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**Regional Differences:** Dene leaders debate devolution deal at spring leadership meetings. See page 7.



**MLA leaves chair role after drinking debacle**  
Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche resigned as standing committee chair last week after missing meetings due to alcohol use. See page 2.



**K'atl'odeeche building communications links**  
The K'atl'odeeche First Nation of Hay River has big dreams of a First Nation telecommunications network throughout the NWT. See page 6.



**Language commissioner says Dene schools needed**  
As her term ends, NWT language commissioner Sarah Jerome says "drastic action" is needed to save Aboriginal languages. See page 9.



**Olympian promotes Thaidene Nene park**  
Olympic medalist Clara Hughes visited Lutsel K'e last week to help promote the First Nation's proposed national park. See page 10.



**HAPPY EARTH WEEK!**

Tuesday, April 23, 2013  
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# NORTHERN Journal

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Ecology North's Kim Rapati, right, scoops up a clump of composting worms to show Mike Vassal, left, and Chris Westwell how vermiculture works as part of Fort Smith's environment fair on Sunday to usher in Earth Week. See page 13 for more.

## North Slave Métis denied land claim Feds say North Slave Métis Alliance not 'distinct, rights-holding' Aboriginal government

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG  
The North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA) has been told once again it has no right to establish a land claim or have access to caribou harvesting rights and devolution money because its members are not a distinct Aboriginal group indigenous to the region, according to federal documents obtained by the *Northern Journal*.

NSMA president Bill Enge was told by the federal department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) in February that the Métis organization north of Great Slave Lake "has not provided sufficient evidence to establish the existence of

an ancestrally-based, present-day Métis community in the North Slave area with links to a historic Métis community in that area."

**Why are we being treated differently in the North Slave area than our other Métis counterparts? We believe AANDC is treating us with a double standard.**

*Bill Enge  
North Slave Métis Alliance*

"The NSMA have not established a credible claim to s.35 Métis rights which would support recognition of the NSMA as a distinct s.35

Métis rights-holding community," the letter to Enge states. Enge said he has no idea why their evidence has been rejected.

"I provided to Canada through Aboriginal Affairs a binder that contained my genealogy connecting me to the North Slave area and the Great

Slave Lake area, plus historical documents showing use prior to effective European control being established in this area," he told *The Journal*.

"We requested a meeting with AANDC officials involved with the review of the documents so we could hear first-hand from the reviewers how they arrived at their conclusion. Show us where the gaps are in the information provided...We have a right to secure and fill in the gaps so a clear picture can emerge," he said.

That meeting has yet to take place, but AANDC officials told *The Journal* it is in the process of being scheduled. "AANDC recently completed an assessment of North

Slave Métis Alliance asserted s.35 rights in the North Slave, and is currently coordinating meeting dates to discuss the results of the assessment with the NSMA in the near future," spokesperson Dawn Curtis said in an email. "Once this meeting has taken place, AANDC will be in a better position to answer some of the questions you've posed."

Enge and the NSMA's legal counsel presented their case to the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on Oct. 17 of last year looking for recognition as a distinct Aboriginal group with an indigenous territory north of Great Slave Lake.

See Ottawa on page 3.

*The best little newspaper in Canada*

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Delivery man attacked in Behchoko

A man has been released from hospital following a brutal attack while delivering parcels to the Northern Store in Behchoko. According to RCMP, the man was severely beaten by three unidentified men between 5:00 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. on Sunday. Police say the assault was "completely unprovoked." The man suffered serious injuries and was taken to Stanton Territorial Hospital in Yellowknife. He is now recovering at home. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Behchoko RCMP 867-392-1111 or Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

### Record prices received for NWT fur

The March fur auction in Seattle saw record prices for NWT furs marketed under the government of the Northwest Territories' Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur (GMVF) label, meaning strong returns to NWT trappers. The recent auction was the most successful sale in the history of the Fur Harvesting Association and will result in a total projected return to NWT trappers of almost \$1.5 million. The NWT marten was a big auction name, with prices up 60 per cent from 2012 and selling for \$1,300 per pelt. In total, the value of NWT fur purchased in March exceeded the entire value of sales made at last year's four fur auctions combined. The next auction will be held on May 20.

### Inuvik shelter receives boost from Canadian Mental Health

The Inuvik Homeless Shelter received a \$25,000 donation from the Inuvik branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association last week. The money will go towards wellness programming for shelter clients. The donation was made possible after the sale of the town's Family Counselling Centre building, which, up until 2007, offered offered mental health and addictions counselling services to people of the region through the Canadian Mental Health Association. The Inuvik Homeless Shelter opened in 2003 and is the only means of temporary, short-term housing for single men and women in the Beaufort Delta region.



Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche apologized last week for missing two days of committee meetings while drinking.



Mackenzie Delta MLA Frederick Blake Jr. is also alleged to have been drinking with Menicoche, but has yet to comment publicly on the matter.

#### Politics Territorial

# Nahendeh MLA resigns as chair of committee after drinking debacle

## Fort Liard volunteer says Menicoche betrayed Northern youth

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

The MLA for the NWT riding of Nahendeh has resigned from his position as chair of the Standing Committee on

Priorities and Planning after failing to attend committee meetings in Inuvik two weeks ago due to excessive drinking.

Assistance Program to address his personal problems and will continue to represent his constituency. He stated he would not be commenting any further

of different ways. Now, they see their MLA drinking to excess. I worry it further legitimized drinking to excess for the kids who already see it too often... We need to stop tolerating that and I think we need to start at the top of society with our senior elected officials," he told *The Journal*.

In his letter, Williams noted he understands it's a hard issue to tackle.

"I doubt you set out, as an MLA, to get drunk and miss meetings. I'm sure you feel pretty terrible already and I've no great desire to add to that. I understand the complexities," he wrote to Menicoche. "You, in turn, must understand the scale of this betrayal and the extent to which you lose the ability to guide your communities' youth, who look to you as a role model."

Williams also asked Menicoche in the letter to "talk frankly and openly to the community's youth about your alcohol dependency issue, how it has affected your work, and how you plan to tackle it and recover," when he next visits Fort Liard.

Williams received considerable criticism after he released his letter to the public.

"I am seen as an outsider primarily because I am. I've been in Fort Liard for just over half a year and people don't like to hear these sort of things from an outsider. That's the case in any community and I expected that," he said. "Alcohol abuse and dependency and its impact on children is the same no matter whose eyes you look through. I hope people look beyond who I am and start to talk about what is a huge issue in the North instead of keeping it behind closed doors."

I take seriously the grievous error I have made...and I'd gladly stand aside and let someone else take my place.

*Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche*

"I take seriously the grievous error I have made and I believe in the institution of our government and our MLAs, and I'd gladly stand aside and let someone else take my place because I know we still have two years left in our tenureship and I don't want our great institution to be clouded any further," Kevin Menicoche told reporters Thursday afternoon after a closed committee meeting to discuss the incident.

It was reported that Menicoche and Mackenzie Delta MLA Frederick Blake Jr. were drinking late into the night on Apr. 11, missing a full-day committee meeting the next day and a subsequent half-day meeting on Apr. 13.

No action against Blake, who could not be reached for comment, has been recommended by the committee.

Menicoche released an official apology last Wednesday admitting he did not attend the two meetings.

"I take full responsibility for my behaviour...I have asked the Legislative Assembly to bill me for any extra costs that may have been incurred on my behalf," the apology read.

Menicoche also stated he would be seeking treatment through the Members'

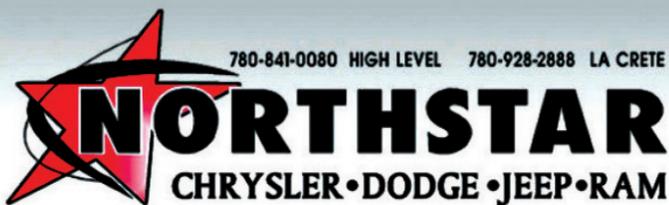
on personal matters to media.

Range Lake MLA Daryl Dolynny, currently deputy chair, will act as the chairperson on an interim basis until the committee chooses a permanent replacement at the outset of the May/June sitting of the House.

"The Members' Conduct Guidelines call on all MLAs to serve the people of the North with integrity and honour," Dolynny said in a press release. "They also acknowledge human vulnerabilities and how members should strive to act in ways which help to overcome the hardships which destroy life and hope, and the human frailties which fall upon us. Citizens should have faith or belief that their political leaders will act in a right, proper or effective way. As colleagues, we will support Mr. Menicoche and Mr. Blake in their journeys of personal healing."

Ollie Williams, a British volunteer in Fort Liard with the Operation Beaver program of the non-profit Frontiers Foundation, wrote Menicoche an open letter last week expressing his concern over the impact the incident will have on Northern youth.

"Many children are exposed to alcohol in Fort Liard in a lot



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# Ottawa tells North Slave Métis to join other claims

## Around 90 per cent of members would qualify for other agreements

Continued from page 1.

At the meeting, Enge argued that over 50 of the NSMA's 500 members, including himself, trace their ancestry back to "the founding father of the Métis of the Great Slave Lake area," Francois Beaulieu.

Those "Métis of the Great Slave Lake area" include both Métis on the south and north sides of the lake, Enge said - one group that has divided itself in recent years into two contemporary organizations, the NWT Métis Nation (NWTMN) and the NSMA.

Enge said it is unfair that the federal government has engaged the NWTMN - formerly the South Slave Métis Tribal Council - in a land claims process while leaving out the NSMA.

"The common law supports that two groups representing one larger ethnic community is acceptable," he told the senate committee.

"The problem is that NSMA cannot get the Crown, neither federal nor territorial, to engage with us. Canada and the government of the Northwest Territories have chosen to engage with the Northwest Territories Métis Nation, our cousins to the south, but not with us. The South Slave Métis Tribal Council, as it was known when it was originally formed, and the North Slave Métis Alliance both became legal entities around the same time. We have never been told why the Crown engaged with them and not us. This situation is extremely frustrating."

Enge told the senate committee chair, Gerry St. Germain, that the NWTMN agreement doesn't apply to Métis living in Yellowknife.

"It specifies which communities this land and negotiation agreement applies to. In that context it is Fort Smith, Hay River and Fort Resolution, to the exclusion of Yellowknife. We had no choice but to form an organization to assert our own rights because we were not included as a community under the auspices of that claim," he said. "First, we are a separate community north of the lake, therefore we see ourselves as a separate entity geographically...and second, we were not a part of their land and resources negotiation or agreement."

According to the NWTMN, many members of the NSMA are eligible to



North Slave Métis Alliance president Bill Enge says the government is giving mixed messages by denying them section 35 rights while wanting to consult with them on devolution.

be beneficiaries under the South Slave claim - which is still under negotiation - based on genealogy that connects them to the communities of Fort Resolution, Fort Smith or Hay River, even if they live in Yellowknife.

While Yellowknife does not exist as a "community" within the NWTMN claim, a Yellowknife affiliate of the NWTMN - the North Arm Métis Council - is entirely composed of indigenous Métis members originally from the South Slave communities who are legitimate members of the NWTMN and included as beneficiaries of the NWTMN lands and resources agreement.

Those eligible to join the NWTMN include Enge himself, who according to family records obtained by *The Journal* is a descendant of Pierre Mercredi, with familial ties to Fort Smith and Fort Resolution in the NWT.

### Not the first rejection

This is not the first time the NSMA has been told by Ottawa that it can't start a land claims process in the North Slave.

Following the formation of the group in 1996, then-minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Ronald Irwin instructed the NSMA to join either the South Slave Métis (NWTMN) claims process or the Tlicho (Dogrib) negotiations.

"With respect to the Métis in the Yellowknife area who are not eligible for a comprehensive land claim or a treaty entitlement process,

those who are indigenous to the South Slave region should participate in the South Slave Métis Tribal Council process. For any other eligible persons, a separate Métis process in the North Slave region will not take place," Irwin said.

"The interests of the Métis of Dogrib descent... should properly be addressed within the Dogrib comprehensive land claim and self government negotiations," he added.

Despite Irwin's instructions, the NSMA went ahead with a second attempt following both a restructuring of its own executive - after ousting its first president, Clem Paul, from the position - and the appointment of a new federal minister.

Like Irwin, his successor Jane Stewart said in 1999, "There will not be a separate, 'Métis-only,' land claim process in the North Slave region."

Enge said 90 per cent of the NSMA membership are eligible to be part of either the Tlicho, Sahtu or NWTMN land and resource agreements, but deserve to have their own claim in their own region.

"Why are we being treated differently in the North Slave area than our other Métis counterparts? We believe AANDC is treating us with a double standard," Enge told *The Journal*.

"At the end of the day, in the name of equality, fairness and what's right, the North Slave Métis people have the right to choose where they want to assert their rights in the NWT."

vigorously to have the North Slave Métis claim attached to the Tlicho claims process, but were unsuccessful.

### Court cases ongoing

On Mar. 5, the NSMA launched a judicial review application against the federal government over its lack of inclusion in the NWT devolution agreement-in-principle (AiP) - three weeks after receiving the letter from AANDC.

A draft agreement of the AiP was signed a week later following the completion of negotiations with Canada on Mar. 11.

Though the NSMA was originally included in devolution discussions in 2002 as part of the Aboriginal Summit - a coalition that had active participation from all NWT Aboriginal governments, except the Dehcho First Nations - its invitation to sit at the table was eventually rescinded.

