



ADVANCING TRADE THROUGH TRANSPORTATION

# In the Corridor

SEPTEMBER, 2009

## Northwest Territories Notes

In an important first step this month, Town of Inuvik Mayor, Derek Lindsay, along with Tuktoyaktuk Mayor, Mervyn Gruben signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the Northwest Territories. It deals with the regulatory requirements of eventually constructing an all weather road between the two communities. Essentially it commits the parties to a partnership advancing the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk portion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

## British Columbia Notes

With the announcement of \$130 million committed by the Government of Canada through the Green Infrastructure Fund, it was announced this month that the Northwest Transmission Line (NTL) will go ahead. The \$404 million project will see the construction of a new 287 kilovolt power line, extending 335 kilometres from Terrace, British Columbia to Meziadin Junction and north to Bob Quinn Lake, British Columbia. When complete, it will provide access to the electricity grid for customers while supporting the economic diversification of the area with great potential for future developments.

An eighteen member Chinese delegation was in Prince Rupert and Prince George in September. While in Prince Rupert, they visited the Fairview Container Terminal and heard from the Prince Rupert Port Authority, the City of Prince Rupert and the District of Port Edward. A visit to Prince George included taking in the airport and the site for the future logistics park.

On the heels of signing the Western Economic Partnership (WEP) earlier in September, representatives of the governments of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta signed a "Declaration on Open Skies" at the 2009 British Columbia International Open Skies Summit in Vancouver, BC. The document commits the provinces to advancing research and communication activities bent on achieving more, "Open Skies" agreements between the federal government and other nations.

NCDC member, the City of Terrace proudly hosted the Kraft Hockeyville 2009 event in September. Many activities occurred leading up to an exhibition hockey game between the Vancouver Canucks and New York Islanders. The Hockeyville broadcast occurred nationally on CBC television, highlighting the community's great collaborative effort.

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## Federal Notes

A rail service review was recently initiated to examine issues and problems and recommend solutions for improving rail services provided to shippers by Canada's rail companies. This review is ongoing, and a final report is expected to be completed in mid-2010. In connection with this rail freight service review, and its Phase II, the Minister of State (Transport) announced appointment of a three-person panel this month. The panel consists of Walter Paszkowski as chair, David Edison, and William (Bill) LeGrow. The panel is to come up with recommendations, addressing service-related issues and problems within the rail-based logistics system. Results of analytical work conducted under Phase I, consultations with stakeholders, and any other relevant information and findings are to form the basis for their recommendations which may include both commercial and, if necessary, regulatory solutions.

Recent amendments to the Canada Transportation Act require that railways publish a list of rail car sites available for grain producer loadings. It's also required they give a 60-day public notice before removing such sidings from operation. On news of the proposed closure of 52 of these sites, federal government and CN Rail officials met and came to an agreement seeing CN keep the sites open until the end of 2009. This will allow for further consultation with producers interested in keeping any of the sites in operation.

The International Maritime Organization has adopted long-range identification and tracking of vessels as a means of protecting marine environments and international shipping's safety and security. Canada's Transport Minister, announced regulations towards similar objectives.

The proposed regulations would enable Canada to adopt an international shipping requirement that mandates tracking systems aboard certain classes of vessels. Canada would benefit from the transmissions of foreign vessels intending to enter Canada and those navigating up to 1,000 nautical miles off its coasts.

Three levels of government gathered at Haines Junction for an intergovernmental forum on self-government implementation and economic development in the Yukon. The forum had participation from the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie, Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Andy Carvill and chiefs from self-governing Yukon First Nations.

## Industry and International Notes

A "step-change" for the international maritime industry's escalating war against piracy was ushered in with the official September opening of the Merchant Maritime Warfare Centre (MMWC). A UK based, non-profit organization, it is staffed by experienced maritime security specialists. MMWC was established to provide certificated counter-piracy training and ongoing operational support. As such it enables members to adopt a coordinated, structured and sustainable approach to mitigating the financial, operational and human impact of modern day piracy. To learn more about MMWC, visit their website at: [www.mmwc.org](http://www.mmwc.org)

The City of Dawson Creek, British Columbia hosted the Northeast BC Energy Conference in September, held in conjunction with Oil and Gas Week in the province. For more information on the City of Dawson Creek, visit: [www.dawsoncreek.ca](http://www.dawsoncreek.ca)



## CORRIDOR CLOSE-UP

### The NWT Association of Communities

A strong voice for NWT Communities, NWT Association of Communities (NWTAC) has served its members since 1967. The NWTAC has been the leading voice for community governments in the Northwest Territories.

Formed in 1967 by four municipalities – Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River and Fort Smith – as the NWT Association of Municipalities, the NWTAC has grown through one name change and the creation of Nunavut, and now represents 27 community governments in the NWT.

