

## Northwest Territories Government Press Releases 2000

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- 00-001 Jan 4 NWT Teacher's Association takes job action.
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- 00-003 Jan Minister urges Teachers' Union to return to bargaining table.
- 00-004 Jan 12 Department of Health and Social Services and UNW join forces to improve working conditions in the North.
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- 00-008 Jan 14 Northerners urged to quit smoking "for the health of it".
- 00-009 Jan 14 Department exams will go ahead.
- 00-010 Jan 15 Rural teachers break off contract talks.
- 00-011 Jan 17 Truck removed from ice road.
- 00-012 Jan 20 Cabinet Secretary (Andrew Gamble) retires.
- 00-013 Jan 20 Premier Stephen Kakfwi has assigned Cabinet Minister Joe Handley to take the lead for the territorial government in the Diavik diamond mine environmental review process.
- 00-014 Jan 20 Premier supports Deline uranium process.
- 00-015 Jan 24 Cabinet portfolios assigned.
- 00-016 Jan 24 Agreement reached between the NWTTA and the GNWT.
- 00-017 Jan 25 New appointment for Principal Secretary (Richard Bargery – Special Advisor to Cabinet).
- 00-018 Jan 26 Senior management appointments.
- 00-019 Jan 27 Information for seniors now available on the internet.
- 00-020 Jan 27 Cabinet congratulates Aboriginal Leaders on Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Agreement.
- 00-021 Jan 31 Jan 31 – Feb 6 – Apprenticeship week in the NWT.
- 00-022 Jan 31 Discussions underway on alternate payment methods for physicians.
- 00-023 Jan 31 Premier [Kakfwi] appoints Chief of Staff [Lynda Sorensen].
- 00-024 Feb 01 Three new trade certifications confirmed.
- 00-025 Feb 02 Education week celebration to feature Territorial bookworm challenge.



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00-026 Feb 03 E. Gruben Transport to replace GNWT fuel services in Tuk.

00-027 Feb 03 February 6-12 Mental Health Week in the NWT.

00-028 Feb 07 Annual transportation report released.

00-029 Feb 10 GNWT signs Canada/NWT Cooperation Agreement on Language.

00-030 Feb 15 Campaign launched to promote teaching profession.

00-031 Feb 16 New survey provides insight on benefits of wildlife.

00-032 Feb 17 Health and Social Services Minister releases final report of the Minister's Forum.

00-033 Feb 17 Dave Murray appointed Deputy Minister of MACA.

00-034 Feb 18 Heritage Day to be celebrated in the NWT.

00-035 Feb 22 Premier's address calls on all NWT leaders to work together.

00-036 Feb 22 Health and Social Services partnership assures physician care for residents.

00-037 Feb 23 Deadline for applications for funding.

00-038 Feb 24 Reduced speed on highway #3.

00-039 Feb 25 Student financial assistance program improved.

00-040 Feb 28 Towards excellence : a report on education in the NWT.

00-041 Mar 03 Beaulieu appointed president NWT Housing Corp.

00-042 Mar 03 Needs assessment survey underway in NWT schools.

Pr. Stmt. Mar 06 Commissioner of the Northwest Territories announces the end of his appointment. (Press Statement).

00-043 Mar 07 New board appointments at Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

00-044 Mar 08 International Women's Day.

00-045 Mar 08 The territorial government signs off on Diavik Environmental Agreement.

00-046 Mar 10 Economic strategy to include training, education and inter-regional cooperation.

00-047 Mar 15 Employment Minister to attend international conference on rough diamonds.

00-048 Mar 16 Premier [Kakfwi] and Finance Minister [Handley] meet with Federal Government.

00-049 Mar 20 NWT Social Work Week - March 20-26, 2000.

00-050 Mar 21 Glenna Hansen appointed as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.



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- 00-051 Mar 27 Larry Elkin appointed chairperson of Stanton Regional Health Board.
- 00-052 Mar 27 Minister of Education Jake Ootes has proclaimed this week Education Week in the Northwest Territories, with a theme of "Literacy, Language and Learning".
- 00-053 Mar 28 Premier looking forward to release of new national standards strategy.
- 00-054 Mar 29 \$1 Million senior's complex sold to Alaskans.
- 00-055 Apr 04 Rae Edzo Dene Band to redeem invested shares from the NWT Development Corporation.
- 00-056 Apr 10 Outstanding NWT volunteers honoured.
- 00-057 Apr 10 Premier Kakfwi seeks Alberta investment for brilliant future.
- 00-058 Apr 18 Virtual classrooms being piloted in the NWT.
- 00-059 Apr 19 Kakfwi says his promise stands.
- 00-060 May 1 Worker's compensation benefits paid to widows.
- 00-061 May 2 Turning Point Youth Facility a good move, Minister says.
- 00-062 May 3 Handley assumes responsibility for RWED.
- 00-063 May 5 International youth week.
- 00-064 May 8 Staff retention policy announced.
- 00-065 May 8 Public Works and Services publishes 'Good Building Practice' guidebook.
- Joint May 10 Appointment to the Workers' Compensation Board.
- 00-066 May 11 Grand opening of new community school in Kakisa.
- 00-067 May 11 NWT attends prairie initiative to address FAS.
- 00-068 May 15 Program to help new teachers.
- 00-069 May 17 NWT public libraries receive \$323,000 from Gates foundation.
- 00-070 May 17 Inuvik regional health facility to proceed as GNWT-owned project.
- 00-071 May 18 New agreement provides air support for northern search and rescue operations.
- 00-072 May 23 Panel finalizes economic development strategy.
- 00-073 May 23 Northern leaders unified in plans to address western premiers.
- 00-074 May 24 New agreement to offer more courses on line.
- 00-075 May 25 Western Premiers support northern priorities.
- 00-076 May 26 GNWT targets tobacco with public awareness campaign.



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00-077 May 28 Premier and Cabinet meet face to face with NWTAM.

00-078 May30 Minister congratulates Community Futures organization.

00-079 June 5 NWT employer of youth for 2000 recognized.

00-080 June 5 High Council consider opening NWT polished diamond grading facility.

00-081 June 6 New MOU will enhance northern economies.

00-082 June 8 New Board appointments at Northwest Territories Power Corporation.

00-083 June 9 The northern dimension of Canada's foreign policy.

00-084 June 9 Understanding Canada's health care costs.

00-085 June 15 GNWT will respect decision of Supreme Court.

00-086 June 20 NWT Finance Minister presents optimistic budget.

00-087 June 21 Report concludes GNWT does not have jurisdiction to regulate Yellowknife houseboats.

00-088 June 21 Kakfwi delivers sessional statement - government is building momentum.

00-089 June 26 Economic Strategy Panel delivers 'Common Ground'.

00-090 June 28 Commercial vehicles on NWT highways safest in Canada.

00-091 July 7 Minister (Vince Steen) says highway #3 is safe.

00-092 Aug 2 Commissioner welcomes Governor General to the Northwest Territories.

00-093 Aug 4 Minister announces next phase in highway construction.

00-094 Aug 4 Premier re-assigns cabinet portfolio. ( MACA – Roger Allen)

00-095 Aug 8 New plan introduced for Yellowknife family physicians.

00-096 Aug 9 GNWT to attend Jewellery World Expo in Toronto.

00-097 Aug 10 Department of Transportation introduces General Identification Card.

Joint Release Premiers secure national support for Northern priorities.

00-098 Aug 14 New bridge for West Channel opened.

00-099 Aug 14 Minister appoints new members to the NWT Arts Council.

00-100 Aug 22 Archives project preserves NWT culture and language.

00-101 Aug 23 New Inuvik hospital underway.

00-102 Aug 25 Student financial assistance application assessment completed.

00-103 Sept 05 Minister to honour community language leaders.





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00-104 Sept 05 Proponents to withdraw from bidding process in Hay River.

00-105 Sept 06 International Literacy Day.

00-106 Sept 08 Premier to attend First Minister's Meeting.

00-107 Sept 15 Speed limit reduced on Highway #3.

00-108 Sept 15 Funding for Sachs Harbour airport.

00-109 Sept 19 Minister committed to hard to house initiative in Inuvik.

Joint Release Sept 26 Alberta and NWT meet on memorandum of understanding for co-operation and development.

00-110 Sept 20 NWT Premier says gas pipeline should benefit Canadians.

00-111 Sept 28 Co-chief negotiators appointed at Dogrib table.

00-112 Sept 28 NWT joins Canada in mourning.

00-113 Sept 29 Minister proclaims NWT Literacy Week.

00-114 Oct 6 Study confirms Mackenzie Valley pipeline as best route for Canadians.

00-115 Oct 17 Minister recognizes National SADD Day.

00-116 Oct 18 NWT Arts Council grants approved.

00-117 Oct 19 Federal budget good news for taxpayers.

00-118 Oct 19 GNWT clarifies facts regarding Power Corporation announcement to employees.

00-119 Oct 23 Second annual Principal's Conference addressing effective schooling.

00-120 Oct 24 LINX 2000 Career Development Conference.

00-121 Oct 26 Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre acquires unique artifact.

00-122 Oct 30 Family violence awareness week proclaimed.

00-123 Oct 30 Parents to take their kids to work Wednesday.

00-124 Nov 1 Women and children's healing and recovery program launched.

00-125 Nov 6 Collaborative effort produces disabilities survey and report.

00-126 Nov 9 Minister introduces strategy for NWT roads.

00-127 Nov 9 NWT joins the Canadian North West Archival Network.

00-128 Nov 10 GNWT files motion asking equal pay tribunal to adjourn.

00-129 Nov 14 Premier announces Federal contribution to GNWT's non renewable resource strategy



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- 00-130 Nov 17 Premier Kakfwi comments on Chief of Staff issue.
- 00-131 Nov 30 Premier re-assigns cabinet portfolio.
- 00-132 Dec 1 Celebrating northern volunteers.
- 00-133 Dec 1 Aboriginal Leaders meet in Yellowknife.
- 00-134 Dec 1 GNWT releases response to common ground strategy.
- 00-135 Dec 4 Government releases electrical power review report for consultation.
- 00-136 Dec 4 Premier Kakfwi assumes responsibility for the NWT Power Corporation.
- 00-137 Dec 5 GNWT pleased with CRTC decision on communication services in the NWT.
- 00-138 Dec 6 First diamonds receive GNWT certification.
- 00-139 Dec 6 GNWT welcomes announcement from Alaska North Slope gas producers.
- 00-140 Dec 8 North Slave apprentices honoured by Minister.
- 00-141 Dec 8 NWT recognizes the world's first certified diamond polishers.
- 00-142 Dec 8 GNWT assists Fort McPherson with high costs of water supply system.
- 00-143 Dec 8 Premier says Dogrib input always welcome.
- 00-144 Dec 12 Cabinet supports National Aboriginal day as statutory holiday for NWT.
- 00-145 Dec 13 Student support needs assessment released.
- 00-146 Dec 13 Finance Ministers support restoring formula financing.





00-001

### **NWT Teachers' Association Takes Job Action**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 4) -- The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, said he is disappointed but not surprised by the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) decision to work to rule.**

"I hope that escalated job action by the NWTTA can be avoided. The territorial government remains committed to negotiating a responsible collective agreement that fairly compensates teachers while recognizing the fiscal reality of a projected \$60 million deficit next year," Mr. Dent said.

On Monday, arbitrator Tom Joliffe agreed with the government that school principals must perform essential child safety functions in the event of strike action by the NWTTA. Principals will be required to be on duty at the school for the first two hours of any strike to ensure that any children who show up for classes are returned to the safe custody of their parents or guardian.

Upon receiving the arbitrator's decision, the NWTTA served the government with notice of job action starting at noon on January 6th. Job action will initially consist of working to rule. Teachers will conduct classes but will not perform any voluntary services. The NWTTA has committed to notifying the government before any escalation in job action.

The government, with Divisional Education Councils and Divisional Education Authorities, has developed contingency plans should job action escalate.

Last November, NWTTA members rejected a tentative agreement reached by the government and the NWTTA bargaining committee and endorsed by a mediator. The tentative agreement offered wage and benefit increases totalling six per cent over two years and would have made NWT teachers among the highest paid in the country.

Early in December, the government presented its plans to deal with class size and special needs through the release of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment's Strategic Plan. This plan will be one of the critical areas for the new government to address.

**For more information contact:**

**Sylvia Haener**  
Director, Labour Relations  
Financial Management Board Secretariat  
(867) 873-7786

**Mark Cleveland**  
Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-6240





00-002

## **GNWT Prepared to Meet NWTTA's Priority Wage Demand**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 7) -- Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, announced today that the Government of the Northwest Territories has increased its offer of compensation to teachers outside of Yellowknife and has invited the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association (NWTTA) to resume negotiations for a collective agreement.**

The new proposal provides for a wage increase of 6.25 per cent over two years. The parties had reached a tentative agreement in November of 1999 that provided for a five per cent increase in wages over two years, along with increases to allowances, for an overall increase in compensation of six per cent.

"In a television interview on January 4th, NWTTA President, Pat Thomas, stated that her members' primary monetary demand is a 6.25 per cent increase to the existing salary grid," Mr. Dent said. "This was our first indication of what the NWTTA's priorities were even though we had been asking this question for some time. We now have the opportunity to avoid a protracted dispute and the negative impact it would have on our students."

"Given that education of our young people is a high priority for the government, we were already prepared to move funds from other areas to increase teachers' compensation by six per cent. Under our current financial circumstances this means that very difficult decisions must be made as to where the money will come from in the areas of health care, housing and other public services. However, in the interest of avoiding escalated job action by teachers that will affect NWT students, the GNWT is prepared to reallocate further funds to meet the NWTTA's stated priority wage demand," Mr. Dent said.

Mr. Dent also indicated that while the government remains committed to addressing class size and special needs support outside of the collective agreement, it is prepared to explore ways that the NWTTA can be involved in the resolution of these issues.

"The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to maintaining the quality of the education program," said Mr. Dent. "We would like to resume bargaining and resolve this dispute as soon as possible."

### **For more information, contact:**

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Financial Management Board Secretariat  
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**Mark Cleveland**  
Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-6240







00-003

## **Minister Urges Teachers' Union to Return to Bargaining Table**

**The Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, hopes that the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) will reconsider the government's latest salary offer and return to the bargaining table.**

This morning, in an effort to get collective agreement negotiations started again, the government offered to increase the teachers' salary grid by 6.25 per cent. In her response to the government's overture, the NWTTA President, Pat Thomas, characterized the increased offer as little more than repackaging, even though hundreds of thousands more dollars had been put on the table. The NWTTA has countered with wages demands that exceed eight per cent and appear to be taking the position that these concessions must be made as a precondition to returning to the negotiating table.

"We have taken every reasonable step we can to get bargaining back on track and avoid escalating job action," Mr. Dent said. "As a government facing a \$60 million deficit and almost no revenue growth we simply cannot agree to the large wage increases the NWTTA is holding out for. We are prepared to make the difficult reallocations from other areas to meet responsible demands, but we will not fatally jeopardize our other programs and services to satisfy one group's excessive expectations."

Mr. Dent went on to say that he hoped the NWTTA would reconsider its position and agree to resume bargaining next week.

### **For more information contact:**

**Sylvia Haener**  
Director, Labour Relations  
Financial Management Board Secretariat  
(867) 873-7786

**Mark Cleveland**  
Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-6240





00-004

## **Department of Health and Social Services and UNW Join Forces to Improve Working Conditions in the North**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 12) — The Department of Health and Social Services and the Union of Northern Workers (UNW) are uniting to address problems of workplace health, safety and well-being. The goal of the participants is improved working conditions for health and social services workers across the NWT.**

The initiative grew from the department's recruitment and retention planning, and is meant to help address the territory-wide shortage in health and social services professionals. As one of the first steps in the process, the department and the UNW jointly chaired a one-day workshop with representatives of several stakeholder groups in Yellowknife on January 11.

Represented at the workshop were health and social services boards, the NWT Registered Nurses Association, the NWT Medical Association, the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada, and the Certified Nurse Assistant Association. Other stakeholders in attendance were the Northwest Territories Health Care Association, the Worker's Compensation Board, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the GNWT Financial Management Board Secretariat, and Aurora College.

A portion of the workshop was devoted to having frontline health care and social services workers identify issues of workplace safety as they see them. The workshop also offered participants the opportunity to build better working relationships and share information and strategies to combat workplace violence.

Penny Ballantyne, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services, and Georgina Rolt-Kaiser, President of the UNW, both expressed their satisfaction at the outcome of yesterday's workshop.

"These are not new issues," Ms. Ballantyne said. "Our frontline workers need to feel supported, not only by their employer, union and professional associations, but also by community leaders and the general public. With the growing national and international shortage of health and social service professionals, we need to treat frontline workers well and let them know they are appreciated and valued members of our communities."

"Workers' safety is a most important issue," Ms. Rolt-Kaiser said. "This is about working together and forming joint strategies to develop a foundation to improve workplace safety. I'm pleased that we've gathered here to identify problems and commit to making positive changes together."

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**Department of Health and Social Services and UNW Join Forces to Improve Working Conditions in the North: Page 2**

Participants first identified areas of concern, which included workplace violence, issues of staffing and isolation, and career training and professional development. Groups were then formed to address specific areas of concern and identify possible solutions. The department and the union have committed to forming a working team of stakeholders to ensure that the process maintains its momentum.

**For more information, contact:**

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

**Georgina Rolt-Kaiser**  
President  
Union of Northern Workers  
(867) 873-5668





00-005

### **Ice Road Closed to Remove Truck**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 12) -- The Department of Transportation says no one was injured and the ongoing construction of the ice road has not been affected by an incident on the Mackenzie River ice road this morning.**

At approximately 7:00AM, a northbound Super-B-Train truck hauling diesel fuel broke through the ice crossing near Fort Providence. The driver was treated for hypothermia at the Fort Providence nursing station.

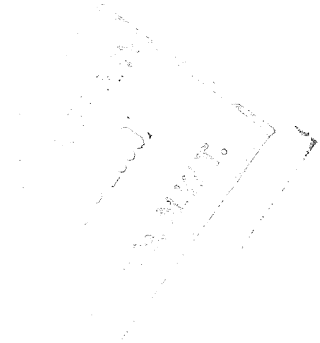
Both fuel tanks on the tanker remain partially in the water. No fuel has leaked from the tanks and the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) is currently monitoring the situation.

The ice crossing, which had been open to light traffic up to a maximum of 4,000kg, is currently closed while spill-response crews pump the fuel out of the stranded tanker and attempt to remove the truck from the ice. It is estimated that this will take at least 48 hours.

Staff from the local RCMP detachment, RWED and the Department of Transportation (DOT) will maintain road closures at both ends of the ice road until the retrieval of the truck has been completed.

The ferry at Fort Providence continues to operate on a 24 hour basis and no disruption to the travelling public is expected other than normal delays due to ice or fog.

**For further information, contact:** **Peter Vician**  
Deputy Minister  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-3460









00-006

## **Northerners Reminded that Smoke Alarms are an Essential Part of Fire Safety**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 10) - Despite recent concerns about the reliability of smoke alarms, the Office of the Fire Marshal is reminding NWT residents that properly installed and maintained smoke alarms play an important role in fire safety.**

Present day codes require dwellings in the NWT to have at least one smoke alarm hard-wired into the building's electrical system and located immediately outside sleeping areas at ceiling level. Supplemental battery operated or hard-wired smoke alarms may be installed in other locations at the owner's discretion. For an added measure of protection, residents may use a combination of both ionization and photoelectric alarms.

One of the leading causes of smoke alarm failure is the lack of a power source - no battery, dead battery or, in the case of hard-wired alarms, disconnection from a power source. To ensure alarms are working properly, consumers should set up a regular testing and maintenance schedule that meets the manufacturer's recommendations.

"Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms do save lives," NWT Fire Marshal Don Gillis says. "Ensure that your smoke alarms are working and leave them in place."

Smoke alarms, however, are only one element of fire safety in the home. Fire prevention is the first priority. "Smoke alarms cannot prevent fires," Gillis says. "They are simply a warning device to allow people to escape from the dangers of smoke and fires."

All households should develop and practice a fire escape plan regularly. Preplanning and practicing a fire escape plan allows everyone to be prepared and to react quickly if fire strikes. A good plan ensures that every member of a household knows: two ways out of every room; where to meet outside the home; and to call the fire department from a neighbour's home.

All residents of the NWT are encouraged to follow the above safety practices. The Fire Marshal's Office will keep the public informed of any new developments in this area.

**For more information, note the attached Backgrounder or contact:**

<b>D.E. (Don) Gillis</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Mick Beauchamp</b>
Fire Marshal		President,
Municipal and Community Affairs		NWT Fire Chiefs' Association
Tel: (867) 873-7469		Tel: (867) 873-4506
Fax: (867) 873-0260		Fax: (867) 873-9056

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## *Backgrounder*

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### **Northerners Reminded that Smoke Alarms are an Essential Part of Fire Safety**

- In Canada, smoke alarms go through third-party testing by the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada.
- There are two types of smoke alarms on the market – ionization and photoelectric. Both are tested, certified, and labelled by Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada and must bear the ULC or CUL mark. They are suitable for early detection of smoke and fire in homes. Both technologies are designed to “alarm” at a point that will offer sufficient time for occupants to evacuate a home.
- Ionization type smoke alarms are recognized by ULC for being better suited in detecting fast-flaming fires, which account for 70 per cent of home fires.
- Photoelectric type smoke alarms are recognized for quicker detection of smouldering fires, which account for 30 per cent of home fires.
- Smoke alarms should be installed and tested in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Smoke alarms should be tested at least once a month.
- To test an alarm:
  - test monthly with smoke
  - drift smoke from a just extinguished candle
  - alarm should sound within 20 seconds
  - fan smoke away to silence alarm
- If an alarm doesn't sound, check and or replace the battery, check fuse box/breaker panel if the alarm is not receiving electricity and if the alarm is dead then replace immediately.
- To maintain an alarm:
  - clean smoke alarms twice a year by removing and wiping cover with damp cloth and gently vacuuming the inside of the alarm;
  - replace batteries once a year as needed (a chirping sound indicates low battery status);
  - never remove batteries for other uses;
  - do not install rechargeable batteries in smoke alarms; and
  - replace smoke alarms 10 years or older with a new one.





00-007

### **Fuel Recovery Completed from Tank Truck**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 13) – Officials from the Department of Transportation say the recovery of fuel from onboard the tank truck that went through the ice crossing near Fort Providence yesterday has been completed without incident.**

The Mackenzie River ice crossing will remain closed while crews assemble equipment required for the recovery of the truck cab and tanker units. This operation is expected to begin on Saturday. Once the recovery is complete the Department of Transportation will reassess the site for damage to the ice crossing.

Department personnel and barricades will remain in place at either end of the ice road until the crossing is reopened to light traffic. The ferry at Fort Providence continues to operate on a 24-hour basis and no disruption to the travelling public is expected other than normal delays due to ice or fog.

**For further information, contact:**     **Peter Vician**  
Deputy Minister  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-3460







00-008

### **Northerners urged to quit smoking “for the health of it”**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 14) -- The Department of Health and Social Services is launching an aggressive quit smoking campaign in recognition of National Non-Smoking Week, January 17 – 23.**

Television, newspaper and radio advertisements will deliver informative and insightful quit-smoking messages through media outlets that include community radio stations. The campaign encourages individuals to quit, provides helpful hints on butting out, and suggests lots of reasons why quitting is a good option for the individual, their friends and their families. The ultimate goal is to help people improve their health and well being while reducing the burden on the health care system.

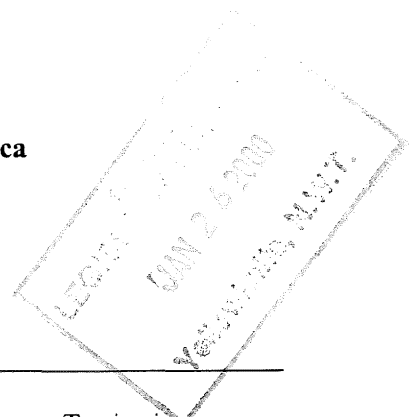
The NWT’s smoking rate is one of the highest in the country. Health problems related to smoking are a burden on the health care system and smoking related deaths are above the national average. The good news is these deaths and illnesses are preventable and the quit smoking message is getting through to more and more people.

Minister of Health and Social Services, Floyd Roland, has great enthusiasm for the campaign. “We’re dedicated to reducing smoking and the health related complications that come with it. Long after National Non-Smoking Week, our campaign will continue to encourage northerners to butt out – for the health of it,” he said.

Smoking related health care problems can be prevented. The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to prevention through its quit smoking campaign kicking off on Monday.

**For more information, contact:**

**Rick Tremblay**  
Health Promotions Consultant  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 920-8826  
Fax: (867) 873-0202  
Email: [rick\\_tremblay@gov.nt.ca](mailto:rick_tremblay@gov.nt.ca)









00-009

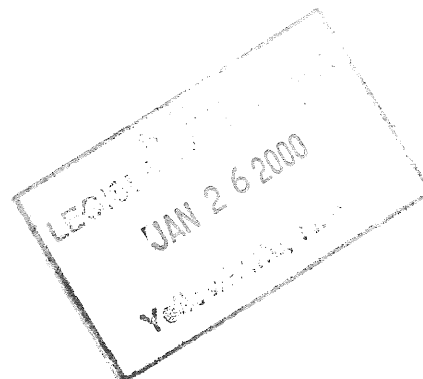
### **Departmental Exams Will Go Ahead**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 14) – Departmental exams for high school students will go ahead as scheduled over the next two weeks, notwithstanding the job action by members of the NWT Teachers’ Association. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Michael Miltenberger, said today.**

“Each of the Directors of Education at the five Divisional Education Councils have come up with a contingency plan for supervising students who were scheduled to write exams next week,” Mr. Miltenberger confirmed. “Students are studying now for exams scheduled Monday.”

Questions about exams can be directed to the District Education Authority in your community, or the Divisional Education Council.

For more information, call collect 1-867-920-6909, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday, or the Job Action Information Line toll-free 24 hours a day at 1-877-493-2444.







00-010

## **Rural Teachers Break Off Contract Talks**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 15) – The NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) has broken off contract negotiations with the territorial government.**

The latest round of negotiations was held on January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> in Yellowknife. The NWTTA left the table after the government presented an offer that would have given rural teachers a 6.25 per cent pay raise over two years. This would have ranked them among the highest paid teachers in the country.

"This is a good offer that shows the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to improving education for our young people and values teachers and the work they do," the Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Charles Dent, said. "We were confident that this offer would get students back to school."

The offer also contained a memorandum of agreement, subject to approval of funding by the Legislative Assembly. The agreement would have seen the pupil/teacher ratio (ptr) drop from the current ratio of 18:1 to 16:1 over the next four years. The ratio would have dropped to 17.5:1 at the beginning of the school year next fall. The memorandum of agreement also committed to increase funding for student support services from 8.2 per cent of total schools funding to 15 per cent over the next four years. These targets would require at least \$4 million in the first year. This is in addition to \$4.2 million over two years increase to salaries and benefits for teachers.

"With the government facing a deficit of close to \$60 million, the latest offer to the NWTTA is a significant commitment," Mr. Dent said. "The offer demonstrates our commitment to quality education and provides specific targets to address support for special needs and a reduction in the pupil/teacher ratio."

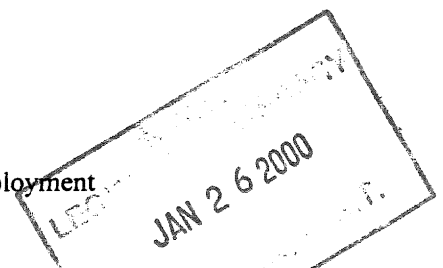
The government's budgeting process takes place over the next few months. It is through this process that MLAs consider where the GNWT should allocate money.

"It's not clear how long the NWTTA will continue rotating strike action while it waits to see whether the government reallocates more money for education," Mr. Dent said. "It would be unfortunate if students are kept out of the classroom while their teachers hold out for more money despite there being a reasonable offer on the table. I encourage the NWTTA to reconsider this latest settlement offer and return to the bargaining table."

### **For more information contact:**

**Sylvia Haener**  
Director, Labour Relations  
Financial Management Board Secretariat  
(867) 873-7786

**Mark Cleveland**  
Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-6240







00-011

### Truck removed from Ice Road

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 17) - Officials from the Department of Transportation (DOT) confirmed today that the tanker truck that crashed through the Mackenzie River ice crossing last week was successfully removed to the north shore of the river on Saturday afternoon.**

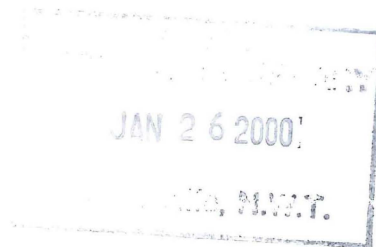
RTL Robinson's Enterprises Ltd. of Yellowknife led recovery efforts that involved using small dynamite blasts to free the truck from the ice. RCMP and DOT officials were on hand for the recovery along with representatives from the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development and the federal departments of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Department of Fisheries.

DOT staff have since secured the damaged ice road with ice berms and have erected barriers to protect the area where the truck went through the ice. The ice road has been reopened to light traffic up to 4,000 kg with a detour around the damaged area.