"Before disbanding, the Aboriginal Summit itself changed its membership rules so as to include only those Aboriginal governments recognized by the government of Canada as a distinct people with resolved or unresolved claims," officials at the NWT devolution office told *The Journal* in an email. "This disqualified the NSMA from membership in the Aboriginal Summit."

After the Aboriginal Summit disbanded in 2005, the recognized governments that had been a part of the Aboriginal Summit participated in devolution negotiations independently.

But in late March, Enge said NSMA received a letter from both the GNWT and the federal government setting up a meeting to consult

with the North Slave Métis on devolution. That meeting is to take place on Apr. 24.

He said it's confusing that his group is now being sought for consultation as an Aboriginal government when just weeks earlier it was told it does not have constitutionally guaranteed Aboriginal rights.

"We're still trying to clarify from them what rationale there is for consulting with us in light of the fact that they said we don't have section 35 rights," he said. "We're a little mystified as to what kind of consultation the Crown has in mind."

The NSMA also has an ongoing court case against the territorial government over its exclusion from the groups allowed to hunt Bathurst caribou, for which there remain hunting restrictions.

The Métis were left out of last year's limited harvest, which was opened only to Tlicho and Yellowknives Dene hunters.

Enge argued before the NWT Supreme Court last July that the NSMA should have been consulted on the caribou hunting issue based on their Aboriginal rights. Justice Shannon Smallwood has yet to make a ruling on the case.

Both the federal and territorial governments declined comment on both cases because they are before the courts.

Enge said the NSMA will continue to go through the legal process if that's the only route available to them to be recognized as a distinct Aboriginal group.

"We're not going to go away. We're going to assert our rights, and it's unfortunate that our rights are being determined through the court systems now," he said.

Photo: Meagan Wohlberg

### NSMA formed to start claims process

The NSMA was formed in 1996 with the intention of realizing a land claim and self-government agreement for its beneficiaries.

For the first two years, the organization was beset with infighting among members, with an eventual court case removing Paul from the executive and allowing Enge to step up into the position with Sholto Douglas as vice president.

During the first tumultuous years, which saw a proliferation of overlapping and conflicting Métis organizations pop up in Yellowknife, entire families left the NSMA's membership, many to join the South Slave negotiations or Tlicho claim, as instructed by Irwin.

Years later in 2004, Enge and Douglas tried



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The Northern Journal is an independent newspaper covering news and events in the western Arctic and northern Alberta.

**Publisher & Managing Editor Don Jaque**  
867-872-3000 ext.21 • [dj@norj.ca](mailto:dj@norj.ca)

**Editor Meagan Wohlberg**  
867-872-3000 ext.24 • [news@norj.ca](mailto:news@norj.ca)

**Reporter Renée Francoeur**  
867-872-3000 ext.25 • [reporter@norj.ca](mailto:reporter@norj.ca)

**Comptroller Dixie Penner**  
867-872-3000 ext.23 • [dix@norj.ca](mailto:dix@norj.ca)

**Advertising Joshua Jorgensen**  
867-872-3000 ext.15 • [ads@norj.ca](mailto:ads@norj.ca)

**Administration Aldo Landaverde**  
867-872-3000 ext.29 • [admin@norj.ca](mailto:admin@norj.ca)

**Production & Graphics Sandra Jaque**  
867-872-3000 ext.22 • [sandra@norj.ca](mailto:sandra@norj.ca)  
**Paul Bannister**  
867-872-3000 ext.27 • [graphics@norj.ca](mailto:graphics@norj.ca)

**Intern Georgina Skipplings**

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The Northern Journal welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be signed and include a phone number so the author can be verified. Names will be withheld on request in special circumstances where the reasons are determined to be valid. The Journal reserves the right to edit letters for length, libel, clarity and taste. Opinions expressed in letters and columns are not necessarily those of the publisher or editor.



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Behchoko	Fort Simpson	Sachs Harbour
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Deline	Gameti	Tsiigehtchic
Eagle Plains	Hay River	Tuktoyaktuk
Ekatie Diamond Mines	Inuvik	Tulita
Enterprise	Jean Marie River	Ulukhaktok
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Conklin	Grande Prairie	Slave Lake
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# Get more bang for the volunteer buck

This is Volunteer Week, so we recognize those who unselfishly dedicate their time to bettering their community, working with youth, furthering important causes and so on.

There are a number of days set aside to recognize volunteers, and frankly, we think the fanfare is a bit paltry. It is part of the limited vision involved with recognizing and appreciating the critical role of volunteers in our society.

Firstly, any time you single out one person for accolades or awards for their contributions, there are hundreds more who are missed. So how does that make them feel? There is always a danger in choosing only one, and sometimes it does more harm than good.

Secondly, you have to be careful handing out a token or plaque, particularly one of many, to someone who has dedicated hugely to a cause, that it does not understate the magnitude of their efforts. Everyone knows "it is the thought that counts," but it can still offend.

It is nice to recognize people for their contributions, but that is not why they are involved. Their real satisfaction comes from achievement - watching as they bring joy to the lives of kids and seeing them do well, even improve; or seeing a part of their community enhanced. The gratification that comes from such results is the real reward.

Let's stop for a moment and assess this. There are many, many volunteers in towns and cities throughout Canada. Our country would not be as wonderful as it is without them. It is what the spirit of community is all about, part of our culture: that

legion of volunteers work to achieve many things, making all our lives better. Most, if not all of us, contribute to that in some way, some certainly more than others.

What should be foremost in our efforts to encourage volunteerism, is to provide support to foster and enable it. Unfortunately, that critical aspect is almost always missed.

There are two kinds of volunteers. Those unique individuals who can organize and manage are rare and wonderful and the key to the success of any venture. Then there are the worker bees who will help, often tirelessly - they simply need to be given tasks. The two together are formidable.

Almost any volunteer undertaking requires money and or resources. When something needs doing, the volunteer organizer-managers take the lead and determine goals and objectives, assess available resources and funds and then devise a plan. The volunteer workers can then be assigned tasks and start working.

Rather than facilitating all this, what we as a society do is immediately add extra burdens to the organizer-managers, impeding their ability to perform. They must, before anything else, meet lengthy and complex criteria, filling out forms, drafting budgets with rationalizations and justifications in order to access money and resources. These essential steps done in order for that effort to be considered require huge amounts of time and energy.

That time and energy is taken away from the volunteer activity - from working with kids and bettering communities and enhancing causes. That process is seriously flawed. None of that precious time and energy should be sacrificed.

Another way must be found to justify those resources and funds.

Most of this is about government's inability to facilitate efficiently - since most of our resources and money stem from different levels of bureaucracy. That is not to say volunteers should not be accountable and they certainly should not be given money and resources freely without strings attached. Governments deal in public money and are responsible to shepherd it carefully. But the process of planning, rationalization and justification should be carried out by government staff on behalf of the volunteers.

Instead of government workers giving time-consuming tasks to volunteers, encumbering them, the onus should be on government workers to facilitate, freeing up volunteers to the greatest extent possible, enabling them. In addition, every community should have a staff person assigned to assist volunteers with administration, planning and finances.

If that were done, we would get so much more out of volunteers. Facilitated, they would have more time to do what they love and what they are good at, accomplish more, and so reap greater rewards of satisfaction. Everyone would win, including the government workers, who would be more effective in their role - by design, the pros at organizing and managing - and so be more engaged and involved in the inevitable success stories.

Facilitating volunteers in every possible way is a missing step. In order to meet accounting and administrative needs, a huge workload is heaped on volunteers and we need to fix that. It should never happen.



Over 50 participants, ranging from age 4 to 65, came out to the first Jump A Bunch-Athon at the Yellowknife Multiplex on Sunday. The group strapped on Kangoo Jumps, special jumping boots for exercise, and bounced for an hour to various songs. In total they raised \$500 for the Canadian Cancer Society's Relay for Life campaign.

Photo: Amanda Grobbeck

## ARCHIVES

### 15 Years Ago...

*Thebacha Campus hosts principals in training*  
Fort Smith took its turn as a training ground for school principals.

Aurora College, Thebacha Campus was the site of the 1998 session of the Principals Certification Course, designed to give teachers and new principals the background needed to handle the responsibilities of the job.

The course is tailored to be flexible, since the teachers and principals enrolled come from a wide variety of school situations.

Issue: April 19, 1998

### 20 Years Ago...

*Greatest health threats ever*

Dr. Yves Bergevin says medical professionals are now facing the greatest public health emergency the world has ever known: the toxic combination of pollution, poverty and overpopulation.

Bergevin is a McGill University medical school professor who has worked as a doctor in Quebec Cree and Inuit communities.

Issue: April 19, 1993

### 30 Years Ago...

*Y.O.U. office reopened*

The Youth Opportunities Unlimited office reopened at the old school in Fort Smith.

Recent acts of vandalism by unoccupied youths spurred action on the matter. Y.O.U. keeps youth busy from doing any vandalism.

Y.O.U. has proved in the past to be a useful service benefitting both young people looking for something meaningful to do and those wanting a job done.

Issue: April 18, 1983

# What volunteering can do for you!

Have you ever considered volunteering? The rewards and benefits may be surprising to you.

Think of volunteering as a way of helping yourself while helping others. With our busy lives it can be difficult to find time to volunteer, but knowing the benefits and potential pay-back to you, your family and your community may entice you to fit that time in to be a part of the volunteer community.

Let's learn more about the positive benefits of volunteering and a few tips on getting started.

- It connects you to others. An immediate benefit of volunteering is the positive impact it has on our community. Volunteers are often the glue that holds a community and its programs together. Volunteering allows you to connect with your community

making it a better place to live, work and play. It is also as rewarding to you as you are to the cause; your time given will help you make new friends, expand your network and boost your social skills. Include your whole family so these benefits have a ripple effect in your home and family life.

- It's good for your body and mind. Volunteering can help improve mental and physical well-being through increased self-confidence, combating depression, and it helps us stay physically active. It can also provide that healthy boost you are looking for with your personal self-confidence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Research has found a direct correlation to life longevity and volunteerism.

- It can help advance your

career. Whether you are considering a new career or getting started, volunteering can help you get experiences in your area of interest and meet people in the field. Even if you are not planning a career change it may offer an opportunity to work in a field you have an interest in. Volunteering provides a chance to practise important skills employed in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, negotiating, problem-solving, project-planning, and organization. It may also expose you to a job opportunity you may not have heard of outside of the volunteer route. Another added bonus: Many volunteer positions offer free training and/or education.

- It's fun and fulfilling. Volunteering offers a fun way for you to explore your interests and passions. It offers a way

to find meaning and purpose in your life and can result in feeling more relaxed, energized and provide an overall sense of well-being.

While reaping the true rewards and benefits of volunteering, the most valuable consideration is to come to the experience with compassion, an open mind, a willingness to learn and a positive attitude.

For more information on volunteering in your community, seek out volunteer services agencies; a community theatre group, museums, libraries, senior centres, your local hospital or check in with your city or town office. Other opportunities may be available through different service organizations, youth organizations, sports teams, and after-school programs.

*Michelle Hodder  
Alberta Health Services*

## First Nations need new transparency law *20 per cent of respondents to annual Aboriginal Governance Index said they were afraid of reprimand from chief and council*

BY JOSEPH QUESNEL

The best-governed First Nations are always the most transparent.

According to the Frontier Centre for Public Policy's annual Aboriginal Governance Index (AGI), the highest ranked First Nations are always the communities that post basic financial and electoral information on their websites, or have governments with an "open books" policy to its members.

Through surveys, the Frontier Centre's Governance Index gauges the opinions of common residents on the quality of governance and services band governments provide.

We also find every year in our survey that there is a statistical connection between high transparency and good administration, well-run elections and respect for human rights.

Bernard Valcourt, federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, discussed details of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (formerly Bill C-27) in Winnipeg recently. It requires band governments to post on band websites: audited consolidated financial statements;

schedules of remuneration and expenses; auditors' written reports respecting consolidated financial statements; and auditors' reports or review engagement regarding the schedule of remuneration.

Each band is required to provide such information to any member, upon request and "without delay," within 120 days after the close of the financial year. As the name of the law suggests, the objective is to introduce a greater measure of transparency.

The law also provides remedies against blocking such information. Individuals may apply to a superior court to compel the band government to provide it. In the event of a breach, the minister of Aboriginal Affairs could also apply one of three administrative steps:

1. Require a band council to develop an action plan to remedy the breach;
2. Withhold monies payable to a band as a grant or contribution under a current agreement;
3. Terminate any current agreement respecting a grant

or contribution payable to the band government.

Understandably, steps 2 and 3 would only be used as last resorts.

Many critics question the need for a legal remedy to the lack of transparency. They argue bands already provide this information to the government. However, such an argument fails to acknowledge the difference between the law on paper and the reality.

Frontier's surveys reveal a troubling minority of band members across the Prairies remain concerned about a lack of transparency in their communities. In our fifth annual AGI, we asked more than 3,000 band members in 32 indigenous communities in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan what they thought about transparency. Unsurprisingly, more than 80 per cent of respondents believe band governments should be open about their salaries and benefits.

Our survey also found that the best-governed bands do not need to be compelled by law when they proactively establish

websites containing all relevant financial information. The new law is aimed at the minority of communities failing to provide this information.

Typically, in band governments with no separation between administration and politics, elected leaders have been known to ostracize members who ask too many questions. Our most recent AGI reported that 20 per cent of respondents said they were "definitely" afraid chief and council could make people leave the community through a band council resolution, depriving someone of reserve membership and the entitlement to reside there.

