
(867) 920-6173,

or

Dr. Andre Corriveau
Director, Population Health Division
Department of Health and Social Services
(867) 920-3231



99-165

Minister Seeks Review of Legal Services Act

YELLOWKNIFE (December 14) – Minister of Justice, Stephen Kakfwi has commissioned an independent review and assessment of the *Legal Services Act* and its mandate, including the make-up and mandate of the Legal Services Board.

The review is necessitated by changes that occurred in the creation of two territories and the anticipated departure of Nunavut members from the Legal Services Board on March 31, 2000.

The results of the review and any consequent recommendations will be completed in time for delivery to the new Minister of Justice in late January.

For more information, contact: **Lynda Sorensen**
Executive Assistant to Stephen Kakfwi
(867) 669-1546



99-166

GNWT Will Not Appeal Giant Court Decision

YELLOWKNIFE (December 14) -- In light of Monday's agreement between the union representing former employees at the Giant Mine and the receivers, PricewaterhouseCoopers, the government will not appeal last month's court decision concerning the termination of employees.

The agreement between the receivers and the Canadian Autoworkers union was reached at the last minute yesterday in Toronto where PricewaterhouseCoopers was scheduled to ask a bankruptcy court to transfer the Giant and Colomac mine properties to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The court order would also have declared the receiver's termination of the Giant Mine employees as valid, despite provisions of the *NWT Labour Standards Act*. The act calls for 12 weeks notice of mass termination to be given to a labour standards officer.

The territorial government had intended to oppose parts of the court order that affected employees to preserve its appeal of a Nov. 11 ruling concerning termination of the Giant employees.

"It was clear that our potential opposition, and that of the union, moved the receiver to make a deal," Justice minister Stephen Kakfwi said. "While the employees got far less than they wanted, there was the threat that if the government had convinced the court that the Giant employees were not legally terminated, the receiver would have abandoned the property and put Royal Oak into bankruptcy. If that had happened the employees would have received nothing and any proposed takeover of the mine would have been scuttled."

"Obviously, I didn't want us to kill the agreement made by the union or a takeover deal for the sake of trying to prove a point. The fact that the receiver negotiated this agreement with the union tells me that they feared our legislation would be upheld and that, in itself, is a victory," Mr. Kakfwi said.

For more information, contact:

Lynda Sorensen

Executive Assistant to Stephen Kakfwi

Tel: (867) 669-1646

Tel: (867) 669-2366



99-167

Museum Assistance Program Supports Dogrib Caribou Lodge Project

YELLOWKNIFE (December 14) -- A project to create replicas of the Bear Lake chief's caribou-skin lodge, repatriated by the Dogrib in 1997, has received \$52,950 in funding from the federal Museum Assistance Program (MAP) Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger announced today.

In an effort to further preserve and enhance northern culture and heritage, many partners are involved in this historic project including the Department of Education Culture and Employment, the Dogrib Community Services Board, Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School and the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council.

"This project has been a tremendous learning opportunity for the staff, students and elders who have been involved," Mr. Miltenberger said. "We appreciate the support of Canadian Heritage."

In total, 70 caribou hides will be required to complete the two lodges. These hides will come from the NWT's four Dogrib communities: Rae, Gameti, Wekweti and Wha Ti. Elders will begin cutting and sewing the hides together in May 2000 with the lodges being unveiled at a celebration during next summer's Dogrib Annual Assembly.

"Projects like this allow the Dogrib people to reclaim their past and celebrate their pride in their culture," said Dogrib Grand Chief Joe Rabesca.

One of the lodges will be used by the Dogrib Community School System. The second will be placed on permanent display at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. The project includes a videotape documentary on the project for future students to also share in the experience.

For more information, contact:

Charles Arnold, Director
Culture, Heritage and Languages
Education, Culture and Employment
Tel: (867) 873-7551



99-168

Funding to Help Establish New Dene Company

YELLOWKNIFE (December 16) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories is investing a \$288,800 contribution from the Business Development Fund program in a new Dene company that will provide a range of services and rentals to the oil and gas industry in the South Slave and Deh Cho regions.

Dene Directional and Rentals Ltd. is a joint venture between the Acho Dene Koe First Nation of Fort Liard, the Hay River Dene Band, the Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation of Kakisa and Wellco Directional Drilling of Alberta. It has already secured three contracts for this winter and has provided training for 18 people. The company is expected to create about 300 jobs for Aboriginal and northern residents during the next five years.

"It is imperative that northern communities and residents benefit from the increased activity in oil and gas exploration in the NWT," Stephen Kakfwi Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development said. "This is a good example of Aboriginal organizations pooling their resources to take advantage of employment and business opportunities in their regions."

Dene Directional and Rentals Ltd. will operate out of the abattoir building in Hay River. The building and land is presently owned by RWED. Negotiations for the sale of the building and land are currently underway.

For more information, contact: **Robert McLeod**
Deputy Minister
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Tel: (867) 920-8048
Fax: (867) 873-0563



99-169

Extraordinary School Enrollment Funded

YELLOWKNIFE (December 17) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Michael Miltenberger announced today that nearly \$500,000 in additional funding will be made available in two regions to offset higher than average increases in student enrolment.

The funding will be used by the South Slave and Beaufort Delta Divisional Education Councils to hire additional teachers for the 1999/2000 academic year.

