



Northern Alberta Development Council

Annual Report
2008 - 2009

Message from the Chair

This report reflects my first full year as Chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC). As part of the Ministry of Finance and Enterprise, the NADC enjoyed the guidance of former Minister of Finance and Enterprise, Iris Evans and the expertise offered by this Ministry. I am very pleased to present our 2008-2009 Annual Report, which highlights this year's Council achievements and contributions to the development of the North.

Planning and preparations were completed for the "Challenge North 2009 – Lead the Way" triennial conference scheduled for April 22-24, 2009 in Cold Lake. As well, the NADC has hosted Regional Stakeholders Forums, helped organize meetings of the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders and met one-on-one with northern leaders and organizations. These are important ways for us to hear about and address issues and opportunities. As well, the NADC provides information to northerners and other stakeholders through the *NADC Communiqué*, and its three websites.

We continue to work with many stakeholders across the north on a wide range of initiatives. This past year we held meetings about affordable housing and development of a Boreal birding tourism network. As well, we worked with many valuable organizations to help them move their projects forward. These organizations include the Rural Physician Action Plan, Woodlands Operations Learning Foundation, the Youth Apprenticeship Program, Branding the Peace, and the Deh Cho Travel Connection.

Increasing northern skill levels remains an NADC priority. The 88% return service rate for the NADC Bursary reflects the high level of demand for professionals in the region in recent years. The Northern *LINKS* program was refined to focus more specifically on encouraging students to complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. Through

the Northern Labour Market Clearinghouse we continue to work with northern post-secondary institutions.

This year's strong economy brought significant growth to our communities, but also burdened them with considerable stresses. The impact of the recent global downturn has eased some of these pressures, but not without new challenges. I have had the opportunity this year to visit communities across the north and to meet with local leaders. The NADC remains committed to working with our northern partners in these changing times.



**Robin Campbell, Chair
MLA West Yellowhead**

NADC at a glance

NADC

- Chair, Robin Campbell
- 9 Council members
 - Brian Allen, Grimshaw
 - Sharon Anderson, Gift Lake
 - Iris Callioux, Peace River
 - David Kirschner, Fort McMurray
 - Joe Layton, Bonnyville
 - Andy Neigel, Athabasca
 - Pat O'Neill, St. Paul
 - Michael Ouellette, Grande Prairie
 - Williard Strebchuk, Whitecourt
- 16 staff members
- 3 offices: Peace River, Lac La Biche, Edmonton
- Many partner organizations
- 8.4 out of 10 partner satisfaction

Workshops, meetings and events

- Regional Stakeholder meetings
- Workforce Symposium
- Affordable housing workshops
- Boreal bird tourism meetings
- Pine Beetle community workshop
- Physician Recruitment and Retention Workshop
- Alternative Energy Trade Fair

Participation/support for organizations

- Branding the Peace
- Northern Alberta Elected Leaders
- Travel Alberta North
- Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta
- Northern Labour Market Clearing House
- Northern Planning Circle – University Level Social Work Education
- Youth Apprenticeship Program

Inter-jurisdictional work

- The Northern Forum
- Northern Ministers' Forum
- Alberta/Northwest Territories MOU
- Northwest Corridor Development Corporation
- Deh Cho Travel Connection

Websites:

www.nadc.gov.ab.ca
www.opportunitynorth.ca
www.benorth.ca



Bursaries

- 88% NADC Bursary return service rate
- 129 NADC Bursaries
- 8 Medical Student Bursaries
- 6 Pharmacy Student Bursaries
- 3 Nurse Practitioners Bursaries
- 91 Partnership Bursaries
- 444 Northern Student Supplements
- 32 Northern Health Care Practicums

Northern LINKS

- 30 mentorship projects and campus tours

Reports

Visit www.nadc.gov.ab.ca for documents mentioned in this annual report:

- *Affordable Housing Analysis, Municipal Approaches, Practices and Implications for the NADC Region*
- *Awards, Bursaries, Scholarships – A Listing of Information Sources to Help in the Planning of Your Post-secondary Education*
- *Defining Quality for Peace Country Agriculture*
- *Inventory of Water Studies Relating to Northern Alberta*
- *NADC Communiqués:*
 - *Edmonton - June 2008*
 - *Grande Cache – September 2008*
 - *Slave Lake – November 2008*
 - *Whitecourt – February 2009*
- *Northern Alberta Youth Program and Services Review*
- *Northern Highways Strategy 2008 – Building Tomorrow Today*

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Northern Alberta Development Council Annual Report 2008-2009

OVERVIEW

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a council of and for northerners. In 2008-2009, the Council was a reporting entity of the Ministry of Finance and Enterprise.