Spray-ice construction of the ice crossing continues today and the Department of Transportation expects to open the ice crossing to all traffic later this week.

The Department would like to thank the travelling public for their understanding during this recent closure.

**For further information, contact:**      **Art Barnes**  
Superintendent, North/South Slave  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 874-5009







00-012

### **Cabinet Secretary Retires**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 20) - Premier Stephen Kakfwi today announced the retirement of Andrew Gamble, Cabinet Secretary.**

Mr. Kakfwi thanked Mr. Gamble for his twenty years of service with the Government of the Northwest Territories. "I worked closely with Mr. Gamble during the creation of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development," he said. "I was impressed by the professional approach he took to this very difficult task."

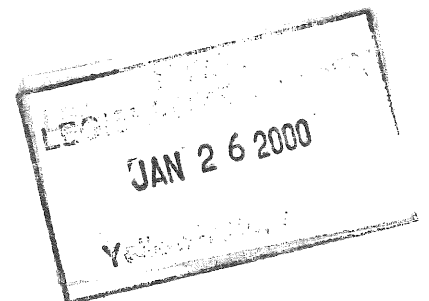
Mr. Gamble began his career with the territorial government in January of 1980 as a project engineer. He held the positions of Deputy Minister of Transportation and Deputy Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development and has served as Secretary to Cabinet since November of 1997.

"The North has been good to me and I plan to stay. But after 30 years of public service, it's time to try something else," Mr. Gamble said.

Ms. Elizabeth Snider will assume the responsibilities of Secretary to Cabinet pending the appointment of a permanent replacement.

**For more information, contact:**

**Judy Langford**  
Office of the Press Secretary  
Tel: (867) 669-2302  
Fax: (867) 873-0111









00-013

## Special Assignment

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 20) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi has assigned Cabinet Minister Joe Handley to take the lead for the territorial government in the Diavik diamond mine environmental review process.**

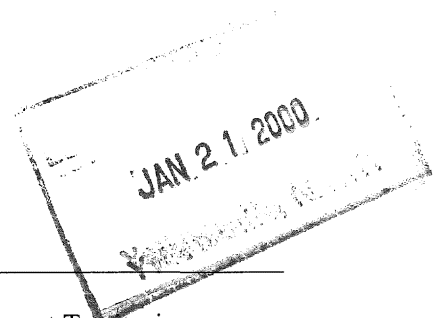
Mr. Handley's special assignment follows positive statements today in Yellowknife by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the future of the Diavik project. Robert Nault indicated there would be no delay in issuing water and land use permits for the Diavik process once an environmental agreement was in place.

"We are encouraged by Mr. Nault's comments today and agree that negotiations for an environmental agreement should proceed with all reasonable speed," Mr. Kakfwi said. "We appreciate that Mr. Nault has demonstrated concern for the effects mining has on the northern environment. At the same time, we do not want to see any unnecessary delay in assessing the Diavik proposal."

"I have asked Joe Handley to lead the territorial government's role in this process to ensure a speedy and satisfactory resolution to the Diavik issue. Mr. Handley's background makes him an ideal choice for this assignment," Mr. Kakfwi added.

This is a special assignment for Mr. Handley, who is the former Deputy Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. The Premier has not yet assigned cabinet portfolios.

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



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00-014

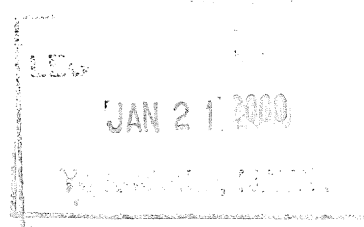
### **Premier Supports Deline Uranium Process**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 20) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi welcomes today's federal announcement of a process to deal with concerns about the former Port Radium mine site on Great Bear Lake.**

"The agreement between the community of Deline and the federal government is an important step towards addressing the concerns people have about links between health problems and the Port Radium mine," Mr. Kakfwi said. "I support this move to answer the questions about this mine and I fully support the inclusive, community-based approach that is being taken."

The Premier has written to Indian Affairs and Northern Development Minister Robert Nault and Western Arctic MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew to express his support of the process.

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







00-015

## **Cabinet Portfolios Assigned**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 24) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi has announced the following portfolio assignments for the Cabinet ministers who were elected last week.**

**The list is arranged by order of precedence: Premier, Deputy Premier and then ministers according to the length of time they have being a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Members who were elected on the same date are listed alphabetically.**

**Hon. Stephen Kakfwi:** Premier; Intergovernmental Affairs; Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

**Hon. Jane Groenewegen:** Deputy Premier; Health and Social Services; Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

**Hon. Jim Antoine:** Aboriginal Affairs; Municipal and Community Affairs; Justice.

**Hon. Jake Ootes:** Education, Culture and Employment; Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation.

**Hon. Vince Steen:** Public Works and Services, Transportation; Minister Responsible for Seniors.

**Hon. Roger Allen:** NWT Housing Corporation; Public Utilities Board; Minister Responsible for Youth.

**Hon. Joseph Handley:** Finance; Minister Responsible for the Financial Management Board; Minister Responsible for the Workers Compensation Board.

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





00-016

### **Agreement Reached Between the NWTTA and the GNWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 24) - Premier Stephen Kakfwi and President of the NWT Teachers' Association (NWTTA) Pat Thomas announced today that they have signed a Memorandum of Agreement outlining a commitment to introduce amendments to the *Education Act*.**

"Amendments to the Act will be tabled at the next session of the Legislative Assembly," Mr. Kakfwi said. "This will confirm the government's commitment to implementing two of its department's key goals: to decrease pupil teacher ratios and increase student support funding."

Approval of the planned legislative changes will result in an incremental increase in education funding of approximately \$4.6 million in the 2000/2001 year.

"While job action was a difficult step for GNWT teachers to take, the end result is that all teachers and students in the NWT will benefit from the proposed legislative amendments," Ms. Thomas said.

In addition, the parties have reached a tentative agreement to renew the collective agreement for teachers outside of Yellowknife.

The collective agreement package includes:

- a salary increase of 6.25 per cent over two years; comprised of 3.75 per cent in the first year and 2.5 per cent in the second year. These same percentage increases will be applied to other teacher allowances;
- a professional allowance of \$1000 in the first year and \$500 in the second year;
- average increases to the Northern Allowance of 15 per cent;
- a new Mentorship Allowance of \$1000 to support orientation of new teachers;
- restructured Principal and Assistant Principal Allowances which result in an average increase of about 22 per cent.

- The addition of one salary step to the grid for Aboriginal Language and Culture Specialists; and
- A restructured salary grid based on the number of years of post-secondary teacher education. The results in approximately 30 teachers receiving an additional 5-6 per cent salary increase.

“This agreement means that teachers will no longer be working to rule or engaging in other job action,” Ms. Thomas said. She says she will be working towards an early ratification vote by the members.

**For more information, contact:**

**Pat Thomas**

President,  
NWT Teachers' Association  
Tel: (867) 873-8501

**Mark Cleveland**

Deputy Minister  
Education Culture & Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-6240

**Sylvia Haener**

Director, Labour Relations  
FMBS  
Tel: (867) 920-8900





00-017

### **New Appointment for Principal Secretary**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 25) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi, announced today that Principal Secretary Richard Bargery has accepted an assignment as Special Advisor to Cabinet to coordinate the Government of the Northwest Territories' involvement in the Intergovernmental Forum process.**

"The Intergovernmental Forum is a priority issue for this government," Mr. Kakfwi said. "Mr. Bargery has been the lead on this issue as the Principal Secretary to the former Premier and I am very pleased that he has agreed to continue with this role for the new government."

The Intergovernmental Forum will be a trilateral meeting this Spring between Aboriginal, territorial and federal governments to deal with issues such as resource revenue sharing and northern control of northern resources.

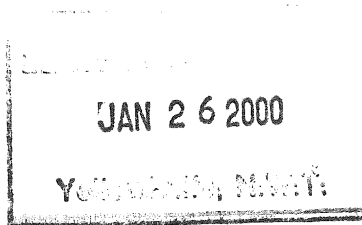
Cabinet has agreed to take a team approach to this process with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Jim Antoine, taking the lead role.

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





00-018



## Senior Management Appointments

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 26) -- The Premier and Cabinet are pleased to announce the following senior management appointments:**

- **John U. Bayly QC** has accepted the position of Principal Secretary, effective March 7. Mr. Bayly is a noted northern lawyer who has worked as both a Crown Attorney and as private counsel. Highlights of Mr. Bayly's long and varied career include: chairing the government's Task Force on Spousal Assault and the Denendeh Conservation Board, serving as Executive Director of the Legal Services Board and two terms as President of the NWT Bar Association. Mr. Bayly is a member of the RCMP Public Complaints Commission and has represented a variety of aboriginal groups, including the Dene Nation, and the Committee for Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE) at the Berger Inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley pipeline from 1974-76.

"John Bayly's long experience in and dedication to the Northwest Territories make him an ideal choice for this position and I could not be happier that he has agreed to take on this new challenge," Premier Stephen Kakfwi said. "I am also very pleased to announce that George Braden will be the Acting Principal Secretary until Mr. Bayly takes up his appointment in March."

Mr. Braden is a former Government Leader and Member of the Legislative Assembly who is currently a senior advisor to the territorial government at its Intergovernmental Affairs office in Ottawa.

- **Elizabeth Snider** has been appointed Secretary to Cabinet following the retirement of Andrew Gamble last week. Ms. Snider was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and has been the Acting Secretary to Cabinet.
- **Bob McLeod** has been appointed Deputy Minister for the department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Mr. McLeod is the former Deputy Minister for Municipal and Community Affairs and has been Acting Deputy Minister of RWED since last fall.

**Mr. Kakfwi also announces the following changes to his personal staff:**

- **Susan Fleck** will be Mr. Kakfwi's Executive Assistant with responsibility for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Ms. Fleck joined the government in 1979 with the Department of Renewable Resources. She is currently Senior Policy Advisor for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development.

/...2

**Senior Management Appointments, page 2**

- **Pamela Slater** will be Mr. Kakfwi's Executive Secretary. Ms. Slater has worked for the Yellowknife law firm of Gullberg, Wiest, MacPherson and Kay since 1985.

**For more information, contact:**

**Judy Langford**  
Press Secretary  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2302



00-019

### **Information for Seniors Now Available on The Internet**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 27) -- Minister Responsible for Seniors, Vince Steen today announced the creation of a new web site to provide seniors with up-to-date information on a wide range of federal, provincial, and territorial policies, programs and services.**

The web site, called the Seniors Policies and Programs Database (SPPD), is the latest tool to be developed by the federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors to assist in planning for and responding to the needs of Canada's ageing population.

"Seniors are one of the fastest growing population groups in the North," Mr. Steen said. "By the year 2018, the population of those over 60 years of age in the NWT is expected to increase 135 per cent from about 2,400 to 5,600. The information available on this site will allow seniors, care-givers and ageing persons to research the supports and programs they need, or will need, in the future."

The SPPD web site includes information in both English and French on areas such as health, housing and income support, and will support the development of policies and programs that address the needs of seniors in the North and across Canada.

The new site allows seniors to browse policies and programs by jurisdiction or by subject, and provides direct access to federal, provincial and territorial web sites related to their search.

Fort Smith senior and President of the NWT Seniors Society, Beatrice Campbell says the new site will be a valuable tool for those providing information on the society's toll-free information line. "This will certainly fill a gap, she said. "We can now readily find information for those callers who may not have Internet access."

Seniors living in NWT communities that have a public library will be able to access the web site using the library's computers.

The Seniors Policies and Programs Database is available at <http://www.sppd.gc.ca> (English) or <http://www.bdppa.gc.ca> (French). The NWT Seniors Information Line can be reached by calling 1-800-661-0878.

**For more information, contact:**

**Dianne Mercredi**  
Consultant, Residential Care  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 873-7925





00-020

### **Cabinet Congratulates Aboriginal Leaders on Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Agreement**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 27) -- The Premier and Cabinet congratulate northern Aboriginal leaders on yesterday's decision to work together to develop a business partnership to maximize ownership and benefits of a pipeline in the Mackenzie Valley.**

The decision was taken at a two-day meeting in Fort Liard which marked the first time since the Berger Inquiry of the 1970s that all northern Aboriginal groups had met to discuss pipeline development. "This is a turning point in northern history," Premier Stephen Kakfwi said. "In the days of the Berger Inquiry, Aboriginal peoples said development had to wait until land claims were settled. It is a sign of how much progress we have made in the NWT that these same groups are now prepared to take control of this development themselves."

Finance minister Joe Handley and Aboriginal Affairs minister Jim Antoine attended the meeting on behalf of the territorial government. "This shows what can be achieved when people work together," Mr. Antoine said. "This type of unity and cooperation will allow northern people to ensure that they take control of the development of northern resources."

**For more information, contact:**

**Richard Bargery**  
Special Advisor to Cabinet  
Intergovernmental Forum  
Executive  
(867) 669-2311







00-021

### **Jan 31-Feb 6 - Apprenticeship Week in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 31) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes today proclaimed January 31 to February 6, 2000 as Apprenticeship Week in the Northwest Territories.**

“Together with their many partners, apprentices and trades people make a vital contribution to the northern economy,” Mr. Ootes said. I encourage you all to take the time this week to recognize and acknowledge that contribution.”

The theme for this week of activities is “Apprenticeship is just the Beginning”. Special events are planned in many communities to mark the week and to recognize the many partners that contribute to the success of apprenticeship programs in the NWT.

“From carpentry to cooking, apprenticeship has allowed many northerners to get a head start in the pursuit of a fulfilling and rewarding career.” Mr. Ootes said.

More than 4000 apprentices have successfully completed training and gone on to achieve Journeyman status in the Northwest Territories.

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





00-022

## **Discussions Underway on Alternate Payment Methods for Physicians**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 31) – The Department of Health and Social Services and the NWT Medical Association are working together to find alternative ways to recruit, retain and compensate physicians in the Northwest Territories.**

The department and the NWT Medical Association are joining with Stanton Regional Health Board and Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board to create a competitive compensation scheme and practice environment -- one which supports the recruitment and retention of physicians, while ensuring clients continue to receive the quality of care to which they are accustomed.

Over the past year, a significant number of general practice physicians have left Yellowknife to practice elsewhere. It is increasingly difficult to recruit permanent replacements. Consequently, the pressure on the remaining physicians has become unsustainable. General practice physicians in Yellowknife must manage patients in their office, while providing a wide range of services to Stanton Regional Hospital and continuing to provide visiting physician services to other communities.

“We must act now to ensure that our remaining physicians stay in the North,” Penny Ballantyne, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services said. “We are very pleased to be working with the NWT Medical Association on this initiative and are exploring ways to develop physician compensation methods that may result in improved working conditions.”

Dr. David King, President of the NWT Medical Association said, “Although our current focus is on addressing the concerns of Yellowknife physicians, a new alternate payment method will obviously have implications for the entire NWT medical care system. Because we represent the interests and concerns of all NWT physicians, we will continue to provide leadership and support to the process.”

### **For more information, contact:**

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

or

**NWT Medical Association**  
(867) 920-4575





00-023

### **Premier Appoints Chief of Staff**

**YELLOWKNIFE (January 31) – Premier Stephen Kakfwi today appointed Lynda Sorensen as his Chief of Staff.**

In her new role, Ms. Sorensen will provide for the smooth administrative operation of the Premier's Office, and Executive Council political offices. She will oversee the quick response to MLA requests, the Premier's scheduling and coordinate Mr. Kakfwi's Intergovernmental Affairs and Premier's duties.

Ms. Sorensen has worked closely with Mr. Kakfwi since joining him in 1985 as an Executive Consultant during his term as President of the Dene Nation. She has worked as his Executive Assistant since his first appointment as a Cabinet Minister in 1987.

Ms. Sorensen has lived in the North since 1970. She was the Director of Nursing for the Stanton Regional Hospital in the early 1970s. From 1975 to 1979 she was well known for her comments and articles in radio, newspaper and cable television as a consumer advocate for the people of the Northwest Territories.

Ms. Sorensen was elected to the Legislative Assembly in the fall of 1979 and again in 1983. She represented the Yellowknife constituency of Yellowknife South until she resigned in 1984 to run in the federal election. She and her husband, Art, have three children: Ernestine, Jodi and Ridd.

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





00-024

### **Three new Trade Certifications Confirmed**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 1) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes, today announced that diamond polishers, security officers and warehouse technicians have been designated for certification in the Northwest Territories by the Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board.**

An occupation becomes designated for certification once the Board, on the recommendation of industry, has approved it. Formal certification raises the level of professionalism in an occupation by indicating that an employee has achieved the industry standard in terms of knowledge, skill and attitude. A certificate is recognized throughout the industry as an indication of competence.

“Training employees to meet industry standards will result in a professional northern labour force with transferable skills to meet the needs of an evolving labour market in the Northwest Territories,” Mr. Ootes said.

Several other occupations have been designated for certification in the Northwest Territories in coming years. “It is appropriate, during Apprenticeship Week to recognize that apprenticeship training can be the beginning to a rewarding and unique career in the NWT,” Mr. Ootes said.

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







00-025

### **Education Week Celebration to feature Territorial Bookworm Challenge**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 2) – The week of March 27 to April 2, 2000 has been designated Education Week in the Northwest Territories with the theme: “Literacy, Language and Learning”. Today, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes challenged NWT residents to celebrate the week by building bookworms.**

Until March 1<sup>st</sup>, NWT schools, learning centres, libraries, Aurora College campuses and all government departments are being asked to build a bookworm by recording each time a story is shared or read.

Each group will receive a package containing a bookworm template, poster and colorful worm segments on which to record the title and author of each story told, along with the name of the person who shared it. As each segment is added, the worm will grow. It can live in a school, a community hall, gym, library or any location big enough to allow the worm to grow as big as possible between now and the end of February.

“The Territorial Bookworm Challenge is a method of showing how much we use literacy, language, and learning in our daily lives,” Mr. Ootes said.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, all bookworms will be forwarded to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and a territorial bookworm will be created. The territorial bookworm will be given the added recognition of being displayed in the Legislative Assembly’s Great Hall during Education Week.

Entire communities are encouraged to get involved in celebrating Education Week by reading, writing, and telling stories which will help enhance literacy and teach us about ourselves and others.

“I encourage everyone to rise to the challenge of building a community bookworm. As students read, write, talk and share their stories, they will develop their language skills and promote literacy in their families and communities,” Mr. Ootes said.

**For more information, contact:**      **Pauline Gordon,**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-8061





00-026

### **E. Gruben Transport to Replace GNWT Fuel Services in Tuk**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 3) – Minister of Public Works and Services, Vince Steen announced today that the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has entered into a lease agreement with E. Gruben’s Transport Limited for the operation of the tank farm and the sale and distribution of fuel products in Tuktoyaktuk.**

Mr. Steen says the lease represents a more commercialized approach to fuel storage and delivery in NWT communities. “It makes good economic sense for the private sector to take over services from the GNWT if they can offer a better or comparable level of service at a lower price to the consumer,” he said.

The leasing arrangement in Tuktoyaktuk is unique when compared to other communities where the Department of Public Works and Services provides fuel sales and distribution services and may serve as a model for future commercialization activities.

The department currently provides fuel sales, distribution and delivery services in 18 communities not served by the private sector.

**For more information, contact:**

**Brian Austin**  
Director, Petroleum Products Division  
Public Works and Services  
Tel: (867) 920-3447





00-027

## **February 6-12 Mental Health Week in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIE (February 3) -- Mental Health Week will be celebrated in the NWT from February 6th to 12th, Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen announced today. This year's theme is "Daily Stress Can Throw You Off Balance". All residents are encouraged to participate by making mental health a personal priority.**

In the Northwest Territories, mental health problems account for more hospital visits than any other illness. "It is important," Mrs. Groenewegen said, "that communities continue to recognize mental health as a priority."

In 1998-99, over sixty per cent of funding for community wellness projects was spent on mental health prevention, promotion or protection. Traditional healing, drug and alcohol prevention, physical activity, cultural workshops, healthy parenting, support groups, traditional justice, anger management and empowerment are just a few areas where communities are spending mental health dollars.

"Mental health issues are important and communities across the north are responding to the challenge. I'm pleased to hear that communities are involved in setting the mental health agenda. They understand the impact mental health problems have on individuals, families and communities," Mrs. Groenewegen said.

The NWT Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association has changed their recognition of Mental Health Week from May to February. It now coincides with the long, cold months of mid winter - a time when people can experience an intensified incidence of depressive symptoms.

President of the NWT Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Kathryn Youngblut invites individuals and organizations across the NWT to access the association for mental health support. "The CMHA is dedicated to helping individuals and communities improve their mental health. We offer resources, advocacy and support," she said.

### **For more information contact:**

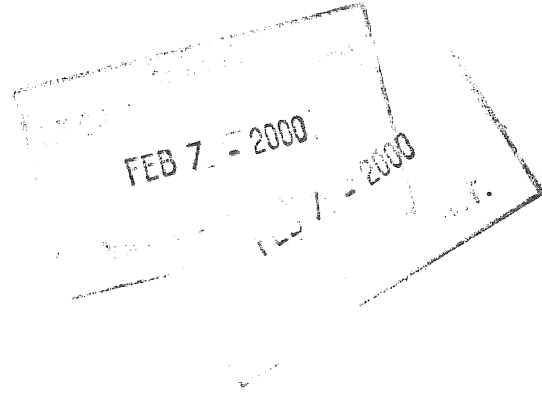
**Sandy Little**  
Mental Health Consultant  
Department of Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 873-7926

**Kathryn Youngblut**  
President, NWT Branch  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Tel: (867) 873-3190





00-028



### **Annual Transportation Report Released**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 7) - Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen today released an annual report of traffic accidents in the NWT prepared by the Department of Transportation for the year ending 1998.**

The report indicates there were 725 collisions in 1998 that resulted in 195 injuries and five fatalities. The number of collisions in 1998 represented a 17 per cent drop compared to the average number of collisions for the previous nine years.

Although the low number of vehicles in the NWT makes some statistics difficult to interpret, Mr. Steen said the report confirms his concern that high alcohol use continues to be the leading cause of accidents in the North. Ten per cent of all accidents in the NWT involve alcohol. In those collisions, one in every four people are injured or killed. The report also cites the lack of seatbelt and helmet use as concerning.

“The information in the report will be useful for NWT communities to review the type and nature of accidents that are occurring in their communities or nearby highways,” Mr. Steen said. “Their input will assist the Department of Transportation to determine the most effective way of bringing these accident numbers down.”

The 1998 report also contains statistics for areas now within Nunavut, an aspect that will not appear in future reports now that Division is complete.

**For more information, contact:**

**Richard MacDonald**  
Director, Motor Vehicles Division  
Department of Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-8915







00-029

## **GNWT Signs Canada/NWT Cooperation Agreement On Language**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 10) – The Government of the Northwest Territories has secured funding to support the preservation and enhancement of Aboriginal languages and the development of French language activities in the Northwest Territories by signing the Canada/NWT Cooperation Agreement on Language.**

The agreement, which was reached in December 1999, is valued at \$17.5 million over the next five years and will support a wide range of community based and government services in the territories.

“The Canada/NWT Cooperation Agreement on Language establishes a viable framework for co-operation for the preservation and enhancement of French and the Aboriginal languages by ensuring service is provided as required under the Official Languages Act,” Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes said. “It also provides money for the development of language programming in the territory.”

The agreement, which will end in 2004, provides \$1.9 million annually for Aboriginal language activities. A large portion of the money is to be managed locally to promote and enhance Aboriginal language preservation and recovery. A further \$1.6 million a year will go toward the provision of French services in the NWT.

The Cooperation Agreement on Language is signed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the money is distributed to all government departments to provide the delivery of government services in French and the Aboriginal languages.

An event will be held in March to officially recognize and celebrate the ratification of the Language Agreement.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**  
**Director**  
Culture, Heritage and Language  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 873-7551





00-030

## **Campaign Launched to Promote Teaching Profession**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 15) – A new promotional campaign to highlight the rewards of teaching careers and the teacher training programs available at Aurora College will be launched today by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes.**

The multimedia campaign will include posters, newspaper and radio advertising, CD-ROMs, a video and information packages. Its goal is to increase the number of northerners who choose teaching as a career.

“We want to make it clear to northerners that teaching is an extremely satisfying and rewarding career,” Mr. Ootes said. “In the North, we have an excellent teacher training program available at Aurora College.”

The theme of the promotional campaign is “Be a Teacher – It’s More Than a Career.” In addition to the more obvious benefits of being a teacher, a career in teaching can provide many intangible benefits such as an opportunity to mentor young people and to watch students succeed and overcome challenges. Teachers are respected members of the communities in which they serve, acting as valuable role models.

The campaign will highlight the training offered through the Aurora College Teacher Education (ACTE) program. Over the past three decades, ACTE has trained hundreds of northerners, many of whom now teach in NWT communities. Others have gone on to assume leadership roles at the local, territorial and national level.

ACTE is a three-year diploma program, which permits graduates to teach up to grade nine within the NWT. By completing a fourth year of study with the College’s partner, the University of Saskatchewan, graduates can earn a Bachelor of Education degree and the right to teach in various provinces and territories.

“We are proud of the role ACTE has played in the North since it began in 1968,” Aurora College Chairperson, Danny Yakelya said. “We have built a respected program that produces qualified teachers. Our partnership with the University of Saskatchewan makes a degree very accessible for our graduates.”

One element of the campaign is an information kit to help prospective candidates decide if teaching is the right career for them. The kit is designed for use by students and teachers together or by the students themselves and are available through Aurora College, School Guidance Counselors and Career Development Officers throughout the NWT.

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





00-031

### **New Survey Provides Insight on Benefits of Wildlife**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 16) - More than 600 resident hunters in the Northwest Territories have responded to a survey prepared by the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) aimed at determining some of the economic and social benefits of wildlife in the NWT.**

The survey asked questions about hunting expenditures and economic benefits for hunters as well as questions regarding their enjoyment of, and reasons for, hunting.

Results of the survey will contribute to the management of wildlife in the NWT by providing important economic and social benefit information for environmental assessments, land-use planning and integrated resource management.

Detailed results will be available in July.

This is the first year the survey has been conducted. As an incentive for completing the form, RWED offered three prizes for resident hunters who returned the completed survey. Prize winners were Kelly Schofield of Hay River, Garry Lemieux and Barry Bessette of Yellowknife.

**For more information, contact:**

**Bruce Ashley**  
Resource Economist  
Resource, Wildlife and Economic Development  
Tel: (867) 920-6328  
Fax: (867) 873-0293





00-032

### **Health and Social Services Minister Releases Final Report of the Minister's Forum**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 17) - Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen today released the final report of the seven-member Minister's Forum on Health and Social Services.**

"On behalf of the people of the NWT, I'd like to thank the members of the Forum," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "They have dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy over the past year listening to concerns about health and social services across the NWT."

The Forum was struck by former Minister of Health, Floyd Roland in 1999 with instructions to examine the NWT health care system with regard to governance, finance, human resources, and the delivery of programs and services.

The Forum's mandate was to produce a report outlining recommendations to sustain and improve the NWT's health and social services system. The report was delivered to the Minister on February 14, 2000 by Forum Chair Duncan McNeill.

"Over 800 stakeholders shared their views at Forum meetings last fall," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "They've done their work. Now we must examine their recommendations."

The department and other stakeholders will now review the Forum's report. Mrs. Groenewegen will present a formal response this spring. The public can access the report from the Department's web site ([www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca)).

**For more information, or for copies of the report, contact:** **Penny Ballantyne**  
Deputy Minister  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 920-6173







00-033

### **Dave Murray Appointed Deputy Minister of MACA**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 17) -- Premier Kakfwi has appointed Dave Murray as Deputy Minister for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA).**

Mr. Murray, currently the President of the NWT Housing Corporation, has been an employee of the Government of the Northwest Territories since 1978. He served for ten years as the Director of Finance, the Director of Policy, Planning and Training and as the Director of Accommodation Services in the Department of Public Works.

Mr Murray joined the Housing Corporation in 1992 as Vice President of Community and Program Services and was named President in May of 1997.

Vice President of Operations, Tom Beaulieu, will assume the duties of Housing Corporation President on an acting basis.

**For more information, contact**

**Elizabeth Snider**  
Secretary to Cabinet  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 873-7100





00-034

### **Heritage Day to be Celebrated in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 18) - Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes, has declared Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup> Heritage Day in the Northwest Territories.**

“Heritage Day is an opportunity for all of us to recognize and celebrate the contribution of the many individuals who together make up the rich cultural diversity that exists in Canada and the NWT,” Mr. Ootes said. “It’s a day set aside to learn about the past and about the cultures of our neighbors.”

Every year, the Heritage Canada Foundation, proclaims the third Monday of February as Heritage Day. Cultural institutions across the NWT have special events planned. In Yellowknife, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre will celebrate early when “Amazing Family Sundays” will invite people to step into a day in the life of Yellowknife’s past.

The Heritage Centre will also be open to the public on Heritage Day Monday.

“Culture and heritage play a very important role in building a rich foundation on which to base modern society,” Mr. Ootes said. “Let’s take the time this week to acknowledge the past and prepare for the future.”