“While we do an excellent job at predicting enrolments, there are occasions when enrolment growth is greater than expected,” Mr. Miltenberger said. “The additional money will ensure that pupil teacher ratios will not increase again during this school year.”

School funding is allocated based on a formula developed by Education Councils and ECE staff. Divisional Education Councils are required to submit program plans and enrolments figures as part of an established accountability structure. Adjustments to the formula are made periodically because of enrolment or program changes.

“The Department of Education, Culture and Employment shares the responsibility for the delivery of education in the NWT with the Divisional Education Councils and the District Education Authorities. Together we ensure that our children have the best possible opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to gain the skills they will need to take this territory into the future,” Mr. Miltenberger said.

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99-170

Consultation Begins on Wildlife Legislative Initiatives

YELLOWKNIFE (December 17) -- The Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) has begun widespread consultation toward drafting new wildlife and species at risk legislation.

“The Northwest Territories is considered a world leader in the co-management of its wildlife resources,” Minister Stephen Kakfwi said. “We want to ensure the sustainability of this valuable resource for future generations.”

The new Wildlife Act will regulate wildlife management and harvesting activities in the NWT. Consultations will focus on identifying issues to be covered in the new Act. There has not been a major revision to the general provisions of the current Wildlife Act since 1978.

The new species at risk legislation will govern the protection, conservation and management of species in the NWT that may be endangered or considered threatened with extinction. Consultations will focus on a variety of options to best achieve protection for these species.

The department made presentations on both wildlife initiatives at this week’s meeting of the Wildlife Management Advisory Council for the Inuvialuit area. Presentations to the wildlife co-management boards in the Gwich’in and Sahtu areas are also being planned.

RWED will also be seeking input from Aboriginal organizations, environmental groups, industry and the public.

The federal government is expected to introduce its own species at risk legislation this winter, which will also compliment the GNWT’s efforts.

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99-171

Minister Disappointed by Lack of Progress in Negotiations with NWTTA

YELLOWKNIFE (December 20) -- The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, has expressed disappointment with the slow progress made following the resumption of collective bargaining with the NWT Teachers' Association.

Collective bargaining resumed today after NWT teachers rejected a tentative agreement recommended by their bargaining committee. The agreement would have given members a pay raise greater than six per cent over two years and ranked them among the highest paid teachers in the country.

"The NWTTA came back to negotiations with wage and benefit demands in the vicinity of 10% over two years. With the government facing a deficit of close to \$60 million, there is just no way demands of this magnitude can be addressed," Mr. Dent said.

The NWTTA is also demanding that specific class size and special-needs support levels be part of the collective agreement. The government has previously expressed the view that these issues should remain outside of the collective bargaining. Plans to address these issues were contained in a strategic plan released recently by the Minister of Education, Culture & Employment, J. Michael Miltenberger.

Failure to reach an agreement during today's negotiations means the bargaining process must continue. The NWTTA will be in a legal position to take job action once the decision of the essential services arbitrator is rendered and the requisite 48 hours notice is given. The arbitrator's decision is expected in the first week of January.

"A strike is the last thing the government ever wants to see happen," Mr. Dent said. "I sincerely hope the NWTTA will recognise the government's fiscal limitations and return with a package that gives the parties a chance to reach agreement, rather than take strike action," he said.

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99-172

Geographic Tracking of Government Expenditures Available to Public

YELLOWKNIFE (December 21) – Chairman of the Financial Management Board, Charles Dent today released the government’s 1997-98 Geographic Tracking of Expenditures.

The report tracks government expenditures according to community or the geographic area in which they most closely relate or benefit. It is provided as a supplement to the Public Accounts - an annual documentation of expenditures by department and activity.

This method of reporting expenditures was first used during the division process to allocate expenditures between the two new territories.

“The Geographic Tracking of Expenditures has proven to be a valuable source of information for the government, the communities and the general public,” Mr. Dent said. “With it, everybody can see exactly how the GNWT spends its public money. It is an important feature of open and accountable government.”

The Geographic Tracking of Expenditures 1997-98 report is now available on the Financial Management Board’s web site at www.gov.nt.ca/FMBS. Published copies are expected to be ready in late January 2000.

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99-173

Panel to Outline Economic Strategy and Recommendations

YELLOWKNIFE (December 22) - The Northwest Territories Economic Strategy Panel will begin work on a draft strategy and recommendations next month.

The panel recently met in Yellowknife to review issues and opportunities related to education, training, the environment, manufacturing and the NWT's forestry and wildlife sectors.

Several presentations were made to the panel. Gary Bohnet provided an overview of the NWT's traditional economy while Ecology North offered an alternative insight into the challenges faced in sustaining global resources. Alternatives North offered five recommendations to panel members. The NWT Manufacturers Association and the Status of Women Council of the NWT also made presentations.

"Recommendations provided by the various presenters will be extremely valuable as we begin the drafting of an NWT Economic Strategy," panel co-chair Darrell Beaulieu said. "For example, Alternatives North recommended the establishment of an NWT Trust fund using taxes or royalties from resource development. The panel will consider all options as it develops the strategy."

Panel members will outline a strategy and discuss the recommendations they have heard when they meet again January 20-21 in Fort Smith. Additional presentations will also be heard regarding access to capital and the priorities of regional aboriginal organizations.

The Economic Strategy Panel is expected to complete its work by March 31, 2000.

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