The association adopted its present name in 2003, three years after territorial division. Until 1999, it represented municipal governments in the NWT and what is now Nunavut, at one time boasting a membership of 47. It is governed by a 7 member board. The president is elected at large by all members while vice president and 2 directors are elected from 2 caucuses: Cities, Towns & Villages and Charter Communities, Settlements & Hamlets.

“There’s no question that community governments in the NWT have benefited from work done by the association,” said Yellowknife Mayor Gordon Van Tighem, now in his third term as president of the NWTAC. “We were active nationally with development of the Federal Gas Tax Fund that delivers substantial annual infrastructure funding to our members.” The NWTAC helped establish the New Deal for NWT Community Governments which for the first time saw communities enabled to plan their own infrastructure investment. Gordon Van Tighem added, “When our members say they want something, we get out there and fight for it. Because our members speak with one voice through the association, the territorial or federal government listens.”

That sentiment is shared by Tuktoyaktuk Mayor Merven Gruben. He was elected Vice President for Charter

Communities, Settlements and Hamlets at the May 2009 annual general meeting attended by twenty member communities and 110 delegates.

“By working together, our member communities are able to have issues addressed at the highest levels,” said Mayor Gruben. Fort Providence Mayor Paschalina Nadli, an NWTAC director, said the support provided to community governments is invaluable. “The assistance that the NWTAC has provided to Fort Providence in our community’s development of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plans was excellent,” she said. “To date the Capital Plan has been updated, the Human Resource Plan is in the works, the Strategic Plan just has to be formally approved and the Energy Plan is in the process.”

The NWTAC belongs to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and helped establish its Northern and Remote Forum, ensuring Northern issues are heard on the national stage. Mayor Van Tighem chairs this forum.

The NWTAC is headed by Yvette Gonzalez, who’s been with the association for 24 years, serving as CEO since 1991. She and five staff manage daily affairs, advocate on behalf of member communities, work with the Government of the Northwest Territories to develop programs and services for communities, implement association resolutions and policies, and manage a successful reciprocal insurance program. Gonzalez says, “It’s safe to say that I love the work I do and am inspired by the people I work for – the mayors, chiefs, and councillors who do so much to serve their communities.”

The NWTAC not only advocates on behalf of community governments, it works hard to make sure they understand the issues they face and get the support and services they need. The NWTAC takes its lead from Resolutions and Policies adopted by Member Communities at its annual general meeting. In 2009, 19 resolutions were adopted at the AGM. Included was one on protection of the Mackenzie Watershed from oil sands contamination. Still others were on a range of issues from climate change, plumbing inspections, community access to gravel to calls for completing the Mackenzie Valley Highway.

# In the Corridor

In addition to advocacy, the association works on a day to day basis on behalf of its member communities. The Northern Communities Insurance Program (NCIP) is a success story for the association. Although NCIP has been in existence since 1978, it has taken on a new importance during the past decade. Skyrocketing insurance rates forced communities to form a reciprocal self-insurance program. With financial backing of the GNWT, the made-in the North Northern Communities Insurance Exchange Program (NORCIX) was established on April 1, 2003 and since then, NCIP has been able to stabilize and reduce insurance rates for community governments. With rates stable, NCIP is now embarking on an ambitious risk management program, to work with its member communities to reduce the risk of insurance losses, which will enable all to share in the rewards of lower rates and even get money back in the form of good claims credits. During the past two years, approximately \$1.1 million was returned to members thanks to low losses and the strong performance of the fund.

Communication is also an important role played by the association. Its staff work hard to make sure the GNWT understands the issues faced by community governments and to ensure that its members have the best, most recent information on funding programs, territorial policies, and federal affairs.

The association recently redeveloped its website. It now includes private, "Member Community-only" pages to access a variety of information and keep up to date on policy and resolution work. In addition, the association sends out an e-mail newsletter twice a month and a printed newsletter twice a year, the next edition due in October.



*NWTAC's Annual General Meeting in Inuvik, May 21-24, 2009*

Providing information and supports for communities required to develop four-part Integrated Community Sustainability Plans is also a current focus for the association. In partnership with the NWT Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA), Federal Gas Tax funding was used to hire a Sustainability Coordinator for two years. To continue to be eligible for Gas Tax funding, each community must complete a Strategic, Human Resources, Capital and Energy Plan by March 31, 2010.

A similar partnership was formed this year to deal with one of the biggest ongoing challenges facing community governments in the NWT: "capacity" (having the right people with the right skills to fill the jobs needed to serve residents and deal with ever growing responsibilities).

The NWTAC is working with the NWT Departments of Municipal and Community Affairs and Human Resources and other partners in the development and implementation of the Public Service Capacity Initiative. It is a \$1 million annual program to support, develop and recruit staff for community governments and provide training and other supports for elected officials at the community level.