The NADC has nine public members and one elected Alberta Member of the Legislative Assembly. Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities. In July 2008, Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead, became Chair, replacing outgoing Chair Denis Ducharme, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake. The public members were:

Brian Allen, Grimshaw
Sharon Anderson, Gift Lake
Iris Callioux, Peace River
David Kirschner, Fort McMurray
Joseph Layton, Bonnyville
Andy Neigel, Athabasca
Pat O'Neill, St. Paul
Michael Ouellette, Grande Prairie
Williard Strebchuk, Whitecourt

Mission

The mission of the NADC is to advance northern development through developing and implementing regional strategies and initiatives in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations, industry, other jurisdictions and ministries.

Core Business

The mandate of the NADC, as set out in the *Northern Alberta Development Council Act*, is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the Government accordingly." The NADC supports the government's commitment to prosperity by facilitating the development of a thriving and progressive northern economy.

BUSINESS PLAN GOALS AND STRATEGIES

As part of Alberta Finance and Enterprise, the NADC supports ministry goals:

Goal Ten: Alberta has a competitive and sustainable economy

Goal Eleven: Alberta has strong and vibrant regions and communities

The NADC focuses on northern Alberta's unique opportunities and challenges by developing strategies to advance sustainable northern development.

Key Strategies

The NADC uses three key strategies to achieve outcomes:

- Promotes regional and rural development
- Promotes the significance of northern development to all Albertans
- Supports initiatives to increase skill levels

To accomplish these, the NADC partners with other jurisdictions and ministries, northern and Aboriginal communities, business and industry learning providers, and students.

THE NADC REGION

The Northern Alberta Development Council region represents 60% of Alberta's landmass and only nine per cent of the Province's total population. The region has:

- 100% of the province's mineable oil sands development
- 21% of provincial crop production
- 10% of provincial livestock production
- 75% of the forestry portion of Alberta's gross domestic product

The north's relationship to the global economy was clearly displayed in 2008/2009. In many communities across the region, the year started with a strong economy. There were continued investments in industrial development, pressures on infrastructure and labour shortages. During this past period of unprecedented growth, the northern region made a significant contribution to the rest of Alberta, and Canada's economy. Through the development of northern Alberta's abundant resources, the north drove provincial and national economic growth.

The world wide economic downturn has started showing effects in the region with reduced economic activity. While it is anticipated that the main sectors will resume their growth, the tremendous economic activity in the north has decreased. In the near future, some northern communities may find themselves struggling to support social and fiscal demands. A healthy northern economy, social development, and sustainable environmental practices are essential if the north is to maintain and expand its contribution to Alberta and the rest of Canada.



PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

Increased partner satisfaction with NADC's work in advancing northern interests

This year partner satisfaction was assessed by polling participants of the Challenge North 2009 conference. The conference evaluation included the following question:

How would you rate your satisfaction with the NADC's contribution to advancing northern interests?

The average of conference participant ratings was 8.4 out of 10.

Partner satisfaction out of 10

2005-06	8.2
2006-07	7.7
2007-08	8.2
2009-10	8.4

Source: 2009 Challenge North Conference evaluation

NADC Bursary recipients' return service rate at all-time high

The NADC Bursary requires students to enter into an agreement to live and work in Northern Alberta when they complete their education. The expectation is one year of full-time work for each year of bursary support. The NADC follows up with each recipient. Students who do not fulfill their return service obligations are required to repay bursaries received.

The return service rate is based on students who have completed their studies in the three calendar years prior to the annual report. The return service percentage includes those students who are completing their return service and those who have fulfilled their obligation.

The current return service rate for the NADC Bursary is 88%, an increase of 10% from last year. This is an all-time high and likely reflects the high demand for skilled labour in the region over the last three years.