Canadian indigenous peoples need the basic protections and transparency that the rest of Canadians take for granted. All First Nations communities should welcome the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

*Joseph Quesnel is a policy analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, where he writes mainly about Aboriginal issues. www.fcpp.org. Troy Media (www.troymedia.com)*

### MUKLUK



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**Dominion seals deal on EKATI diamond mine**  
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**Ryan Heron:** Does that mean dominion's going to cleanup the garbage, or does BHP still have to?



**Duaine Randhile:** It would be new owners I'm guessing that's why sold, supply getting to nitty gritty and putting back to old state around the corner (pass the buck sorta say)

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## Forecast

### Inuvik Yellowknife

Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
-2 High	-6 Low	5 High	-5 Low	-10 High	-18 Low	0 High	-7 Low
-10 High	-13 Low	-8 High	-17 Low	0 High	-12 Low	-4 High	-14 Low

Norms: -4°C and -14°C      Norms: 4°C and -7°C

### Hay River Fort Smith

Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
4 High	-7 Low	7 High	-6 Low	0 High	-5 Low	3 High	-5 Low
-2 High	-10 Low	-1 High	-11 Low	-4 High	-11 Low	0 High	-12 Low

Norms: 6°C and -5°C      Norms: 9°C and -3°C

# K'atl'odeeche dreams of First Nations broadband network

## First Nation hopes to link up reserve to fiber optic line in Alberta

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The K'atl'odeeche First Nation (KFN) of Hay River is looking beyond the boundaries of its reserve with the dream of establishing a network of First Nations-owned telecommunications infrastructure in the NWT.

The First Nation, which established its own local fiber optic network on the reserve in 2011, is currently in conversation with Alberta's Axia SuperNet about linking the reserve to existing infrastructure in High Level.

While Axia would build the line up to the border, KFN would pay the estimated \$3 million to connect that fiber to the reserve, thus securing greater bandwidth for the community and anyone else who wants to lease the infrastructure or build their own to join up.

KFN's hope is that the new link will not only create more economic opportunities for the band and region, but potentially link with nearby communities, providing a model for other First Nations wanting to establish and own their infrastructure, rather than be dependent on



Photo courtesy of K'atl'odeeche First Nation

K'atl'odeeche First Nation members Loran Potras, Harley Tambour and Henry Tambour dig a trench for their local fiber optic line on the Hay River reserve.

the sole telecommunications backbone in the North, owned by Northwestel.

"A lot of First Nation communities talk about self-government, yet how can you be self-governed when you don't have the infrastructure to put services on? We're always dependent on utilities that the First Nation communities don't own, so we wanted to own the utility outright," Lyle Fabian, information and communications technology

(ICT) manager for KFN, told *The Journal*.

KFN first began looking into fiber technology in 2008 in order to address the high costs and technological issues with phone and internet experienced on the reserve.

With a two-year, \$215,000 grant from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor), the community was able to train five local band members to build a 1-km fiber optic line

connecting all KFN administration buildings, including the school and elders' facility.

The infrastructure not only significantly boosted the speed and reliability of local telecommunications, but saved the First Nation money. Video conferencing capabilities alone have saved KFN thousands of dollars in travel and accommodation costs.

"At the highest year, we were spending close to \$140,000 just on travel,"

Fabian said. "When we started implementing video conferencing, for the first time in 15 years we were under \$40,000 in travel and \$18,000 in accommodations."

Now, Fabian said KFN wants to "finish what it started." They have gone back to CanNor with the results of their on-reserve pilot project with a new proposal to connect to outside infrastructure, asking that CanNor pay 80 per cent of the cost of the line meeting up with Axia's open-access network in Alberta.

The benefit, Fabian said, will not only be for the First Nation, but anybody else who wants to live or do business in the North, from residents to cell phone and internet service providers, by creating competition through redundancy, which could bring down the cost of services currently provided by one company with a stronghold on the territory.

"The existing copper infrastructure is old, expensive to operate and very limited," Fabian said. "When you put infrastructure in the hands of Aboriginal groups and they build the utility themselves,

it's 100 per cent owned, the community can lease the infrastructure at a fraction of the cost of the local incumbent and lower the costs for companies to come in."

Plus, he said, when First Nations are in charge, they can provide locals with training and jobs building and maintaining the network, and the whole community can benefit from better health and social services, education and potential business partnerships.

Fabian said this localized network model could be applicable to First Nations across the territory, and he hopes other communities follow KFN's lead to build and own their own infrastructure.

"We're trying to show we can cookie cut the same process we've done on the reserve with other communities and put ownership in the hands of First Nations governments," he said. "Here in the NWT, we're all waiting for one company to be the solution for everything. If communities take infrastructure into their own hands, they're benefitting. And who better to benefit than the communities and the people?"

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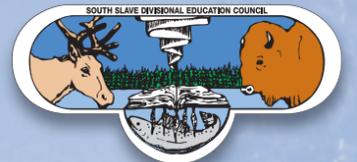


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# First Nations point fingers over devolution

## *Dene Nation leadership meetings highlight political rifts in Denendeh*

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Hardly a word was said during an update on the devolution agreement given by Finance Minister Michael Miltenberger during last week's Dene Nation leadership meetings in Yellowknife, as chiefs saved their criticisms for one another following the departure of the small territorial government delegation.

Chiefs from settled and unsettled claim areas showed their differences on Wednesday afternoon surrounding the divisive issue of devolution, which has seen the majority of Aboriginal governments in the NWT sign on to the consensus draft agreement that will see powers over land, water and resources transferred from Ottawa to the territorial government.

Chiefs from the Akaitcho - one of two remaining regions whose First Nations governments have yet to sign onto the deal - reiterated the difficulty of moving forward while land claims remain unfinished.

"Akaitcho wants to sit at the table for devolution,"



*NWT Finance Minister Michael Miltenberger (centre), flanked by chief devolution negotiator Martin Goldney (right) and meeting chair Jim Antoine, gives Dene leaders an update on the devolution agreement.*

Dettah Chief Edward Sangris of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) told the other leaders. "We don't disagree with the concept, but it's what's in the terms and conditions that's the problem...Unless there's an agreement in place, I don't think we can agree with it politically...We could (sign on) too, but it's the principle of not having settled claims."

Leaders from the Dehcho, which has also remained outside the deal, continued questioning the legitimacy of the NWT government in gaining control over lands in the NWT, and even challenged the Gwich'in, Tlicho and Sahtu regions for signing the deal.

"We're still struggling to keep our lands. I don't know where to stand; I feel like we're giving up a piece

of our land, to come right into my backyard and take what they can, take the resources under our feet," Wayne Sabourin, chief of the Deh Gah Gotie First Nation at Fort Providence, told the room.

"Treaty rights are not with the GNWT - we need to remember that. We're barking up the wrong tree," said Chief Roy Fabian of the K'atl'odeeche First Nation

near Hay River, who criticized other groups for "giving up the treaties" in order to finish comprehensive land claims.

"Devolution is like the GNWT's land claim, and we need to contest that with Canada. This is our land," he said.

Though Fabian apologized the next morning for casting stones at the settled claim groups for signing onto the deal, Tlicho Grand Chief Eddie Erasmus said such criticism must never happen again at the Dene Nation table.

"We Dene people have a tradition that we don't talk about other people. The Tlicho don't criticize other people. We mind our own business, deal with our issues and implement our own agreement," he said. "Kids at home hear that we have given up our treaty. It's still our treaty; it's still intact. We want to make that perfectly clear - we didn't give up our treaty."

Acting YKDFN chief for N'dilo, Roy Erasmus, Sr., also weighed in, saying he thought it was important

for Dene leaders to be "more reasonable" in dealing with each other and the government.

"I know people are very passionate about their rights and how we have to exercise rights, but we have to be careful and make sure we have rights and interpret them carefully," he said. "On devolution, sure people signed the agreement here. That's their right. The Gwich'in signed their land claim 20 years ago. How long do you expect them to wait for us? If we can't finalize an agreement in 20 years, I don't think they have to wait for us."

Dene leaders from all five regions of Denendeh, stretching from northeastern Alberta to the Arctic coast, met for three days last week at the Tree of Peace Friendship Centre in Yellowknife to discuss issues from economic development to environmental concerns.

Leadership meetings are held every spring and fall, along with the annual general meeting held each July.



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**On behalf of all staff and volunteers at FSHSSA congratulations to the graduating class of Aurora College, Thebacha Campus.**

# Pioneering Fort Smith midwife begins new journey

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

After 13 years of bringing Fort Smith's newest generations into the world, midwife Gisela Becker is packing her bags and starting a new position in Calgary this June as Alberta's first director of midwifery services.

Becker said she leaves with only the best of memories.

"It's been an incredible ride. I will miss everyone here in Fort Smith...Change is good but it's always emotional too," she said.

Becker's trailblazing role will be to advance midwifery services throughout Alberta as well as strategize the further integration of midwifery into the public healthcare structure.

"In many situations, midwifery has largely been serving as an add-on service in healthcare and we'll be looking to see how it can fit more into the system without taking the autonomy of midwives away and highlighting what makes midwifery so special: women-centred care, women-centred choices," Becker, 50, said.

Midwifery has been regulated in Alberta since 1998, but services were not publicly funded until 2009.

Since then, midwifery has seen heightened activity within the province, leading to the establishment of the first College of Alberta Midwives, which represents and supports registered midwives, in January.

"The idea is to also expand midwifery services to First Nations communities and more rural and remote areas across Alberta," Becker said. "I'll be working closely with not only midwives but also physicians, managers, policy makers. It's exciting."

While her new job is not as hands-on as the one she leaves behind in the NWT, Becker said she enjoys the advocacy part of midwifery, as she discovered when she served as a past president of the Canadian Association of Midwives.

"I felt like it was time to jump on one last opportunity before I retire," she said, laughing. "The program here in Fort Smith is strong and I know it will continue to be."

Becker, originally from Germany where she received her midwifery training, has worked in various places across Canada since she immigrated 20 years ago. She was involved in a midwifery pilot project in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut which



Photo: Renée Francoeur

Gisela Becker is preparing to leave Fort Smith and the midwifery program she helped spearhead for a new position with Alberta Health Services.

has since become a thriving program, and also advanced midwifery services in Cambridge Bay, Gatineau, Que., and in many more locations as a locum midwife, including during a two-year stint in the Caribbean.

She arrived in Fort Smith in 2000, working in private practice until 2005 with fellow midwife Lesley Paulette, who

Becker calls the "grandmother of NWT midwifery."

"Lesley's been in the community since she was a young woman, practicing midwifery here since 1993. If she hadn't taken that first move and started providing services to women, I don't think things would have taken off for Fort Smith the way they did and I might never have been here,"

Becker said. "It's just been a tremendous team here - we now have a registered nurse, too, Jennifer Morris - and I'm so grateful for this beautiful, close partnership with Lesley."

Becker and Paulette successfully spearheaded the motion to legislate midwifery in the NWT with the passing of the Midwifery Profession Act in 2003 (it was fully implemented in 2005). They also pioneered the NWT's first official midwifery program, operating with the Fort Smith Health and Social Services Authority (FSHSSA). It remains the only midwifery program in the territory today, despite ongoing plans to expand the program into Hay River and the Beaufort region.

"After all the hard work, trying to get midwifery regulated, it was so incredible when we actually saw it happening and we were able to practice as recognized midwives," Becker said. "It was a breakthrough moment felt by not only us, but also the women in the community and the midwifery community in Canada as a whole because at that time midwifery was only regulated in bigger, established areas like Ontario

and BC, and this showed us anything is possible."

Becker, who noted the FSHSSA is currently looking for a new midwife to fill the vacancy, said her departure from the North isn't really a goodbye.

"So much happened in these 13 years...I'll always look back fondly and I know that Lesley and I will stay connected and support each other and work together across the miles," she said. "Lesley and I are not getting any younger...It will be good to have a new midwife and I'm sure they will be as warmly welcomed as I was."

Looking toward the future, Becker said she'd like to see a greater push for a Northern-based midwifery training and education program.

"We know how tough it is to find and keep midwives in the North...With a training program, maybe with Aurora College or something, right here in the NWT, that could help," Becker said. "Northern midwifery is much different from southern practices. Women's lives are different; their needs are different. You don't have a Northern midwife overnight."

Becker's final day as a midwife in Fort Smith is May 10.

# 'We need to take some drastic action'

## Language commissioner ends term with call to create Dene schools

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

The outgoing language commissioner for the Northwest Territories says Dene leadership needs to look into starting its own schools if Aboriginal languages are going to survive in the territory.

Sarah Jerome, whose four-year term ends next month, told the Dene Nation leadership at last week's spring meetings in Yellowknife that "drastic action" needs to take place to revitalize language and culture for youth, starting with the creation of their own immersion programs on the land.

"Right now through the school system, you have to deliver all the core subjects, and language is being taught 30 minutes a day, 90 hours a year. That's not enough. We need to take some drastic action and say enough is enough. We need to do something," she told *The Journal*.

"Throughout the valley, the leadership should start seriously thinking about (setting up Dene schools), because unless we do it, we're still going to be under the English system of education and we'll never be able to revitalize our languages in

a box. Because for a lot of us, when we were put into the residential schools, we were put into a box where we were forbidden to talk our language. So we need to be out there in the natural environment, on the land, surrounded by elders, right where it's natural for us to teach a language."

The language commissioner position functions as an ombudsman at arm's length from the territorial government, providing annual reports on what the GNWT needs to do in terms of language services.