**For more information, please contact:**

**Charles Arnold,**  
Director, Culture, Heritage and Languages  
Education Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-7551





00-035

### **Premier's Address calls on all NWT Leaders to Work Together**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 22) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi made a renewed commitment to partnerships today as he formally began the business of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.**

Mr Kakfwi told his colleagues that his government's agenda will be based on a collective commitment from all leaders of the Northwest Territories. He said that he wants to develop a three-way partnership approach to governance that includes federal and aboriginal governments.

"We all represent the same people, Mr. Kakfwi said. "We need to show them that their leaders can pull together and truly demonstrate that we serve in the best interests of the people of the new western territory.

The Premier's Sessional Statement, the first since his election as Premier, also summarised many of the accomplishments already achieved by previous governments, residents and aboriginal people of the NWT and painted a hopeful picture of the Northwest Territories in ten years. But Mr. Kakfwi also warned his colleagues that the NWT must face some immediate realities.

"The cost of our social safety net of programs and services is rapidly escalating. Our revenues are stretched to the maximum to meet these costs," Mr. Kakfwi said. "Government cannot legislate a healthy lifestyle. It is a matter of personal choice."

Mr. Kakfwi said the measurement of his government's partnership approach will be a reduction in the number of incidents related to social issues in each community and an increase in the global health and wellbeing of people in the Northwest Territories.

**For more information, contact:**

**Drew Williams**  
Office of the Press Secretary  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-036

## **Health and Social Services Partnership Assures Physician Care for Residents**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 22) -- Residents of the Northwest Territories will continue to have access to fully qualified physicians, even if their physician takes a leave of absence, thanks to an agreement announced today.**

The agreement was reached by the Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Medical Association (NWTMA), the Alberta Medical Association and NWT Health and Social Services Boards.

Under the agreement, locums—temporary physician replacements—from the Alberta Medical Association's Rural Locum Program will provide care to patients when NWT physicians take a leave of absence for personal reasons or for professional development.

"This agreement ensures continuity of high-quality medical care for NWT residents," stated Minister of Health and Social Services Jane Groenewegen. "And it allows physicians to take well-deserved breaks from their heavy work loads to spend time with their families or take advantage of continuing-education opportunities."

"We look forward to working with this successful Alberta program. It will benefit our patients and our doctors," NWTMA President Dr. David King said.

"The Alberta Medical Association is pleased to be extending Rural Locum Program services to northern patients and colleagues," Alberta Medical Association President, Dr. David W. Bond said. "This successful program has proven very valuable to Alberta doctors and to patient care."

The Department and NWT Medical Association initiated this joint venture with the Alberta Medical Association in response to current physician shortages in the NWT.

### **For more information, contact:**

**Penny Ballantyne,**  
Deputy Minister  
Department of  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 920-6173

**Dr. David King,**  
President  
NWT Medical Association  
Tel: (867) 920-4575

**Shannon E. Wilkinson**  
Communications Officer  
Alberta Medical Assoc.  
Tel: (780) 482-2626







00-037

### **Deadline for Applications for Funding**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 23) - Artisans, musicians and registered arts organizations in the Northwest Territories are reminded that the deadline to apply for funding from the NWT Arts Council is February 28, 2000.**

Funding is available for a wide range of creative endeavours in the visual, literary, media or performing arts field. The project must be completed in the next year. "Every year, artists inspired by the diversity of cultures and the richness of the landscape in the NWT are supported in their work by the NWT Arts Council," Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes said today.

Last year, 24 artists received funding. Yellowknife potter, Astrid Kruse was one of those recipients and this week at the Birchwood Gallery in Yellowknife she will exhibit a series of raku clay sculptures called "Breaking New Ground". Her exhibit is only one of many creative ideas brought to life by funding from the NWT Arts Council.

In addition to individual awards, money was awarded to The Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik and Yellowknife's annual Folk on the Rocks for a series of workshops for artists participating in the festivals.

"Many people travel to the North every year. Some simply want to enjoy the inspired works and music of northern musicians and artists," Mr. Ootes said. "Funding from the NWT Arts Council will help ensure that this is possible."

**For more information, or an application, contact:**

**Evelyn Dhont,**  
Arts and Culture Officer  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-3103





00-038

### **Reduced Speed on Highway #3**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 24) – Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen today announced that the maximum speed for trucks will be reduced on the non reconstructed portion of Highway Three between Rae-Edzo and Yellowknife.**

Effective March 1<sup>st</sup>, the speed limit for trucks over 4500kg will be reduced from 90km per hour to 70km per hour between Stagg River and Yellowknife.

“I believe that, in view of the condition of this section of the highway and the increased volume of truck traffic travelling on it, a lower speed limit for trucks will reduce the wear and tear on the road and give motorists a greater sense of confidence that they can travel the highway safely,” Mr. Steen said.

**For more information, contact:** **Peter Vician**  
Deputy Minister  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-3460





00-039

## **Student Financial Assistance Program Improved**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 25) – Post-secondary students from the Northwest Territories could soon have access to more money, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes, said today.**

Mr. Ootes introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly this week to amend the *Student Financial Assistance Act*. If approved, it will allow for changes to be implemented to the Student Financial Assistance Program providing increased financial support for post-secondary students.

Under the new program, funding for books will increase to \$300 per semester, tuition allowances will increase from \$1250 a semester to \$1750 a semester and the life-time maximum loan limit will increase to \$47,000.00.

“The objectives of changes to the NWT Student Financial Assistance Program are to increase benefits to students, encourage success and to invest in the future of the North,” Mr. Ootes said.

The new program places an emphasis on aboriginal students and those schooled in the NWT. It will focus on supporting student success and progress, and will ensure that over the long term, student debt load remains at a manageable level with limits placed on the number of semesters for which students can receive assistance.

“These changes are being made following an extensive consultation process,” Mr. Ootes said. “Direct input from students, parents, aboriginal leaders and legislators have all contributed to the program’s redesign.”

In addition, the redesigned program will be supported by improved, streamlined administrative procedures.

**For more information contact:**

**Lesley Allen**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-7252





00-040

## **Towards Excellence: A Report on Education in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (February 28) – “Towards Excellence: A Report on Education in the NWT,” was tabled Friday in the Legislative Assembly by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes.**

The report is the third edition of what is referred to as an “indicators” document to be published in the Northwest Territories. It presents statistical data documenting how well students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 are progressing through the education system.

“This report is good news for all residents of the Northwest Territories,” Mr. Ootes said. “It reveals that there is much to be proud of in our education system.”

The document indicates the overall education level of NWT residents has risen. It shows yearly increases in the number of students graduating from high school. School participation rates are up and more than 90 per cent of existing students now have access to senior secondary schooling in their home community.

Information contained in the document will allow parents and the public access to the same tools used by educators and the Department of Education to track progress and the effectiveness of the education system in the NWT.

This is the first set of indicators for the new Northwest Territories. It will provide a reference point from which to track trends and changes in the system over the next few years. Indicators will be published bi-annually in the future.

“Towards Excellence is not only a snapshot of where we are, it helps us set realistic goals for our education system and our students,” Mr. Ootes said.

**For more information, contact:**

**Pauline Gordon**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867)-873-8061







00-041

### **Beaulieu Appointed President NWT Housing Corp**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 3) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi today announced the appointment of Tom Beaulieu as President of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.**

Mr. Beaulieu first joined the NWT Housing Corporation in 1977 as a Program Officer Trainee. He was appointed District Manager of the South Slave District Office in Hay River in 1984.

In 1994, Mr. Beaulieu was appointed District Director of the South Slave, a position he held until he was appointed Vice-President of Operations in 1997.

Mr. Beaulieu was born in Fort Resolution but also considers Hay River his hometown. He and his wife Vita have five children.

He replaces Dave Murray as President.

**For more information, contact**

**Elizabeth Snider**  
Secretary to Cabinet  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 873-7100





00-042

### **Needs Assessment Survey Underway in NWT Schools**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 3) – A survey is being conducted to determine what level of educational support is needed to meet the needs of students in the Northwest Territories, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Jake Ootes announced today.**

“The reality is that our classrooms are characterized by diversity,” Mr. Ootes said. “To provide an education system that supports the diverse learning and personal needs of all students, it is necessary to determine what the scope of those needs are.”

The Student Support Needs Assessment Survey was identified as a priority by NWT residents during last winter’s Minister’s Forum on Education. The department, with input from educators and focus groups, has developed a survey to capture the information required to design educational programs and supports that best meet the diverse needs of the NWT students.

The survey was piloted in Yellowknife in January. This month, employees who have been specially trained to gather the information will talk to every classroom teacher in the NWT. The survey will be completed and the results analyzed in time to assist Divisional Education Councils in their planning for the next school year.

“All students require some form of support during their education,” Mr. Ootes said. “This survey will ensure that we have current information on which to base future policy and program decisions.”

**For more information, contact:**     **Pauline Gordon**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-8061



# Press statement

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Office of the Commissioner – Government of the Northwest Territories – Yellowknife – NT

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## **Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Announces the End of his Appointment**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 6) – The Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, the Honourable Daniel Marion announced with sadness and regret that his term ends on April 1, 2000.**

“When I was asked to complete the term of Helen Maksagak by the Prime Minister of Canada, it was with great honour that I accepted this position.” Commissioner Marion said. “I agreed to represent the North and promised to visit communities to promote and honour individuals who have contributed to the improvement of life within their communities. I have done all this. Now is the time to look ahead at future opportunities and challenges.”

The Commissioner’s role in the NWT is similar to that of a province’s Lieutenant Governor and reports to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Honourable Robert Daniel Nault. Mr. Marion is proud to have been the first Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories and the first Commissioner of the Millennium.

Mr. Marion would like to thank all those people who supported his appointments as Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner and those who have contributed to his success in his duties. “Without the help of these people, the responsibilities and duties of the position would have been that much harder”. Mr. Marion would like to specially thank the Member of Parliament, the Honourable Ethel Blondin-Andrew, the Premier, the Honourable Stephen Kakfwi, and the past Premier, the Honourable Jim Antoine. Others that Mr. Marion would like to thank are Colonel J. G. Pierre Leblanc of DND, Chief Superintendent Bill Sweeney of the RCMP, for their assistance with the protocol and pageantry of the position. And finally, he especially thanks both Lynda Sorensen and Carmen Moore from the Premier’s Office who provided valuable advice and that extra assistance above and beyond the normal expectations of their jobs.

Mr. Marion’s appointment will end April 1, 2000. He believes that the Prime Minister will choose a respected person who is reflective of the spirit and people of the North. This person will have contributed to the community as well as the territories as a whole. Mr. Marion wishes to the new Commissioner good health and success in their duties.

## **Commissioner of the Northwest Territories Announces Retirement: Page 2**

In closing, "I have been given one of the greatest opportunities to serve this Country by the Prime Minister of Canada," Mr. Marion said. "I will cherish and remember the many events I have participated in. I will return to private life with the same optimism as when I became the first Commissioner of the new Northwest Territories."

**For information, please contact: Judy Langford**  
Office of the Press Secretary  
(867) 669-2302



00-043

## **New Board Appointments at Northwest Territories Power Corporation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 7) – The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NWTPC), Jake Ootes, today announced four appointments to the corporation's board of directors.**

Gordon Stewart of Yellowknife has been appointed chairman of the board. He formerly served as acting vice-chairman. Simon Merkosak of Pond Inlet has stepped down from his former position as acting chairman and will now serve as vice-chairman. These appointments are effective immediately. David Simailik of Baker Lake and John Parker of Vancouver Island have both been re-appointed as members of the board for a one-year period, starting April 1, 2000.

Gordon Stewart is a 25-year northern resident who has been involved with many NWT businesses, serving as president of Braden-Burry Expediting Ltd. and as a board member of Diamond Logistics Ltd., among others. Mr. Stewart was first appointed to the NWTPC board in 1995. His appointment as Chairman is effective until May 31, 2001.

Simon Merkosak of Pond Inlet was educated in Churchill, Manitoba, and Ottawa. After ten years in municipal administration, he became an active member of the business community and has served on the Community Futures Board and the Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Merkosak has served the NWTPC as a board member, vice chairman and acting chairman since 1996. His appointment as vice chairman is effective until December 9, 2000.

David Simailak of Baker Lake was first appointed to the board of the Power Corporation in 1998. He serves on a variety of northern boards, among them the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Program, the NWT Housing Corporation and three Kivalliq-based development corporation boards. Mr. Simailak has been active in local politics and instrumental in the startup of Inuit Development Corporations in the Kivalliq region. Mr. Simailak has also been involved in several northern businesses. His appointment as director is effective until March 31, 2001.

John Parker of Vancouver Island has served as a member of the NWTHC board since 1990. He graduated from the University of Alberta as a geological engineer and worked in the mining field until his appointment as Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories in 1967. In 1979 he was appointed Commissioner and served in that position until his retirement in 1989. He currently holds directorships on the boards of two other northern-based companies. His appointment as Director is effective until March 31, 2001.

**For more information, contact: Annelies Pool, Executive Assistant to Hon. Jake Ootes**  
Tel: (867) 669-2312







00-044

### **International Women's Day**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 8) -- Today is International Women's Day; part of International Women's Week, being celebrated this year from March 6-10th. It is a day set aside around the world to highlight accomplishments in women's universal fight for equality.**

In the Northwest Territories, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Jane Groenewegen, said women have always played a significant role in the North's social, political and economic environment.

"The role of northern women has long been a catalyst towards community and self-empowerment," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "Their work goes hand in hand with the government's commitment to actively support and encourage the participation of women on an equal basis with men in all aspects of society in the NWT."

Mrs. Groenewegen commended all women for their dedication to their families and communities. "We will continue to work hard to remove the obstacles that limit the choices and opportunities for women to be full and equal partners in society," she said.

**For more information contact:**            **Bertha Norwegian**  
Special Advisor  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women  
Tel: (867) 920-3106





00-045

## **The Territorial Government Signs off on Diavik Environmental Agreement**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 8) – The Minister of Finance, Joe Handley, today confirmed that the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has signed off on the Environmental Agreement with Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.**

"I commend all parties involved in the long and tough negotiations on this agreement," Mr. Handley said. "Their dedication and hard work has paid off in an agreement that recognizes the importance of the environment to northerners as well as the rights of Aboriginal governments to play a central role in monitoring the project."

The environmental agreement was developed with the participation of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Diavik and the governments of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada.

An agreement was required to address environmental provisions identified in the Diavik Comprehensive Study Report that would not be covered by other regulatory instruments such as a water licence or land permits.

The environmental agreement calls for the establishment of an Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board, composed of representatives from Diavik, the five affected Aboriginal governments as well as the governments of the NWT, Canada and Nunavut, to oversee the environmental management of the project.

The advisory board will also make recommendations on the participation of Aboriginal people and community members in training and monitoring programs and on the design and implementation of scientific and traditional knowledge studies. Diavik will fund the board. The territorial and the federal governments will provide additional funding to the board for the first two years.

The Diavik Diamonds Project is still awaiting other regulatory instruments including a water licence from the Northwest Territories Water Board.

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

## **Backgrounder**

### **Diavik Environmental Agreement**

- Establishment of an Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board to operate at arm's length from Diavik and government.
- Advisory Board will oversee the environmental management of the project, to make recommendations on the participation of Aboriginal people and community members in training and monitoring programs and to design and implement scientific and traditional knowledge studies.
- Membership of the Advisory Board to include representatives of the Dogrib Treaty 11 Council, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation, North Slave Metis Alliance, Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Diavik and the governments of the NWT, Nunavut and Canada.
- Advisory Board will produce an annual report of its activities and recommendations.
- Diavik will fund the Advisory Board.
- GNWT and Government of Canada will provide additional funding to the Advisory Board for the first two years.
- Diavik will comply with all environmental laws and regulations applicable to the project.
- Diavik will provide environmental management plans for both the construction and operating phases of the project.
- Diavik will establish environmental monitoring programs for the project.
- Diavik will participate in the development of a regional cumulative effects assessment and management framework.
- Diavik will implement a progressive reclamation and abandonment plan for the project.
- Diavik will provide appropriate protection for archaeological sites in the vicinity of the project.
- Diavik will produce an annual report which will include results of environmental monitoring programs.
- Diavik will provide a security deposit for the reclamation and abandonment of land and water.
- Disputes arising out of the agreement will be subject to arbitration.

00-046

## **Economic Strategy to Include Training, Education and Inter-regional Cooperation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 10) – Training, education and inter-regional cooperation are some of the key issues that need to be addressed in an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories.**

These issues were on the table when the Economic Strategy Panel recently met in Inuvik to continue their deliberations on the contents of an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories.

"Education and training, particularly in the areas of the trades and technical and management skills, must be vital components of the strategy," Economic Strategy Panel co-chair Darrell Beaulieu said. "Northerners must have the skills necessary to meet the needs of industry if residents are to benefit from development."

The panel identified the need for much greater inter-regional cooperation.

"Development projects often cross regional boundaries and investment opportunities frequently require a cooperative approach by Aboriginal governments," co-chair Richard Nerysoo said. "A cooperative approach to development could benefit both Aboriginal governments and developers, who can be faced with a multitude of consultation requirements."

The panel also emphasized the need for increased promotion of tourism and of the Northwest Territories in global markets.

A special presentation was also made by an experienced negotiator from the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation. Steven Mills provided the panel with a presentation on the devolution of oil and gas in the Yukon, and the experience of the Yukon First Nations.

The panel is scheduled to meet in Rae April 5-6 to continue work on the economic strategy.

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





00-047

### **Employment Minister to Attend International Conference on Rough Diamonds**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 15) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes will represent the territorial government at the Israel 2000 conference on rough diamonds next week in Tel Aviv.**

Mr. Steve Nitah, MLA for Tu Nedhe, will also attend as a representative of the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development. His four years of experience in the diamond mining industry will enhance the NWT's participation in the conference.

Mr. Ootes will address the conference delegates about the diamond industry in the Northwest Territories and will participate in a panel discussion.

"This is an important opportunity to meet individuals and companies that may be interested in being part of the growing NWT diamond industry," Mr. Ootes said. "I am also looking forward to sharing with delegates from around the world northern innovations such as our diamond cutters certification program and training in jewellery design."

The diamond industry has made a significant impact on employment in the NWT. As more mines are developed and more secondary industries are established, this impact will grow. "The potential for jobs and economic stimulation from this industry is great," Mr. Ootes said. "Our participation in the international community of diamond producers will help ensure that we reach that potential."

Israel 2000 is the second international conference on rough diamonds and is expected to attract approximately 500 delegates. It is hosted by several Israeli diamond industry groups and by the government of Israel. The conference allows rough diamond producers and consumers to share ideas and explore opportunities and to discuss the issues facing the industry today.

**For more information, contact:**

**Annelies Pool**

Executive Assistant to Hon. Jake Ootes

(867) 669-2312







00-048

### **Premier and Finance Minister meet with Federal Government**

**OTTAWA (March 16) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi and Finance Minister Joe Handley have had a productive series of meetings with federal cabinet ministers this week in Ottawa.**

The Premier and Mr. Handley met with several federal ministers, including Heritage minister Sheila Copps, Intergovernmental Affairs minister Stéphane Dion and Justice minister Anne McLellan. They also met several times with Western Arctic MP Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

“We had a good meeting with federal Finance minister Paul Martin where we raised a number of issues, such as the prospects for northern resource and pipeline development and the NWT’s short-term financial situation,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “I will be meeting this afternoon with Indian and Northern Affairs minister Bob Nault about these issues as well.”

Mr. Handley is returning to Yellowknife today. Mr. Kakfwi remains in Ottawa for the rest of the week for further meetings with the federal government.

**For more information, contact:**

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





00-049

### **NWT Social Work Week - March 20 - 26, 2000**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 20) – Minister of Health and Social Services Jane Groenewegen and President of the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada Nuelle Novik are encouraging NWT residents to recognize the valuable contribution social workers make in building healthy communities.**

March 20<sup>th</sup> to March 26<sup>th</sup> is NWT Social Work Week, a time to let social workers know they make a difference. To kick off the week, the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada is granting its first honorary lifetime membership to a NWT resident who has dedicated 34 years to the profession (to be announced on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the presentation). In addition the association, and Health and Social Services are co-sponsoring a variety of newspaper advertisements and producing a special edition of the association's newsletter.

"Social workers provide a variety of services in the areas of mental health, community wellness, child protection, adoption counselling and crisis intervention. They work in health care centres, family violence shelters, social work offices, correctional facilities, and in counselling settings," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "They make a difference and they deserve our recognition."

"Recognition is important, it lets social service professionals know their work is appreciated and it's a way for us to let the public know that community wellness is what social work is all about," Ms. Novik agreed.

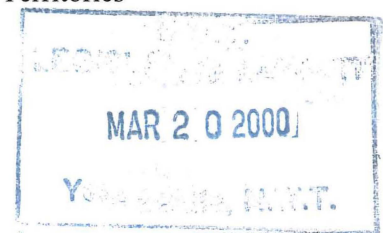
The Association of Northern Social Workers is a tri-territorial organization that was formed in 1999. Its mandate, as an independent professional association, is to provide members in the NWT, Nunavut and Yukon with a common voice on issues of social work practice and policy. It also emphasizes membership education and communication by providing a variety of tools that allow northern social workers to share information. The Association has close to 100 members. Seventy-five members are based in the NWT.

Social Work Week is being celebrated in communities across the NWT. Please contact your Health and Social Services Board or the Association for Social Workers in Northern Canada for information about board and community activities.

**For more information contact: Carolyn Mandrusiak**                      **or**                      **Blair Dunbar**  
Manager, Children & Family Services                      Association of Social Workers in  
Health and Social Services                      Northern Canada  
(867) 873-7047                      (867) 873-5707

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00-050

### **Glenna Hansen Appointed as Commissioner of the Northwest Territories**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 21) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi congratulates Glenna Hansen on her appointment today as the 14<sup>th</sup> Commissioner of the Northwest Territories.**

“Glenna has always worked to make life better in her community,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “This is demonstrated in her commitment to health and education activities. She has also been active in the business community and balanced her own career with raising a family as a single parent. Glenna reflects the best qualities of a northern person and will make a fine Commissioner.”

Ms. Hansen is Inuvialuit. She was born in Aklavik in 1956. She joined David Storr and Sons Contracting Ltd. of Inuvik in 1990 as an executive assistant and has been the company’s general manager since 1996. Ms. Hansen lives in Inuvik, is widowed with four children: Bobbi, 19; Sherris, 18; Kristin, 13; and Tiffany, 11.

Ms. Hansen is very active in community affairs in Inuvik. Among other accomplishments, she has served as Chairperson of local Education Advisory Board, Vice Chair of the Inuvik Regional Education Board, Chairperson of Inuvik Community Corporation, as Co-Chair of the Ministers’ Forum on Health and Social Services and as a director of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Inuvik Community Corporation, Western Arctic Business Development Services and the Inuvialuit Investment Corporation.

Ms. Hansen will be issuing a brief media advisory through the Press Secretary’s Office this afternoon.

**For more information contact: Judy Langford**  
Press Secretary  
Government of the Northwest Territories  
(867) 669-2302





00-051

### **Larry Elkin Appointed Chairperson of Stanton Regional Health Board**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 27) -- Minister of Health and Social Services Jane Groenewegen today announced the appointment of Larry Elkin as chairperson of the Stanton Regional Health Board.**

Mr. Elkin brings to his appointment 30 years experience with both the NWT and federal governments. He has served as deputy minister for the departments of Planning and Program Evaluation, Local Government, Public Works and Highways, and the NWT Housing Corporation.

“I am confident Mr. Elkin will work in close co-operation with the other health and social services boards to ensure the best quality care for all NWT residents,” Mrs. Groenewegen said. Through his extensive northern travel, he has developed a keen understanding of community needs, priorities and aspirations.”

Mr. Elkin believes that Stanton Regional Hospital is a quality facility. “To maintain the current high standards of services and ensure all of the people throughout the NWT continue to receive quality care, the board must carefully manage the financial resources and consider new and innovative approaches to the delivery of programs and services,” he said.

In addition to his career credentials, Mr. Elkin has worked with various boards and agencies. Most recently, he was the regional chairperson for the Stanton Regional Hospital Foundation Capital Equipment Campaign. He is retired from the Government of the NWT and the Nunavut Implementation Committee. His appointment as chairperson of Stanton Regional Health Board is effective immediately.

**For more information, contact:**

**Penny Ballantyne**  
Deputy Minister  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 920-6173







00-052

### **Education Week in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 27) -- Minister of Education Jake Ootes has proclaimed this week Education Week in the Northwest Territories, with a theme of "Literacy, Language and Learning".**

To celebrate Education Week, people at schools, campuses, libraries, colleges and teaching and learning centres have been building bookworms, reading and sharing stories.

Under the Bookworm Challenge, which the Minister issued in January, each time a story was read or shared with another person a colourful segment listing the name of the book, the author and the residents involved was added to the bookworm growing in that community.

"By demonstrating the significant role literacy, language and learning plays in our daily lives, the challenge symbolizes the strength we acquire each time we read, write or share our stories," Mr. Ootes said.

The Bookworm Challenge has generated a tremendous response. More than 20 communities have taken part and more than 6,000 books and stories have been read. The territorial-wide bookworm is on display in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly for the rest of this week.

**For more information, contact: Ellie Elliot**  
Director, Early Childhood and School Services  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-3491





00-053

### **Premier Looking Forward to Release of New National Standards Strategy**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 28) – Premier Kakfwi says he, like many northern interest groups, will be watching with interest when the details of a new Canada-wide standards strategy are released tomorrow in Yellowknife. Federal Industry Minister, John Manley, plans to release the new Canadian Standards Strategy simultaneously in Yellowknife and six other cities.**

Plans to formulate a Canadian Standards Strategy were announced by the federal government almost two years ago. The Standards Council of Canada, a national crown corporation, has co-ordinated the project in partnership with industry associations, governments, standards development organizations, consumer groups and the general public. The strategy will outline the position that Canada should take internationally and domestically to secure a leadership role in the development and application of standards.

“Standards are a significant marketing tool for our emerging Northern manufacturing sector,” Mr. Kakfwi said. “By demonstrating that our products comply with established standards, we are able to access new markets for our own goods and services.”

A special launch event has been scheduled at the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly, where the Premier and representatives from industry, business, government and members of the public will watch the new national strategy being announced via satellite broadcast from Ottawa.

“It is significant that Yellowknife was chosen as one of the locations for this national event,” Mr. Kakfwi said, “I think it demonstrates a recognition that residents of Canada’s North are important stakeholders in this sort of initiative.”

Tours of two manufacturing plants and a discussion of what the strategy means for Northerners will follow.

**For more information contact:**

**Alan Downe**  
Executive Director  
Regulatory Reform Secretariat  
Tel: (867) 873-7365  
Fax: (867) 873-0599





00-054

### **\$1 Million Seniors' Complex sold to Alaskans**

**YELLOWKNIFE (March 29) -- The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC), Roger Allen today announced the completion of a deal to sell a made-in-the-NWT seniors' complex to Stebbins, Alaska.**

The five-unit complex valued at roughly \$1 million will be built as a pilot project between the NWT Housing Corporation, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. Under the terms of the deal, NWT contractors will build the complex with local labour while NWT suppliers and manufacturers will provide the materials.

"In addition to the participation of NWT contractors, suppliers and manufacturers, Aurora College will conduct a three week pre-employment training program for the Alaskans who will work on the project," Mr. Allen said. "By working together in this manner, Northerners can help build a viable economy for the NWT."

The complex will use existing NWT HC designs modified to meet the needs of the Alaskans. The pilot project is a continuation of NWT HC efforts to market NWT goods and services to other parts of the circumpolar world. Last year the NWT HC sold seven housing materials packages to the Inupiat of the Alaskan North Slope. The NWT HC is confident that there is the potential for increased business with the Alaskans.

As part of the NWT Trade Delegation to Alaska, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Jim Antoine, will be in Stebbins today to inaugurate the pilot project.

Stebbins is an Yup'ik Inuit village located roughly 190 kilometres southeast of Nome, Alaska.

**For more information, contact:**      **Tom Beaulieu**  
President  
NWT HC  
Tel: (867) 873-7853





00-055

### **Rae Edzo Dene Band to redeem invested shares from NWT Development Corporation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (April 4) - The Tli Cho Co-operative Ltd. of Rae Edzo has purchased a building to house its community-owned general store. This allows the Rae Edzo Dene Band to redeem \$294,340 in preferred shares from the NWT Development Corporation.**

The NWT Development Corporation originally invested in the construction of the building in partnership with the Rae Edzo Dene Band Development Corporation in 1996. The Co-op, owned by shareholders in the Hamlet of Rae Edzo, was a tenant in the facility.

The Minister Responsible for the NWT Development Corporation, Stephen Kakfwi, said he's pleased that the corporation was able to partner in the project. "The role of the Development Corporation is to provide assistance to business for infrastructure and employment development. This project is a good example of how all of its investments should work," he said.

President of the Rae Edzo Dene Band Development Corporation, Eddie Erasmus agreed. "The original deal served the community's needs very well," he said. "When things are going well, it makes sense for the community to take financial responsibility for its own developments. With the sale of the building to the Tli Cho Co-operative, the band is able to buy out the corporation's initial investment."

The Tli Cho Cooperative has also received assistance from the NWT Development Corporation, along with the Business Development Bank of Canada and the Arctic Cooperatives Development Fund (ACDF) to purchase the building.