Bursary return service rate

2005-06	80%
2006-07	81%
2007-08	78%
2008-09	88%

Source: NADC bursaries database

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. PARTNERSHIPS

Inter-jurisdictional Initiatives

Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development

A highlight this year was the renewal of the Alberta–Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Premier Stelmach met in September 2008 with NT Premier Roland to sign a new five-year agreement outlining cooperation between the two jurisdictions. The co-chairs of the MOU met three times this year, in Edmonton, by teleconference, and in Yellowknife. Topics included water and wildlife management, rail transportation and the Arctic Gateway. Energy-related topics and the effect of the global economic situation on the two jurisdictions were also discussed. As Alberta's secretariat for the MOU, the NADC coordinates meetings and follow-up.

The Northern Forum

The Northern Forum is an international consortium consisting of northern regional governments. Its mandate is to promote cooperation and exchange information on northern socio-economic issues and initiatives. In addition to Alberta, members include: Yukon; Nunavut; Alaska; Heilongjiang, China; Hokkaido, Japan; Akureyri, Iceland; Gangwon, Republic of Korea; Lapland, Finland; and eight Russian regions.

The NADC supports the Minister's role as North American Vice-Chair of The Northern Forum. In 2008-2009, Alberta participated in a regional coordinators' meeting in Iceland and provided funding to help establish a northern Chambers of Commerce.

www.northernforum.org

Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

The NADC provides technical and organizational support to the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC). Key objectives of both the NCDC and the NADC include the promotion of the transportation corridor to Prince Rupert, plus development of a container port at Prince Rupert and upgrading the rail line to Prince Rupert. In 2008-2009, the NADC continued financial and advisory support and participated in regular meetings.

www.nwcorridor.com

Northern Development Ministers' Forum

The NADC is the secretariat for Alberta's participation in the Northern Development Ministers' Forum (NDMF). The Forum is composed of seven provinces, the three territories and the Federal Government. The theme of the 2008 Forum, hosted by the Government of the Northwest Territories in Yellowknife, was: "Developing the Tourism Potential of Canada's North."

NADC participated in the Senior Official's Working Group (SOWG) and also completed a jurisdictional survey that became part of a *Report on Northern Tourism in Canada*, tabled at the Forum. The report detailed challenges and identified opportunities and best practices of northern tourism in all jurisdictions. Forum guest speakers provided varying perspectives on global, national and local tourism sectors. Discussions focussed on common challenges faced by northern tourism operators and increasing the awareness of opportunities. The report was subsequently provided to respective tourism ministers and the Canadian Tourism Commission.

Ministers received updates on priority projects including: *Initiatives to Maximize Economic and Social Impacts from Major Projects in the North*, *Knowledge North* and the Focus North Website www.focusnorth.ca. A priority project report on Climate Change was tabled, and "Changing Northern Economies" was approved as the theme for the 2009 Forum. Three new priority projects were also approved: Changing Northern Economies, Northern Infrastructure, and Climate Change: Boreal Forest Management.

The NADC has distributed the report *Initiatives to Maximize Economic and Social Impacts from Major Projects in the North* to relevant northern Alberta stakeholders and continues to participate on the SOWG.

The NADC is a member of the Climate Change and Best Practices in Boreal Forest Management priority project working group. The NADC is also providing data on northern Alberta for the Changing Northern Economies and Northern Infrastructure reports, to be presented at the 2009 Forum.

www.focusnorth.ca

Cross Ministry Activities

The NADC participated in cross ministry activities, including the advisory committee for developing potential scenarios, strategies and response to the climate change and adaptation paper. The NADC also gave input into the joint Alberta Environment and Alberta Energy initiative to develop scenarios on energy and environment issues.

Opportunities and Initiatives

Transportation

The *Northern Highways Strategy – Building Tomorrow Today* was updated this year, and distributed to municipalities and the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders. The document is also on the NADC website.

The NADC helped draft a request for proposals for the County of Grande Prairie for an intermodal container site.

The NADC continued to provide financial and advisory support to the Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta (CAANA) to retain air services at Edmonton City Centre Airport.