Jerome said the majority of concerns expressed to her over the years were about a lack of interpretation and translation in the health care system. She said despite four years of recommendations - ones mirroring those made by her three predecessors - the department of Health and Social Services is no closer to ensuring services in most of the territory's official languages, either in the territory or in Edmonton where residents are often sent for care.

"I found out that it was kind of like lip service," she said "For example, if I went



Sarah Jerome, a Gwich'in elder originally of Aklavik, finishes her four-year term as the NWT Languages Commissioner in May.

to the health department and asked them for an interpreter-translator, they gave me names of people that had retired from the department or people I knew that were not fluent, did not know the medical terms. So therefore they were not providing the services that they said they were. So it was really, really frustrating for me."

Once, Jerome asked for services in Gwich'in at a health centre.

"Everybody was running in all directions," she said. "They should be having cultural orientation for doctors, nurses - anybody that's coming in...I am just fed up with repeating my history (to locums), and I wonder what our elders go through."

The same was true of the Justice department, she said. People are not being offered the necessary workshops on legal or medical terminology, and as the small population of capable interpreter-translators age, replacements are not being trained.

"They're getting tired, they're at the end of their careers so-to-speak, they're tired of travelling, and yet there's nobody being prepped," Jerome said. "That's one of the recommendations I keep making through my annual report - not only myself, but the three previous language commissioners keep saying, why don't we set up a language bureau like we had under the government at one time and start training interpreter-translators? They're not doing it."

Her end-of-term recommendations include funding for interpreter-translator training and for the standing committee at the Legislature to respond to any recommendations made by language commissioners since Betty Harnum was first appointed to the position in 1992.

Jerome, originally from Aklavik, managed to relearn her language after 12 years

of residential school with the help of her grandmother, who lived to the age of 106. Jerome said her mother and her grandmother spoke only Gwich'in with her and her siblings out on the land, and that's what kept it alive for them.

She encouraged the Dene leaders and elders in the room to take it upon themselves to make sure their grandchildren don't grow up without their language, even without funding to do so.

"Language is so important," she said. "Please don't give up."

Chiefs and elders present at the meeting congratulated Jerome on her lifelong dedication to education and culture following a presentation by Jerome on the state of Dene languages in the NWT, which she made in Gwich'in.

"I'm so proud of Sarah," K'at'l'odeeche First Nation Chief Roy Fabian said at the meetings. "We went to school together back in the early '70s. Back then we just talked in English, so it's really good to hear her talking her own language."

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Photo: Bob Wilson

Summer sunshine showcases the brilliant hues of the East Arm of Great Slave Lake near Lutsel K'e, part of the proposed Thaidene Nene national park area.



Photo: Meagan Wohlberg

Special guests Clara Hughes, an Olympic medalist, and Dene elder Francois Paulette help promote the proposed Thaidene Nene protected area at the Legislature last Thursday.

**Environment Protected Areas**

# Olympian ventures north to promote national park

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Olympian Clara Hughes left her skates and bike behind to go out on the land with members of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation (LKDFN) last week as one of the first invited guests to experience a taste of what could one day be the Thaidene Nene national park.

The Canadian Olympic medalist spent five days touring the proposed "Land of the Ancestors" protected area surrounding the East Arm of Great Slave Lake and extending northward through the barren lands from Lutsel

K'e to Fort Reliance, followed by a public event at the Legislature in Yellowknife on Thursday evening.

There Hughes shared the stage with community members and guest speakers united in their commitment to preserving an ecologically pristine area deemed sacred to the Dene.

"I can't emphasize enough how much this land needs to be protected for the Dene people and for people like me who come up here to see it," Hughes told the crowd of around 80 who gathered

in the foyer of the legislative building.

Hughes said after her first Olympics, she became clinically depressed. It was through outdoor adventure, including the kayak journey that first took her into the East Arm of Great Slave Lake in 2010, that helped her persevere.

Hughes said she was astounded by the sharing and welcoming she was met with during her first trip to Lutsel K'e that summer, which is something she will never forget.

"I may be from the south,

but part of me will always be in the North," she said.

LKDFN is on its last leg of negotiations with Parks Canada regarding the establishment of Thaidene Nene, a concept that's been talked about for decades but which officially got rolling back in 2006.

Since land withdrawal for the area expires in March 2014, the negotiating team is busy trying to complete discussions, which involve the management structure as well as the final boundaries of the area, within the year.

The First Nation proposes protecting 33,500 sq-km of land not only to preserve the environment from industrial activity, but the traditional way of life of the Denesuline people. The park will be managed by LKDFN in cooperation with Parks Canada, and paid for by a trust fund the First Nation is in the process of establishing.

That trust fund will be responsible for training and paying the employees and building a tourism economy for the community.

"Our way of life is tied to

the land," former LKDFN chief Addie Jonasson told the crowd on Thursday night. "Our identity and strength comes from our relationship to Thaidene Nene, which is something our elders passed on from generation to generation in order to be Denesuline people."

While the land and culture are of utmost importance to the project, the First Nation also sees the park as an opportunity for sustainable and diversified economic development in the small, fly-in community, where only around 30 per cent of people are employed. Those people still rely on the land to support the community.

Along with Hughes, elder Francois Paulette joined Tu Nedhe MLA Tom Beaulieu and several speakers from Lutsel K'e and Yellowknife onstage to promote the park. He stressed the spiritual significance of the place.

"To stop and feel insignificant and humbled, in the hands of Mother Earth - all the spiritualness she provides to us is right there," Paulette said. "For people from all over the world looking for a place where they can find spiritual refuge, this is a place where they can find a sense of belonging with the Creator."

Hughes will now join LKDFN members, including Chief Dora Enzo and chief negotiator Steven Nitah, along with staff from the NWT chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society on a short tour across southern Canada in May.

The group will visit Calgary and Ottawa over five days to promote the area to future potential visitors.

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Northwest Territories Health and Social Services

# MP releases report on Northern impacts of Bill C-45

By MEAGAN WOHLBERG

Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington released his own report on the Northern impacts of omnibus Bill C-45 on Monday, hoping the information on the huge piece of legislation will educate not only residents and First Nations, but the territorial government.

The 35-page report, done with Lutra and Associates out of Yellowknife, outlines the implications for democracy, Aboriginal people and communities, changes to environmental protection, impacts on social security, labour rights and jobs, and ways Northerners can take action.

"The end result of all the changes is something we need to take heed of, especially with the environment," Bevington told *The Journal*. "It's really unfortunate how the government of the Northwest Territories hasn't taken the time to do their own public analysis of the changes, especially at a time of devolution where we're taking on responsibility for environment and



The Slave River is just one of the many rivers in the NWT for which protection was lifted during the recent amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act, contained in omnibus Bill C-45.

environmental assessment in a bigger way. We need to know what we need to do in our own territorial government to replace some of the pieces that are now missing."

The report encourages Northerners to press the territorial government to take action on filling in missing pieces of legislation to ensure the pending devolution

agreement, transboundary water agreement with Alberta, and proposed amendments to the NWT's mining regime honour treaty and Aboriginal rights and protect the environment.

"With dialogue and engagement of Northerners, some of what has been lost might be regained or remade through our own public and

Aboriginal governments," the report states.

Bevington said First Nations, especially, will have an important role in defending the environment and should be supported.

"I think First Nations are going to be required to stand up for their rights, and I think we can all benefit if they do that. Anyone who

wants to protect the environment knows that if First Nations stand up for their rights on the environment, that generally means they'll be protecting them," Bevington said.

Monday's report follows one the MP's office did last year reporting the effects of the Conservatives' first omnibus bill, C-38, which

made changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and Fisheries Act, among others. He said the two bills need to be understood together.

"In many ways, there's similar themes that are in this report that are in the C-38 report: the curtailing of public information, the impacts on Aboriginal peoples, the changes to the basic social security net - EI and pensions," Bevington said.

He said the amendments make up the pieces of a puzzle that, when looked at together, show a complete overhaul of the environmental regulatory regime.

"What I would say is this analysis shows how all those things make a difference, and that's what I think we want people to understand," Bevington said. "When you look at one thing in isolation, it doesn't look like much. When you look at all the steps that have been taken together, you've got a serious problem."

To read the report online, visit Bevington's website at [www.dennisbevington.ca](http://www.dennisbevington.ca).

Politics First Nations

## Salt River First Nation election results appealed

By DON JAQUE

Frieda Martselos began her new term as chief of the Salt River First Nation (SRFN) this month under a cloud of controversy, much as her previous two stints as chief in recent years ended.

Henry Beaver Jr., a losing candidate for chief in the Apr. 2 by-election, filed a complaint under the SRFN election code the following day. In his lengthy statement, he claims errors made by the electoral officer "directly affected the conduct and outcome of the election."

The five-page document alleges there were a number of cases where electors received two sets of councillor ballots and no chief ballot, and the scrutiny procedures during vote counting were inadequate.

The appeal process has temporarily been put on hold due to the illness of one of the three panel members.

Martselos is now in her third term as chief of the SRFN in the last six years. She was ousted from office only one week into her term as chief in April 2007 by a council

whose 21 resolutions at the time called her governing style "autocratic."

Elected again in 2008, she resigned as chief in August 2011 claiming council was not "working together" following several tumultuous years of infighting on council.

She ran and won as chief for a third time this spring. Her 95 votes in the April by-election were enough to triumph over the three other candidates. The election was called following the resignation of Dave Poitras as chief in late January.

In her first membership meeting last week as the new chief, Martselos made a number of pronouncements, including one that all committees of the council are to be terminated immediately, and the number of council meetings per month dramatically reduced. She told the gathering the changes are necessary due to "financial restraint."

The meeting, which requires a quorum of 40, was dominated by the new chief's

supporters, according to some of the veteran councillors, who said she flew family and friends in from Edmonton for the meeting.

Several councillors told *The Journal* they expected to see some amount of collaboration with the new chief, but were frustrated with her "dictatorial ways" in their attempts to even have a say at the meeting.

"We were stunned, caught like a deer in headlights. Clearly she has no respect for us," councillor Judith Gale said. "She does not care what the collective thinks. We are a disenfranchised people."

A motion by former acting chief Connie Benwell for a forensic audit of previous SRFN financial transactions was voted down at the meeting.

Another motion by Benwell, that the minutes of future meetings be provided to council members in a timely manner, was also rejected.

Martselos was travelling to Ottawa this week on behalf of SRFN and was not available for comment.

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

The Property Assessment Notices for the 2013 tax year were mailed on **Friday March 1, 2013** to all Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo property owners.

If you have any concerns regarding any information on the Property Assessment Notice, or you have not received your Assessment Notice, please call **780.743.7900** or **1.800.973.9663** and arrange to speak with an Assessor. Assessors will be available during regular business hours - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

If a discussion with an Assessor does not resolve your concern, an Assessment Review Board Complaint Form (accompanied by the appropriate filing fee) may be filed with the Clerk of the Assessment Review Board. For more information regarding the complaint process please call **780.743.7001** or **1.800.973.9663** or visit [www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/arb](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca/arb). The deadline to submit an Assessment Review Board Complaint Form is 4:30 p.m. on **April 30, 2013**.

Council will set the 2013 tax rates in May. This rate will be applied to the assessed value of your property, as noted on the Property Assessment Notice. Tax Notices will be mailed in late May.

$$\text{ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE} \times \text{PROPERTY TAX RATE} = \text{PROPERTY TAX BILL}$$

**PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT NOTICE CAREFULLY.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca) • 780.743.7900 • 1.800.973.9663

IMPORTANT DEADLINE

2013 Assessment Review Board Complaint Form and Fee to the Clerk of the Assessment Review Board - April 30, 2013

[www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca](http://www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca)



# Fort Smith council takes measures to cut waste costs

## Residents worried new fees will cause garbage to pile up in woods

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

The Town of Fort Smith is introducing new rules to cut costs in solid waste management, but some residents fear they will lead to increased littering along trails and in the surrounding woods.

A new fee of \$40 per location for participating in the annual spring cleanup, where town employees come and remove clusters of waste from residents' lawns, was introduced in the town's 2013 budget.

"The issue with the spring cleanup is the cost; we're running at a heavy deficit with this program," Fort Smith Mayor Brad Brake told *The Journal*.

The cost for the service is budgeted at \$26,000 but the actual cost in 2012 was \$31,405. According to documents obtained by *The Journal*, council is still projecting a deficit of \$12,000 for the cleanup.

"We don't expect to make money out of this, but we're trying to offset the costs associated with it," Brake said. "The council understands the necessity of having this and that it's a good thing for the



Photo: Tracy Freund

A sign outside the Fort Smith landfill informs residents that cash is the new preferred payment method for tipping fees of \$20 or less.

community, but we still have to be fiscally responsible to the taxpayers."

Spring cleanup, scheduled to get underway once the snow melts, can run for up to two weeks. For \$40, residents drag all their garbage to the curb and have it picked up, or can take it to the landfill during these weeks when tipping fees are waived.

Spring cleanup does not include hazardous waste removal.

There are also changes happening at the landfill to help the town cut back on costs.

"We've added the option of paying cash right at the landfill gate for tipping fees adding up to \$20 or less, but we would prefer people to pay cash because we're trying to

cut down on our costs associated with billing," Brake explained.

"For example, you bring a toaster to the dump and it's a \$2 tipping fee. In order for us to process that \$2 bill, the gentleman at the dump fills out a form at the dump, it goes to administration, it goes to finance, an invoice is created and it's finally mailed out. So to collect \$2, how much is it costing us in man hours and paper?" the mayor said.