As well, the association provides feedback to proposed changes in territorial government legislation, from elections, to planning, to fire prevention and dog control.



The NWTAC also reaches out to the general community by offering Supportive Memberships. Businesses and organizations can join the association to be able to improve ties with community governments and keep up to date on association activities and community issues.

That includes being able to attend the NWTAC's annual general meeting, planned for May 13-16, 2010 in the community of Hay River. Contact the NWTAC at (867) 873-8359 or visit the website at: [www.nwtac.com](http://www.nwtac.com)



## Alberta Notes

A joint cabinet meeting of the Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia governments occurred in Calgary, Alberta in September. Thereat, the premiers signed the Western Economic Partnership (WEP) intended to create a broad western interprovincial trade agreement and the largest barrier-free trade and investment market in Canada. It's also intended that the Western Economic Partnership will enhance collaboration on international marketing, innovation and procurement between the three provincial governments.

The Alberta Government announced that tree clearing (36 kilometres) and grading work (16.8 kilometres) is set to commence on the next section of Highway 63 to be twinned in northeastern Alberta. Although tree clearing will begin later this fall, the grading work required for the project is not expected to be completed until the fall of 2011. Thereafter, a separate contract for the asphalt work will occur. The Province of Alberta has plans of eventually twinning 240 kilometres of Highway 63 between Fort McMurray and the junction of Highway 55, near Grassland.

The Province of Alberta announced it will invest \$241 million over the next five years to develop raw Crown land into new residential, industrial and commercial developments in Fort McMurray in readiness for future expansion in the oil sands. Utilizing lands adjacent to Fort McMurray, \$166 million will be used to complete an innovative new residential development to eventually accommodate an estimated 6,500 residents. The remaining \$75 million will bring utilities and roads to another area, allowing for future residential, commercial and industrial development.

## Saskatchewan Notes

The final report on The Future of Uranium in Saskatchewan public consultation process was released in September. Access a copy of the report at: <http://tinyurl.com/ydvmamnt>

## Manitoba Notes

It was reported this month that from July 1, 2008 to July 1, 2009, the Province of Manitoba experienced a thirty eight year high net gain in population.

Manitoba announced mandated use of biodiesel in the province, effective November 1, 2009. An average requirement of 2% biodiesel content over the course of a year is the mandate. They anticipate this will be accomplished through biodiesel blends of 5% during warmer months of the year.

The province announced it will invest \$6 million in the Churchill Northern Studies Centre (CNSC) over four years to support Arctic research and education. For more on CNSC, visit their website at: [www.churchillscience.ca](http://www.churchillscience.ca)

The Manitoba government appointed Michael Werier as mediator in the dispute between the Tembec Paper Group Pine Falls operation and United Steelworkers Local 3-1375. 270 employees at Tembec have been off the job since August 31st.

## Yukon Notes

Confirming strong ties with the Alaskan business community, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce and Yukon's Department of Economic Development attended a conference and trade show held in Homer, Alaska in September.

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## NCDC Organizational Notes

Thanks to these organizations for their 2009/2010 membership renewals received in September:

Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia  
Quickload CEF  
Pommen Group  
Northern Sunrise County  
ILWU Canada  
CFDC of the Pacific Northwest  
City of Fort St. John  
Regional District of Kitimat - Stikine  
Prince Rupert Port Authority  
Prince Rupert Grain Ltd.  
Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.  
City of Edmonton  
Municipal District of Peace No. 135  
Clear Hills County  
K.T. Industrial Development Society  
District of Mackenzie  
Initiatives Prince George  
Prince Rupert Airport Authority  
Fairview Agricultural Society  
Town of Smithers  
Town of High Level  
Transport Canada  
Mackenzie County  
Town of Inuvik  
Grande Alberta Economic Region (GAER)  
CFDC Nadina  
Prince George Airport Authority  
Northwest Regional Airport Terrace - Kitimat

NCDC Directors, Peter Ernst, Mayor of the Town of High Level, Alberta, Jim Feeny with CN Rail and Kevin Dobbin with Rio Tinto Alcan have indicated they will not be seeking nomination to the board in 2009/2010. Our thanks go out for their service to NCDC. At time of publication, those indicating they will let their names stand for nomination to the 2009/2010 board of directors include:

- Carolyn Kolebaba of Northern Sunrise County
- Jeff Burghardt of Prince Rupert Grain Ltd.
- Ron Vanderlee of Pacific Northern Gas Ltd.
- Gordon Van Tighem of the NWT Association of Communities
- Laurie Brown of the Northwest Regional Airport
- Charles Johnson of Clear Hills County
- Maynard Angus of the Prince Rupert Port Authority
- Bruce Lantz of the City of Fort St. John
- Tim McEwan of Initiatives Prince George
- Fred Jarvis of the Peace River Regional District
- Kelli Svendsen of CN Rail

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