Forestry

As follow-up to workshops held in 2007, the NADC organized a meeting for stakeholders in Grande Prairie in June 2008 to provide an update of the pine beetle infestation. Over 70 community representatives met and heard presentations about the mountain pine beetle, and the status of Alberta's forest industry. Presenters offered municipal, industry, and government perspectives. Additional follow-up will depend on the extent of the impact of beetle populations on northern communities.

Inventory of Water Studies

In response to a request from Mayors and Reeves, the NADC funded the compilation of an *Inventory of Water Studies Relating to Northern Alberta*. The inventory focuses mainly on northern Alberta but also includes some studies from central and southern Alberta. The study contains data from the 1970s to the present and lists over 4200 records. The electronic version is on the NADC website and can be searched by topic.

Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals

Over 100 delegates gathered in Cold Lake to participate in the *Unleash the Northern Potential Workforce Symposium/Human Resource Conference* April 9-11, 2008. The NADC assisted the Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals and other area stakeholders to plan and organize the conference. The NADC provided technical support and advice.

Branding the Peace

Branding the Peace is an Alberta - British Columbia initiative with the mandate to achieve the highest dollar for the region's agricultural commodity producers. This past year the group was able to, with the Alberta Research Council as a partner, identify that the quality of the region's flax is better than that grown in other regions of Canada. *Defining Quality for Peace Country*

Agriculture outlines the results and the research plan for the upcoming year. The NADC contributed funding and support to the organization.

www.canadapeacecountry.com

Deh Cho Travel Connection

The NADC is the Alberta lead for the Deh Cho Travel Connection, an inter-jurisdictional tourism marketing group comprised of tourism organizations and visitor information centres from the Northwest Territories, Northeastern British Columbia and Northwestern Alberta. The group promotes a scenic touring route that connects the Mackenzie, Liard and Alaska Highways in the three jurisdictions.

Twenty-five visitor information centres participated in the 2008 “Diamonds in the Rough” summer contest. These centres were stamping locations for contest passports distributed to travelers following the route. The grand prize was a 1.0 carat diamond from the Northwest Territories valued at \$11,500. It was won by a route traveller from Wetaskiwin, Alberta. This contest provides regional, national, and international exposure of the region and resumed for the 2009 season.

The route was once again recognized as a destination through the Deh Cho travel section in the 2009 edition of “The Milepost”, a renowned Alaskan travel guide published in the United States.

www.dehchotravel.com

The Boreal Bird Network

In collaboration with Travel Alberta In-Province, the NADC organized meetings with District Marketing Organizations and area birding societies to finalize plans for a brochure introducing a Boreal Bird Network. The Lac La Biche meeting took place in March 2009 and future meetings are scheduled in Slave Lake, McLennan and Grande Prairie in April. Travel Alberta In-Province has provided seed funds for the brochure.

Travel Alberta North

The NADC is a voting director on the Travel Alberta North Board. This northern Tourism Destination Region (TDR) works closely with local Destination Marketing Organizations and tourism operators to entice tourists to look north as a holiday destination. As a board member, the NADC helps provide direction for TDR activities and TDR funding of tourism marketing projects implemented by northern operators and clients.

www1.travelalberta.com/en-north

Rural Destination Marketing Fund

The *Rural Destination Marketing Fund (RDMF) Research Project* is a joint initiative between various destination marketing organizations throughout northern Alberta and industry operators. The project, led by Community Futures St Paul – Smoky Lake Region, studied the best method of establishing an RDMF in northern Alberta. The report identified challenges in moving ahead and suggested potential follow-up.

Housing

The paper *Affordable Housing Analysis, Municipal Approaches, Practices and Implications for the NADC Region*, completed at the end of last year, was released to the public. A series of affordable community and housing design consultations with Dr. Avi Friedman were arranged. Based on follow-up from the consultations, further workshops are planned for municipalities to share issues and solutions.

The first of these was organized in collaboration with the Cold Lake Affordable Housing Society. Twenty seven representatives from housing organizations, municipalities, Aboriginal communities and businesses participated in the Affordable Housing Workshop in Cold Lake in March 2009.

Health Care

The NADC assisted the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP) and Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing to host a “Provincial Physician Recruitment and Retention Workshop.” This brought together individuals

actively engaged in community-based support and retention for physicians in rural Alberta. The workshop helped build relationships between communities and health region representatives. Participants shared ideas, practices and stories from their communities.