Tipping fees have been in place since 2000, passed in the third reading of the bylaw. Fees were last amended in December 2012 when four additional items not previously accepted at the landfill were added to the list.

Those include ATVs (\$20), empty used 45 gallon drums (\$10), heating fuel tanks (\$30) and mobile home frames (\$100).

No other changes have been made in terms of solid waste management within the town, Brake said.

There is still no fee for household waste taken to the landfill, which is covered under a residential solid waste levy of \$16 per month.

Tracy Freund of Fort Smith said there should be no tipping fees whatsoever at the landfill.

"I've been pulling things from washers to wrecked vehicles out of the bush for years and I take it to the dump and then I get charged," he said. "If you're a citizen of this town and you pay your taxes, it should be free."

Freund, who said recycling and creating as little waste as possible is important to him, is worried the changes will increase dumping in the wooded areas surrounding the town.

"The hours at the dump are not that good for those of us working and some people are discouraged...because they know they get charged extra for unsecured loads...Now, we have to pay cash at the gate and there's this added spring cleanup bill. I think people will say they can't be bothered and continue to just go dump out in the bush."

According to Jim Hood, the town's senior administrative officer, there are measures in place to deter people from dumping trash where they are not supposed to.

"Anytime someone makes us aware that something has been dumped somewhere it shouldn't be, we do go and try to figure out who it belongs to and then we can charge them under our unsightly lands bylaw and whatnot. If we can't identify it, we will just clean it up," Hood said.

Freund, born and raised in town, remembers when the public could go shopping at the dump.

"We called it Tiffany's and you could pick up everything in there before it got crushed and buried...I'd like to see something like that again," he said.

Brake said he's requested the landfill operator provide his thoughts on recycling options and that council is seriously talking about a composting program in the future.

The town will also be monitoring the landfill situation to see whether paying cash at the gate works well or not.

"We may go to other options, such as giving invoices right there at the gate, if this method does not seem to be working for people," Hood said.

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Photo: Leanne Silva

Environment Wildlife

## Whooping cranes start journey to Wood Buffalo

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

Wood Buffalo National Park's flock of whooping cranes is headed home to the Northwest Territories.

The Whooping Crane Conservation Association (WCCA) reported last week that approximately 50 to 60 per cent of the cranes had already left their wintering grounds on the Texas coast in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge.

On Thursday, WCCA's Chester McConnell said he received word of the first whooping crane sighting of the year in Canada from an observer in Radisson, Sask.

"The citizen who reported (it) advised that one and one-half foot of snow was on the ground, but the whoopers were standing in a dugout,"

McConnell said in an email. "Hopefully the Canadian public will be happy that their birds are coming home to nest."

The birds undertake the 2,500 mile migration each year to nest and rear their young in Wood Buffalo.

US Whooping Crane Recovery Coordinator Wade Harrell monitors the flock in Aransas and reported to McConnell that despite some cranes still being observed on the refuge, the migration is well underway.

While the birds seem to be leaving en masse, they actually have staggered departures and leave in small groups, Harrell related.

Bird watchers can log their crane sightings at [www.whoopingcrane.com](http://www.whoopingcrane.com).

To see a map illustrating

the cranes' 2013 migratory progress, visit [www.whoopingcrane.com/migration](http://www.whoopingcrane.com/migration) where observations have been posted since mid March. This map cannot be used to locate the birds as all postings are delayed by at least one week to help prevent harassment of the birds.

Canada is home to the world's largest migratory population of whooping cranes. According to Environment Canada, there are almost 300 birds in the migratory Wood Buffalo flock.

Whooping cranes were designated as endangered in Canada in the year 2000. The birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act.



Kris Johnson, left, and Bart Hartop explore how to live greener at Fort Smith's environment fair on Sunday.



K'aiyus Paulette takes a look at composting worms inside Ecology North's vermiculture bin with the help of dad, Cheyenne.



Jessica Dutton, left, hands out seed packets to children who complete the Aurora Research Institute's eco-themed scavenger hunt. Grace and Ian Gauthier, centre, took home lettuce seeds to plant with dad Tim Gauthier, right.



Jessica Cox gathers signatures for the Recreation Advisory Board's new petition to protect the Slave River rapids.

Photos: Renée Francoeur

**Environment Earth Week**

# Earth Week kicks off with environmental fair

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

Fort Smith residents interested in learning how to make greener life choices flocked to the Northern Life Museum and Cultural Centre on Sunday for an environmental fair to usher in Earth Week.

"This has been really helpful," Louise Fraser said. "I was interested in having a composting bin inside and now I have more information about that...We really can all

be doing something to help the environment. We've just got to start somewhere."

The fair featured various informational booths from local businesses and organizations including Ecology North, the Town of Fort Smith, Parks Canada and the Fort Smith Paddling Club, among others.

Children could participate in a eco-friendly scavenger hunt where they had to solve riddles about composting,

community gardening and recycling. Those that finished received a packet of seeds as a prize.

"That was fun. I got to find things and run around upstairs," Grace Gauthier said. "And they gave me lettuce seeds!"

Members of the Recreation Advisory Board for the town were also on hand at the fair to let residents know about the board's recent declaration and petition against

industrial development on the Slave River rapids.

The river site has been the focus of proposed hydro development for decades.

The board will be presenting the petition and declaration to council on May 14.

Earth Week activities continued Monday with an all-day community clean up, followed by an evening documentary screening of *Manufactured Landscapes*, taking audiences deeper

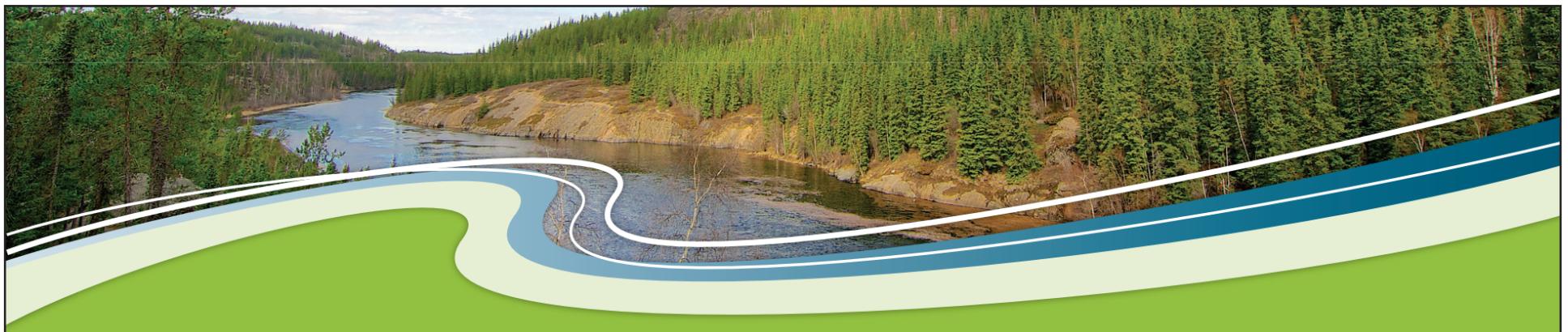
inside e-waste dumps and huge factories in China.

Tuesday there will be a tour of the Fort Smith Water treatment plant and Wednesday will feature another film, *Food Inc.*, that delves into the health horror of corporate farming.

Other local events include a hike and picnic in the Salt River Day Use Area on Thursday and a coffeehouse evening of earth songs and storytelling on

Saturday at the Curling Club lounge.

Earth Week events are also taking place across the territories. In Yellowknife, environmental enthusiasts enjoyed a fish fry and bike repair workshops on Monday with more activities planned throughout the week, including an informational session on carbon pricing, the annual solid waste management forum and a nature walk.



# Devolution

of Lands and Resources in the Northwest Territories

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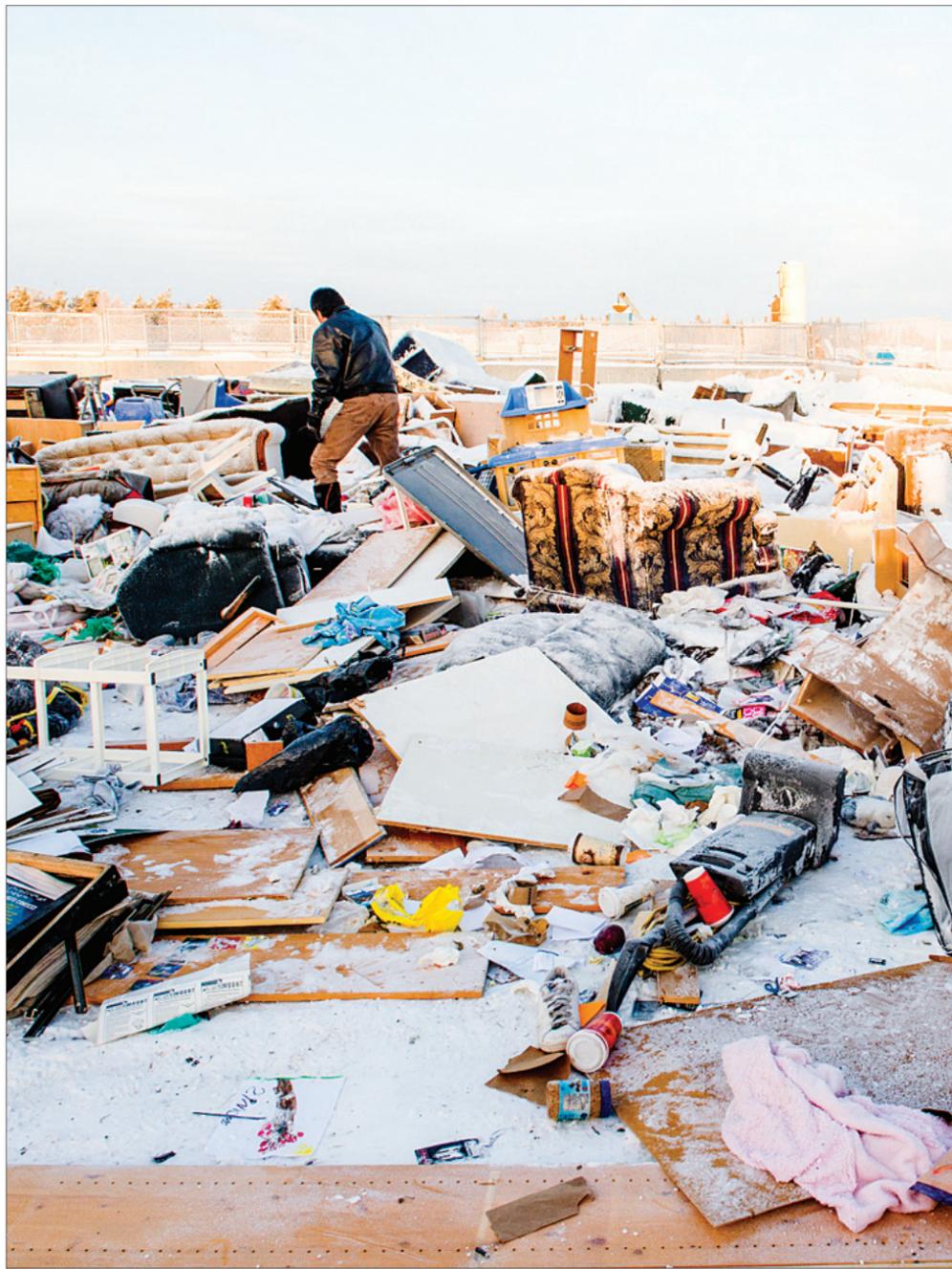




A bulldozer goes in for a load of garbage to haul it to the landfill.



Wood waste is organized into piles and bins to isolate the clean wood that can be recycled.



A Yellowknife resident roams through the popular salvaging cells at the landfill site looking for items to reuse.

**Environment Waste Management**

# Yellowknife's solid waste facility

## New projects proposed as old landfill

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

The Yellowknife Solid Waste Management Facility is at a crossroads.

The “dump,” as it’s lovingly called by locals, has long been known for its efficient diversion rates and extensive salvaging section - commonly acknowledged as a rite of passage for new Yellowknifers looking to furnish their homes without dropping a penny.

This spring, the facility is looking to take all that to another level.

With the original landfill slated to be sealed over during the next two years and the new \$2 million cell already being used for residential and commercial trash, the facility wants to see its spatial and carbon footprint reduced as much as possible.

One of the ways to do this is through the newly proposed idea of a “transfer station,” Peter Houweling, the facility’s assistant superintendent, told *The Journal*. “A transfer station is basically a remote location,

such as an inner city location as seen in the southern cities, that’s a distance away from the landfill,” he said. “Here, you’d have a series of bins that customers could dispose of waste categorically. E-waste would be in one bin, household waste in another, tires in another... We’d then pick up the bin and process it into the landfill or load it and ship it, such as the e-waste that we ship to Edmonton.”

This would minimize the amount of times the materials have to be moved, ultimately saving on cost, time and reducing the environmental impact, Houweling said.

The proposed idea would see only half of the transfer station project developed this year for items such as tires and scrap metal.

The transfer station proposal has been presented to council as a conceptual plan and was well received, Houweling said. The next step is a presentation at the solid waste management public

forum to be held as a part of Earth Week activities on Apr. 23 at 7:00 p.m. at the Northern United Place in Yellowknife.

Similar to a transfer station, the facility has already started changing the way it handles wood waste.