"Cooperatives are community owned businesses. This development demonstrates how co-ops and development corporations can work together at the community and territorial level," ACDF Operations Manager, Greg O'Neil said.

**For further information contact:**

**Glenna Cayen**  
Executive Assistant  
NWT Development Corporation  
Tel: (867) 766-7707

**Greg O'Neil**  
Operations Manager  
Arctic Cooperatives Development Fund  
Tel: (867) 873-3481







00-056

## **Outstanding NWT Volunteers Honoured**

**YELLOWKNIFE (April 10) - Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Jim Antoine today announced that Grace Mitts, Meryl Falconer and Cappy Elkin are the recipients of the 2000 Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards. The three were among 16 residents of the Northwest Territories nominated for the award by fellow Northerners.**

Grace Mitts of Hay River is the recipient of the Good Neighbour Award, a new award for 2000. The Good Neighbour Award was established to recognize the important contribution made by those northerners who volunteer their time and effort to the community on an informal basis. Meryl Falconer and Cappy Elkin of Yellowknife are both recipients of the Organizational Volunteer Award, which recognizes the contributions made by Northerners through the many NWT volunteer organizations.

“Volunteers make an extremely important contribution to our communities,” Mr. Antoine said. “I would like to congratulate the three recipients of this award and all the nominees for the outstanding job they do in helping to make our communities a better place to live.”

Honourable mentions were also awarded to the Kimble family of Enterprise in the Good Neighbour category and to Clara Kelly of Fort Good Hope in the Organizational Volunteer category.

Nominations for the Outstanding Volunteer Service Award were submitted from across the Northwest Territories. A selection committee of northerners active in the volunteer sector reviewed the nominations and selected this year’s award recipients.

The announcement of the award winners marks the beginning of celebrations for National Volunteer Week in the NWT. National Volunteer Week (April 9-15, 2000) is an opportunity to recognize all volunteers for their contribution to our communities. The theme of this year’s celebrations is “Volunteering: a time-honoured tradition.”

**For more information, contact:**

**Roslyn Smith**  
Senior Advisor, Volunteer Development  
Municipal and Community Affairs  
Tel: (867) 873-7756

# Backgrounder

## Re: Outstanding NWT Volunteers Honoured

NWT residents honoured 16 of their fellow Northerners by nominating them for the 2000 Outstanding Volunteer Service Award. Individuals were nominated for their contribution to the community in two categories, the Organizational Volunteer Award and the Good Neighbour Award.

Grace Mitts, Meryl Falconer and Cappy Elkin are the recipients of the 2000 Outstanding Volunteer Service Awards.

Ms. Mitts was nominated for her work in organizing and running the Hay River soup kitchen. She was also recognized for her work as a youth mentor and for the support she offers at funerals to other community members who have lost family and friends.

Ms. Falconer was nominated for her many years of work to raise awareness of breast cancer in the NWT. A breast cancer survivor, Ms. Falconer was instrumental in establishing the NWT Breast Cancer Health/Breast Cancer Action Group and is an organizer of the annual Run for the Cure.

Ms. Elkin was nominated for her long history of community service and for her recent involvement with the Stanton Regional Hospital Foundation. Ms. Elkin led the Foundation's campaign to raise over two million dollars for Stanton Regional Hospital. She has also been active as a member of the United Church and the Yellowknife Senior's Society and in the junior curling program. She has been a swim coach, served as regional commissioner of the NWT Girl Guides and was a founding member of Autism NWT.

Names of the other 13 nominees, their communities and activities they were nominated for, follow.

### Organizational Volunteers:

- **Cheryl Hval** — Fort Smith (Girl Guides, gymnastics and junior curling coach)
- **Betty Hardisty** — Fort Simpson (Beavertail Jamboree, minor hockey, fundraising)
- **Doreen Nitsiza** — Wha Ti (volleyball coach, Canada Day, winter carnival, talent show, fundraising)
- **Clara Kelly** — Fort Good Hope (carnival, cultural and traditional events, Alcohol Advisory Committee, role model)
- **Sandy Nikiforuk** — Inuvik (Legion Auxiliary, Preschool Committee, Lottery Committee, Girl Guides)
- **Ann Peters** — Yellowknife (Old Stope Association, Guild of Crafts, Folk on the Rocks)
- **Laurie Stewart** — Aklavik (Christmas, kid's carnival, fundraising)
- **Yvonne Carpenter** — Inuvik (speedskating, Christmas hamper drive, Aboriginal Sport Circle)
- **Deni Gaccione** — Norman Wells (NWT Recreation and Parks Association, Trans-Canada Trail, minor and senior hockey league, fundraising)
- **Sereta Shae** — Fort Good Hope (Woodblock Music Festival, Rampart Rendezvous)
- **Kathy Yurris** — Yellowknife (Girl Guides of Canada NWT/Nunavut Commissioner)
- **Bobbie Hamilton** — Hay River (hockey tournament, other community events)

### Good Neighbour Award:

- **Cliff Kimble and Family** — Enterprise (Gateway Jamboree, organizing community events, maintaining recreation facilities)



00-057

### **Premier Kakfwi seeks Alberta Investment for Brilliant Future**

**YELLOWKNIFE (April 10) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi told Alberta business representatives this morning that their investment in NWT resources will result in huge benefits as the economic potential of the Northwest Territories is realized.**

Speaking at a “speaker’s corner” breakfast hosted by the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Kakfwi invited the over-100 business representatives in attendance to join the NWT and Aboriginal governments in developing the NWT’s “brilliant future”. “You have the expertise, the equipment and the service industry, he said. “We need training, investment and joint-venture partners to work with northern and Aboriginal businesses.”

Premier Kakfwi’s speech was the first engagement in a two-day round of meetings scheduled with natural gas producers, pipeline and drilling companies and government regulators. Finance Minister Joe Handley and Aboriginal Affairs and Justice Minister, Jim Antoine are accompanying the Premier.

Key to any future hydrocarbon development is the devolution of regulatory authority to northern governments and the successful negotiation of resource revenue sharing that is fair to territorial and aboriginal governments.

In a one-on-one meeting in Ottawa last week, Premier Kakfwi encouraged the Prime Minister to lend his support to the resolution of these important northern issues.

“Our aim is to build a strong unified self-reliant NWT that can take its place in the Canadian Confederation as the first “Have-Territory” in Canada’s history,” Mr. Kakfwi said.

**For further information contact:**      **Drew Williams**  
A/Press Secretary  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-058

### **Virtual Classrooms Being Piloted in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (April 18) -- Students from Kakisa, Hay River, Yellowknife, Norman Wells and Aklavik are taking part in a pilot project that could lead to virtual classrooms becoming a reality in the Northwest Territories.**

The students are taking a course called Northern Studies 10, with the assistance of an online instructor who lives in Norman Wells.

The self-contained distance learning course is presented in software which has been customized to include course material and reference material in an interactive format, and includes links to a number of other Web Sites with information relevant to Northern Studies.

“This pilot project is the first step in developing a network which will give students access to classes which will earn them extra credits toward their high school diploma in their home community,” Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes, said. “This is a perfect example of how the GNWT’s Digital Communications Network is helping people.”

The online instructor uses e-mail and fax to create the atmosphere of a virtual classroom. Her work is supported, in each of the participating communities by an onsite facilitator, commonly an educator from the community who will assist students with difficulties they may encounter accessing course material.

“One of the greatest challenges people of the NWT have to deal with is the delivery of quality services to areas that are often difficult to reach by traditional methods,” Mr. Ootes said. “This concept is a winning combination because both students and teachers communicate via the computer, so it no longer matters where they live.”

The software and curriculum for the program was developed for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. An assessment of the pilot program is planned for June. It is expected the Northern Studies 10 plus a math program for grades 7 to 10 will be available to students across the NWT in September.

**For more information, contact:**

**Pauline Gordon**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-8061





00-059

### **Kakfwi says His Promise Stands**

**YELLOWKNIFE (April 19) -- Premier Kakfwi says he made a promise to Members of the Legislative Assembly that any differences he might have with them would not reflect adversely on their constituents.**

Responding to an article in yesterday's Slave River Journal in Fort Smith, Mr Kakfwi said he stands by his promise.

"I am a Premier to all people of the NWT, including the residents of Fort Smith," Mr. Kakfwi said. "I take that responsibility very seriously. My Cabinet has not, and will not, deliberately disadvantage any resident of the NWT for any reason."

The newspaper article, written following an interview with the Premier in Fort Smith, implied that residents of that town were being hurt by their MLA's continuing negativism to government initiatives.

"I have stated from the outset that I intend this government to be one of partnerships, not only with other governments, but within our Assembly as well. It's how consensus-style government is supposed to work," Mr. Kakfwi said.

<b>For more information, contact:</b>	<b>Drew Williams</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>John U. Bayly</b>
	A/Press Secretary		Principal Secretary
	Executive		Executive
	(867) 669-2304		(867) 444-2329







00-060

### **Workers' Compensation Benefits Paid to Widows**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 1) -- The Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, Joseph Handley announced today that cheques have been mailed to 11 widows whose benefits had originally been discontinued.**

In accordance with the *Workers' Compensation Act* at the time, WCB benefits were terminated to surviving spouses when they remarried. Amendments to the *Act*, introduced by Mr. Handley the March session of the Legislative Assembly changed this legislation to reflect rights identified by the Canadian Charter of Rights in 1985.

"We needed to do this as soon as we could," Mr. Handley said. "Some of these women have waited a long, long time to see this happen."

Mr. Handley noted today that the government's decision to amend the legislation and to allow for the payments was completed in a very short period of time. "It could not have been achieved without the consensus of all members of the assembly," he said.

As in some other jurisdictions across Canada, settlements must still be negotiated with widows who remarried prior to 1985 but Mr. Handley says he's confident that with the continued co-operation of his colleagues, the WCB will be able to resolve that soon.

**For more information, contact:**      **Joseph Handley**  
Minister Responsible for the  
Workers' Compensation Board  
Tel: (867) 669-2344





00-061

### **Turning Point Youth Facility a Good Move, Minister Says**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 2) – Minister of Justice Jim Antoine today congratulated the Turning Point Society on plans to convert their building in Inuvik to a young offenders facility.**

Starting May 23, Turning Point will begin operating a 10-bed open custody facility for male young offenders under a one-year contract with the Department of Justice. The society's current adult alcohol and drug program will move to another location in Inuvik.

"I am very pleased that Turning Point has agreed to work with the Department of Justice in this way," Mr. Antoine said. "This will help keep up with the increasing demand for young offender facilities. It also provides an opportunity for Turning Point to further their good work in the community."

The Turning Point building already meets the standards necessary to operate as an open custody facility. The department will fund training for the Turning Point staff to assist in the conversion. Staff from Inuvik's other open custody homes have been invited to take advantage of the opportunity for further training as well.

**For more information, contact:**

**Bob Cook**  
Young Offenders Coordinator  
Department of Justice  
(867) 920-8823





00-062

### **Handley Assumes Responsibility for RWED**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 3) – Joe Handley will assume responsibility for the Department of Resources Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) from Premier Kakfwi effective at 5 p.m. today.**

Today's cabinet shuffle enables the Premier to concentrate his efforts on promoting the government's priorities, as outlined in the document "Towards a Better Tomorrow", with aboriginal and community leaders, industry representatives and federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Mr. Kakfwi says he always intended to transfer the portfolio once the initial period of transition and planning for the new government had been completed. "The realities of our fiscal situation have been addressed," he said. "The potential of our resources is clearly defined. It's time to take the next step."

The Premier will continue to share in the duties of representing RWED interests at a variety of industry and federal/provincial/territorial meetings.

Mr. Handley served two years as Deputy Minister of RWED prior to his election to the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly. He will continue to hold his portfolio as Finance Minister and Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board.

**For more information, contact:**      **Drew Williams**  
A/Press Secretary  
Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-063

### **International Youth Week**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 5) – Next week, May 6-12<sup>th</sup>, has been set aside to highlight and recognize the accomplishments of youth worldwide, Minister Responsible for Youth, Roger Allen announced today.**

“The youth of the Northwest Territories are an increasing resource,” Mr. Allen said. “Our young men and women must be consulted if we are to achieve a better tomorrow. They represent our future.”

Together with the Native Women’s Youth Association and the NWT Council of Friendship Centres, the Minister will mark International Youth Week, by recognizing four NWT recipients with Outstanding Youth awards.

Mr. Allen says he’s encouraged by the increase of initiatives and organizations providing programs in support of NWT youth. “We will continue to support and encourage youth and to provide choices and opportunities for them to grow and develop within our northern society,” he said.

**For more information contact:**

**Tom Williams**  
Executive Assistant to Hon. Roger T. Allen  
(867) 669-2315







00-064

### **Staff Retention Policy Announced**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 8) -- The GNWT has adopted a new Staff Retention Policy, the Minister Responsible for the Public Service, Joe Handley, announced today. The policy focuses expressly on retention and development of GNWT employees when government goes through organizational change.**

“The Policy recognizes the critical need to retain a competent and skilled workforce and that this becomes even more vital when organizational change occurs,” Mr. Handley said. “Change is inevitable in today’s environment of rapid political and technological developments and it should be a positive experience. We believe that we now have a policy that makes the retention of employees a priority when change occurs.”

Highlights of the policy are:

- An express commitment to retention, retraining and development of existing staff to maintain a skilled, stable and competent public service;
- A requirement that government departments that may undergo restructuring develop a strategy to maximize staff retention where it is contemplated that employees will be affected;
- A requirement that each department report on its management of the human resource aspects of organizational change initiatives on an annual basis to the Legislative Assembly, including all steps taken to retain affected employees.

Mr. Handley stated that the previous government’s “no lay-off” approach to organizational change was commendable but did not place enough emphasis on the need for well planned government-wide co-ordination of organizational change impacts to effectively retrain and redeploy affected employees. It also had the effect of denying employees access to some provisions of their collective agreement in circumstances where employees did not wish to move or undertake retraining.

<b>For further information: Sharilyn Alexander</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Roy Inglangasuk</b>
A/Director		Executive Director
Labour Relations & Compensation		Corporate Human Resource Services
FMBS		Executive
(867) 873-7786		(867) 920-3399





00-065

### **Public Works and Services Publishes *Good Building Practice* Guidebook**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 8) -- Minister of Public Works and Services, Vince Steen, today announced that the department has published a guidebook promoting best approaches to good building in the North.**

The *Good Building Practice* guidebook provides a comprehensive set of guidelines for building in the North and represents the NWT construction industry's collective corporate memory and knowledge.

"It is the product of 35 years of experience in constructing facilities to withstand the harsh northern climate and to meet unique building challenges." Mr. Steen said.

Co-ordinated by the PW&S department, the guidebook includes input from northern architects, engineers, building contractors, suppliers, technical service providers as well as facility administrators and operators, in both the public and private sectors.

"This publication essentially belongs to all people who are significantly involved in the northern construction industry," Mr. Steen said. "We encourage them to offer additions and improvements so that the second edition will be even better."

The guidebook, which evolved from a previous document known as *Design Standards and Guidelines for New Public Buildings*, is intended to supplement Canada's *National Building Code*.

**For more information contact:**

**D. Bruce Rattray**  
Deputy Minister  
Public Works and Services  
Tel: (867) 873-7114





## **Appointments to the Workers' Compensation Board**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 10) -- JoAnne Deneron has been re-appointed for a two-year term as Chair of the Workers' Compensation Board of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Ministers Responsible for the WCB, Hon. Joseph Handley (NWT) and Hon. Kelvin Ng (NU,) announced today.**

Four additional appointments were also announced for the seven-member board:

Alex Stuit, a member of the Nunavut Employees' Union, has been appointed to a two-year term as a labour representative. Fernand Denault, a member of the Federation of Labour and long-time underground miner, was appointed for a one-year term.

Yellowknife tax consultant, accountant and Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Andrew Wong, was appointed for a two-year term as an employer representative. Dan Halldorson, a construction professional and Yellowknife business owner, was appointed as a public interest representative for one year.

The main priorities of the board will be to update the *Workers' Compensation Act* and *Safety Act*, and streamline both protection and compensation services for workers. "I am confident that these new members will continue to build on the excellent work of the previous Board," Mr. Handley said.

"I believe this new Board will provide a balanced and fair approach in administering its responsibilities to the people of both *Nunavut and the NWT*," Mr. Ng said.

In addition to its chairperson, the Workers' Compensation Board is composed of six members - two each representing employer, labour and public interests in the NWT and Nunavut. Existing Board members are Metro Solomon from Rankin Inlet and Tim Butler from Yellowknife.

**For more information, contact:**

**Gerry Meier**  
President  
Workers' Compensation Board  
(867) 920-3887

**Wende Halonen**  
Manager, Communications  
Government of Nunavut  
867-979-5822





00-066

### **Grand Opening of New Community School in Kakisa**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 11) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes joined residents of Kakisa Lake for a celebration marking the grand opening of the new community school today.**

“The Grand Opening of this school is a significant milestone in the history of this Deh Cho community and of the Northwest Territories because the decision to build the school, and the idea for its unique design, came from the community,” said Mr. Ootes.

Eight students are enrolled in the new school, which features a unique octagonal shape and open area concept. The decision to build the new school was made in 1998. The original school was a trailer that had been brought to Kakisa from Pine Point.

“The new school will serve as an inspiration to young people of Kakisa who are now able to graduate from Grade 12 in their home community,” Mr. Ootes said.

Melaine Simba and her niece Jennifer Simba will be the first residents of Kakisa to benefit from the GNWT’s decision to offer grade extensions in community schools. They hope to receive their Grade 12 diplomas at home in June.

Kakisa Contracting built the school at a cost of approximately \$250,000.00.

Mr. Ootes was joined by Deh Cho Grand Chief Mike Nadli, Chief Lloyd Chicot, Chair of the Dehcho Divisional Education Council, Alan Landry and Deh Cho MLA Michael McLeod for the ribbon cutting.

**For more information, contact: Janet Leader**  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-6222







00-067

### **NWT Attends Prairie Initiative to Address FAS**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 11) - This week the NWT will join with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut and the Yukon to continue work on the development of a shared approach to address Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAS/FAE).**

A Prairie Northern Conference on FAS/FAE is being held in Winnipeg from May 11<sup>th</sup> to May 13<sup>th</sup>. The conference will provide information on FAS/FAE prevention, early intervention, research, diagnosis, supports and care for those affected.

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen, is attending the conference along with representatives from her department and a number of non-governmental organizations from the Northwest Territories.

“We see great value in this partnership. All the participating territories and provinces share similar challenges and it makes sense that we work together to strengthen our efforts,” Mrs. Groenewegen said. “Everyone will benefit from sharing experiences and resources. The NWT is bringing some exciting work to the partnership.”

In December 1999, the department accepted an invitation to join the Prairie Northern FAS/FAE Partnership. The partnership facilitates information and resources sharing along with the coordination and harmonization of government FAS/FAE initiatives in the areas of prevention, intervention, care and support of individuals affected by FAS/FAE.

**For more information contact:**      **Gillian Burles**  
Manager, Health Promotion  
Health & Social Services  
(867) 873-7371





00-068

### **Program to help New Teachers**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 15) – A program designed to help new teachers get used to their duties in the classroom was announced last week by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes.**

“New teachers are enthusiastic about their careers and the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young people,” explained Mr. Ootes. “But those first weeks in the classroom, when they are suddenly faced by the expectations of both students and the school system, can be overwhelming. Teachers may feel isolated and lose their initial enthusiasm.”

“A Program for Beginning Teachers” is designed to help new teachers meet the challenges they face during the first year of their careers. It will help the five divisional education councils and the two Yellowknife school boards support teachers who are new to the territory or have graduated from the Aurora College Teacher Education program and are about to begin their first year of teaching.

The four-phase program is outlined in an NWT Teacher Induction Guide. It begins with a pre-orientation session immediately after a teacher has been hired and provides ongoing support throughout the school year. It features methods of orienting new teachers to northern culture as well as ways of encouraging them to establish supportive relationships in the school and in the community.

The need for the program was identified in the Strategy for Teacher Education in the Northwest Territories two years ago. Its purpose is to improve teacher performance, retain teachers in the profession, promote the personal and professional well being of new teachers and help teachers understand the culture of the education system in the NWT.

The material included in the NWT Teacher Induction is based on broad consultation with beginning teachers and participation from Divisional Education Councils, Yellowknife School Boards, Aurora College, the NWT Teachers Association and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Copies of the NWT Teacher Induction Guide are available from the Co-ordinator, Public Affairs, Department of Education Culture and Employment.

**For more information contact:**

**Janet Leader**  
Education, Culture and Employment  
(867) 920-6222





00-069

## **NWT Public Libraries Receive \$323,000 from Gates Foundation**

**HAY RIVER (May 17) – Public Libraries in the Northwest Territories will receive a \$323,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jake Ootes, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment announced today in Hay River.**

The grant will fund computers and Internet access in NWT public libraries, as well as virtual libraries in communities not currently served by the NWT Library system. Separately, Microsoft Canada will donate software with a retail value of \$92,000 to all libraries receiving foundation grants.

“The ability to access new information quickly is a necessary skill in today’s wired world,” Mr. Ootes said. “This announcement means that not only are we one step closer to providing a range of library services for all NWT residents, regardless of where they live, it also means we are developing the capacity in NWT communities to learn computer skills and to pass on that training to others.”

The nine existing NWT public libraries will receive computer workstations. Six additional communities will also benefit from the grant as virtual libraries with full Internet access and computer technology will be created. A mobile training lab, training for library staff, upgraded hardware to improve Internet access, and one help desk station are included in the gift.

“NWT Library Services is leading the way to providing increased access to all people. The creation and development of virtual libraries will mean that even without a physical library building, citizens of NWT can now benefit from library services and the power of the Internet,” said Carol Erickson, International Library Programs Manager for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “It is the Foundation’s hope that this program may be used as a model to reach people worldwide.”

The communities in which virtual libraries are established will have public access to the World Wide Web, including the NWT Library Services web page. This will mean access to the borrow-by-mail program currently offered by NWT Library Services; inter-library loans throughout Canada; full-text material on-line; plus other research and resource material. Training will develop expertise at the community level that will ensure service for library clients. NWT Library Services will work with the communities to create a virtual library with the range of services that best suits the community.

The grant is a part of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Library Program whose mission is to provide increased access to technology for libraries serving low-income communities throughout the United States and Canada.

.../2

## **NWT Public Libraries Receive \$323,000 from Gates Foundation: Page 2**

“This impressive gift means that both the goals of NWT Libraries to enhance service and that of the foundation to increase access to technology are met,” Mr. Ootes said. “More than that, the training components turn this gift into an investment from which all NWT residents will benefit. This gift supports the commitment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly to work towards a vision of self-reliant, well educated Northerners.”

Installation of the virtual libraries in Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchic, Fort Good Hope, Fort Liard, Rae-Edzo and Lutsel K'e will begin in September and will be completed before Christmas.

### **For more information, contact:**

#### **Jane Peart**

Northwest Territories Public Libraries

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#### **Jenna Buffaloe**

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Phone: 206-709-3100

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## **Backgrounder:**

### **NWT Public Libraries Receive \$323,000 from Gates Foundation**

In a July 1999 study of Internet use by households, Statistics Canada noted that while computer use has increased nationwide, there is a wage gap between those with access to technology and the Internet and those without access. Individuals in the highest-income households are nearly five times more likely to use computer communications than those individuals in the lowest-income households.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is dedicated to improving people's lives by sharing advances in health and learning with the global community. Led by Bill Gates' father, William H. Gates, Sr., and Patty Stonesifer, the Seattle-based Foundation has an asset base of \$21.8 billion. Preventing deadly diseases among poor children by expanding access to vaccines, and developing vaccines against malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, are central priorities. Other major efforts include extending unprecedented opportunities for learning by bringing computers with Internet access to every eligible library in the U.S. and Canada, and providing scholarships to academically talented minority students in the U.S. with severe financial need through the Gates Millennium Scholars Program ([www.gmsp.org](http://www.gmsp.org)). For complete information and grant guidelines, visit [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org).







00-070

### **Inuvik Regional Health Facility to Proceed as GNWT-Owned Project**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 17) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories will build a new regional Health and Social Services Centre in Inuvik but not as a Public/Private Partnership (P3) pilot project as originally planned.**

"The Government was excited by the potential for a P3 approach on this project, but we did not receive the response from the private sector that we had hoped for," Minister of Finance, Joe Handley announced today. Instead, the GNWT will assume full ownership and project-management responsibility for the new facility.

Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen stressed that progress on the Health Centre will not be delayed by the decision. "We have conducted a thorough analysis of the options open to the Government, and have determined that at this point whatever route is chosen to finance and construct the hospital, it will result in a new facility opening during the Summer of 2003. Even if the Government were to proceed with the P3 approach, the facility could not be completed any sooner," she said.

"The Department of Health and Social Services will work with the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board, and the Department of Public Works to get a project management team in place. No time will be lost as a result of this change to the management and ownership approach," Mrs. Groenewegen said.

**For more information, contact:**

**Joseph Handley**  
Minister Responsible for  
The Financial Management Board  
Tel: (867) 669-2344





00-071

## **New Agreement Provides Air Support for Northern Search and Rescue Operations**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 18) -- A new Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "G" Division and the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) will provide trained aerial support for search and rescue operations in the NWT.**

Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Jim Antoine signed the understanding in Yellowknife last week. "It is important that we have effective search and rescue services in the Northwest Territories," he said. "Having access to trained air support when it is needed will help us organize more efficient ground searches with our partners in this agreement."

CASARA is a national organization of volunteer pilots, navigators and spotters trained to conduct aerial searches. It has been active in the North for 11 years and currently has operations in Hay River, Yellowknife and Inuvik, with plans to expand to Fort Smith and Fort Simpson.

Under the terms of the understanding, CASASRA will provide air support to official searches for missing persons at the request of the RCMP and the department's Emergency Measures Organization. Over 100 members and six aircraft are available to provide support during ground searches.

The RCMP is responsible for organizing ground searches and searches on inland waters in the Northwest Territories. The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs, through the Emergency Measures Organization, assists communities in developing their own emergency response plans and works to coordinate the implementation of search and rescue plans.

**For more information, contact:** **Eric Bussey**  
Director, Emergency Services  
Municipal and Community Affairs  
Tel: (867) 920-6133





00-072

### **Panel Finalizes Economic Development Strategy**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 23) – The Economic Strategy Panel has finalized its economic development strategy for the Northwest Territories. The panel met last week in Fort Smith to review the final draft of the "Common Ground" strategy.**

"We are pleased with the outcome of the panel's efforts during the past year," Co-chair, Richard Nerysoo said. "These recommendations can be used to guide future economic development efforts in the NWT."

The strategy is expected to be presented to Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Joe Handley by mid-June.

"It is our sincere hope that the recommendations will be adopted and that the co-operative process which lead to them will be continued through implementation," Co-chair, Darrell Beaulieu said.

The "Common Ground" Strategy is expected to be available for public review and input by late June.

**For more information, contact:**

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Inuvik  
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**Darrell Beaulieu**  
Deton'cho Corporation  
Ndilo  
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00-073

## **Northern Leaders Unified in plans to address Western Premiers**

**BRANDON (May 23) -- Northern Premiers will seek support for northern economic development when they meet this week with their counterparts at the Western Premiers' Conference (WPC) in Brandon, Manitoba.**

Following a meeting of the northern Premiers this afternoon, NWT Premier Stephen Kakfwi said that he and Premier Paul Okalik of Nunavut and Premier Pat Duncan of the Yukon will focus on the need to build infrastructure in the North and the current lack of any federal economic development programs in the three territories.

"Strategic investment now will unlock the potential of the North and provide strong economic returns in the future," Premier Kakfwi said. "Ultimately, healthier economies north of 60 will have a positive effect on the country as a whole, particularly Western Canada."

The northern Premiers will also seek support for the devolution of administration and control of land and resources from the federal government to northern governments.

"It is important for the three territories to capitalize on opportunities like the annual WPC to ensure that northern messages are highlighted. The agenda for the Western Premiers Conference allows us to raise awareness of the economic potential of our territories and solicit support directly from those regions that will benefit the most from northern development," Premier Okalik said.

Premiers Kakfwi, Okalik and Duncan say that in the future they will continue their tradition of meeting as northern Premiers. "We expect to meet again prior to the annual Premiers conference in August. These meetings provide a venue where northern leaders can focus on shared priorities," Premier Duncan said.

### **For more information, contact:**

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Executive - GNWT  
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**Jason Cunning**  
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Government of the Yukon  
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**Annette Bourgeois**  
Press Secretary  
Government of Nunavut  
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00-074

## **New Agreement to Offer More Courses On Line**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 24) – High school students in NWT communities will have more online courses to choose from in the 2000/2001 school year thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed today by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes, and Cathy Faber of the Calgary Board of Education.**

The MOU will give NWT students access to more than 30 online courses developed in accordance with the Alberta curriculum. Students will use a web-based program called WebCT (Web Curriculum Tools) to access courses through the Digital Communications Network. WebCT is the most popular method of delivering online courses in North America.

Earlier this year, on line studies were introduced to NWT schools in a successful pilot project in Kakisa, Hay River, Norman Wells and Yellowknife. "The potential for this new initiative is immense," Mr. Ootes said. "Students now have an opportunity to augment their studies with courses previously unavailable in their communities. WebCT allows students to study online, at their own pace, with the support of a trained teacher facilitator."