As follow-up to last year's Medical Student Training Symposium, the NADC collaborated with the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce, Peace Regional Economic Development Alliance and Grande Prairie Regional College to plan for a more detailed study to determine the feasibility of rural medical education models. In addition, the NADC provided input to the Alberta Rural Integrated Community Clerkship Stakeholder's Committee. This committee provides advice to Alberta's medical schools about extended rural clerkships.

Youth Services

As follow-up to last year's youth focus groups, the NADC provided funding to Smoky River Family and Community Support Services to complete the *Northern Alberta Youth Program and Services Review*. The report was based on a survey of northern service providers for youth aged 10-16. The study gave recommendations to providers on ways to increase services for youth. The NADC also received information from the Children Services' northern youth forums and made offers of assistance to northern communities for follow-up.

Alternative Energy Trade Fair

The Peace Regional Recycling Society, with help from Northern Lakes College and the NADC, organized a workshop and trade fair in Peace River in November 2008. The event brought in over 200 regional residents to learn about alternative energy options.

Research and information


In response to enquiries from entities such as small businesses, municipalities and other organizations, the NADC provided information on a wide range of topics, including:

- Horticulture, planting and production of food crops in northern regions for Health Canada
- Industry activity and production information for the Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance
- The cost of goods and services in northern communities in relation to southern communities
- Past research about health of residents living north of Fort McMurray
- The effect and possible cause of bee colony collapse in northern Alberta
- A bibliography of reports and periodicals pertaining to student funding
- Northern Alberta demographic data from the Statistics Canada 2006 census
- Information related to oil and gas companies operating in north central Alberta
- Industry production information for U of A Masters students
- Funding and partnership programs for schools that want to offer an Aboriginal component
- Statistics about northern Aboriginal populations for Alberta Sustainable Resources Development
- Road, rail, power, and pipeline mapping information for the Northwestern Canadian Integrated Road and Utility Networks map

2. PROMOTE AWARENESS

Communication with community and business leaders is a key priority for the Northern Alberta Development Council. The NADC engages northerners in discussions about regional priorities, opportunities and challenges, and solicits their input on sustainable solutions.

Challenge North 2009 – Lead the Way

 Arrangements were completed for the NADC's triennial "Challenge North 2009 - Lead the Way" conference, April 22-24, 2009 in Cold Lake. Many excellent speakers were lined up, including Premier Ed Stelmach and former Minister of Finance and Enterprise, Iris Evans. The conference working group discussions were designed using a scenario-based process. The scenarios were developed with input from focus groups in High Level and Lac La Biche, and from a survey of stakeholders. The NADC will report on the conference in its 2009-2010 Annual Report.

Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

The Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL) group provides a valuable way for the NADC to monitor issues important to northern communities. This year the NADC helped the NAEL formalize itself as an organization and draft a Terms of Reference. The NADC provides administrative and organizational support for NAEL meetings, including coordinating speakers, venue and travel. Three meetings were held this year in Fairview (April 2008), Grande Prairie (June 2008) and Peace River (January 2009). Some key topics that were discussed at meetings include:

- loss of NAV Canada control tower staff
- the need for increased communication by the NAEL and Alberta Forest Products Association with the province
- provincial support for STARS
- information on water management

Regional Stakeholders Forums

The NADC holds Regional Stakeholders Forums, in conjunction with regular Council meetings, where northern community and business leaders can present issues and concerns or identify specific opportunities and/or challenges to development. In 2008-2009, Forums were held in Grande Cache, Slave Lake and Whitecourt. Council was able to follow up on a variety of issues, including:

- Highway 40
- air services
- need for new schools
- housing for seniors and students
- water/waste water systems
- application wait times for foreign and immigrant workers
- trades training for high school students
- tourism and economic development opportunities in rural areas

Annual Meeting with Northern MLAs

The NADC hosted its annual breakfast meeting with northern Members of the Legislative Assembly in May 2008 in Edmonton. This meeting allowed northern Ministers, MLAs and the NADC to share concerns, successes and opportunities in the region and their respective constituencies. Additionally Council members could inform northern MLAs and Ministers of the NADC's work. Items that were discussed included inadequate rail service, attrition in rural agriculture, support for municipalities and senior populations, and the need to increase high school completion levels, particularly in Aboriginal communities. The June *Communiqué* provides a summary of the meeting and was sent to stakeholders.