“Wood used to be in a giant stockpile and people would be able to go through it, salvage it and then we would pay money for a company to chip it and we’d use it as cover material on the landfill. Starting a few months ago, we now put our wood in bins and we have an area beside the bins specifically for salvaging. So any clean wood scraps and pallets can go in there,” Houweling said. “The wood that is not salvaged, the stuff with paint or nails in it, we bring it over to our new cell, spread it over a layer of garbage and compact it with our bulldozer, which eliminates us moving it twice, hiring a chipping contractor and we still achieve the same end result.”

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Solid Waste Facility supervisor Carl Grabke oversees a load of fresh trash being dropped off.



Heavy equipment like this bulldozer shift and pack down layers of garbage to make the most of the landfill space.



Salvagers are not the only ones sifting through garbage at the landfill. Feathered scavengers also hunt out juicy pieces of trash from the compressed mounds.



The landfill features a designated section for electronic waste. In 2012, the facility shipped 26 metric tonnes of e-waste to Edmonton.

Photos: Don Jaque, Patrick Kane

## Facility on brink of change to be capped off over next two years

The facility also wants to eventually create an entirely new and categorized salvage area.

“Right now we have a mix-match method for users dropping off their stuff. We want to designate sections, like a specific furniture section, and monitor this,” Houweling said.

Salvaging is a huge component of the facility and one of the reasons for a higher diversion rate, according to Chris Greencorn, the city’s acting director of public works.

Approximately 12 per cent, or nearly 4,000 tonnes, of the non-hazardous waste that entered the facility in 2010 was diverted, in addition to beverage containers diverted from landfills through the Beverage Container Recycling Program.

“People come out of there with some pretty nice stuff. It’s a fairly dominant thing in Yellowknife culture that has been going on for a long time. I know people that have furnished their entire

apartments with items from the salvage cells here,” Greencorn said.

According to Greencorn, a number of existing program expansions are also on the facility’s agenda.

“We’re looking at expanding our contaminated soil remediation pad that started in 2005 where we take contaminated soil - maybe soil with fuel spilled on it - and treat it so it can be landfilled hydrocarbon-free,” he told *The Journal*. “We’re also exploring a curbside recycling option and expanding the popular composting component.”

Yellowknife is in the midst of putting together an outline for a city-wide composting program after the success of the four-year-old centralized composting pilot project, located on the solid waste facility site, Greencorn said.

Over 765 tonnes of food and yard waste have been diverted since the composting plant opened, saving the landfill an estimated \$144,000.

The old landfill, started in 1974 as an unlined, hole-in-the-ground style dump with uncontrolled burning until 1990, can be capped off either by an engineered clay liner, followed by a layer of sand and a final layer of topsoil, or by asphalt.

A potential location for the expanded composting piles is on top of the old landfill once it has been capped off.

“This would limit the amount of land we’re taking up for waste,” Houweling said. “The compost can still be turned on the asphalt and it can be engineered so that any drainage or leachate produced by the compost would be caught in a containment area and treated appropriately.”

The new landfill has an expected life span of five years based on city calculations and has been in use since January 2012.

Construction waste is the only material still going into the old landfill the purpose of grading prior to final capping.

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April 27  
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| 1,2: <b>Town of Fort Smith</b>                 | 25: Northstar Chrysler                       | 43: <b>Business Development Investment</b>   |
| 3: <b>Northern Journal</b>                     | 26: The Pelican Rapids Inn                   | 44: <b>Industry, Tourism, and Investment</b> |
| 4: Wood Buffalo National Park                  | 27: South Slave Divisional Education Council | 45: <b>NWT Power Corporation</b>             |
| 5: Thebacha Chamber of Commerce                | 28: Environment and Natural Resources        | 46: Employment Standards                     |
| 6: Mike Labine                                 | 29: Dancing Spirits                          | 47: Service Canada                           |
| 7-9: Diggerz Power Sports                      | 30: Northern Life Museum & Cultural Centre   | 48: Western Willow Ventures Inc.             |
| 10-14: Kingland Ford                           | 31: Human Rights Commission                  | 49: Enchanted Pathways Faerie Nursery        |
| 15: <b>Northwestel</b> /MacSkiToe              | 32: <b>Fort Smith Health Centre</b>          | 50: Brandy Wilson                            |
| 16: Sawdust                                    | 33,34: <b>Kaeser's</b>                       | 51: CosMedic Arts                            |
| 17: Tupperware                                 | 35: Jessical Hval                            | 52: Arctic Energy Alliance                   |
| 18: Relay for Life                             | 36: Karl Johnston                            | 53,54: Wesclean                              |
| 19: Fort Smith Ski Club                        | 37: Education, Culture and Employment        | 55: Ptarmigan Inn                            |
| 21: Fort Smith Animal Shelter                  | 38: Aurora College                           | 56: Métis Dene Development Fund              |
| 22: <b>Thebacha Business Dev. Services</b>     | 39: DeWolf ArtWorks                          | 57: Northwest Company/Northern               |
| 23: Thebacha/Wood Buffalo Astronomical Society | 40: Mercury Sign Art and Design              | 58: Rusty Raven                              |
| 24: High Level Motor Products                  | 41: <b>Northwestern Air Lease</b>            | 59,60: Fort Smith Paddling Club              |
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Photo: Arvids Sillis

Researchers crouch along a snow trench to gather snow depth and layer data in the Trail Valley Creek watershed area.



Photo: Thomas Watts

An Environment Canada scientist uses a magnaprobe tool to conduct ground sampling of the snowpack layers on the Trail Valley Creek study site, 55 km outside of Inuvik.

**Environment Climate Change**

# Snow radar technology used in Canada for first time

## *SnowSAR captures NWT data for international campaign*

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

Environment Canada researchers have taken cutting-edge images of Northwest Territories snow cover with a new aerial radar tool developed and funded by the European Space Agency (ESA) as part of an international campaign underway to further understand climate change's effects on snow and ice.

The instrument, called SnowSAR (synthetic aperture radar), was flown in Canada for the first time around the Inuvik area for two days in March and again during the first week of April to detect changes in the snowpack through radio waves.

Earlier this year, SnowSAR took to the skies in Austria and last year collected data on snow cover in Finland.

The technology is flown in a small bush plane with specialized baggage doors to house the sensors.

"We're interested in collecting things like the size of the snow grains, which change over the season, within the snowpack," Chris Derksen, an Environment Canada scientist in climate research, told *The Journal*. "The signal from the radar comes down from the aircraft, interacts with the snow and a proportion of that radar signal is returned to the aircraft. What happens to that radar signal in the snowpack depends on how deep the snow is, the size of the grain, the layers and whatnot."

Environment Canada has been conducting snow surveys in the NWT, specifically around the Trail Valley Creek watershed, just to the east of the Mackenzie River Delta or about 55 km

north-northeast of Inuvik, for over 20 years, Derksen noted, making it a data-rich location.

"It's a great place to start global radar work because of the history of information, and we have come to understand the snowpack very well here."

SnowSAR is a new technology developed to help drive the ESA's COREH2O campaign, which, according to the agency's website, "aims to fill the gaps in current information on snow, glaciers and surface water" through improving the modelling and prediction of water balance and streamflow for snow-covered basins.

ESA is campaigning for a radar like SnowSAR in space, Derksen noted.

"With this work right now, we're just trying to prove scientifically that the mission concept would work in space," he said. "With an orbiting instrument in space, we'd get regular measurements over time and you could use these to inform some of our modelling activities and other work. Right now, if we use satellite data to estimate how deep the snow is, it's really coarse grid scale. We don't have a fine picture of how the snow depth varies across the North, but if we had a radar in space we could see larger grid sizes to understand snow depth in more clear detail. In turn, these data sets would really help...weather prediction models, water balance modes, which all need information on state of snowpack."

Radar data also refines scientists' understanding of the impacts that climate change is having on the distribution of snow and ice and how this, in turn, is influencing the water cycle and various feedback systems, ESA stated.

According to Derksen, it's an expensive and time-consuming

process to put a radar sensor system in space and no funding has been secured for such a mission as of yet.

### **Radar observations compared with ground data**

While the SnowSAR data taken in the NWT will not be analysed until this summer, Derksen said the field research team was able to see a big difference in snow cover between March and

April when the two radar flights occurred.

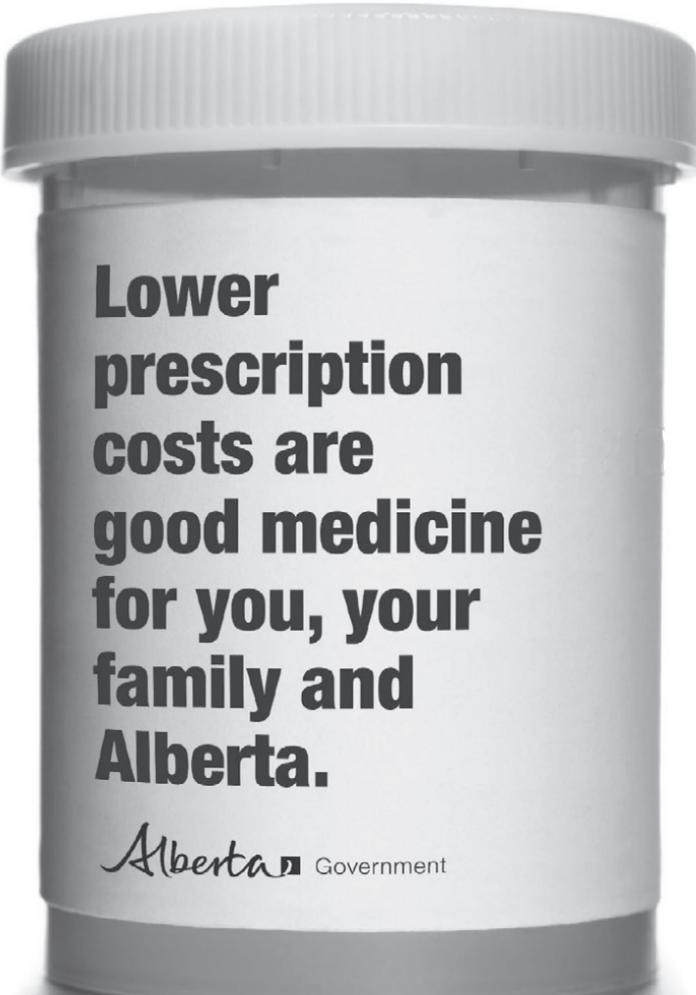
The radar data will be compared with the approximately 15,000 snow depth measurements taken on the ground in a designated 50m-long snow "trench" across one of the radar lines. These depth measurements are acquired using automated snow depth probes equipped with a GPS, Derksen explained.

The researchers also use a near infrared camera to take sequential photographs along the length of the trench. The camera is sensitive to the snow grain size and will provide precise information on how the snow layers vary both vertically and horizontally.

To best interpret the radar data, it is key to understand the structure of the snowpack, Derksen said.

"Every time you have a blowing snow event or a blizzard, a slab layer is deposited, then you get fresh snow on top of it. Snow is a very layered medium and we really want to understand how these layers are formed, how they change, because that does impact the radar signal."

Plans to try SnowSAR in Alaska next are underway, Derksen said.



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# Volunteering from north to south for the next generation

## Social worker finds fulfillment in padding schedule with unpaid deeds

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

Nona German is not one to sit around.

"I'm what you'd call a serial volunteer," German, 53, said with a laugh. "If my day job ended, I'd still be busy. It may be a lot of craziness but I love it. It's my cup of tea."

German, a social worker by trade who runs the Northern Student Education Initiative (NSEI) out of the Ben Calf Robe Society in Edmonton, was born and raised in Yellowknife and has been volunteering for as long as she can remember.

"My parents were both big volunteers in Yellowknife. They were of the mindset you give back to the place you live in," she said. "My father, Fred German, was actually a serial volunteer, ask anyone who knew him. He helped build churches, he helped round up other volunteers. He did a lot of good. Growing up I remember the kids in my neighbourhood ringing the doorbell and asking for Mr. German to come out and play because he was so involved."



Nona German helps University of Alberta student Marshall Johnson with a quick coursework question.

German's first volunteering gig was with Girl Guides, when she was just on the brink of adolescence.

"This was back when not very much of Yellowknife was paved, so we'd clean up all the trails. That started it. I've been a lifetime volunteer ever since."

The NSEI program, which assists Aboriginal and other students from the NWT and Nunavut in pursuing post-secondary education and the subsequent transition from a Northern lifestyle to a southern urban community, has made volunteering

To me, we all have something to give and if you're a capable human on this planet, you should be volunteering.

Nona German

that much more of a focus in German's life.

"My career has become a lifestyle. I try to make my volunteer work assist with the work I do with the young people," she said. "That's my way of contributing to the next generation, because they're the ones that matter. They're learning from us right now and they'll be taking care of us in the future."

One of German's volunteer commitments is serving on the University of Alberta's animal care and use committee for about five to six hours a month.

"Volunteering at this committee has led to such great networking that some of these researchers (on the committee)

now give my student groups coming from the North a more in depth school tour. This has been absolutely fantastic and impacting for those kids."

German also currently sits on the Aboriginal liaison committee for the Edmonton police and the Aboriginal Advisory Council for Homeward Trust Edmonton, a not-for-profit organization striving to end homelessness.

"My day can start at 6:00 a.m. and end at midnight. I take students' calls at any time," German said. "To me, we all have something to give and if you're a capable human on this planet, you should be volunteering."

German may no longer live full-time in the NWT,

but that hasn't stopped her from continuing to volunteer in the North as well.