Courses to be offered in the new school year have been developed by teachers from the Calgary Board of Education, considered a leader in the development and delivery of online learning. Calgary teachers will teach the courses with student support provided by trained teachers in the NWT.

"We are delighted to have reached an agreement for WebCT course delivery in the NWT," Cathy Faber said. "We are looking for partners in education to help us develop and expand our WebCT program. The GNWT is looking for ways to enhance and expand the amount of material available for students online."

Teachers in the NWT will also benefit from the learning offered by WebCT programs thanks to professional development opportunities available for teachers who assist in delivering the courses. Training will be provided by the Calgary Board of Education beginning in August and will continue throughout the two-year term of the MOU. NWT teachers will also have the opportunity to participate in the development of future courses designed for online delivery.

Students who wish to take advantage of the course offerings through the WebCT program must complete a computer readiness course called *Info Highways 1090*, which will be offered beginning in September at NWT schools.

**For more information, contact:** **Ellie Elliott, Director**  
Early Childhood and School Services  
Education Culture & Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-3491



## **Backgrounder:**

### New Agreement to Offer More Courses On Line

- Online Learning is a type of distance education that has gained prominence and popularity in recent years, because of advances in technology. WebCT is among the most popular course delivery tools currently available
- WebCT, which is an acronym for Web Curriculum Tools, is a Web-based program developed at the University of British Columbia.
- Students can access courses through the Internet, which are stored on a server in a central location. Under the guidance of a trained teacher facilitator, students can proceed at their own pace through the course.
- Teacher facilitators in the NWT will be trained by the Calgary Board of Education through a combination of Online Learning and on site workshops.
- The Online Learning training course will be delivered in the NWT over the Digital Communication Network (DCN). This follows a successful pilot project this spring in which Northern Studies 10 was offered in virtual classrooms throughout the NWT over the DCN.
- Teachers will be encouraged to develop additional courses appropriate to the NWT, in conjunction with the Calgary Board of Education who hopes to use the expertise of NWT teachers in developing a curriculum that is culturally appropriate for Aboriginal students.
- Among the secondary level courses that will soon be available to schools in the NWT are: Pure Math 10 & 20, Applied Math 10, Social Studies 10, 20, 30, 33, English 10,13,20,23,30, 33, Sciences 10, Chemistry 20 & 30, PE 10 & 30, Sociology 30, Biology 20 & 30, Physics 20 & 30, Art 10, 20 & 30, Psychology 30. It is expected that by next year, three hundred courses in all will be available.
- NWT Teachers will be given the opportunity to complete the *Training On-line* program, and to attend the *Summer Teaching and Learning Institute* in Calgary.
- Students are required to complete a computer readiness course, *Info Highways 1090*, before being recommended by their local DEC/DEA to register through ECE for the courses offered. This course is available in schools where a trained teacher facilitator is present.





00-075

## Western Premiers Support Northern Priorities

**BRANDON (May 25) -- The Premiers of Canada's three territories say that support received at the Western Premiers Conference will strengthen their message to the federal government, and that it is time to talk seriously about implementing federally funded economic development and diversification programs in the North.**

The provincial and territorial Premiers addressed common northern priorities in Brandon, Manitoba yesterday afternoon. In particular, the provinces restated their support for the federal devolution and jurisdiction over land and resources to the territorial governments.

"The devolution of land and resource management responsibilities to northern governments will be critical if we are to fund economic development initiatives," Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik said.

Yukon Premier Pat Duncan agreed. "Devolution of jurisdiction over land and resources is critical if Yukon people are going to gain control over their economic futures," she said.

The Premiers expressed concern that the territories are the only jurisdictions in Canada where the federal government has not implemented expected economic development agreements.

"This is ironic considering the enormous potential for resource development in Canada's northern territories," NWT Premier, Stephen Kakfwi said. "We can take advantage of the opportunities if Canada invests now but without the support of the federal government, our ability to maximize those economic opportunities is severely constrained."

### For more information, contact:

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00-076

## **GNWT Targets Tobacco with Public Awareness Campaign**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 26) -- The Department of Health and Social Services is releasing a series of ten public-awareness television advertisements in recognition of World No-Tobacco Day, Wednesday May 31, 2000.**

"It's a proactive initiative that targets a very serious problem," said Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen. "Smoking rates in the NWT are among the highest in Canada. Implications for health costs and human costs in terms of death and disability are significant and rising. We simply can't afford it." The 1999 Labour Force Survey indicated that 42.4 per cent of males and 39.7 per cent of females in the NWT are smokers.

The 30 and 60 second commercials, produced in the North and featuring northern actors, primarily target youth using a blend of humour, animation, music, vivid imagery and testimonials. "We're looking forward to the response these messages will provoke," Mrs Groenewegen said. "They are well produced and speak in the images and languages of the audience we are trying to reach."

The advertisements are designed to counter messages in marketing by tobacco companies. "We want young people to think about what they're being asked to buy into," Mrs. Groenewegen said.

World No-Tobacco day is an international event designated by the World Health Organization. This year, the theme is Entertainment and Tobacco Promotion – Countering the deception. The slogan is Tobacco Kills – Don't be Duped.

The GNWT recognizes tobacco use as a major health and social problem in the NWT and is committed to combating this significant public health issue. A key goal cited in the government's vision document, *Towards a Better Tomorrow*, is "people free from preventable diseases such as those resulting from alcohol and drug abuse."

**For more information, contact**

**Rick Tremblay**  
Health Promotion Consultant  
Health and Social Services  
(867) 920-8826







00-077

### **Premier and Cabinet Meet Face to Face with NWTAM**

**FORT SIMPSON (May 28) -- Premier Kakfwi says he will meet personally with the executive of the NWT Association of Municipalities (NWTAM) to build the relationship between that organization and the Government of the Northwest Territories.**

"The GNWT has committed to building the capacity of NWT regions to benefit municipalities and aboriginal governments," Mr. Kakfwi told delegates yesterday at the annual meeting of the NWTAM in Fort Simpson. "The key will be our willingness and commitment to work together."

The Premier's promise concluded a two-hour dialogue also attended by the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs Jim Antoine, Minister of Finance Joe Handley, Minister of Education Culture and Employment Jake Ootes and Minister of Transportation Vince Steen. The members travelled to the community to hear, first hand, concerns and issues facing mayors, councillors and other municipal representatives from across the NWT.

The Cabinet members answered questions regarding representation on the Intergovernmental Forum and funding for tourism on a regional basis. In response to concerns raised about cuts to block funding, the Premier said he was optimistic. "In 1999, the GNWT was facing a serious financial picture but now the outlook is getting better," he said. "We will find ways to live up to the future identified in our vision of a better tomorrow. We are working hard to help you believe that there is a brighter future ahead."

**For more information, contact:**      **Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Executive - GNWT  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-078

### **Minister Congratulates Community Futures Organization**

**YELLOWKNIFE (May 30) – A Community Futures Development Corporation in Inuvik has received a Community Futures Initiatives award for its work in securing and co-ordinating a major Community Futures conference, Catch the Spirit, in Inuvik this spring.**

The Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic, Joseph L. Handley, today congratulated Western Arctic Business Development Services (WABDS) on receiving the national recognition. "Western Arctic Business Development Services has supported small business development in Inuvik and the surrounding area for more than 10 years and continues to improve employment and economic opportunities for people of the Mackenzie Beaufort Delta Region," Mr. Handley said. "This organization and its board demonstrate how hard work and ingenuity can benefit all northerners."

The Community Futures Program is a community-based economic development program introduced in the 1980's by the federal department of Human Resources Development Canada. It provides funds to regional organizations to carry out initiatives that promote economic development at a community level. WABDS is one of six regional organizations in the NWT and more than 250 across Canada.

Inuvik Twin Lakes, MLA Roger T. Allen presented the Initiatives award to Patricia Black, the executive director of WABDS, on Saturday at the first Pan-Canadian Communities Futures Conference held in Mont-Tremblant, Quebec.

**For more information, contact:**      **Joseph L. Handley**  
Minister  
Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development  
Tel: (867) 669-2344





00-079

## **NWT Employer of Youth for 2000 Recognized**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 5) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes today presented the NWT Employer of Youth Award for 2000 to Al and Kelly Kaylo, owners of the Yellowknife McDonald's franchise.**

"On behalf of the GNWT and The Conference Board of Canada, it gives me great pleasure to recognize, the outstanding efforts the Kaylos have made in providing job opportunities for young people who often have a difficult time making a transition into the work force," Mr. Ootes said. "Efforts like those of this McDonald's franchise exemplify the role an employer can play in introducing young people to the world of work and reducing unemployment among youth."

The Kaylos first opened Canada's most northerly McDonald's in Yellowknife in 1992. Two years later, the original location in Yellowknife was expanded and a second location opened in the local Walmart store. The two restaurants regularly fill orders from north of the Arctic Circle and employ anywhere from 40 to 90 young people aged 14 to 19 at any one time.

"Young people employed by McDonald's get an excellent start in developing job skills because of the extensive training provided by the company," Mr. Kaylo said. "They learn skills ranging from team work to supervisory skills and everything in-between, sometimes without even realizing it."

The Conference Board of Canada's Employer of Youth Award program is one of several initiatives under the Forum of Labour Market Ministers' Agenda for Action on Youth Employment. Each year, employers from each province and territory who demonstrate innovation in creating new work opportunities for young people are encouraged to apply. Winners are recognized at the Conference Board of Canada's annual conference, which took place earlier this year in Halifax. In the Northwest Territories, the Employer of Youth program is co-ordinated by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

Minister Responsible for Youth, Roger T. Allen joined Mr. Ootes in presenting the award today. "Meaningful employment is a strong motivator for young people," he said. "It fosters self-confidence and a feeling of well-being that can last a lifetime."

**For more information, contact:**

**Lesley Allen**  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-7252





00-080

## **High Council Consider Opening NWT Polished Diamond Grading Facility**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 5) – Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Minister Joseph Handley and Education, Culture and Employment Minister Jake Ootes, met in Yellowknife this week with representatives from the Diamond High Council (HRD) of Antwerp, Belgium to discuss the establishment of a polished diamond grading facility in the NWT.**

"A polished diamond grading facility would be of great benefit to the Northwest Territories," Mr. Handley said. "A world-recognized diamond grading facility would play an important role in establishing the NWT as North America's diamond centre."

HRD representatives discussed the Council's possible role in developing a secondary diamond industry in the NWT. HRD has previously been involved in training programs offered by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) to support the diamond cutting and polishing industry. Opportunities to continue, and possibly expand, the current training relationship were also discussed.

"HRD had recognized the unique diamond-related opportunities in the NWT at an early stage and has proven to be an excellent partner," Mr. Ootes said. "When others doubted the GNWT's vision for secondary diamond industries in the North, the Council provided expertise and support to develop related industries that are now giving NWT residents the opportunity to train and work for a better future."

While in the NWT capital, the HRD delegation, lead by President Charles Bornstein, presented Premier Stephen Kakfwi with a bronze sculpture entitled "Shared Visions".

"We are pleased with our relationship with the Government of the Northwest Territories," said Mr. Bornstein. "We look forward to exploring the many exciting diamond-related opportunities in the NWT."

### **For more information, contact:**

**Martin Irving**  
Director, Diamond Projects  
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**or Inge Weber, Secretary General**  
**Youri Steverlynck, Spokesman**  
Diamond High Council  
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00-081

### **New MOU will Enhance Northern Economies**

**VICTORIA (June 6) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi and the Premier of British Columbia, Ujjal Dosanjh agreed today on a range of economic development initiatives designed to mutually benefit communities in the two regions.**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the leaders in Victoria will see the NWT and BC governments pursue joint initiatives to develop services and infrastructure critical to long-term economic development.

Premier Kakfwi says government agreements such as this one are an important part of fostering and developing a healthy economic environment. "I am particularly pleased that we can do this with a mutual respect for environmental concerns, and with the recognition that Aboriginal people and businesses in both regions play a key role in the economic development of their communities," he said.

The MOU outlines plans to increase residents' participation in the economic life of the NWT and northern BC and to improve co-operation, consultation and joint planning in priority areas and concerns.

"By working as partners, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia can develop plans for sectors such as natural gas and forestry, as well as in other areas including transportation and tourism," BC Premier, Dosanjh said.

A joint steering committee will oversee implementation of the new five-year agreement.

<b>For more information, contact: Drew Williams</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Shari Graydon</b>
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Communications		Office of the Premier
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## Backgrounder:

### New MOU will Enhance Northern Economies

Between 1991 and 1996, the Northwest Territories imported on average just over one billion dollars worth of goods and services annually from southern Canada. Ontario and Alberta were the leading suppliers of imported commodities, with Quebec and British Columbia following in third and fourth place.

In 1996, the latest year for which we have information in imports, the NWT imported \$952 million from southern Canada. In 1996, the NWT economy created a demand of around \$3.2 billion. Thus, for every dollar of economic demand generated in the NWT, thirty cents flowed directly south to benefit businesses and labour in other provinces.

The impact is even greater with large-scale resources projects such as mining, oil and gas developments. Because the NWT produces very little manufactured goods such as machinery, and because of a limited supply of skilled labour, demand for machinery and trades employment must be filled from southern suppliers. For example, it is estimated that for every dollar of output by Yellowknife gold mines, 51 cents flows directly south for supply purchases. For the construction phase of mine operations, 95 cents of every dollar spent on machinery and equipment heads south, and 69 cents of every dollar spent on materials flows to a southern province. Similarly, for capital construction associated with oil and gas, 80 cents of every dollar spent accrues to southern businesses.

The NWT imported on average (1991-1996) \$137.2 million of goods and services annually from British Columbia. In terms of economic output, imports from British Columbia represent 5.8% the average gross domestic product of NWT economy during that period. That is, for every dollar of output in the NWT, almost 6 cents of economic activity is generated in British Columbia.

Average 1991 - 1996	Total Imports		GDP
	\$1,028,500,000		\$2,369,200,000
British Columbia	\$137,200,000	13%	5.8%
Alberta	\$290,900,000	28%	12.3%
Ontario	\$339,400,000	33%	14.3%
Quebec	\$164,500,000	16%	6.9%

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1996	
Final Domestic Demand	\$3,167,000,000
Provincial Imports	\$952,000,000

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00-082

## **New Board Appointments at Northwest Territories Power Corporation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 8) – The Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, Jake Ootes today announced a variety of appointments to the corporation's board of directors.**

"These appointments will help ensure continued reliable, safe power delivery across the NWT and Nunavut," Mr. Ootes said.

Newly appointed to the NWTPC Board of Directors are Rick Blennerhassett and Andrew Gaule:

Rick Blennerhassett of Iqaluit graduated from the University of New Brunswick. He has worked for St. Catherine's Hydro Electric Commission, the Nova Scotia Power Corporation and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. His diligent work promoting safety on the job at NWTHC contributed to the Corporation's passing of the 'one million person hours' mark with no lost-time accidents. He currently holds the position of President of the Nunavut Power Corporation. His appointment is effective until March 31, 2001.

Andrew Gaule is the owner of North of Sixty Training and Consulting Ltd. (financial services and consulting) and North of Sixty Office Micro (computers, office supplies and paper) in Fort Simpson. He has a strong background in accounting and completed his education at Bristol University, UK. Mr. Gaule specializes in community economic development for many First Nation clients and prepares business plans for many private sector clients. He has served on several boards and agencies, including the Fort Simpson Chamber of Commerce and Nogha Enterprises. His appointment is effective until June 14, 2003.

Eric Shelton of Calgary has been re-appointed as a board member until August 31, 2001, Kelly Kaylo of Yellowknife has been re-appointed until June 14, 2003 and Tom Zubko of Inuvik has been re-appointed as a board member until August 31, 2003.

Simon Merkosak of Pond Inlet will continue in his capacity as Vice Chairman of the Board. He was re-appointed until March 31, 2001.

**For further information, contact:**      **Annelies Pool**  
Executive Assistant to Minister Ootes  
Tel: (867) 669-2312  
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00-083

## The Northern Dimension of Canada's Foreign Policy

**OTTAWA (June 9) -- Minister of Finance, Joe Handley was among the northern leaders who met with Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy yesterday to unveil the "*The Northern Dimension*" of Canada's Foreign Policy.**

Mr Handley, who attended the meeting on behalf of Premier Stephen Kakfwi, joined Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik, Yukon Deputy House Leader Scott Kent and Inuit, Gwich'in, Metis and Yukon First Nation leaders at the Ottawa event.

The document unveiled by the Minister outlines Canada's northern foreign policy objectives with a focus on four areas: Strengthening and promoting the Arctic Council, particularly Aboriginal peoples' participation in the Council; Helping to establish a University of the Arctic and a Canadian and circumpolar policy research network; Developing and expanding opportunities to assist Russia in addressing its northern challenges; and Promoting the study and practical application of means for circumpolar countries and communities to develop sustainable economic opportunities and trade across the Arctic circumpolar region.

"The GNWT has consistently supported the concept and principle of having a Northern component in Canada's Foreign Policy that addresses the unique aspects of Canada's North in a circumpolar world," Mr. Handley said. "Our government is particularly interested in the promotion of circumpolar trade and commerce and the implications of climate change."

Mr. Handley noted however, that Canadian domestic policies and priorities must be developed to ensure that they will be supported by the *Northern Dimension*. "For example, we need a larger percentage of our northern students to finish high school in order to benefit from the post secondary opportunities afforded by a circumpolar university" he said.

The GNWT will review the Northern Dimension document and expects to be a full and active participant in the next step, the development of an action plan to support the policy framework.

**For more information, contact:**

**Joseph Handley**  
Minister of Finance/RWED  
Tel: (867) 669-2344





00-084

## Understanding Canada's Health Care Costs

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 9) – Today Premier Lucien Bouchard, on behalf of all provincial and territorial premiers released *Understanding Canada's Health Care Costs, An Interim Report*. Copies of the report have been provided to the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Health Allan Rock.**

*Understanding Canada's Health Care Costs, An Interim Report* examines how the health care system is financed, provides an analysis of innovations that are already underway in provinces and territories, and looks at the current and future cost drivers in Canada's health system.

The report confirms that Canadians are currently well-served by the public health care system however, territories and provinces are challenged by increasing costs due to such factors as ageing populations, new technologies and pharmaceuticals. In the NWT additional challenges include: a young population, 30% of our residents are 15 years or younger; a high birth rate; a seniors population that will double in 2018; a high turnover rate in the health care field; and the population's low health status in areas of preventable illness and premature deaths.

If current cost trends continue, operating health expenditures will increase by approximately 5% per year. The interim report clearly shows that while territories and provinces are increasing their health care contributions, federal government funding has decreased.

"Each year the NWT Minister of Health and Social Services requests additional funding and each year the GNWT makes some kind of increase. Despite our efforts we continue to be short on funds to do things the public and health care providers expect," Premier Stephen Kakfwi said.

Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen adds that money is the big issue but it's not everything. "All the money in the world will not solve the challenges we are faced with today. We also need to change the public's attitude toward their health and the health care system. Federal funding is essential to help us make long-term changes. Changing the public's attitudes and behaviours will not happen overnight, Mrs. Groenewegen said.

.../2

## Understanding Canada's Health Care Costs: Page 2

When Medicare was first created, it was established on the basis of a 50/50 cost sharing arrangement between the provinces/territories and the federal government. Currently the federal contribution averages 13% of total health costs. Premier Kakfwi is confident that Understanding *Canada's Health Care Costs, An Interim Report* will help change the situation. The report has been released to support the Provincial and Territorial Premier's request for full and immediate restoration of \$4.2 billion to the base funding of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) and the implementation of an annual escalator for the CHST.

The document and an executive summary can be viewed at:  
[www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca)

**For more information contact:**

**Cathy Praamsma**  
Acting Deputy Minister  
Health and Social Services  
(867) 873-7737





00-085

## **GNWT will respect Decision of Supreme Court**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 15) – Justice Minister Jim Antoine says the Government of the Northwest Territories will take time to analyze this morning’s decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to uphold the validity of the new federal Firearms Act.**

A reference question was brought to the Supreme Court by the Province of Alberta, which asked for a ruling on whether the licensing and registration provision of the Firearms Act was outside federal jurisdiction. Several provinces and territories, including the NWT, joined Alberta as intervenors in the case.

“We participated in this case because we understood the concerns of many northern people about the way the federal legislation would affect their lives,” Mr. Antoine said. “We have pursued this question to the highest court in Canada and we must respect that court’s decision.”

“This is a complex issue and we know there are many strong opinions on firearms legislation both in the North and throughout Canada,” Mr. Antoine said. “We will now take the time necessary to analyze the full effect of the court’s decision before deciding what, if anything, can be done. I will, of course, be very interested to hear the views of my colleagues from other jurisdictions that took part in this court case.”

The Government of the Northwest Territories is not participating in the administration of the Firearms Act. The federal government administers the gun licensing and registration program in the NWT.

**For more information, contact:** **Judy Langford**  
Policy Advisor – Communications  
Justice  
Tel: (867) 920-3130





00-086

## NWT Finance Minister Presents Optimistic Budget

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 20) -- Finance Minister Joseph Handley said he's optimistic that the future of the Northwest Territories will bring increased opportunities for residents of the NWT. He presented his first budget to the NWT Legislative Assembly this afternoon.**

"These are exciting times for the people of the Northwest Territories. We are on the brink of substantial development of our territory's immense resource potential."

Today's budget supports the vision of a prosperous future identified by the Legislative Assembly in the document *Towards a Better Tomorrow*. Mr. Handley warned, however, that the GNWT is limited in the amount of new resources it can commit to the vision.

"Given our fiscal position, the fact that we are able to maintain the service levels we currently enjoy is an achievement worth noting," he said. "We are maintaining the levels of services provided to northerners and investing where we can to provide maximum returns on the future – both for our people and our economy."

For the second time in the short life of the post-division NWT, revenue growth is not expected to keep pace with the growth in demands for government programs and services as the \$764 million in budgeted expenditures exceed revenues by \$12 million.

The government is conducting a number of reviews to identify possible areas of savings but the Finance Minister ruled out major cuts to programs as the solution to the NWT's fiscal problems. "Making cuts to essential services will likely cost us much more in the future in terms of health and social problems," he said. Mr. Handley warned all residents of the NWT that they must be realistic in their expectations of what the GNWT can afford to do.

Despite these challenges, Mr. Handley noted there are opportunities as well. Oil, natural gas and diamonds have made the NWT the focus of national and international attention and the possibility of a Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline is very real.

The Budget identifies a number of initiatives the government is taking to respond to and prepare for resource development, including community planning, highway construction and employment training.

Mr. Handley was clear, however, that the GNWT alone does not have the fiscal resources to make the investments that are needed if both northerners and Canadians are to reap the maximum benefits from the



## **NWT Finance Minister Presents Optimistic Budget: Page 2**

development of its resources. NWT developments could yield as much as \$90 billion in royalties and taxes over the next thirty years - most of which will flow to the federal government.

“We are hopeful that the federal government will make the required level of commitment and invest in a bright future for the Northwest Territories,” Mr. Handley said.

Mr. Handley stressed the need for a timely resolution on the issue of devolution – the transfer of control of northern resources and royalties to northern governments. He noted that the Intergovernmental Forum, bringing together territorial, federal and Aboriginal governments, is an important process for dialogue on this issue.

Today’s budget introduced one new tax for the NWT, a five per cent tax on hotel occupancy effective April 1, 2001 in order to provide revenues needed to promote the NWT as a tourist destination and to develop attractions. The tourism industry is a sector whose potential has barely been tapped. The tax is expected to generate \$1 million in annual revenues.

**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



**NORTHWEST TERRITORIES  
2000-2001 BUDGET  
HIGHLIGHTS**

**Fiscal Overview**

- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) expects that its share of the closing March 31, 1999, pre-division surplus will be \$21 million.
- The \$34 million budgetary deficit anticipated for 1999-2000 will eliminate this positive starting balance and place the GNWT in a small accumulated deficit position as of March 31, 2000.
- Beginning in fiscal 2000-2001, the GNWT is making a significant change in its budgeting and accounting policies. It will now report the value and accumulated depreciation of its capital assets, such as schools, hospitals and highways. Previously, the value of these assets was not reported in the GNWT's books. This change responds to calls by the accounting profession for governments across Canada to amend their accounting practices.
- The 2000-2001 Budget anticipates operating expenditures of \$763.6 million. Total revenues are estimated to be \$751.3 million, representing an expected operating deficit of \$12.3 million. When this operating deficit, and the undepreciated value of the GNWT's investment in capital assets, which is \$845.5 million, are taken into account, the GNWT expects an accumulated surplus of \$843 million for March 31, 2001.
- The GNWT continues to face deficits because revenue growth is not keeping pace with the growth in demands on the government's programs and services. The Budget avoids cuts to programs or to the public service. However, in order to identify possible areas for savings the GNWT has committed to conducting both a broad review of programs as well as specific reviews in areas such as government purchasing, subsidies and energy use.

**Improving Social Wellbeing**

- Ongoing investments in key social programs such as education, health care, social services and housing are essential to addressing the NWT's serious social challenges. Recognizing that cuts to these programs will likely result in higher future costs, the Budget contains measures to maintain service levels in the face of rising demand:
  - o \$5 million to respond to the growing needs of the NWT population for health care;
  - o \$3 million to respond to the projected growth in school enrolment and income assistance demands.
- In addition, strategic initiatives have been made in a number of key areas:
  - o \$1.6 million to decrease the pupil-teacher ratio in NWT schools;
  - o An additional \$210,000 for the Healthy Children Initiative, the aim of which is to give children as healthy as possible a start in life; and





- o \$4.8 million, financed by additional Canada Health & Social Transfers, to be allocated by the Department of Health & Social Services for the implementation of primary health care models.

### **Better Governance Through Partnerships**

- The GNWT has committed to fund one-third of the costs of the Intergovernmental Forum. The Intergovernmental Forum brings together territorial, federal and Aboriginal governments to discuss issues that are territorial in scope, and will provide a process for ongoing discussions on key issues such as devolution and resource revenue sharing.

### **A Vibrant Northern Economy**

- The Budget includes a number of initiatives to respond to ongoing and future development of the Northwest Territories' resources:
  - o \$700,000 to help communities prepare for oil and gas development, including economic development, employment and business planning, environmental and socio-economic monitoring, and investigation of opportunities for value-added industries;
  - o Almost \$10 million to keep pace with the heavier industrial traffic on the NWT's highway system;
  - o \$1.3 million to promote employment in the oil and gas industries; and
  - o \$1 million to target youth employment.
- In order to provide resources to invest in the tourism sector, the Budget proposes the adoption, effective April 1, 2001, of a 5 per cent tax on hotel occupancy. The tax is expected to generate about \$1 million in annual revenues.

### **Becoming More Self-Reliant**

- Growing demands on social programs and the pressures created by resource development will place great strains on the GNWT's fiscal capacity.
- New resource development in the NWT has the potential to provide as much as \$90 billion in royalties and tax revenues for government over the life of the developments. Under current fiscal arrangements, most of these revenues will flow to the federal government.
- Funds from resource development have the potential to help finance needed investments in infrastructure and growing costs in the social area.
- Devolution of both control over development and the revenue from natural resources to northern governments could turn the NWT into a "have" territory over the course of the next ten years.





00-087

## **Report Concludes GNWT does not have Jurisdiction to Regulate Yellowknife Houseboats**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 21) -- A report prepared by the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has concluded that the Government of the Northwest Territories does not have the authority to regulate activity on waters within municipal boundaries.**

The report was completed to help clarify questions, of municipal jurisdiction over activities on water, raised by the City of Yellowknife's efforts to regulate houseboat developments on Yellowknife Bay. Copies of the report have been provided to the City of Yellowknife, all houseboat owners and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

The report found that the Government of Canada is currently responsible for the administration and control of waterbeds and activities on water in the Northwest Territories. Existing federal and territorial legislation does not provide the GNWT with authority to regulate these activities.

GNWT authority to regulate activities on water may be established, but would first require the federal government to transfer administration and control of waterbeds within municipal boundaries to the GNWT. Discussions between the GNWT and the federal government indicate that this transfer will not be possible without the support of the appropriate aboriginal groups.

If GNWT jurisdiction were established by the transfer of administration and control of the waterbeds from the Government of Canada, legislative changes would be required to explicitly establish municipal authorities in this area. This would require the GNWT to prepare amendments to 14 pieces of existing GNWT legislation. As any changes to GNWT legislation would have territorial-wide effect, extensive consultation would have to be undertaken before any legislative changes were introduced. This process would require considerable time and effort on the part of the GNWT.

The report concludes that due to the time and expense necessary to conduct extensive consultations with aboriginal groups, the federal government and other parties to seek the transfer of federal authority, further action on the part of the GNWT in this matter would be inappropriate at this time.

**For more information:**            **Dave Murray**  
Deputy Minister  
Municipal and Community Affairs  
Tel: (867) 873-7118





00-088

## **Kakfwi Delivers Sessional Statement - Government is Building Momentum**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 21) -- Premier Kakfwi says the first four months of his government have been about building relationships and earning trust. In his Sessional Statement to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the 14<sup>th</sup> assembly this afternoon, he told his colleagues that their vision of a better tomorrow is gaining momentum.**

“Businesses and institutions outside of the NWT, which are in a position to help us realize our dreams, are sitting up and taking notice of the things we are saying,” he said. “They are beginning to share our excitement about the prospects for development in the Northwest Territories - not only of our non-renewable resources, but of our local businesses, our tourism industry, our people, their skills and abilities.