Edmonton Journal Editorial Feature



With funding support from Travel Alberta, the NADC initiated a special series on northern Alberta in *The Edmonton Journal* to raise public awareness of the north. The first special report ran in

March 2008; the second was published on June 25, 2008. Titled *Tourism, Explore the great mystery*; it featured twelve pages of stories and sponsor ads about northern Alberta tourism opportunities. Six feature series about northern Alberta were also included in the Edmonton Journal Country Asides, on March 31, April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5, 2008 featuring the following the topics:

- *Northern Alberta: Opportunity is knocking*
- *Look North! Tourism expected to be a growing industry in scenic, vibrant northern Alberta*
- *Northern Alberta meeting the challenge of educating a scattered population – Alberta Supernet makes it possible*
- *Fort McMurray: A family community growing up fast; Peace Country products carve out their own niche*
- *Employers send out call from northwest; Edmonton not gateway say angry northerners*
- *Bridges of understanding; Athabasca project targets oilsands workers*

NADC Communiqué



Through a one-page *NADC Communiqué*, the NADC reports on key discussions at its Council meetings and highlights projects and events. Communiqués were prepared this year, in June, September, November and February. They are

available on the NADC website and are distributed to northern businesses, industries, municipal governments, Aboriginal organizations, and community groups, as well as government departments and all MLAs.

NADC Website



The NADC website provided information on the NADC's activities, the Northern *LINKS* program, northern statistics and industry profiles, publications and news releases. In 2008-2009 the NADC website received 83,684 hits.

Opportunity North



The Opportunity North website is a resource for individuals wanting to learn more about northern Alberta. Its associated CD-ROMs, business cards and brochures continued to be a valuable tool for northern employers and organizations in recruitment and promotional activities. In 2008-2009 the Opportunity North website received 53,581 hits.

BeNorth Branding and Website



The NADC bursary programs new marketing plan was fully implemented in 2008-2009. The www.benorth.ca website received 17,496 hits this past year. As well, postcards were distributed to all households in the north advertising bursary programs.

3. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

NADC Bursary Programs

In collaboration with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, the NADC offered over 300 return service bursaries to Alberta students this year - recipients live and work in northern Alberta after their studies. The NADC Bursary return service rate is discussed under Performance Measures.

129	NADC Bursaries
8	Medical Students
6	Pharmacy Students
3	Nurse Practitioners
91	Bursary Partnerships Program

The **NADC Bursary** focuses on students training in a variety of professions in high demand. In 2008-2009, 129 Alberta students received NADC Bursaries, 125 of \$3,500 and four of \$1750.

In 2008-2009, eight students received \$5,000 **Medical Bursaries**; two of these received matching funding.

Six pharmacy students received a \$3,500 **Pharmacy Bursary**; two of these received a matching bursary from sponsors.

New this year was a higher valued bursary of \$5,000 for **Nurse Practitioner** students. Three students received the bursary.

Through **Bursary Partnerships**, businesses and community organizations sponsor return service bursaries with the NADC. In 2008-2009 91 bursaries were awarded, with a total value of \$258,050.

Northern Student Supplement

As part of the provincial Financial Assistance program, the Northern Student Supplement encourages first- and second-year students from Northern Alberta to pursue a post-secondary education and reduces their level

444 Northern Student Supplement

of student debt. There is no return service requirement attached to these funds.

In 2008-2009, 444 students from Northern Alberta received the Northern Student Supplement. Average funding per student was \$1,298, for a total of \$576,500.

Northern Health Care Practicum Funding

The Northern Health Care Practicum Funding is funded by the NADC and has been administered by the three former northern health regions: Aspen, Northern Lights, and Peace Country. This funding encourages health care students to complete their practicum placements in Northern Alberta.

32 Northern Health Care Practicum

In 2008-2009 32 students received an average of \$1,233 for a total of \$39,500. An evaluation of the program confirmed its value to recruiters in the health regions, and resulted in its continuation as an ongoing program.