Last Tuesday she was back in her hometown to volunteer for the Territorial Skills Competition where high school and post-secondary students faced off in a series of trade and technical skill events.

"I arrived a day early, helped them set up - all that grunt work, you know. Then I had a booth during the competition for students to learn more about my program and the resources and services available to them so they know that they can pursue higher education no matter what," German said. "I find students have a hard time believing in themselves and it takes the extra time, the extra work, to encourage them to start believing."

German was also in Inuvik earlier in the year to volunteer with the NWT-North Regional Skills Competition.

Volunteering with students is never a waste, she said. "You always learn from them too, as they're learning from you."

Apr. 21-27 is National Volunteer Week.

### Northerners Volunteers

## Hay River hockey hero rewarded for giving back

By KRISTEN CAMPBELL

Hay River may not have won the grand prize, but the hard work of one avid volunteer earned the town a second place finish in this year's Kraft Hockey Goes On contest.

Jeff Ashby, a man known for his dedication to volunteerism, was awarded \$20,000 for Hay River's minor hockey association after the town rallied for two days of intense voting.

For many in the community, the competition wasn't just about getting the money for minor hockey, but giving a man the appreciation he deserves.

Ashby was awarded the second place prize for Western Canada, beat for first by Saskatchewan's Grant Berger.

He said the second place finish was unbelievable and he is still buzzing with excitement.

"I was excited," he said. "Really excited. The night it happened there was a bunch of us at the arena." He said he didn't know whether he should laugh or cry.

Ashby's avid volunteerism budded after attending a women's league game approximately eight years ago. From there, he started regularly visiting the arena and assisting the Peeewe



Jeff Ashby

25 nominees across the entire country, that was out of over 1,000 entries."

Buth was in Edmonton when the final results, including Ashby's second place finish, were announced live on TSN during the Montreal versus Philadelphia NHL game on Apr. 3. Many of those who were in Hay River congregated at the arena with the star of the evening himself, to cheer him on and see the results. Ashby's accomplishment was also mentioned at the minor hockey association's annual banquet on April 16.

"It is hard to imagine the scope of what we were able to accomplish here. We managed to get more votes than 15 other communities, including places as large as Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary," Butth said.

The money will be used to renovate Hay River's arena, but that isn't the most valuable gain from the competition, in Butth's opinion.

"The biggest and most important thing that has come from all of this, though, is that Jeff now knows just how much he means to us all and we were given such a great opportunity to show him in a very public way," she said.

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# Playground a labour of love for college student

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

The Timber Crescent Natural Playground, Fort Smith's only naturally engineered play area in the centre of the Tamarack trailer court, is getting some new features before it hosts its first nature-based activities this summer.

Katie White, the park's designer, used driftwood, sand and boulders from the Slave River last fall to create a natural space that would reconnect children with their environment as her final project for a diploma in ecological restoration at the University of Victoria.

The project, however, turned out to be more than just another school assignment.

"It definitely kind of grew from that," said White, who is now also enrolled in the Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program at Aurora College. "I felt like I couldn't just build this thing and leave it there. I felt like I needed to take it a step further to show people the meaning behind it."



Katie White demonstrates how much fun natural elements, such as boulders and logs, can be in Fort Smith's Timber Crescent Natural Playground, which she designed and built last year as part of her ecological restoration diploma program.

Photo: Meagan Wohlberg

White and her fiancé, Adam McNab, put all of their own time into building the playground, from gathering the boulders and logs to shaping the 14 dump truck loads of sand dropped off by the town.

"A lot of playgrounds feature flat terrain, so I wanted

there to be buried logs for climbing structures and hills for climbing and rolling," White said.

This summer, she plans to add the X's and O's pieces for the life-sized game board made out of driftwood. She also wants to connect the playground to a simple trail

system to encourage children to explore the neighbouring forested area.

"I've acquired some funding from the Legion to get Sonny MacDonald, a local artist, to do some simple interpretive signs for the trails, like 'This is a Jackpine,' for identifying

vegetation," White said.

A steering wheel and mast, hopefully created by Paul W. Kaeser high school art students, will also be added this summer to the log structure that outlines the shape of a boat.

Additionally, White has recently secured funding

from TD's Friends of the Environment Foundation to run environmental workshops at the playground in July.

"That is still in the planning stages, but I think these workshops will collaborate with the day camps at rec centre," White said. "We'll be building bird houses, maybe doing moss propagation and scavenger hunts...I'd like to incorporate elders and their teachings, too."

The overarching idea behind the natural playground is to address the disconnection happening with the youth and their natural surroundings.

"I truly believe that our kids are spending too much time indoors playing video games and it scares me that the next generation doesn't know the difference between a pine and spruce tree, but they can identify a fast food emblem as soon as they see it," White said.

"It's about giving back to the community and learning to celebrate the green spaces in our neighbourhood that are right at our fingertips."

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# Focus groups to help out front line HIV workers

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

A research project from the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) has arrived in the North to collect input from more rural and remote locations about sexual health risk and needs, after running in five major cities across the country over the past year.

The project, titled The Development of Core Competencies for HIV Prevention, is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and made its Northern debut with a focus group at Aurora College's Thebacha campus in Fort Smith last Monday.

Through these "open-dialogue, non-judgmental" group discussions, the project hopes to collect information on the public's understanding of HIV and sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections (STBBIs) and determine what needs are not being met by public health workers for those at risk.

From this, the project aims to build a set of population-specific core "competencies" or resources for public health organizations and front line workers. These competencies will advance front line



Jessica Dutton, research and outreach coordinator with the South Slave Research Centre of the Aurora Research Institute, is running a series of focus groups across the NWT to help develop resources for front line HIV workers.

workers' skills in handling sensitive sexual health cases, particularly those involving HIV.

The project also calls for the establishment of a national reference group to provide overarching guidance and advice.

"The association felt like there was a greater need for training for front line workers when it came to treating not only those already

with HIV or an STI, but also those at risk of contracting one of these diseases," said Jessica Dutton, research and outreach coordinator with the South Slave Research Centre of the Aurora Research Institute. "These focus groups allow those competencies to be based on what people's experiences have been."

Dutton led the focus group, along with Pertice Moffitt,

manager of health research programs with the North Slave Research Centre, who took notes.

While only five participants showed up in Fort Smith, there was still a lively discussion about the skills and knowledge that front line workers and service providers should have to properly care for people with or at risk of contracting HIV and other STBBIs.

"I think it did exactly what it was supposed to do because it collected the ideas, impressions and experiences of the people who live here," Dutton said.

She also noted focus groups in the NWT will help diversify the project.

"It will create a snapshot of the North for the project and maybe the CPHA will want to narrow their focus and release a set of competencies catered to the North because it is different here...Relationship building is huge, whereas in the city there is a lot more anonymity...and we know and we heard it again in the group discussion how relationships between clients and care providers are very important to the overall quality of care."

The group also touched on another key issue CPHA wants to bring to the table in developing competencies: understanding the social determinants of health.

According to CPHA, these determinants include a broad range of social and economic factors, such as income, education, social support networks, gender, culture, experiences of homophobia and racism, along with the

physical environment and biological and genetic factors, which can all increase the vulnerability of individuals to HIV and other communicable diseases.

CPHA has found that front line workers and care providers find it challenging to know how to address these factors, which prompted the project.

Launched last year, the project has targeted focus groups in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax.

Moffitt was approached last month in regards to bringing it to the NWT.

"They wanted to extend this project to more rural and remote communities to ensure the competencies apply to everyone," Moffitt said.

The project has relevance in the NWT due to the territory reporting the highest rate of gonorrhea and second highest rate of chlamydia in Canada in 2010 when there were 867 cases of chlamydia and 215 cases of gonorrhea.

Plans are underway for additional focus groups over the next month in Yellowknife, Behchoko and Inuvik, Dutton said. The project is not expected to run in Nunavut or Yukon.

Photo: Renée Francoeur

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# More rebate opportunities for energy-conscious Northerners

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR  
 Northerners can save even more money while lowering their home heating costs and becoming more energy efficient following new changes to the Northwest Territories

Energy Efficiency Incentive Program (EEIP).  
 The initiative by Arctic Energy Alliance and the GNWT, put in place through the Energy Plan and Greenhouse Gas Strategy, provides NWT

residents and businesses with a rebate for qualifying products and services, such as washing machines, heat recovery ventilators, wood pellet stoves, home insulation renovations, etc., bought in the NWT.

For Canadian products purchased outside the NWT, consumers can apply for a 50 per cent rebate.  
 The program, started in 1998, was designed to help Northerners become more energy efficient, reducing

their greenhouse gas emissions as well as household costs.  
 As of Apr. 1, the program has expanded to include rebates on Energy Star chest freezers, air sealing for upgrading an older home of up to \$350, and rebates on new homes receiving an EnerGuide label rating.  
 The rebate for wood stoves and wood pellet stoves,

homes with EnerGuide label ratings of 81 or higher is not just for the new home purchases, but also the builders, and that's really to encourage the evolution of higher construction standards with regards to energy. In a lot of regards, the benchmark that was set five years ago, we've achieved it and so we asked ourselves what's the next benchmark?"

The number of rebate applications continues to increase over the years, with over 1,000 rebate applications received in 2012.

"When you look at it, with total rebates running at about \$200,000 on average a year and you do that over 10 years, about \$2 million in rebates have gone out," Azzolini said.

Rebate quantities differ for the eight NWT hydro (including Dettah, Yellowknife, Enterprise, Fort Resolution) versus non-hydro communities, such as Norman Wells, Deline, Inuvik, because hydroelectricity is considered greenhouse gas neutral, Arctic Energy Alliance states on its website.

Applications for rebates are available online at [www.aea.nt.ca](http://www.aea.nt.ca) or [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca). Copies of receipts are needed and cheques are received typically four to six weeks after an application is submitted.

Residents are eligible for two products per category, per household, per year, with the exception of home renovations. Non-profit organizations and businesses can apply for incentives to a maximum of five products per category, per year, also with the exception of renovations.

Applications must be submitted within 12 months of purchasing the appliances/services.

Azzolini said he foresees a reduction in the amount of energy consumed in the NWT over the coming years, which will also mean change for power service providers.

"I think power producers are increasingly going to try to find more inexpensive ways to produce power... They'll respond to the market's demand for less power and if they're having less income come in, they'll find ways to reduce their own operating costs over the long term," Azzolini said.

"Ultimately what we're doing is contributing to a market solution for individual energy choices. It affects energy producers, yes, and so then the energy producer has to rethink the energy production model and we then have a gradual evolution."

We have a lot of people coming to us asking how they can further reduce energy consumption in their homes. One of the things we see is that reducing air leakage is one of the most practical and cost effective ways of saving energy.

*Louie Azzolini  
 Arctic Energy Alliance*

windows, doors and the replacement of electric hot water heaters has also increased.

Dual flush toilets still qualify for a \$50 rebate. Previously, single flush toilets qualified for a rebate with a single flush of six litres of water or less; however, single flush toilets can only qualify now if they have a minimum flush of 4.8 litres as part of the new changes.

The rebate for Energy Star Zone "D" windows and doors has increased to \$100 and pellet and wood stoves buyers can now get back one third of the original cost, up to a \$1,000 rebate.

Replacement of electric hot water tanks in a non-hydro community has also increased to a \$1,500 rebate.

The new changes speak to market demand, Louie Azzolini, Arctic Energy Alliance's executive director, told *The Journal*.

"We have a lot of people coming to us asking how they can further reduce energy consumption in their homes. One of the things we see is that reducing air leakage is one of the most practical and cost effective ways of saving energy so it was added to the program," he said.

"The new rebates for new



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*Information provided by Canadian Coalition for Immunization Awareness & Promotion (CCIAP)*





Tech Chair Darcy Sinclair gets his hands dirty in the heavy equipment contest with competitors in the background.



Siyath Sok of Yellowknife tries his hand at rewiring during the electrical event.



The winners in the cooking event are all smiles from the podium. Left to right, Lina Xiao won silver, Samantha Butt took home the gold and Olivia Williams won bronze.



Aspiring carpenters take precise measurements to make the perfect cut.



Keshki Lalonde spritzes her dummy's locks in the hairstyling competition. Lalonde won gold.



Dalton Atwell cranks open a small engine.



Eileen Jones snaps on a camera lens to shoot for the photography contest.



Sparks fly as Antonio Lewis shows off his welding skills.

Photos courtesy of Dave Broshta

**Education Trades & Technology**

# Territorial Skills ready Northern students for nationals

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

Over 60 students gathered to show off their trade and technology skills at the 15th Territorial Skills Competition in Yellowknife last Tuesday.

High school and post-secondary school students went head to head in various trade contests such as baking, carpentry, electrical wiring, hairstyling, welding and plumbing at four venues across the capital.

Gold medalists in each event advance to the Skills Canada National Competition in Vancouver on June 5-8.

Almost all of this year's first place winners hail from Yellowknife with a few exceptions. Luke Terry of Inuvik won gold in the workplace safety event for post secondary students, while Fort Simpson's Kiyana Betsaka also took home a gold in graphic design for secondary students, followed closely by her classmate Ethan Moreau-Betsaka.

The most popular event is usually photography, Skills Canada NWT executive director Jan Fullerton said, but this year the cooking contest

boasted the highest number of participants. The heavy equipment event also made a mark in this year's competition as it had not been run for a numbers of years due to low registration.

"It was a good, fairly standard turnout," Fullerton said. While the bulk of participants were from Yellowknife (42), there were also four students from Whati, eleven from the Beaufort Delta region, two from Fort Simpson and seven from the South Slave.