Mr. Kakfwi spoke of the momentum of support building within Federal, Aboriginal and Community governments but acknowledged that initiatives such as the intergovernmental forum were fragile and, to flourish would need goodwill and a spirit of co-operation. “I would ask for support and patience from each of you. Please recognize that we are working hard to overcome the obstacles that have divided us in the past, in order to forge a new and stronger bond,” Mr. Kakfwi said.

Emphasizing the Government’s position that building strong partnerships with Aboriginal governments is fundamental for the GNWT, Mr Kakfwi praised recent steps towards the settlement of outstanding land claims and self-government agreements – a long standing goal of the GNWT. “Achieving this goal will represent a tangible confirmation of the rights of Aboriginal people to self-government and to secure tenure over lands that they have occupied for centuries,” he said.

The Premier also outlined many of the initiatives of individual Ministers which have helped to build momentum in business and industry, the social agenda and national and international affairs; and he called, once again on the federal government to respond quickly and decisively to the GNWT’s Non-renewable Resource Strategy.

“Immediate investment is needed,” he said, “if the opportunities offered by economic development are to be maximized for the benefit of NWT residents. With every day that passes we find new opportunities to benefit from this development. As a proactive government, we cannot afford to wait.”

Premier Kakfwi’s Sessional Statement is available at <http://pingo.gov.nt.ca/politics.htm>

**For further information, contact:**     **Drew Williams**  
Communications  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-089

### **Economic Strategy Panel Delivers 'Common Ground'**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 26) -- The Government's Economic Strategy Panel has formally delivered their report to the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Joe Handley.**

Co-chairs Richard Nerysoo and Darrell Beaulieu today signed, then delivered, their document titled 'Common Ground' in a short ceremony in the Legislative Assembly's Great Hall.

Mr. Handley thanked the panel for their hard work which will provide a comprehensive approach to economic priorities and actions needed to guide the government's future economic development. "After additional input from the public, 'Common Ground' will form the basis of an economic action plan for the recommendations directed to the Government of the Northwest Territories," he said.

The panel, appointed last June by then RWED Minister, Stephen Kakfwi, represents a broad cross section of northern organizations with an interest in the economic development of the North. The report reflects not just industry and sector associations' concerns, but those of Aboriginal governments as well as communities and organizations dealing with environmental and social issues.

The panel's work has already formed the basis for the draft Non-renewable Resource Development Strategy. Mr. Handley says he will continue to work with panel members to review progress made on their recommendations.

**For more information, contact:**            **Joseph L. Handley**  
Minister,  
Resources Wildlife and Economic Development  
Tel: (867) 669-2344







00-090

### **Commercial Vehicles on NWT Highways Safest in Canada**

**YELLOWKNIFE (June 28) – The percentage of NWT commercial vehicles that passed safety inspections in a recent inspection blitz was the highest in the country Vince Steen, Minister of Transportation announced today.**

Only ten per cent of trucks checked from June 6-8, 2000 had safety defects serious enough to require towing or immediate repair compared to the Canadian average of 23 per cent. The 72-hour random-safety inspection of trucks and drivers known as Roadcheck 2000 was conducted across North America. Eighty-seven trucks were inspected in Yellowknife, Inuvik and Enterprise. Nine vehicles and two drivers were removed from the highway until major defects were corrected. Sixteen charges and ten written warnings were issued.

“The carriers that operate on NWT highways continue to have some of the best quality drivers and vehicles in the country,” Mr. Steen said. “Long distances, remote locations and an unforgiving climate are all factors that demand the very best from our trucking industry. The Department will continue to concentrate on inspections to ensure that acceptable levels of safety are maintained.”

The annual Roadcheck Program serves as a report card on trucking-industry compliance across North America. During the last six years, the program results for the NWT have show steady improvement from the pass rate of 62 per cent in 1995 to 90 per cent achieved during the most- recent inspection. The NWT’s average pass rate of just over 80 per cent over that time is higher than the Canadian average of 73 per cent.

**For more information, contact:**

**Mark Schauerte**  
Acting Director  
Motor Vehicles  
Department of Transportation  
Tel: (867) 874-5007





00-091

### **Minister says Highway #3 is Safe**

**YELLOWKNIFE (July 7) – The Minister of Transportation says Highway #3 is safe. Responding to concerns raised in the Legislative Assembly this week, that portions of the Highway are too narrow to allow transport trucks to pass, Vince Steen today told his colleagues, “It is simply not true.”**

Mr. Steen reassured his colleagues that the full distance of Highway #3 is wide enough to accommodate passing transport trucks. “For two trucks carrying over-dimensional wide loads to pass, they need a minimum travelling surface of 6.4 metres. There is no point along the road narrower than eight metres wide. The average width is 10 metres,” he said. “Newly constructed sections of Highway #3 are built to a standard width of 11 metres.”

The Department of Transportation ensures that all NWT highways meet national engineering safety standards.

Mr. Steen told his colleagues however, that the Department of Transportation’s Highway Patrol Officer reports far too many private passenger vehicles routinely travel in excess of the posted maximum. “Highway #3 is safe at the posted maximum speed limit of 90 kilometres an hour,” he said.

**For more information contact:**            **Peter Vician**  
Deputy Minister  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-3460



00-092

### **Commissioner Welcomes Governor General to the Northwest Territories**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 2) – Commissioner Glenna Hansen says she’s looking forward to welcoming Her Excellency The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, C.C., C.M.M., C.D., Governor General of Canada and His Excellency John Ralston Saul, C.C. on their first official visit to the Northwest Territories August 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>.**

On Saturday, the Governor General will address Members of the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Chamber prior to attending a public reception in the Great Hall. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Anthony (Tony) Whitford and Premier Stephen Kakfwi will be among those to welcome the Governor General and Mr. Saul to the Legislative Assembly.

While in Yellowknife, the Governor General will present Corrections Exemplary Service Medals and the Governor General’s Caring Canadian Award. The Governor General and Mr. Saul will unveil a plaque at the Ceremonial Circle and attend a dinner hosted by the Commissioner.

The Governor General and Mr. Saul will visit Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Holman, Sachs Harbour, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Fort Simpson and Yellowknife during their seven-day visit to the NWT. Commissioner Glenna Hansen says, “I am delighted that the Governor General and Mr. Saul will be visiting the NWT, and I am especially pleased that they are making a point of visiting so many of our smaller communities.”

Additional details of the visit will be released by Rideau Hall.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
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00-093

### **Minister Announces Next Phase in Highway Construction**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 4) -- Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen announced today that the re-construction of an additional 15.5 km of Highway #3 between Rae and Yellowknife has been awarded to Pelly Construction Ltd. and their northern partners.**

Construction on this next phase beginning at the Stagg River bridge and proceeding towards Yellowknife is expected to begin this summer with completion scheduled for September 2001.

This contract is the third in a series of contracts that will lead to the eventual reconstruction of Highway #3 from its junction with Highway #1 near Fort Providence to its junction with Highway #4 near Yellowknife. To date, 12.5 kilometres near Rae/Edzo and 4.5 kilometres near Yellowknife have been completed. Once this contract is complete, the gravel portion of Highway #3 will be reduced to 58 kilometres.

The Department of Transportation reminds motorists to adjust their speed as posted through the construction zone and in accordance with road conditions on the remaining gravel sections. Speed limits through the construction zone and on the remaining gravel portion of Highway #3 will be strictly enforced.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Rob Nelson**  
Director,  
Highways Division  
Tel: (867) 83-7800







00-094

### **Premier Re-assigns Cabinet Portfolio**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 4) – Roger Allen will take over responsibility for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs effective at 5pm today.**

Currently the MLA for Inuvik, Twin Lakes and Minister Responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation, Public Utilities Board and Youth, Mr. Allen assumes his new portfolio from Jim Antoine who will maintain his responsibility for the Departments of Justice and Aboriginal Affairs.

“This change will more effectively balance the workloads of both Ministers,” Premier Kakfwi said.

Mr. Allen joined the Premier and Mr. Antoine this afternoon in a meeting with the NWT Association of Municipalities.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive – GNWT  
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00-095

### **New Plan Introduced for Yellowknife Family Physicians**

**Yellowknife (August 08) — A new agreement will change how Yellowknife physicians are compensated for the services they provide, and give them clearer terms of service for their practices. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Yellowknife physicians and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board introduced the plan in a joint news conference this afternoon.**

Under the new plan, physicians will be offered employment on a contract basis with the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board. Current physicians will have the option of continuing to be compensated on a fee-for-service basis or selecting the contract arrangement. The Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board will also assume ownership of the four clinics and employees of the clinics will become employees of the board.

Today's announcement is an important step toward implementing a new model for primary health care. With the transfer of administrative responsibilities for the clinics to the board, physicians will be better able to concentrate their time on their patients. In addition, physicians will have greater opportunities to work with nurse practitioners, mental health workers and social workers.

The new plan also addresses, in part, the severe shortage of general practitioners in the city. With the new contract payment method, the board expects to be more competitive in recruiting physicians.

Minister of Health and Social Services Jane Groenewegen, said she's pleased with the plan developed by the board and physicians. "I believe we will now be in a better position to compete nationally for the limited pool of doctors in the country," Mrs Groenewegen said. "I want to assure the people of Yellowknife and northerners that the quality and responsiveness of our health care system is a priority of this government. Our efforts to recruit and retain physicians will be enhanced by the plans announced today.

"These initiatives represent an important step toward stabilizing the current general practice physician workforce, as well as moving toward a competitive recruitment and retention strategy for Yellowknife," said Dr. David Butcher, speaking on behalf of Yellowknife physicians. "We do not anticipate any immediate change for the public in their access to their family doctors, but we hope we'll be able to attract more family doctors to Yellowknife under this plan."

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00-096

## **GNWT to Attend Jewellery World Expo in Toronto**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 9) – Staff from the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development (RWED) will attend the Jewellery World Expo in Toronto August 13-15th to promote NWT diamonds and raise awareness of the GNWT’s new diamond certification program.**

The GNWT has been working with stakeholders to develop a program to certify selected diamonds that are mined, cut and polished in the NWT. The monitoring system will follow diamonds from the producer through to the factory.

“This certification system guaranteeing the origin of NWT diamonds is on the leading edge of the diamond industry,” says RWED Minister, Joseph L Handley. “No other region in the world is putting such a program in place”.

Participation by the northern manufacturers will be voluntary, along with diamonds they choose to have certified. To date, two northern manufacturers have agreed to participate. “The GNWT and our participating manufacturers believe that this process will increase the growing demand for high quality NWT diamonds,” Mr. Handley said.

A government seal with the GNWT’s official polar bear logo will adorn the new certificate. The certificate will state that the accompanying diamond has met standards outlined by the GNWT Certification Program and will include the diamond’s Gemprint image. A Gemprint image is similar to a fingerprint, as each diamond has its own distinctive characteristics. These details will provide yet another level of authenticity for the consumer. Northern manufacturers may choose to put their own mark or logo on their diamonds as a marketing tool.

The GNWT, along with Deton’cho Diamonds and Arslanian Cutting Works are working to have the Certification Program in place by the late fall. They will share a booth at the Jewellery World Expo to provide details and information on the certification process to the international jewellery industry.

**For more information please contact:**

**Martin Irving**  
Director, Diamond Projects  
Tel: (867) 873-7373





00-097

## **Department of Transportation introduces General Identification Card**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 10) – The Government of the Northwest Territories has introduced a General Identification Card (GIC) for residents of the Northwest Territories.**

Beginning September 5th, residents who have reached the age of 14 and meet current motor-vehicle identity requirements will be able to apply for a GIC. Identification Cards will cost \$25.00, plus the applicable agent's fee, and will be valid for five years.

The new identification cards will be provided through the Department of Transportation. "There are residents in the Northwest Territories who may not have a driver's licence or other forms of personal identification" says Minister, Vince Steen. "For them, the GIC will be an official means of providing identification and proof of age in the Northwest Territories."

The Department of Health & Social Services and the Northwest Territories Liquor Licensing Board are also partners in the project. Once incorporated, the General Identification Card will be the officially recognized ID for the purchase of alcohol and tobacco products in the NWT.

General Identification Cards will be issued at the following Motor Vehicle Agency locations:

Yellowknife - Yellowknife Registries  
Hay River - Mack Travel  
Fort Smith - MATCO  
Norman Wells - Mack Travel  
Inuvik - Arctic Insurance Brokers  
Rae - Hamlet of Rae  
Fort Simpson - Xah Ndah Resources Ltd.

**For more information please contact:**

**Gary Walsh**  
Assistant Director  
Motor Vehicles Division  
Tel: (867) 920-8633  
Fax: (867) 873-0120







## **Premiers secure national support for Northern priorities**

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba (August 12, 2000)** – Canada’s Northern Premiers received strong support from their southern colleagues on a number of initiatives during the Annual Premiers’ Conference, which wrapped up in Winnipeg late Friday night.

Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik, Northwest Territories Premier Stephen Kakfwi and Yukon Premier Pat Duncan met prior to the Annual Premiers’ Conference to review the APC agenda and discuss issues of common concern. Premiers agreed that health, northern economic development and infrastructure would be a key part of their discussions with Canadian Premiers.

Premiers discussed the state of health care systems in Canada and agreed to a plan that would ensure access to care, prevention of disease, improvements to health services, availability of doctors and nurses, better home and community care, and affordable drivers. Premiers are committed to ongoing investment in health infrastructure and new technologies. They emphasized the need for the federal government to work with the provinces, territories, and aboriginal peoples to improve the delivery of health care and services to aboriginal peoples. Premiers called on the federal government to restore health funding immediately.

“Unless the North is able to access increased funding for the health care system, we will continue to find ourselves lagging behind other Canadians,” Premier Paul Okalik said. “In Nunavut we have been innovative in restructuring our health care system and we urge the federal government to recognize this and respond favorably.”

Premier Kakfwi led the discussion on Northern Economic Development Strategy and Devolution. He acknowledged the continued support of Premiers for devolution of resource jurisdiction and revenues to northern governments. As importantly, Premiers expressed support for federal economic development assistance and promotion of strategic private sector investments to promote strong northern economies.

“The key to economic self-sufficiency for all territories is to maximize economic benefits now,” Premier Kakfwi said. “In the Northwest Territories our vision is to create a vibrant, robust economy that will enable the NWT to be a ‘have’ territory.”

Premier Pat Duncan led the Northern Premiers’ call for specific, baseline infrastructure funding for the territories. Premier Duncan said the recently announced federal infrastructure program does not meet Northern needs. Premiers acknowledged the challenges faced by the North and agreed that special consideration should be made for the territories in meeting their infrastructure and transportation requirements.



“The population of the North is small compared to the rest of Canada; the infrastructure needs are great,” Premier Duncan said. “In addressing the issue of funding allocation, our colleagues have continually stressed that funding must take into account the pressing infrastructure needs of remote and sparsely populated areas.”

Premiers also agreed to pursue discussions with the federal government in the areas of early childhood development, airline restructuring, post-secondary education and skills development.

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Government of the NWT  
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Ken MacGillivray  
Communications Advisor  
Government of Yukon  
☎ 867-667-8905





00-098

### **New Bridge for West Channel Opened**

**HAY RIVER (August 14) – An official ceremony was held Saturday to open the new West Channel Bridge in Hay River.**

The new \$3.5 million structure is a two-lane, 130 metre long, open concrete deck on steel girders with a sidewalk for pedestrians and bicycles. Unlike the old structure, built in 1963, the new bridge has no dimensional restriction and is designed to handle heavy truck traffic. It is the only bridge in the NWT to feature streetlights.

"This new bridge is another example of how communities and the Department of Transportation can work together for the benefit of the travelling public," Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen said.

The Town of Hay River worked with the Department of Transportation throughout the construction process, which minimized disruption for local traffic during the construction period, and maximized local involvement.

Also in attendance at the celebrations were Hay River MLAs Jane Groenewegen and Paul Delorey, Mayor Jack Rowe and Chief Pat Martell of the Hay River Reserve.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Rob Nelson**  
Director, Highways  
Department of Transportation  
Tel: (867) 873-7800





00-099

## **Minister Appoints New Members of the NWT Arts Council**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 14) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes, today announced the appointments of three highly qualified northerners to the NWT Arts Council.**

**Marnie Hilash** of Inuvik is a well-known northern artist whose participation and volunteer efforts with the Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik have made her a national and international ambassador for northern art. Ms. Hilash works in a variety of media ranging from beadwork to sculpture. A lifelong student of artistic technique, she frequently shares her knowledge and experience as an artist through workshops and teaching.

**Wallace Murphy** of Rae-Edzo joins the NWT Arts Council for the first time. Mr. Murphy has spent 15 years teaching fine arts to high school students, and like Ms. Hilash, continues his own study of art and artistic technique. An artist in his own right, Mr. Murphy's works include drawing, painting, pottery and stained glass.

**Sonny MacDonald** is a well-known Fort Smith carver. He returns for a second term on the Arts Council, assuming the role of Chairperson. Mr. MacDonald is a familiar figure at art shows across Canada, the US and overseas where he exhibits his work several times a year. Mr. MacDonald carves wood, bone, antler, horn, ivory, stone, ice and snow.

"The impressive credentials of these individuals will ensure that the NWT Arts Council will meet its mandate of promoting and supporting the abundance of artistic talent in the NWT," Mr. Ootes said.

Established in 1985, the Council exists to promote the arts in the NWT. It makes recommendations to the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment on financial contributions for creative artistic projects to NWT residents.

All three appointments are for two-year terms ending in 2002.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**  
Director,  
Culture, Communications and Language  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel (867) 873-7551







00-100

## **Archives Project Preserves NWT Culture and Language**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 22) – A joint project to preserve the political and cultural history of the Northwest Territories as seen through the eyes of Canada’s public broadcaster has been completed by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and CBC North.**

The collection of over 1,000 audio and video recordings, dating back to 1952, is now housed in the NWT archives at the Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. The locally produced programs, production tapes and audio and video footage feature prominent politicians and other well-known northerners talking about land claims, aboriginal self-government, mineral exploration, wildlife management and politics.

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes says the collection is an important component of recorded history of both the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. “Even though the NWT is a relatively new jurisdiction, it is rich in history,” he said. “Many people can still remember when Joe Tobie made the first radio broadcast in a Dene language in 1969. Events of that type played a significant role in the rapid political change that has taken place in the last 50 years.”

To facilitate public access, the materials, have been divided into four series: radio, television, administration and project and special events. In most cases, individual programs are catalogued and described item by item. Over 1000 CBC radio recordings, already housed in the archives, were also transferred from audiotape to compact disc to ensure the quality of the recordings was preserved.

CBC Radio has broadcast in Aboriginal languages in the NWT since the first Inuvialuktun radio program aired in 1960. CBC-TV debuted in the North in 1979. Both have captured and documented the diversity of languages spoken by Aboriginal northerners in their interviews and programming. Much of what has been recorded and is now preserved for future generations is the traditional knowledge of elders who spent their lives on the land, and experienced first-hand, the culture of their ancestors.

“Joining forces in this way permits both the GNWT and the CBC to fulfil their mandates of preserving and promoting culture and language,” says Cathie Bolstad, Director of Television for CBC North, “Housing the collection in a public institution makes the richness of our heritage accessible to everyone.”

### **For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**  
Director - Culture, Heritage and Languages  
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre  
Tel: (867) 873-7551

**Dave McNaughton**  
Radio Operations Manager  
CBC North,  
Tel: (867) 920-5400





00-101

## **New Inuvik Hospital Underway**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 23) -- Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen today announced the \$37 million replacement for the current Inuvik Regional Hospital will go ahead. The project includes \$3 million in start-up work to be carried out this year.**

The project, anticipated to be ready for occupancy in 2003, will include a transient centre, acute care beds, continuing care beds, and emergency health services.

"I am pleased that we are able to proceed with this important project," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "It provides the Beaufort-Delta with a modern infrastructure necessary to effectively serve regional residents and projected increases to regional industry. The GNWT is committed to this project. It is a critical component in ensuring that northerners continue to receive quality health care that is comparable to the rest of Canada."

In 1997 and 1998, the Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board, in conjunction with department staff, undertook studies to define current and projected needs for a regional facility and the ability of the existing facility to meet those needs. These studies determined that the most cost efficient alternative was to replace the existing structure built in 1957.

"I am pleased that the construction of this capital project is going ahead," Board Chair, Nellie Cournoyea said. "The Inuvik Regional Health and Social Services Board will work closely in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services and all other involved players in order to make this project a reality."

Work will begin soon on the development of design options.

**For more information, contact:**

**Jane Groenewegen**  
Minister  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 669-2310





00-102

### **Student Financial Assistance Application Assessment Completed**

**YELLOWKNIFE (August 25) – The initial processing of all 2000-2001 fall-term Student Financial Assistance applications is complete, Minister of Education Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes announced today.**

“Staff have worked hard and students have been very patient. As a result, we have completed the review of nearly 1500 applications from across the Northwest Territories,” Mr. Ootes said.

Students who have not yet been notified will receive the results of their assessment by letter. In Yellowknife, students can pick up their letters in the lobby of the Lahm Ridge Tower until 5:00 pm today or between 9 am and noon on Saturday. Outside of Yellowknife, students will receive their letters via courier.

“Many students have, however, already been notified and have begun their fall studies or are making arrangements to travel to school, rent apartments and pay their tuitions.” Mr Ootes noted.

The improved Student Financial Assistance Program now provides increased financial support to all eligible post-secondary students. Mr. Ootes says he’s pleased with the continued strong interest in post-secondary education. “Getting a good education is a key to a successful career,” he said.

**For more information, contact:**

**Bruce Evelyn**  
A/Assistant Deputy Minister  
Advanced Education and Careers  
Tel: (867) 873-7252





00-103

### **Minister to Honour Community Language Leaders**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 05) - Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes made a call for nominations today for the Community Language Leader Award to be presented next month.**

“The Community Language Leader Award is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge and publicly recognize the selfless efforts of individuals in the NWT who live their language,” Mr. Ootes said. “Such individuals are committed to sharing knowledge about their language by promoting its use every day and by organizing and encouraging community events that spotlight language.”

Any NWT resident who volunteers in their spare time to promote the daily use of Chipewyan, Dogrib, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inunnaqtun, North Slavey, South Slavey, Cree and French can be nominated for the award. One winner in each language group will receive \$250. and a certificate.

“This award recognizes the significant role the community plays in keeping the languages of the NWT strong,” Mr. Ootes said.

The deadline for nominations is Monday, October 2, 2000. Winners will be chosen by a panel with members from each of the language communities. The winners will be announced during the fall session of the Legislature.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**

Director, Culture Language and Heritage

Education Culture Employment

Tel: (867) 920-8061







00-104

### **Proponents to Withdraw from Bidding Process in Hay River**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 05) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories has requested both Northland Utilities Ltd and the Northwest Territories Power Commission withdraw their proposals for the provision of power in Hay River.**

Minister of Finance, Joe Handley says the GNWT needs time to identify how best to provide power to NWT residents in the future. "With the division of the NWTPC on March 31, 2001 and recent issues surrounding community power franchises, there is an urgent need to address the future of power distribution in the NWT," he said. "Concerns regarding affordability, competition and regulation, security of supply, and other public interests need to be addressed."

The GNWT will undertake a review of the future of power generation in the NWT and plans to have a report for discussion this fall - prior to the expiry of the current Hay River franchise.

**For more information, contact:**      **Lew Voytilla**  
Secretary of  
Financial Management Board  
GNWT  
Tel: (867) 873-7211





00-105

## International Literacy Day

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 06) - Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes is encouraging everyone to celebrate International Literacy Day on Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.**

“Literacy skills are important for self esteem and coping with the challenges of day to day life,” Mr. Ootes said. “Literacy is about participating in communities, helping others and building one’s future. It is the ability to read, write, calculate, speak and understand, as well as communicate with others.”

Education levels in the NWT have improved steadily and consistently in the past ten years. Mr. Ootes says International Literacy Day is an opportunity to celebrate this accomplishment. “Increasing literacy levels mean more NWT residents will be able to take advantage of employment opportunities emerging from the oil and gas and diamond industries,” he said.

International Literacy Day is also a time to focus on the challenges faced in ensuring that literacy standards and education levels in the NWT continue to improve. The Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, in co-operation with other GNWT departments and non-government organizations and agencies, is preparing a comprehensive literacy strategy for the NWT. It will identify goals and objectives, refine a work plan and foster better co-ordination of programs that support and promote literacy in the NWT.

“I encourage everyone to take the time today to reflect on the link between economic well-being and literacy,” Mr. Ootes said. “By working together to promote literacy we can make the NWT a ‘have’ territory with healthy, educated Northerners making responsible personal choices for themselves and their families.”

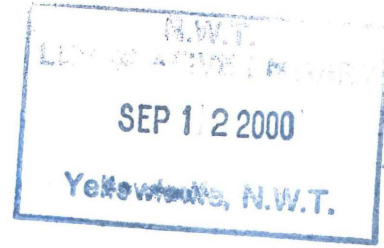
**For more information, contact:**      **Lesley Allen,**  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
Education, Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-7252.

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00-106



### **Premier to attend First Ministers' Meeting**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 08) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi will travel to Ottawa this weekend to discuss with the Prime Minister and first Ministers the restoration of federal health funding to provinces and territories.**

The Premier and his colleagues will also discuss health innovation and renewal, early childhood development and infrastructure programs.

Premier Kakfwi is concerned about the basis on which funding will be distributed. "If funding is based on per-capita allocation, it will not offer the same degree of benefits to northerners as will be enjoyed by other Canadians," he says. "The cost of delivering health care in the North to a growing population in small isolated communities cannot be met when funding is allocated solely on the basis of population."

For every \$1 billion of health funding transferred by the federal government to provinces and territories under a per-capita agreement, the NWT receives only \$1.36 million. "Forced growth in our health service system alone is costing the GNWT \$11 million a year - and that doesn't begin to include money for social programs," the Premier says.

Mr. Kakfwi supports the Premiers' call for the full restoration of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) with an appropriate escalator but he says he wants to work with his counterparts to find a solution that will also meet the needs of northern governments. He says one such solution could be a minimum funding threshold for smaller jurisdictions like the NWT.

"My provincial colleagues have publicly recognized the need for special consideration for the territories and remote communities in areas such as transportation and infrastructure," Premier Kakfwi says. "Similar consideration will have to be given to health care and early childhood development."

Mr. Kakfwi has expressed his concerns and suggestions in a letter to the Prime Minister.

**For more information, contact:** **Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-107

### **Speed Limit Reduced on Highway #3**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 15) -- Effective Monday (September 18, 2000), the speed limit for all vehicles travelling Highway #3 between Stagg River and Yellowknife will be reduced to 80 kilometres per hour.**

Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen says the change reflects an increase in the volume of traffic on Highway #3 over the past three years and continued public concern regarding the behaviour of drivers travelling the 75-km of unpaved highway between Stagg River and Yellowknife.

Mr Steen says he's confident that reducing the posted speed limit will encourage drivers to slow down on the unpaved portion of the highway and reduce wear and tear on the highway itself.

A traffic survey conducted by the Department of Transportation this summer indicated that approximately half of all drivers on the highway travelled in excess of the current posted limit of 90 kilometres per hour. "Increased traffic and excessive speed have a detrimental affect on road conditions," Mr. Steen noted.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Rob Nelson**  
Director of Highways  
Department of Transportation  
Tel: (867) 873-7800







00-108

### **Funding for Sachs Harbour Airport**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 15) – A retrofit to the Sachs Harbour Airport will go ahead thanks to \$1.6 million in contribution funding from the federal department of Transport – GNWT Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen announced today.**

The Department of Transportation applied to Transport Canada under the Government of Canada's Airport Capital Assistance Program - part of the National Airports Policy supporting capital projects on airports related to safety, asset protection and operating-cost reductions. "I am pleased that our application was successful and that Transport Canada will be a partner in this important project," Mr. Steen said.

The Sachs Harbour airport was constructed in 1978 and has only received annual operations and maintenance care since. This funding will allow for the rehabilitation of airside surfaces and the replacement of the airfield lighting system.

"This project will enhance the safe and efficient operations of the Sachs Harbour airport well into the future," Mr. Steen said. "It reaffirms the commitment of both federal and territorial governments to a safe, efficient, and affordable airport system in the Northwest Territories.

**For more information, contact:**

**Jim Winsor**  
Director, Airports  
Department of Transportation  
Tel: (867) 873-7725





00-109

### **Minister Committed to Hard to House Initiative in Inuvik**

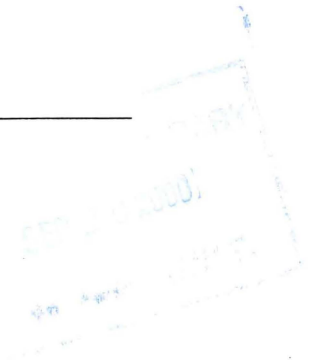
**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 19) – Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, Roger Allen, says he’s committed to implementing a solution for the hard-to-house in Inuvik.**

The Minister plans to move forward with a proposed Transitional Housing Initiative in Inuvik. The project will see the construction of two duplexes under a partnership agreement between the Nihtat Gwich’in Council and the NWT Housing Corporation. The units will provide temporary accommodations for displaced individuals who are seeking to re-establish their eligibility for public or private-sector accommodations.