Bursary Values and Business Case

Bursary values have remained static for many years while education costs have risen substantially. The NADC Bursary Selection Committee decided to increase bursary values for the upcoming year to increase the impact of bursaries on student decision making. The NADC Bursary will increase to \$6,000 next year, while Nurse Practitioner and Medical Students will be able to receive \$9,000 and \$12,000 respectively. The NADC also prepared and submitted a business case requesting an increase in the bursary budget.

2009 Awards, Bursaries & Scholarships booklet

The annual *Awards, Bursaries, Scholarships – A Listing of Information Sources to Help in the Planning of Your Post-secondary Education* booklet was produced and distributed to northern high school students, northern Alberta Service Centres and college

awards offices. This booklet lists funding sources for students interested in pursuing a post-secondary education. The booklet is also on the www.benorth.ca NADC website with hyperlinks to post-secondary and funding websites.

Northern LINKS

The Northern LINKS program focused on encouraging high school students to graduate and stay in the north. In 2008-2009 Northern LINKS supported 30 student liaisons and campus tours. Other funded projects included Entrepreneurship Ventures and a pilot Aboriginal Student Job Shadowing Program. Communities that traditionally used LINKS funding were the focus of the new programs.

Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse is a joint initiative of the NADC and four northern post-secondary institutions: Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Northern Lakes College and NAIT. The Clearinghouse provides the member institutions with labour force and economic information. This helps them identify new training programs or to modify or cancel existing ones. It also serves as a potential forum for further communication and cooperation between the partner institutions. This year Clearinghouse partners met with representatives from the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada and the Rural Alberta Development Fund.

Northern Planning Circle – University Level Social Work Education

The Northern Planning Circle provides advice to the Learning Circle social work programs offered in northern Alberta by the University of Calgary (U of C). The group also works to ensure that other social work education needs in the region can be addressed. Masters level social work education continues to be a focus. A Master of Social Work cohort, offered collaboratively by Blue Quills First Nations College and the U of C, started this year. The Planning Circle met with program deans and other representatives to discuss options, and

initiated a student MSW interest survey for northwest.

Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)

To compete in world markets, Alberta's forest industry maintains high environmental and workplace standards. The Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF) is a collaboration between industry, government, and Northern Lakes College. WOLF trains forest workers to adopt productivity, environmental and information-enhancing technologies. This year the NADC contributed funds to digitalize courses. By developing e-courses, WOLF is able to offer courses at lower rates to the struggling forest industry and increase course availability.

www.w-o-l-f.ca

Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) is a six-year pilot project. It began in the 2003-2004 school year in three communities in northern Alberta: Lac La Biche, Wabasca and High Prairie. The pilot project introduces trades and technologies to grade 7 students. It provides them an opportunity to participate in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) starting in grade 9. The NADC provided financial support to the on-going operations of the program. In 2008-2009, 278 students in Grades 7 through 11 were enrolled in YAP.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The “Challenge North 2009 - Lead the Way” conference offers an excellent start to the 2009-2010 year. Scenarios developed through consultation with northerners over the past year provide a realistic starting point for the discussion groups. Delegates from across the north will hear thought-provoking speakers, plus conference addresses by Premier Ed Stelmach and Minister Iris Evans. The conference will leave northern Albertans well placed to ‘lead the way’ in dealing with transitions and making northern communities in Alberta stronger.

The NADC will follow up on new issues that arise in the working group discussions at the conference, and including continuing work on ongoing initiatives. Projects expected over this next year include:

- an examination of municipal infrastructure needs
- options for generation of electric power
- further workshops related to affordable housing, and
- support for initiatives that can improve transportation of goods such as a container site, improved rail and air access

The economic downturn is a part of the north’s reality, as it is for the rest of Alberta. The NADC will investigate what needs to be done to ensure that industry and businesses in the region are poised to lead the province, and the country, into eventual recovery and a position of strength.

The NADC Bursary program is very beneficial with a record return service rate of 88%. The NADC will continue to seek additional funds to increase bursary amounts and the number of bursaries awarded, and will work with Alberta Education to develop a new bursary program to recruit teacher graduates to the north.

In all its work, the NADC will partner with organizations and federal, provincial and municipal governments to ensure continued advancement of Alberta’s north.



Government of Alberta ■

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