Last year there were 74 registrants.

"Students from Gameti unfortunately could not attend due to their winter camp happening on the same day. They would have brought 12 additional competitors," Fullerton said. "We're looking to make plans now to ensure that we don't double book with an important school event next year...We want to see overall participation increased."

Skills Canada NWT will be sending a survey out to schools across the territory later this year to gauge how they can recruit more participants, Fullerton said.

"The survey asks things like what barriers are interfering with skills competitions, what can we do better, how do they rate our communication strategies or if the territorials date needs to be changed, things like that."

Low registration numbers for the NWT's South regional competition in February led to a cancellation of the event this year.

Students in this region - the Tlicho, South Slave and Dehcho areas - could directly register for the territorial competition but not

many of them did, Fullerton noted.

"The level of competition is different, so some felt their skills were ready for a regional competition but not the territorial one. That's one of the advantages of the regional events, it gives them a chance to test themselves in a slightly more relaxed, more localized context and then they can feel more confident about territorials."

Fullerton plans to also directly engage with schools in the southern regions and have the regional competition's numbers back up for next year.

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# EMPLOYMENT, TENDERS AND LEGAL NOTICES

and orientation is provided. Competition remains open until a suitable candidate is found. Resume may be faxed, emailed, or posted to: Gayle MacAdam, Community Services Coordinator, Alberta Seventh Step Society, 1820 - 27 Ave., SW, Calgary, AB, T2T 1H1. Fax 403-228-7773. Email: comworker@albertaseventhstep.com.

## Farm Machinery

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## Personals

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## Real Estate

15 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING LOTS, Vulcan, Alberta. Ritchie Bros Auctioneers. Selling by Unreserved Auction, July 18 from Lethbridge. 25 Bareland Condo Units as 8 lots + 7 single lots. Jerry Hodge 780-706-6652; Greg Cripps - Re/Max 403-391-2648; rbauction.com/realestate.

ELINOR LAKE RESORT. 2.5 hours NE Edmonton. Spring Sale, fully serviced lake lots reduced by 15% May 17-31, 2013. Suitable for cabin/house, RV or investment. 1-877-623-3990; elinorlakeresort.com.

## Services

CRIMINAL RECORD? Think: Canadian pardon. U.S. travel waiver. (24 hour record check). Divorce? Simple. Fast. Inexpensive. Debt recovery? Alberta collection to \$25,000. Calgary 403-228-1300/1-800-347-2540; www.accesslegalresearch.com.

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GRIZZLY BEAR TOUR. Experience a one day fly and cruise west coast grizzly adventure to Khutzeymateen, BC this July. Calgary and Edmonton departures. 1-866-460-1415; www.classiccanadiantours.com.



## REQUEST FOR TENDERS Highway Surface Repairs and Rehabilitation CT101294

- NWT Highway 3 - Kms 263 to 266  
and 304.6 to 306.2, NT -

Ripping the existing road surface, placing base/subbase course and applying the SAST.

Sealed tenders addressed to the Transportation Office in Hay River or Yellowknife under the conditions contained within the tender documents, will be received before:

**3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, MAY 23, 2013.**

Contractors may obtain tender documents from either of the above addresses as of April 15, 2013.

Pre-tender meeting: 1:30 pm, May 9, 2013, 1st Floor Boardroom, 4510 Franklin Ave, Yellowknife, NT.

**General inquiries to:** Charlene Lloyd  
Phone: (867) 920-8001

**Technical inquiries to:** Muhammad Abu Bakar  
Phone: (867) 873-7309

The GNWT Business Incentive Policy and Chapter 5 of the Agreement on Internal Trade will apply to this procurement.

For contract opportunities visit  
[www.contractregistry.nt.ca](http://www.contractregistry.nt.ca)



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## MÉTIS YOUTH SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM

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## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



### Town of Fort Smith Recreations and Community Centre Concession Lease

The Town of Fort Smith is accepting proposals from qualified organizations for the operation of the food and beverage concession at the Recreation and Community Center.

Sealed proposals clearly marked "RCC Concession Proposal" will be received at the Town Office, Box 147, 174 McDougal Road, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0 up to 3:00 p.m. local time on Friday May 3, 2013.

For further information, please contact:

Jim Hood  
Senior Administrative Officer  
Town of Fort Smith  
P.O. Box 147, 174 McDougal Road  
Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0  
Phone: 867-872-8400 / Fax: 867-872-8401  
Email: [jhood@fortsmith.ca](mailto:jhood@fortsmith.ca)

A copy of the Request for Proposal documents can be obtained at the above address or on the Town of Fort Smith website at <http://www.fortsmith.ca>. Anyone obtaining documents from the website must register with the Town Office to ensure they receive any addenda to the RFP.

To view the concession area, contact the Recreation and Community Center at 867-872-4732.

This is a Request for Proposal only and not a tendering process and will not necessarily give rise to a contract.

*Proposals received after the closing time will be rejected and returned unopened. Proposals will not be opened in public.*



**AURORA  
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### Instructor, Developmental Studies (English 150/160)

Thebacha Campus  
Fort Smith, NT

Term Position to August 19, 2014

Salary starts at \$46.30 per hour (approximately \$90,285 per annum), plus an annual Northern Allowance of \$7,059.

**Job Opening ID #:** 10425 **Closing Date:** May 3, 2013

**Apply Online:** [www.hr.gov.nt.ca/employment](http://www.hr.gov.nt.ca/employment)  
**Inquiries Only:** Fort Smith Human Resource Service Centre, P.O. Box 876, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0,  
Fax: (867) 872-3298, E-mail: [jobsfortsmith@gov.nt.ca](mailto:jobsfortsmith@gov.nt.ca)

- Applicants must clearly identify eligibility under the Affirmative Action Policy in order to receive priority consideration.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories is an inclusive workplace, and seeks to accommodate persons with disabilities, as required. If you have a disability and you require support, you are encouraged to identify your needs if you are contacted for an interview or assignment, so that you may be accommodated.
- Equivalencies may be considered.
- Eligibility lists may be created from this competition to fill future term or indeterminate positions.
- Certain positions may require medical clearance and/or an acceptable criminal records check.
- For copies of the job description please visit [www.hr.gov.nt.ca/employment](http://www.hr.gov.nt.ca/employment).



### FUN FACT #43:

*Canada's beaver is the second largest rodent in the world.*

# EMPLOYMENT, TENDERS AND LEGAL NOTICES



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Office Systems Furniture – Design, Supply and Install SO435191

### – Various Communities, NT –

The Department of Public Works and Services of the GNWT is requesting proposals from qualified suppliers for a Standing Offer Agreement for the design, supply and installation of office systems furniture for the GNWT.

Proposals addressed to the Contracts Administrator, Department of Public Works and Services, Government of the NWT, 5009-49<sup>th</sup> Street, Yellowknife, NT, will be received before:

**3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2013.**

Contractors may obtain proposal documents from the above address as of April 16, 2013.

**General inquiries to:** Contract Administrator  
Government of the NWT  
Phone: (867) 873-7230  
E-mail: [pwstenders@gov.nt.ca](mailto:pwstenders@gov.nt.ca)

The GNWT Business Incentive Policy and Chapter 5 of the Agreement on Internal Trade will apply to this procurement.

For contract opportunities visit  
[www.contractregistry.nt.ca](http://www.contractregistry.nt.ca)



## REQUEST FOR TENDERS FEC Installation CT101303 – Wrigley, NT –

Supply and install new FEC at Wrigley Airport.

Sealed tenders addressed to the Transportation Office in Fort Simpson, Hay River or Yellowknife under the conditions contained within the tender documents, will be received before:

**3:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, MAY 7, 2013.**

Contractors may obtain tender documents from either of the above addresses as of April 22, 2013.

Pre-tender meeting: 2:00 pm, May 2, 2013, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom, YK Centre, 4922 - 48<sup>th</sup> Street, Yellowknife, NT.

**General inquiries to:** Charlene Lloyd  
Phone: (867) 920-8001

**Technical inquiries to:** Pat Ayiku  
Phone: (867) 920-3053

The GNWT Business Incentive Policy and Chapter 5 of the Agreement on Internal Trade will apply to this procurement.

For contract opportunities visit  
[www.contractregistry.nt.ca](http://www.contractregistry.nt.ca)

## NOTICE OF TENDER



## Town of Fort Smith New Salt Storage Building 2013

Sealed Tenders plainly marked on the envelope "Town of Fort Smith New Salt Storage Building 2013", will be received by the Town of Fort Smith, 174 McDougal Road, Fort Smith, NT, until **3:00 p.m. MST, Tuesday, May 7, 2013.**

The project is located in the Town of Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. This project consists of:

- Demolition of existing metal building
- Removal of existing concrete
- Supply and installation of new concrete
- Supply and installation of new fabric building
- Supply and installation of new wooden pony walls

Project documents may be obtained from the Town of Fort Smith after April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

Each tender must be accompanied by the specified bid security made payable to the Town of Fort Smith.

The right is reserved to reject any or all Tenders or to accept any Tender that may be considered in the best interest of the Town of Fort Smith.

**Written inquiries may be addressed to:**

Mitchel Heron, C.E.T  
at Maskwa Engineering Ltd.  
Phone: 867-872-2812 / Fax: 867-872-2813  
Email: [mitch.heron@maskwaengineering.ca](mailto:mitch.heron@maskwaengineering.ca)



## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS Northwest Territories Minimum Wage Adjustment Committee

The Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is now accepting resumes from Northwest Territories' resident based employers and employees interested in serving on the Northwest Territories' Minimum Wage Adjustment Committee (MWAC).

The MWAC's mandate is both interesting and important and will benefit the residents of the Northwest Territories. The MWAC will meet biennially and make recommendations to the Minister of ECE on adjusting the Northwest Territories' minimum wage rate.

Employer applicants must be residents of the Northwest Territories and own their own business located in the Northwest Territories. Employee applicants must also be residents of the Northwest Territories and work for a Northwest Territories company located in the Northwest Territories. One employer and one employee will be selected. Members will receive honorarium and reimbursement for related travel and per diem expenses at the Government of the Northwest Territories' rate.

Submissions must be received in writing (by email or regular mail) in the form of a resume detailing experience before:

**5:00 PM, LOCAL TIME, WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013.**

**General inquiries to:** Ms. Janelle James  
Manager, Employment Standards  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Nova Plaza  
P.O. Box 1320  
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9  
Tel: (867) 873-7486  
Email: [janelle\\_james@gov.nt.ca](mailto:janelle_james@gov.nt.ca)



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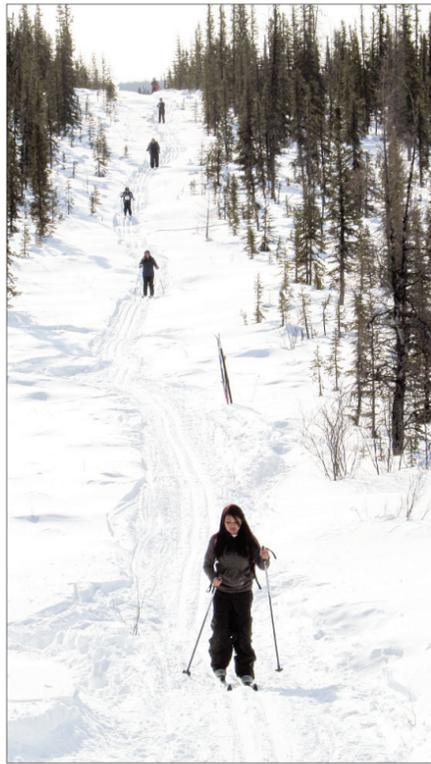


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Arianne Etchinelle of Tulita takes a breather during a cross country ski exercise.



A line of young winter sport enthusiasts coast downhill during the Sahtu Skifest.



Instructor Katy Pollock watches shooter Lori Gaudet from Deline hone in on her target from atop a caribou hide during the biathlon event.

Photos: Courtesy of Karen Johnson

**Sports & Recreation Skiing**

# Sahtu Skifest challenges students with skiing and shooting

By RENÉE FRANCOEUR

The NWT Ski Division and NWT Biathlon came together to help pool resources for the new Sahtu Skifest, which saw 35 skiers come out for a skill-building, farewell-to-winter weekend in Colville Lake on Apr. 13-14.

“The general consensus from all participants is that it

would be fantastic if it could happen every year. It would really build the sport and build connection amongst students and teaching staff from the five Sahtu communities,” Karen Johnson, Ski North coordinator, said in an email.

The Sahtu Skifest, largely a skill development camp,

involved skiing, shooting and snowshoeing.

On the morning of Apr. 13, the skiers, ranging from age 8 to 15, rotated through three stations to improve their biathlon techniques, Johnson said. That afternoon, the group completed a mass start relay twice.

“First each skier shot one clip. Then the coaches

upped the ante and the students were challenged to shoot until they hit all five targets,” Johnson said. “Many of them were excellent shooters.”

A challenge “ski and shoot” was held Apr. 14 where each participant skied up to the range from the school, shot their clip, collected a

chocolate easter egg, skied a loop on the trail, then shot again.

The students were challenged to ski as many loops as they could in a given period of time, Johnson noted.

“These students were very determined. One skier went around four times and the coaches

were surprised that some skiers went around a second time after a challenging first tour. There were two challenging uphill on the ski course. Other kids were not especially keen on the skiing but they kept going so they could have their turn in the shooting range,” she said.

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