“There is a need in the community to assist people who are unable to access proper housing,” Mr. Allen said. “We can’t have people living on the streets in our harsh climate.”

The NWT Housing Corporation hopes to begin construction in early November. “Time is of the essence, Mr Allen said. “We need to meet some tight deadlines and get a lot of work done. By working together, we can we provide a safe, warm environment this winter for these individuals and their dependants.”

**For More Information Contact:** **Greg Barton**  
Public Affairs Co-ordinator  
NWTHC  
Tel: (867) 920-3137





# News release

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September 26, 2000

## Alberta and Northwest Territories meet on Memorandum of Understanding for Co-operation and Development

EDMONTON — The first meeting of the Steering Committee for the Northwest Territories-Alberta Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Co-operation and Development was chaired today by Mike Cardinal, Alberta Minister of Resource Development and Vince Steen, Northwest Territories Minister of Public Works & Services and Transportation. The 1998 MOU is a broad agreement that provides an overarching framework for co-operative initiatives between the two jurisdictions.

“Today’s meetings are an important first step in advancing additional partnerships between our jurisdictions. Mr. Steen and I discussed resource development activity in the north, transportation, trade, tourism and training. We have challenges which are unique to the north, and we have learned that co-operation will help us overcome those challenges,” said Cardinal.

Mr. Steen said “ The Northwest Territories has always had strong economic links with Alberta. Further partnerships with Alberta will contribute to the enhancement of our economy, our educational opportunities and ultimately the lives of residents in both jurisdictions. It is particularly important to the Northwest Territories that we make progress on these initiatives, as they support the NWT’s vision of a better tomorrow.”

The two jurisdictions have established working groups in the areas of transportation and resource development. Other possible areas of co-operation include trade and tourism initiatives. Both jurisdictions expect subsequent meetings to follow twice annually, with the next meeting tentatively scheduled for June 2001, in Yellowknife.

For more information, contact:

Drew Williams, Press Officer  
Communications Division  
Government of Northwest Territories  
Tel: (867) 669-2304

Mark Erdman  
Director of Communications  
Alberta Resource Development  
Tel: (780) 422-3667

Tom Baldwin  
Executive Director  
Northern Alberta Development  
Council  
Tel: (780) 624-6277

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00-110

## **NWT Premier says Gas Pipeline Should Benefit Canadians**

**CALGARY (Sept 20) – NWT Premier, Stephen Kakfwi says Canadians should not be content with simply being a corridor to move Alaskan gas to American markets.**

Proven and potential gas reserves in the NWT mean a Mackenzie Valley Pipeline would be one of Canada's biggest energy developments. But, the Premier warns, the billions of dollars it represents will not flow into government coffers and local cash registers if Canadian oil and gas remains in the ground.

"Clearly, the reserves that would be accessed by the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline have the potential to establish the NWT as a "have territory" and keep Canada in the forefront of the continental gas market," he said.

The Premier told government, industry and First Nation representatives attending an oil and gas conference in Calgary that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline is the only pipeline proposal that will allow for the development of Canadian oil and gas resources.

"I want to emphasize that we are talking about Canadian gas with the potential to generate royalties for the federal government and spin-off revenues for the provinces and territories – Canadian reserves that will create nation-wide business opportunities and thousands of jobs for Canadians, across this country," he said.

Industry estimates indicate the construction of the more-economical Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline with an offshore link to Prudhoe Bay will yield \$2 billion in wages and \$4 billion in purchases - most of which will be spent outside of the NWT.

The NWT Premier assured industry representatives, in particular, that any short-term challenges posed by aboriginal interests and environmental and regulatory processes are far outweighed by the benefits a Mackenzie Valley Pipeline will offer to Canadians.

**For more information, contact:**      **Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304







00-111

### **Co-Chief Negotiators Appointed at Dogrib Table**

**YELLOWKNIFE (September 28) – Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Jim Antoine today announced the appointments of Gary Black and Bernie Funston as Chief Negotiators in the Dogrib land claim and self-government negotiation process.**

“Mr Black’s and Mr. Funston’s long-term experience with NWT issues will contribute greatly to the conclusion of successful negotiations,” Mr. Antoine said. “The appointment of two negotiators is part of the GNWT’s commitment to the timely completion of a fair and workable agreement.”

Gary Black, who has 25 years experience in the departments of the Executive, Municipal and Community Affairs and Education, will be responsible for negotiating collateral agreements on issues such as program delivery, governance financing and the implementation of the final Dogrib agreement.

Bernie Funston, a lawyer with extensive experience in intergovernmental and constitutional affairs at the national level, will be responsible for negotiating the finished text and overseeing the legal review of the Final Agreement document.

“The settling of land, resource and self-government rights for the Dogrib Nation is an essential building block for the future,” Mr. Antoine said.

**For further information, contact:**      **Sue Enge**  
Communications Officer  
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs  
Tel: (867) 920-6989





00-112

### **NWT Joins Canada in Mourning**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 28) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories joins the nation in mourning the death of the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau - one of Canada's great political leaders and statesmen.**

Mr. Trudeau was a champion of the rights of all Canadians. He was instrumental in the patriation of the constitution and the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The constitutional debate that led up to the incorporation of the Charter included, for the first time, Aboriginal leaders who fought for and succeeded in having their constitutional rights recognized and entrenched.

He believed in and celebrated the cultural diversity of our country. Mr Trudeau loved the wilderness of northern Canada. With his friends, he paddled our northern rivers and carried his bedroll across our arctic and sub-arctic terrain. He visited the North both as Prime Minister and after his retirement.

To all Canadians he was an icon; to the North he was also a friend.



00-113

### **Minister Proclaims NWT Literacy Week**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Sept 29) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes has declared the week of October 1<sup>st</sup> –7<sup>th</sup> as Literacy Week in the NWT. The NWT Literacy Council has chosen “Everyone Has a Story to Tell,” as the theme for Literacy Week 2000.**

One of several events planned by the Council across the NWT is the annual Read for 15 Challenge. Schools, communities and people in the work place are being encouraged to read for 15 minutes, record the number of people who complete the challenge, and forward their results to the Literacy Council.

“NWT Literacy Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate the success we’ve experienced in improving literacy skills across the NWT in the last 10 years,” Mr. Ootes said. “It is also an opportunity to focus on the challenges we face in improving literacy standards.”

The Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, along with other GNWT departments, is preparing a comprehensive literacy strategy for the NWT that will identify goals and objectives for the North and how they will work together to achieve these goals.

A key player in implementing the literacy strategy will be the NWT Literacy Council, which promotes and supports the development of literacy skills. There is a direct link between the level of literacy in society and the quality of life experienced by residents.

“Rapid growth in the non-renewable resource sector has the potential to create many jobs. But many NWT residents will need a functional level of literacy to access training and employment programs,” Mr. Ootes said.

“By working with the NWT Literacy Council, and other organizations that promote literacy, we can increase the opportunities our residents have to participate fully in the NWT’s future. I encourage everyone to take time this week to consider what they can do to improve literacy in our territory,” he said.

**For more information, contact:**

**Lesley Allen**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
College and Careers  
Tel: (867) 873-7252





00-114

## **Study Confirms Mackenzie Valley Pipeline as Best Route for Canadians**

**YELLOWKNIFE (October 6) -- A study by the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI) confirms the GNWT position that a Mackenzie Valley Pipeline, accessing both Mackenzie Delta and Prudhoe Bay gas reserves, is not only the least expensive transportation route for Canadian and American producers but will also provide the greatest fiscal benefits for Canadians.**

The study, "A comparison of Natural Gas Pipeline Options for the North," was released today by GNWT Finance Minister Joe Handley. It shows projected Canadian tax and royalty revenues from a Mackenzie Valley Pipeline route exceed those of the ANGTS and Dempster Lateral route by \$3 billion dollars. The revenues to Canadian producers from the Mackenzie Valley route are \$5 billion greater than the ANGTS/Dempster alternative.

"The Mackenzie Valley route clearly provides more benefits to Canadians," Mr. Handley said.

The study compares and analyzes alternatives for transporting natural gas from the Mackenzie Delta and Beaufort Sea to the south and considers the impact of transporting Alaska's Prudhoe Bay gas on the economics of transporting Canadian gas.

"Without a pipeline from the Mackenzie Delta, Canadian producers have no means to bring Canadian gas to market," Mr. Handley said. "The lower cost of a Mackenzie Valley route also benefits American oil and gas interests. Clearly, the route that costs the least, poses the fewest environmental challenges and presents the greatest potential for ongoing discoveries is the best choice."

Four pipeline options are examined by the study: a stand alone Mackenzie Valley pipeline, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline with an off shore link to Prudhoe Bay; the Alaska Natural Gas Transmission System (ANGTS) route; and a combination of ANGTS and Dempster highway lateral.

The Canadian Energy Research Institute is an independent non-profit research institute based in Calgary. It specializes in the analysis of energy economics and related environmental policy issues. Copies of the report, commissioned by the GNWT, will be available from the GNWT's Department of Finance website at [www.fin.gov.nt.ca](http://www.fin.gov.nt.ca) or by calling (867) 920-6436.

### **For more information, contact:**

**John Monroe**  
Director, Fiscal Policy  
Department of Finance  
Tel: (867) 920-6436

**Len Coad**  
Vice President, NA Natural Gas/Energy  
Canadian Energy Research Institute  
Tel: (403) 282-1231







00-115

### **Minister Recognizes National SADD Day**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 17) -- Minister of Youth, Roger Allen says he hopes all residents of the NWT will join him today in recognizing Canadian youth working to end impaired driving. Today is National Students Against Impaired Driving (NSAID) Day.**

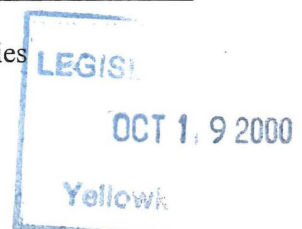
“This is an opportunity for students to bring awareness and change to impaired driving,” Mr. Allen said. “Students across Canada are taking a stand and educating their peers and their parents about the realities of impaired driving.”

Every day in Canada, an average of 4.5 people are killed as a result of impaired driving and hundreds are injured. The Northwest Territories has a per capita charge rate for impaired driving that is 2.5 times the national average.

In March, Yellowknife SADD will host a national conference of 500 young people dedicated to the fight against drinking and driving. The GNWT is one of many northern sponsors of this event.

“It is our hope that the example set by our youth will set in motion a chain of events that will energize our people and strengthen the fight against the number one killer of youth in Canada,” Mr. Allen said.

**For More Information Contact:**      **Tom Williams**  
Executive Assistant to Roger Allen  
Tel: (867) 669-2315







00-116

### **NWT Arts Council Grants Approved**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 18) -- The NWT Arts Council has approved 25 awards, worth a total of \$140,000 to be used in 2000/2001 by a variety of NWT arts organizations, musicians, carvers, photographers, artisans and craftspeople in the NWT.**

The awards are determined annually on the recommendation of the Arts Council which has representation from across the NWT.

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes says the funding provided by the council supports the many individuals, groups and organizations whose creative abilities enrich the lives of those around them. "Art in all of its forms is an integral part of our northern lifestyle and culture," he said.

This year's recipients are:

Eli Nasogaluak, Yellowknife – Eli will produce eight sculptures or paintings for an exhibit featuring artwork by Eli and his two brothers.

Judith McNicol, Yellowknife – Judith will incorporate photography, gauze, lighting and audio tapes in an installation called 'Celebration of Snow – Light and Shadow,' which will consist of 15 images.

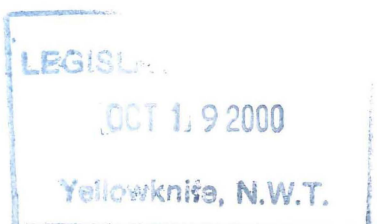
Delta Flood Band, Inuvik – Three members of the Delta Flood Band will travel to Yellowknife to record a CD of original music.

Don Lepine, Fort Smith – Don will create a series of 20 carvings of wood, bone and stone featuring the wildlife of the South Slave region.

NWT Pipe Band, Yellowknife – The Pipe Band will host and organize a weekend piping and drumming workshop.

Derrald Taylor, Yellowknife – Derrald will produce a series of 20 soapstone carvings featuring drum dancers, hunters and animals.

Veronica McNeill, Fort Smith – Veronica will write, arrange and digitally record a seven song CD of original music.





Sandra Tearle, Yellowknife – Sandra will produce a series of between 48 and 60 oil paintings on canvas around 4 themes; perceptions of NWT, spiritual renditions, military historical events and portraits.

Margaret Nazon-Donavan, Tsiigehtchic – Margaret will explore ways of manipulating fabric into art to create six pictures of northern landscapes.

Artists of the South Slave Society, Fort Smith – The Society hosted a series of developmental workshops for visual artists attending the Arts component of the South Slave Friendship Festival.

Lee Mandeville, Yellowknife – Lee will record a CD of his own unique style of Metis fiddling.

Bonnie Fournier, Yellowknife – Bonnie will illustrate thirty common flowers found in the Yellowknife area using pen and ink coloured with acrylic paint.

Robert Laviolette, Fort Smith – Robert will record a CD of original music.

Sherelle Wilsack, Yellowknife – Sherelle will create a series of 14 life size portraits based on Black & White photographs of Canadians from the turn of the century.

Gordon Arychuk, Fort Providence – Gordon will experiment with throwing pottery on a wheel, with various glazes, using clay he dug from the banks of the Mackenzie River.

Marie Villebrun-MacDonald, Fort Smith – Marie will record a CD of original easy listening soft rock songs.

Bernard LeBlanc – Bernard will finish writing a science fiction novel called 'The Beekeeper.'

Ronald Felix, Yellowknife – Ronald will create a series of carvings incorporating soapstone, caribou antler and hide around the themes of hunting, dancing and life long ago.

Christine DeWolf, Fort Smith – Christine will write and illustrate a children's book about a 10-year-old girl who moved from Halifax to the NWT.

The Great Northern Arts Festival, Inuvik – The Festival sponsored a series of developmental workshops for visual artists attending the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Great Northern Arts Festival in Inuvik in July.

Ronald English, Yellowknife – Ronald will create a series of 12 masks using wood, stone and non-traditional materials.

Folk on the Rocks – The festival sponsored a series of developmental workshops for northern musicians in attendance at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Folk on the Rocks Festival in Yellowknife in July.

Karen Wright-Fraser, Yellowknife – Karen will embroider a poem, which she wrote on stroud, surrounded by a border of beaded flowers and quill work geometric design and framed with birch bark.



Norman Glowach, Yellowknife – Norman will explore and write music using the rhythm of aboriginal music (chant) and imposing western music forms on top of these rhythms.

Elizabeth Hardisty, Fort Simpson – Elizabeth will organize a workshop for Deh Cho artists to learn the techniques and designs of moose and caribou hair tufting and porcupine quilling.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**

Director, Culture, Heritage and Language

Education Culture Employment

Tel: (867) 920-7551.







00-117

### **Federal Budget Good News for Taxpayers**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 19) -- Finance Minister, Joseph Handley says yesterday's federal mini-budget is good news for northern taxpayers. The Economic Statement presented Wednesday by federal Finance Minister Paul Martin contains an additional \$42 billion in tax reductions over four years, beyond those announced in his February budget.**

Most of the reductions in yesterday's announcement are targeted at individuals. Mr Handley notes reductions in personal income tax will benefit NWT residents by reducing overall federal and territorial income tax burdens. "I am pleased to see measures targeting students, working parents, and low income families," Mr. Handley said.

By 2001, a single-income family earning \$40,000 in the NWT will pay \$1100 less in federal tax and \$495 less in territorial tax compared to 1999.

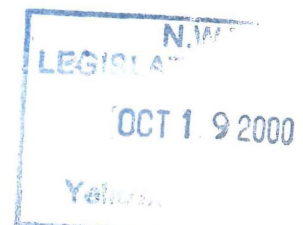
Mr. Handley says that although the fuel tax credit for low-income earners is particularly welcome in the NWT, there are better ways for the federal finance minister to address high fuel prices in Canada. "The federal government needs to make investments to promote frontier gas development," he said. "This is the long-term solution to high energy costs. Federal investment is needed to ensure Canadians, and northerners in particular, realize the benefits from all resource development."

Yesterday's Economic Statement also proposes the introduction of a temporary 15 per cent tax credit aimed at encouraging mineral exploration. "This tax measure is encouraging," Mr. Handley said, "we will be looking for more details on the proposal to see how it will affect northern mining exploration."

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

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00-118

## **GNWT Clarifies Facts Regarding Power Corporation Announcement to Employees**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 19) -- In an effort to respond to concerns raised as a result of this week's announcement by the Power Corporation to its employees, the GNWT is clarifying the facts regarding the recently initiated review of the Power Corporation.**

In a memo to staff this week, the NWT Power Corporation advised that the Board is deferring any decisions regarding layoffs arising from division-related downsizing of the Power Corporation. These decisions, that were expected to be announced on October 18, will be deferred until the GNWT has completed its "Review of Electrical Power Generation, Distribution and Regulation in the Northwest Territories."

The Board's commitment to defer these decisions comes as a result of direction given by the GNWT Cabinet that no final decision can be reached until the comprehensive examination and analysis of the role and mandate of the NWT Power Corporation is completed.

"The outcome of this study has not been predetermined," said the Honourable Joe Handley, Minister of Finance." The range of outcomes and their implications for the structure of the Power Corporation is broad. We need to look closely at the findings before we can reach decisions about issues as important as staffing."

"While the Board has acted prudently in dealing with the impacts of division of the NWT Power Corporation," said the Honourable Jake Ootes, Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, "they do not have all of the facts needed to reach a final conclusion regarding the Power Corporation's future staffing requirements. It is important to recognize that it is not the announcement of layoffs, but the decision about layoffs which is being put on hold until the study is completed."

The study is expected to be completed by November 30, 2000 and will be followed by a period of consultation and analysis.

**For more information, contact:**

**Annelies Pool**

Executive Assistant to Jake Ootes

Tel: (867) 669-2312





00-119

## **Second Annual Principals' Conference Addressing Effective Schooling**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 23) -- More than 50 elementary and high school principals from the Northwest Territories are in Yellowknife this week to attend the second annual NWT School Principal's Conference.**

Minister of Education Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes says the conference, which begins today, is an excellent opportunity for principals to combine professional development opportunities with networking. "The challenges that school administrators in the NWT deal with everyday are often complex. This conference gives them an opportunity to talk to others who may have shared similar experiences," he said.

This year's conference agenda will centre around the theme "Gathering Momentum: Addressing Effective Schooling" and features presenters from the Northwest Territories as well as southern Canada.

"It's a comprehensive and informative program, developed in the North to help northern educational leaders develop more effective school programs for NWT students," Mr. Ootes said.

One of four feature presenters at this year's conference is Norman Kunc from Nainamo, B.C. Mr. Kunc is an internationally recognized disability-rights activist. A number of breakout sessions will also be offered to principals over the two-day conference. These sessions will showcase the work of northern educators and guest speakers on topics ranging from incorporating technology and online learning in school programs, to effective behaviour support and teaching "life" in the high school years.

"The annual Principals' Conference helps administrators develop the skills they need to lead their staff and students through a rapidly evolving education system," Mr. Ootes said. "Northern schools face unique challenges. This program will help give leaders in education the confidence they need to face those challenges."

**For more information, contact:**

**Janet Leader**  
Public Affairs Co-ordinator  
Education Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-6222





00-120

## **LINX 2000 Career Development Conference**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 24) – Teachers, counselors, career development officers, human resource practitioners and adult educators are gathering in Yellowknife today for the second annual NWT Career Development Conference hosted by the Department of Education Culture and Employment.**

Titled, LINX 2000, the three-day conference will address the theme “Linking Northern Expertise” and feature workshops on a variety of topics including career development programs in schools, creating employment opportunities in NWT communities, the Internet as an effective career planning tool, conflict resolution and personal wellness.

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes says improving technologies, industrial developments and changing government roles mean that more jobs will be available in all communities. “Providing access to career development information, programs and supports is key to ensuring that northerners can take advantage of northern development opportunities,” he said. “Professionals are needed to help northerners develop the skills and education levels to find, get and keep jobs.”

Scheduled keynote presentations include “Alley Cat Wisdom – Moving Beyond Domesticity in Career Development” by Sareena Hopkins of the Canadian Career Development Foundation; “Giving Something Back – Life Transitions” by Joe Dragon, Senior Policy Analyst with Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development; a panel discussion on “Lifelong Learning”; and a presentation on NWT Labour Market Trends.

**For more information, contact:**

**Lesley Allen**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Education Culture and Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-7252







00-121

## **Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Acquires Unique Artifact**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 26) – The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre has acquired a unique and important artifact dating back to the early days of the fur trade in the Northwest Territories.**

The “Yellow Knife Fort” (Fort des Couteaux Jaunes) journal - kept by Jean Steinbruck, an employee of the North West Company, during the winter of 1802/03 while he stationed at the fort on the South shore of Great Slave Lake, not far from present day Hay River.

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes says “The Yellow Knife Journal” written in French on birch bark, is a reminder of the importance of the North West Company in the history of Canada’s North.

“It is also important to note that the journal was recorded in French, the language of commerce for the North West Company and the language of Steinbruck’s fellow voyageurs,” he said. “It serves as a reminder of the Francophone legacy in the NWT fur trade.”

The “Yellow Knife Fort Journal” was purchased earlier this year by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre with financial assistance from BHP Diamonds Inc., Diamet Minerals Ltd., The McLean Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada-NWT Cooperation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT.

Father Rene Fumoleau will officially open an exhibit featuring the Yellow Knife Fort Journal on Sunday, October 29, 2000. The ceremony will begin another season of Amazing Family Sundays planned for this fall at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.

A book by Henry Duckworth, *The Yellowknife Journal*, published by Nuage Editions last year, reproduces the text of the journal in its original version with an English translation.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**

Director, Culture, Heritage and Languages

Education Culture and Employment

Tel: (867) 873-7551.





00-122

## **Family Violence Awareness Week Proclaimed**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 30) -- The Department of Health and Social Services has proclaimed October 30 - November 5, 2000 as the NWT's first annual Family Violence Awareness Week.**

"No one group or government can solve the issue of family violence in isolation," Premier Stephen Kakfwi said today. "This week is about mobilizing individuals, agencies and governments to make a commitment to zero tolerance."

Several GNWT Departments including Health and Social Services, Justice and Education, Culture and Employment have collaborated with non-government organizations to develop a campaign that will raise awareness of family violence and celebrate healthy lifestyles.

Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen says today's proclamation is a good start. "Many communities have embraced this campaign, she said. "This proves that the time is right for confronting this very significant problem. We are pleased with the momentum and enthusiasm that communities have shown."

Mrs. Groenewegen commended Ernestine Soloy from the Hay River Family Resource Centre for being the catalyst for today's announcement. The Minister also recognized the work of the interagency-interdepartmental committee which worked with communities and organizations across the NWT to develop and encourage the week's many scheduled events and activities around the issue of family violence.

"We look forward to working even more with our partners as we strive to eliminate family violence," she said.

**For More Information, contact**

**Angus MacKay**  
Director  
Department of Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 873-7991



00-123

### **Parents to take their Kids to Work Wednesday**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Oct 30) -- Hundreds of Grade nine students in the NWT will join their parents at work on Wednesday to mark Canada's seventh annual *Take Our Kids to Work Day*.**

Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Jake Ootes says *Take Our Kids to Work Day* gives Grade nine students a window on the future. "It gives them a look ahead to when they will join the workforce," he said, "an insight into the challenges and rewards of a career."

Last year, nearly 400 Grade nine students were welcomed into businesses and offices in the NWT. This year, approximately 400,000 kids across Canada are expected to visit their parent, a relative, adult friend or a volunteer at work.

In addition to creating awareness about work environments, Mr Ootes says *Take Our Kids to Work Day* is an opportunity to strengthen bonds between parents and children and build bridges between schools, students and the community.

*Take Our Kids to Work Day* is an annual event co-ordinated by The Learning Partnership, a not-for-profit organization that seeks to encourage young people to stay in school and provides support for students as they move from the world of school to the world of work.

**For more information, contact:**

**Janet Leader**  
Public Affairs Co-ordinator  
Education Culture & Employment  
Tel: (867) 920-6222.





00-124

### **Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program Launched**

**YELLOWKNIFE (November 1) -- Minister of Health and Social Services, Jane Groenewegen, in co-operation with a number of key partners, today announced the launch of the Women and Children's Healing and Recovery Program.**

The program, which began accepting clients in late September, provides a holistic approach to supporting the healing and empowerment of northern women who have experienced trauma. Trauma includes any major event in a woman's life, such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse, which makes her feel powerless or afraid.

"This program is an exciting step forward in developing responsive programming through partnerships," Mrs. Groenewegen said. "It is clearly a model we want to encourage in other regions."

The program recognizes and builds on the strengths of participants, and responds to their individual needs and issues. It was developed in an effort to overcome barriers women experience in seeking treatment and support, like access to childcare and discussing gender-sensitive issues like sexual and physical abuse in a more supportive setting.

The YWCA in partnership with the Yellowknife Women's Centre sponsors the pilot project, supported by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board. It is the result of a strong commitment and co-operative effort between government and non-government agencies at the local and territorial levels to improve programming to women.

A governing coalition of the various service providers has been formed to oversee program development and delivery. The coalition is currently chaired by the Status of Women Council. "The Council is pleased to support the program because it involves women, community organizations and government in developing a program that meets the needs of northern women and children in an effective and empowering way," Executive Director, Rosemary Cairns said.

Chair of the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board, Ruth Spence says collaboration at the local level has been a priority for the board. "The strong holistic approach has brought together key agencies and people with the expertise needed for effective programming," she said.





Partnership agreements have been established between the YWCA and the Yellowknife Women's Centre to share service delivery. "As a result, children of participants will also benefit from the improved wellness and self-esteem their mothers gain from the program," says Lyda Fuller, the Executive Director of Yellowknife's YWCA. She notes that pre-school children of participants will have access to quality, licensed child care.

"In 2001, the program will also examine other ways to support the children of participants through expanded programming," Executive Director of the Yellowknife Women's Centre Arlene Hache adds.

The Healing and Recovery Program is available to women outside of Yellowknife. Housing may be available through the YWCA's Transitional Housing Unit.

**For more information, contact:**

**Penny Ballantyne**  
Deputy Minister  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 920-6173

**Ruth Spence**  
Chair  
Yellowknife Health & Social Services Board  
Tel: (867) 873-7276

**Rosemary Cairns**  
Executive Director  
Status of Women Council  
Tel: (867) 920-6177

**Lyda Fuller**  
Executive Director  
YWCA of Yellowknife  
Tel: (867) 920-2777

**Arlene Hache**  
Executive Director  
Yellowknife Women's Centre  
Tel: (867) 873-9131





00-125

## Collaborative Effort Produces Disabilities Survey and Report

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 6) -- Minister of Health and Social Services Jane Groenewegen and Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes today joined with the NWT Council for Disabled Persons, Yellowknife Association for Community Living and the YWCA of Yellowknife to release *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity: A Needs Assessment of Persons with Disabilities in the NWT*.**

The report provides insight into the disabilities of people in the NWT, and their use and need of programs and services. The Department of Health and Social Services contributed funding and participated as one of six agencies that guided the project. An independent consultant working under the direction of a project committee prepared the final reports.

Mrs. Groenewegen says the Department was pleased to have been part of the collaborative effort that produced the report. "We look forward to continuing our working relationship with the disability community and other stakeholders to plan for programs and services that meet the needs of disabled people," she said. "We also hope that this report will raise awareness of disability issues throughout the Northwest Territories."

The summary, findings and methodological reports of *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity* are available at [www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca)

"The next step is to analyze the information contained within *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity* and to utilize the data in planning for the future," Mrs. Groenewegen said.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Angus Mackay**

Director, Community Programs and Services  
Health and Social Services  
Tel: (867) 873-7991

**For copies of *Living with Disability... Living with Dignity*, contact:**

**NWT Council for Disabled Persons**  
Box 1387  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P1  
Tel: (867) 873-8230  
Fax: (867) 873-4124  
e-mail: [disabilitynwt@tamarack.nt.ca](mailto:disabilitynwt@tamarack.nt.ca)

**Department of Health and Social Services**  
Box 1320  
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9  
Tel: (867) 873-7066  
Fax: (867) 873-0484  
e-mail: [brad\\_heath@gov.nt.ca](mailto:brad_heath@gov.nt.ca)





00-126

### **Minister Introduces Strategy for NWT Roads**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 09) - Minister of Transportation, Vince Steen yesterday unveiled his Department's highway strategy for the Northwest Territories.**

Titled *Investing in Roads for People and the Economy: a highway strategy for the NWT*, the document presents a "vision" for the future of roads in the north. "As we move into the 21st Century, we must ensure that our transportation system also moves forward," Mr. Steen said. "This document presents a vision for our roads and an action plan to achieve our vision."

The Department of Transportation, using existing resources, has begun several new initiatives including the construction of a winter road to Colville Lake, new bridges on the Mackenzie Valley winter road system and the opening of discussions to obtain greater northern control of the Lupin winter road. It is also actively working on improvements to the existing highway system.

*Investing in Roads for People and the Economy* supports the government's commitment to improving the NWT's transportation system as outlined in *Towards a Better Tomorrow*, the Economic Strategy Panel's *Common Ground* report and the NWT Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy.

The Department expects to benefit from the National Infrastructure Program in which the federal government has made a Canada-wide commitment of \$600 million for highway improvements.

"I believe this document will serve as a reliable guide for the work being undertaken by the Department in developing our highway system well into the new century," Mr. Steen said.

**For more information contact:**      **Peter Vician**  
Deputy Minister  
Transportation  
Tel: (867) 920-3460





00-127

## **NWT joins the Canadian North West Archival Network**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 09) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes today announced the inclusion of the Northwest Territories Archives in The Canadian North West Archival Network.**

The Canadian North West Archival Network (CaNWAN) is an integrated set of databases which provides public access to the descriptions of archival records held by governments and other public institutions in British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon and the NWT.

Through its website at: <http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/canwan.html>, CaNWAN provides researchers with access to an incredible storehouse of history and information.

“The unique history and heritage of the NWT attracts interest from around the world,” Mr. Ootes said. “Curators of the NWT Archives have worked diligently to make their holdings accessible on the Internet for several years. Participation in the CaNWAN network will facilitate this access while allowing NWT researchers to benefit from access to the archives of other CaNWAN network partners.”

Information about the NWT Archives is available on the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre website at: [www.pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca](http://www.pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca). With enhanced access to the NWT Archives through CaNWAN, it is expected that the number of people visiting the site will increase substantially in the next few years.

Plans are underway to develop a Canada wide archival network to incorporate archival descriptions from across the country.

**For more information, contact:**

**Charles Arnold**  
Director, Culture, Heritage and Languages  
Education, Culture & Employment  
Tel: (867) 873-7551







00-128

## **GNWT Files Motion Asking Equal Pay Tribunal To Adjourn**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 10, 2000) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories today filed a Notice of Motion with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to adjourn from hearing any further evidence in the equal pay case presently being conducted in Ottawa.**

At the beginning of the Tribunal process, the GNWT filed a motion challenging the ability of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal to conduct an independent and fair hearing. The motion was based on a number of serious flaws the GNWT believes exist in the Tribunal's structure and process. The Tribunal denied the motion and the matter was judicially reviewed by Federal Court Justice Dubé.

Justice Dubé's ruling did not deal with the issue of independence. Instead, Justice Dubé ruled the GNWT lacked sufficient standing to bring the matter before him, because in his opinion, the GNWT was part of the Federal Government. The GNWT is appealing Justice Dubé's ruling.

Recently the Federal Court ruled in another equal pay case, involving Bell Canada, that the Tribunal was not sufficiently independent to provide a fair hearing based on several of the issues also raised by the GNWT. The ruling quashed the Bell Canada Tribunal until the applicable legislation is amended.

As the GNWT had made similar arguments to those presented by Bell, the GNWT requested the Tribunal put the issue of the Bell ruling on the agenda for its next session. The Tribunal responded by requesting the GNWT file a formal Notice of Motion to adjourn until the various legal issues are resolved. The GNWT filed its Motion on Friday November 10, 2000.

The Federal Court of Appeal will likely hear the Dubé appeal in April 2001.

**For more information contact:**

**Sylvia Haener**  
Director, Labour Relations & Compensation  
Financial Management Board Secretariat  
Tel: (867) 873 - 7786





00-129

### **Premier Announces Federal Contribution to GNWT's Non Renewable Resource Strategy**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 14) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi and Western Arctic MP Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew, on behalf of Hon. Robert Nault, today announced \$3.7 million in federal funding for the completion of permanent river crossings along the Mackenzie Highway's winter extension between Wrigley and Fort Good Hope.**

Funding for the two-year project, approved by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, comes in response to the GNWT's Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy (NRRDS) – Towards a Better Tomorrow.

"This funding sends a message to industry that Canada cares about their hopes and their plans to bring frontier resources to southern markets," Mr. Kakfwi said. "And it confirms to the Aboriginal people of the NWT that Canada shares the GNWT's commitment to ensure that benefits from non-renewable resource development in the NWT will not be allowed to pass them by."

The Government of the Northwest Territories will provide an additional \$2 million in funding for this partnership project.

"The Premier and his Ministers have done their homework as requested by Finance Minister Martin and produced the two strategies: the Non-Renewable Resource Strategy and the Common Ground Report. I will continue to work with Minister Martin and Minister Nault to address the need for federal investment dollars to respond to the north's increasing development demands. This announcement is an indication of Minister Nault's sensitivity to the need for a timely response on this particular request due to the short winter road season," said the Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrew.

The completion of seven permanent bridges on river crossings along the winter road is expected to increase the shipping season to the region from five to eight weeks, or almost 40 percent. The federal funding, allocated primarily to employ Aboriginal workers and contractors, requires a cash or in-kind contribution agreement from northern industry of \$200,000.

Premier Kakfwi says he looks forward to the continued support of the federal government for additional investments in the GNWT's NRRDS strategy. "This signals Canada's commitment to sharing the costs of preparing the NWT for the oil, gas and mining development that is in our mutual best interests," he said.

**For more information, contact:** **Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-130

### **Premier Kakfwi Comments on Chief of Staff Issue**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 17) -- Premier Kakfwi today commended the *Yellowknifer* for its apology to Lynda Sorensen and its retraction of false allegations that Ms. Sorensen was violating territorial law by acting as campaign chair for a federal candidate while on leave from her position as Chief of Staff.**

"Today's apology and retraction categorically confirm the position I have taken in the House on this issue – that any allegations that the government has broken its own laws or that Ms. Sorensen was in conflict of interest are absolutely false," Premier Kakfwi said.

Ms. Sorensen gave the *Yellowknifer* the opportunity to review her employment contract and seek a legal interpretation confirming that there were no grounds for allegations of conflict of interest.

"I hope that today's editorial demonstrates that the allegations made against Mrs. Sorensen are without grounds," the Premier said.

Premier Kakfwi has been asked repeatedly to table Ms. Sorensen's employment contract in the Legislative Assembly. The attached backgrounder explains that the Premier is not at liberty to provide the document to the House because of process requirements under the *Access to Information and Privacy Act*.

The Premier has made every effort to comply with requests made by regular Members for additional information, while also balancing the government's obligation to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of personal information. Those details of the employment contract that can be released by the Premier were provided today to Accountability and Oversight Committee (AOC) Chairman, Charles Dent, in a letter providing all of the information requested by the AOC.

"I trust that the admission of false allegations in today's editorial, together with the information I have provided to Mr. Dent will bring closure to this issue," Mr. Kakfwi said.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive  
(867) 669-2304



## **Backgrounder:**

### **Premier Kakfwi Comments on Chief of Staff Issue**

#### **Regarding the release of the Chief of Staff's Employment Contract:**

- The Chief of Staff has an employment contract with the GNWT.
- The contract *does not* identify specific duties and responsibilities.
- The contract *does* contain *personal information* (for example, pay and benefit information).
- The *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* establishes the public right to access certain government documents, but the Act also balances this right with the *government's obligation to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of personal information*.
- The Access Act *requires* government to formally notify an affected person when it is considering the release of a document that contains personal information.
- The Act also establishes the affected person's right to:
  - sufficient time to consider the matter,
  - offer comment on the potential release,
  - be formally notified of government's decision before the release of any information, and
  - appeal government's decision to the Access and Privacy Commissioner.







00-131

### **Premier Re-assigns Cabinet Portfolio**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Nov 30) – Premier Stephen Kakfwi has appointed Jane Groenewegen as the Minister Responsible for Seniors. Mrs. Groenewegen assumes the portfolio from Vince Steen, MLA for Nunakput, who will continue as Minister of Public Works and Services and Transportation.**

“We have found that many of the issues that are of importance to seniors in the NWT relate to the responsibilities already held by Mrs. Groenewegen in her role as the Minister of Health and Social Services,” Premier Kakfwi said. “This change will allow the GNWT to more effectively address the needs of seniors living in the NWT.”

“Today’s move is a first step towards improving and co-ordinating GNWT resources and services in those areas of particular importance, not only to seniors, but also women, youth and persons with disabilities,” Mrs. Groenewegen said.

Mrs. Groenewegen’s appointment is effective at 5:00pm this evening.

**For more information, please contact:**

**Drew Williams**  
Press Officer  
Communications, Executive – GNWT  
Tel: (867) 669-2304





00-132

## **Celebrating Northern Volunteers**

**Yellowknife (Dec 01) -- Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, Roger T. Allen is encouraging all Northerners to join him Tuesday for the launch of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) in the Northwest Territories.**

The United Nations has declared 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers to acknowledge the important role played by volunteers in communities around the world. In the NWT, volunteers help provide programs and services in areas such as health, education, social services, sport, recreation, arts, community service and others. A 1999 survey of volunteering found that 41% of all Northerners over the age of 15 participated in some form of volunteer activity.

“Helping our friends and neighbours has always been an important part of life in the North,” Mr. Allen says. “Celebrating the International Year of Volunteers will give us all an opportunity to recognize the volunteers in our communities and thank them for their contribution. It will also be a time to focus on finding new ways to support volunteers and volunteer organizations in the NWT.”

The launch of International Year of Volunteers in the NWT will be held in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly beginning at 2:45pm Tuesday December 5, 2000. The ceremony will feature the announcement of IYV celebrations planned for the NWT and speeches by prominent northern volunteers. The program will also feature the live broadcast of the Canadian launch of the IYV from the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

You can visit the Canadian International Year of Volunteers website at [www.iyvcanada.org](http://www.iyvcanada.org) for more information about activities planned to celebrate IYV in Canada.

**For more information, contact:**

**Shaun Dean**  
Communications Advisor  
Municipal and Community Affairs  
Tel: (867) 873-7512



00-133

### Aboriginal Leaders Meet in Yellowknife

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec 1) -- Aboriginal Summit leaders from across the Northwest Territories met in Yellowknife today with Premier Stephen Kakfwi, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Jim Antoine and Minister of Finance Joe Handley to discuss how they can work together to ensure future prosperity for the Northwest Territories.**

The majority of leaders agreed to begin a formal process to determine how the transfer of authority, currently held by the federal government, over lands and resources will devolve to appropriate territorial and Aboriginal governments.

Such discussions will include developing a position for the negotiation of a resource revenue sharing agreement that is fair to northern governments. These discussions will also help clarify the potential benefits to all governments of such an agreement.

Premier Kakfwi committed to work with the new federal government to ensure that sufficient funds are available for Aboriginal governments to participate in this process as full and equal partners.

All Leaders were of the view that an agreement with the federal government could be reached within the next three years, the life of the 14<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

**For more information contact:**

**Graeme Dargo**

Interim Executive Director  
Aboriginal Summit  
Tel: (867) 669-7945

**Richard Bargery**

Special Advisor to Cabinet  
Intergovernmental Forum Secretariat  
(867) 920-8720





00-134

## **GNWT Releases Response to Common Ground Strategy**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec 01) -- Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Joseph Handley today released *Securing Our Future*: the GNWT's response to recommendations made by the Economic Strategy Panel in its *Common Ground* strategy.**

"I am confident that we can address the recommendations identified by the Economic Strategy Panel in the same spirit of co-operation and partnership that embodied the panel itself," Mr. Handley said. "Our goal is to develop a strong and stable economy that benefits all residents of the Northwest Territories."

The responses identified by the government in today's document cover a wide range of recommendations, not all of which are aimed at the Government of the Northwest Territories. In areas where the lead responsibility is not that of the GNWT, the report indicates actions that the government will take in support of the recommendation.

The Economic Strategy Panel was formed in June 1999 to develop an economic strategy for the Northwest Territories. It tabled the *Common Ground* strategy in the Legislative Assembly in June, 2000 following extensive consultation with interest groups, federal, territorial, provincial and Aboriginal governments.

Key elements of the panel's strategy have already been used in drafting the GNWT's Non-Renewable Resource Development Strategy (NRRDS).

"Common Ground provided a comprehensive and insightful view of the NWT economy, the issues we face and the direction we need to take to address those issues," Mr. Handley said. "It provided the economic focus for our departmental business-planning process and the basis for an action plan aimed at moving our economy forward."

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00-135

## **Government Releases Electrical Power Review Report for Consultation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec. 4) – The GNWT today released the *Report on the Review of Electrical Power Generation, Distribution, Regulation and Subsidization in the NWT*. The review looked at all aspects of electrical power including security of supply, quality and reliability of service, cost of service, affordability of rates, responsiveness to client needs, adaptability and return on investment.**

The report was completed under the direction of Finance Minister Joe Handley, NWT Power Corporation Minister Jake Ootes and Public Utilities Board Minister Roger Allen. Mr. Jim Roberston, a long time NWT businessman and former CEO and President of NWT Power Corporation, was chosen to head up a specialized team of utility and energy experts tasked with doing the review.

“The government is pleased with the quality of the report and that it was delivered on time,” Mr. Handley said. “Now we can get on with the broader consultation necessary before Cabinet considers the recommendations.”

The report and its recommendations are being released to solicit wide input from the public. “We need to determine what people think about the report because this is an issue that affects all residents of the NWT,” said Minister Allen. The government will undertake consultation with many groups over the next few months and review all input received.

“The NWT Power Corporation Board of Directors will have an opportunity to discuss the report when they meet in early December,” Mr. Ootes said. “This is a detailed report and it will take some time for the Power Corporation Board to digest the contents and provide advice to the government.”

The GNWT wants to be in a position to make decisions on the report’s recommendations by the end of the fiscal year.

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00-136

## **Premier Kakfwi Assumes Responsibility for the NWT Power Corporation**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec. 4) – Premier Stephen Kakfwi will assume the role as Minister Responsible for the NWT Power Corporation, effective 5:00 p.m. today. The Premier takes over this portfolio from Jake Ootes, MLA for Yellowknife Centre, who continues as Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.**

The Premier will also take over responsibility for assessment and implementation of the *Report on the Review of Electrical Power Generation, Distribution, Regulation and Subsidization in the NWT*, released earlier today by Minister of Finance, Joe Handley.

“I want to thank Ministers Handley and Ootes for their excellent work in bringing us to the point where we have concrete recommendations to consider on the future of the NWT Power Corporation,” Premier Kakfwi said.

The Premier also acknowledged the contribution of Public Utilities Board Minister Roger Allen to this work. He stressed the decision to take on the portfolio is part of his ongoing intention to ensure a fair balance in the workload of his Cabinet Ministers.

“Mr. Handley offered to head up the power generation review at a time when my attention was otherwise occupied. He has ably fulfilled this commitment and it is now time for me to take this high profile work to its next phase,” Premier Kakfwi said.

The decision to consolidate ministerial responsibility for the Power Corporation with implementation of the review will enable the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment to focus on various key strategies the department is undertaking related to literacy, early childhood education, languages and employment. The findings of the power generation review have implications for all departments and many key government initiatives.

“Bringing coherence to all aspects of power distribution in the Northwest Territories will require a high degree of interdepartmental coordination within the GNWT that is consistent with my role as Minister responsible for the Executive,” Premier Kakfwi said.

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00-137

### **GNWT Pleased with CRTC Decision on Communication Services in the NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec 05) -- Minister of Public Works and Services Vince Steen says the CRTC decision on Long Distance Competition and Improved Service for NorthwesTel Customers will go a long way towards improving the provision of telecommunications services to residents of the NWT.**

For over two years, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has been actively involved in a series of formal public proceedings to improve the quality of telecommunications services in high cost areas such as the NWT. Part of these proceedings also considered opening Northwestel's long-distance operating area to competition.

Although not all of the GNWT's requests were met by the November 30<sup>th</sup> CRTC decision, Mr. Steen says he believes that the overall decision is a good one. "In particular," he said, "the GNWT is pleased that the market will be opened to long distance competition in January 2001 and that long distance rates will be improved significantly."

The Minister notes, however, that the decision has also raised concerns regarding the total level of investment in system improvements, the timeframe for introduction of toll-free internet access for communities, and the availability of features such as call display and voicemail. It is hoped that these issues will be resolved as more details of the decision become available.

The GNWT plans to actively participate in all reviews and proceedings established to monitor the implementation of Northwestel's System Improvement Plan.

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00-138

## First Diamonds Receive GNWT Certification

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec 06) -- The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has certified the first diamonds under its program to certify diamonds as mined, cut and polished in the Northwest Territories. These certified CANADIAN ARCTIC™ diamonds, which must also meet a minimum standard of cut established by the NWT diamond industry, are from Deton'Cho Diamonds, one of two companies participating in the GNWT's Certification Program.**

“Our certification program will provide consumers with a guarantee that they are buying a truly northern diamond,” Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development Joseph Handley says. “It gives northern manufacturers like Deton'Cho Diamonds and Arslanian Cutting Works Ltd. an edge in the competitive diamond market place.”

CANADIAN ARCTIC™ diamonds are the first and only diamonds in the world to have their origins certified by a government. The program, which has been reviewed by the RCMP, is based on an intensive monitoring and auditing process implemented with each participating company. It follows the rough diamond from the mine through the diamond factory. Participation in the certification program is voluntary.

A certificate confirming that the diamond was mined and cut in the NWT accompanies each polished diamond. Each certificate includes a GEMPRINT, an international computerized identification system that provides an image much like a fingerprint, of each diamond. Using GEMPRINT each polished diamond is scanned and its “fingerprint” portrayed on the accompanying certificate thereby linking the polished diamond to the certificate.

CANADIAN ARCTIC™ diamonds are now available at Brinkhaus Jewellers in Calgary and Vancouver and at selected dealers in the NWT.

**For more information, contact:**

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00-139

## **GNWT Welcomes Announcement from Alaska North Slope Gas Producers**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 6) – Premier Stephen Kakfwi says he’s encouraged by the announcement made today by three major Alaska North Slope Gas producers. BP, Phillips and ExxonMobil have agreed to a joint work program on the Alaskan Gas Pipeline Project to coordinate the design, costs, permitting, structure and overall viability of a northern pipeline.**

“The Government of the Northwest Territories has consistently maintained that American gas producers will be the decision makers in determining how Alaskan gas will reach US markets,” Premier Kakfwi said. “At the end of the day, we believe the economic benefits of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline route will compel Alaskan gas producers to share that route with us.”

The GNWT holds that Mackenzie Valley pipeline is viable as a stand-alone route but recognizes that additional economic efficiencies will be gained by linking to Alaskan gas.

Premier Kakfwi pointed to this week’s signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board and the National Energy Board as a big step towards creating a single-window environmental review process in the NWT. “Achievements like this demonstrate that the NWT is committed to facilitating oil and gas development in the NWT and we look forward to working with members of the Alaska Gas Pipeline project to explore further ways to make this project a reality,” he said.

While today’s announcement is good news, it underscores the urgency of making appropriate investments now to ensure that northerners maximize the benefits from oil and gas development. “We trust that the federal government shares our sense of urgency and will continue to join us in making additional strategic investments in the infrastructure and training needed for gas oil and mineral resource development in the Northwest Territories,” the Premier said.

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00-140

### **North Slave Apprentices Honoured by Minister**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 08) – Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes recognized the year’s top Apprentices for the North Slave Region at a ceremony last night in Yellowknife.**

Hay River resident and Journeyperson Automotive Service Technician Michael Mahussier, was singled out as the region’s top graduating apprentice. In total, 30 men and women completed Apprenticeship training in the North Slave Region this year and are now journeypersons in fields that include Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, Welder, Painter and Decorator, Diamond Polisher and Glazier.

“Your hard work has paid off,” Mr. Ootes said. “You have joined the ranks of a select group of people whose prospects for the future in the NWT have never looked brighter.”

Mr. Ootes also recognized 38 apprentices who earned a place on the 1999/2000 Apprentice Honour Roll and 43 NWT residents who were awarded Inter-provincial, Red Seal endorsements. The Red Seal gives journeypersons national creditation enhancing their mobility and job prospects.

“I encourage anyone looking for a challenging career to consider apprenticeship and occupational certification options,” Mr. Ootes told the graduates. “Your accomplishments make you the perfect role models for young people in the NWT.”

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00-141

## **NWT Recognizes the World's First Certified Diamond Polishers**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 08) -- Minister of Education, Culture and Employment Jake Ootes presented Brad Taylor and Andy Thatcher of Yellowknife with certificates yesterday making them the first Certified Diamond Polishers in Canada.**

In presenting their certificates from the NWT Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification Board, Mr. Ootes acknowledged the rigorous testing and exacting standards that must be met to acquire this designation.

"Mr. Taylor and Mr. Thatcher have achieved a level of expertise in diamond polishing that is recognized around the world," Mr. Ootes said. For both men, the certification process included completing written examinations and two days of rigorous testing in which each was required to polish six diamonds to exacting specifications.

The NWT has taken the lead in developing Occupational Standards for Diamond Polishers. In association with industry professionals from Belgium, Germany, the United States and South Africa, it completed *The Diamond Polisher Occupational Standards Manual* - a document outlining the only comprehensive diamond polishing standards to exist in the world.

Occupational Standards are a tool that industry can use to assess the skills and expertise of individuals working in a field. A standard outlines the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes a person requires to perform competently in a given occupation. Certification in a designated occupation indicates that an individual has attained a level of competence in that occupation as determined by industry.

Recent efforts by the Department of Education have also lead to the development of occupational standards for Security Officers, Camp Cooks, Hunting Guides, Fresh Water Angling Guides and Warehouse Technicians.

"The demand for these standards endorses the need and desire of industry, business and government for a professional work force," Mr. Ootes said. "The government is committed to working with industry to develop standards that ensure NWT residents are ready to take advantage of the many job opportunities being created by work in emerging industries."

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00-142

### **GNWT Assists Fort McPherson with High Costs of Water Supply System**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 8) — Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs Roger T. Allen announced today that the Government of the Northwest Territories will provide assistance to the Hamlet of Fort McPherson to reduce the high cost of supplying water to its residents.**

Residents of Fort McPherson have been concerned with the quality of their drinking water supply. This year, MACA is investing nearly \$3 million to develop a new water source for the community. In the interim, the community continues to rely on its existing water system.

The Department of Public Works and Services (PWS) operates the community's water supply system on a full charge-back basis. Recently, the community raised water rates significantly in an effort to cover the higher costs of maintaining the existing system, additional water treatment and testing.

At a meeting this week with Fort McPherson Mayor William Koe, Mr. Allen agreed to provide financial assistance to the community. As part of the plan, the Department of Public Works and Services (PWS) will cap their billings to the community for the rest of the fiscal year. The plan will eliminate the deficit in the Hamlet's water account and allow the rates for private customers to drop back to previous levels.

"Residents should not be expected to absorb the higher costs that have accumulated over the past years," Mr. Allen said, "If we don't help out, Fort McPherson will have to cope with a large deficit in their water supply system accounts."

"I want to thank Mackenzie Delta MLA David Krutko for raising this issue with me during the last Session of the Legislative Assembly," the Minister said, "and I thank Minister of Public Works and Services Vince Steen for assisting us in finding a workable solution."

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00-143

### **Premier says Dogrib Input Always Welcome**

**YELLOWKNIFE (Dec 08) -- Premier Stephen Kakfwi says he's happy to hear that the Dogrib people are prepared to work with the GNWT to secure their place in the future of the NWT.**

Following a news conference hosted by North Slave MLA Leon Lafferty this afternoon, Premier Kakfwi said statements of confidence offered by the Chiefs of the North Slave for their MLA had not gone unnoticed. "I would like to assure the Dogrib people that their concerns are well expressed," Mr Kakfwi said. Mr. Lafferty is a well-spoken advocate for Dogrib interests in the Legislative Assembly and his input is welcomed at all levels."

Premier Kakfwi says he looks forward to full dialogue with the Dogrib on the alignment of a road to resources in the future.

Premier Kakfwi noted that Mr. Lafferty's comments were timely following the GNWT's commitment this week to seek consultation on the future of power generation in the NWT. "The Dogrib Power Corporation is an acknowledged key player in the production of energy for the NWT and will no doubt respond to the study report. I look forward to their input," he said.

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00-144

### **Cabinet Supports National Aboriginal Day as Statutory Holiday for NWT**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 12) – Premier Stephen Kakfwi today announced the government’s intention to make National Aboriginal Day a statutory holiday in the Northwest Territories.**

“The people of the NWT place importance on recognizing the significant contribution of Aboriginal cultures to the NWT and all of Canada,” Premier Kakfwi said. “Declaring National Aboriginal Day as a day of holiday and celebration across the Northwest Territories will demonstrate the importance this particular day holds for people of the NWT.

Other jurisdictions have designated statutory holidays of special significance to their populations, such as Nunavut Day in Nunavut, and Family Day in Alberta.

“Declaring June 21<sup>st</sup> a statutory holiday would provide all people of the NWT, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with an opportunity to participate in National Aboriginal Day celebrations,” the Premier said.

Premier Kakfwi promised the Members of the Legislative Assembly that he would bring this initiative forward if Aboriginal people and organizations in the NWT expressed significant support for this day as a statutory holiday. It is hoped that a Bill to establish June 21<sup>st</sup> as a statutory holiday can be introduced and passed at the February 2001 sitting of the Assembly.

Canada has recognized June 21st, the first day of summer, as National Aboriginal Day since 1996.

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00-145

### **Student Support Needs Assessment Released**

**Yellowknife (December 13) – A report released today by Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) Jake Ootes says schools in the Northwest Territories have made significant progress in addressing the diverse learning needs of their students.**

*"The Student Support Needs Assessment Report"* is the result of extensive research by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment during the 1999/2000 school year. Using interviews with teachers and other educators, information was collected to identify the individual learning needs of students enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and the practices and procedures currently in place to support them.

"This report recognizes and values the diversity that exists in NWT classrooms," Mr Ootes said. "It will assist the education system in identifying and providing the kinds of learning supports required in our schools and will allow us to focus our supports in areas of greatest need."

Among the priorities identified by teachers are the need to increase training and professional development opportunities for education/support assistants, and more counselling services for students. Teachers also identified the need for smaller class sizes, lower pupil/teacher ratios, greater parental involvement and improved behaviour and attendance.

The report is the first of its kind in the NWT since Division. The data will guide ECE, Divisional Education Councils and District Education Authorities in distributing resources in a way that will allow each school to better meet the needs of its students.

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## **Backgrounder:**

### **Student Support Needs Assessment Released**

#### **The goals of the Student Support Needs Assessment Survey were to:**

- Collect data on NWT students regarding supports necessary to enhance the learning of individual students.
- Determine what practices and procedures are in place in NWT schools to support students in learning.
- Identify the gaps between learning supports required and those currently in place.

#### **Methodology:**

- Interviews with teachers about students (Classroom Profile) were conducted from January to June 2000.
- Interviews with Principals and School Administrative Teams about support practices and procedures in the school (School/Community Profile) were conducted in the same time frame.
- In schools with an enrollment greater than 150 students, all the interviews were done in person.
- Phone interviews were conducted with schools with populations less than 150 students.
- Information was gathered on 9,619 students, in 46 schools in seven NWT school divisions.
- The collected data was analyzed and compiled by ECE and the NWT Bureau of Statistics.

#### **The top five needs for student support identified by teachers in the Student Support Assessment were:**

- Trained classroom support staff
- Counsellors in the school
- Reduced class size or lower pupil/teacher ratio
- Program Support Teachers
- Parental Support for Students

Additional priorities identified by teachers include literacy, student behaviour, regular and prompt attendance at school and support for students coping with family related issues.

#### **Next Steps:**

- The Schools Planning and Resource Committee (SPAR), that consists of representatives of directors (DEC), comptrollers, ECE and H&SS staff, developed a four-year action plan that provides recommendations on the approach to allocation of the additional monies that became available to the education system as a result of the recent amendments to the *Education Act*.
- There were two aspects to the task. First was an allocation structure for the 2000/01 school year. The second was to develop a multi-year plan.
- Recommendations for the funding allocations for the multi-year plan will be made by the SPAR committee once it has had the opportunity to review the report.





00-146

## **Finance Ministers Support Restoring Formula Financing**

**YELLOWKNIFE (December 13) – Provincial and territorial finance ministers meeting in Winnipeg say they support the restoration of the five per cent cut made to the territories' formula financing expenditure base in 1996-97.**

Speaking on behalf of NWT Finance Minister Joe Handley, NWT Deputy Premier Jane Groenewegen said she welcomed the backing of provincial counterparts for the restoration of Formula Financing transfers. "I'm extremely pleased that provincial minister's have provided their support," she said. "We were forced to make drastic cuts in spending to cope with the 1996 reduction. We continue to feel the impact today in terms of the strain on our ability to deliver programs."

The federal government reduced funding under the Formula Financing Agreement as a deficit reduction measure in 1996-97. For the pre-Division NWT, this amounted to about \$56 million, or approximately \$30 million for the post-Division NWT. Since 1997, only about one-quarter of the reductions have been restored through increases in Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) funding.

In September, provincial and territorial premiers succeeded in convincing federal decision makers that restoration of the CHST should be the first priority once the federal deficit was conquered and a surplus was achieved. Following the September First Minister's meeting, the federal government announced the addition of \$23.4 billion in CHST funding to the provinces and territories over the next five years.

Provincial and territorial finance ministers hope to meet with their federal counterparts as soon as possible to discuss these issues.

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