

Annual Report

Northern Alberta Development Council

1992-93



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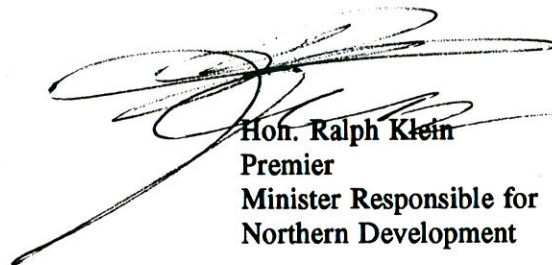
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**His Honour
The Honourable Gordon Towers
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Alberta**

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith, the twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Northern Alberta Development Council, covering the fiscal year from April 1, 1992 to March 31, 1993.

Respectfully submitted,



**Hon. Ralph Klein
Premier
Minister Responsible for
Northern Development**

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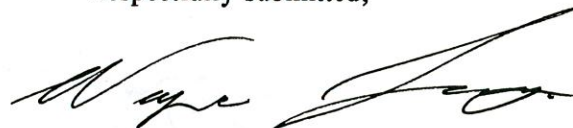
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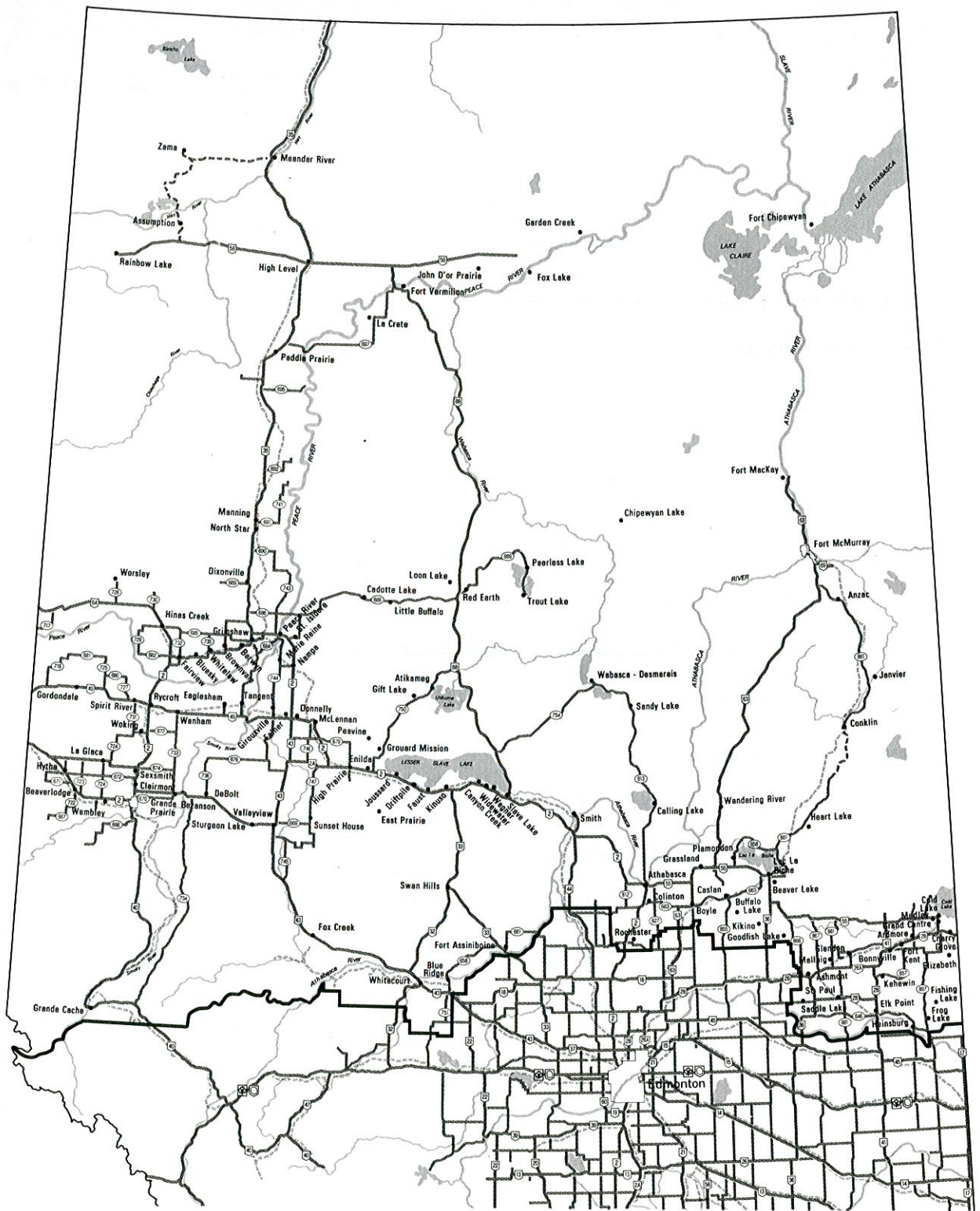
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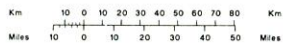
Wayne Jacques, MLA
Grande Prairie-Wapiti
Chairman

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NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA



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Statement of the Chairman

The Northern Alberta Development Council worked hard at serving northerners in the 1992-93 fiscal year. It held public meetings in six northern communities. It also carried out a number of other projects which encouraged development in the region.

The NADC was instrumental in the formation of the Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council, a concept born at the *Tourism North 91* seminar in Slave Lake.

In June 1992 Council brought northerners together to discuss community policing and costs at the *Policing in Northern Alberta* seminar in Lac La Biche. The NADC produced a position paper on the topic and transmitted its recommendations to government.

The NADC helped the communities in the Lakeland region assess drug abuse services. Council also helped remote communities improve local economic benefits and encouraged the development of infrastructure. It continued to support the NADC Student Bursary Program. It advised government in the areas of physician recruitment and the delivery of basic health care services in the north.

Council participated in province-wide policy consultations. In a submission to the review panel of the Electric Energy Marketing Act (EEMA), the NADC reported a survey of northern communities and an analysis of EEMA's effect on the north. Council also presented a northern perspective in discussions involving forestry development, rural districts and revenue sharing, agriculture and rural development, and overall economic development policy. It encouraged the continued operation of the Edmonton Municipal Airport, an important gateway to the north.

The NADC underwent some organizational changes in the fiscal year 1992-93. In December 1992 government reorganization saw Premier Ralph Klein become the minister responsible for the NADC. Al "Boomer" Adair became its chairman, and former chairman, Dr. Bob Elliott, MLA for Grande Prairie, retired from Council after 10 years of dedicated, valuable service. In addition, Jim Carbery of Fort McMurray and Floyd McLennan of Grande Cache joined Council, replacing retired members.

Northern Alberta Development Council

General Objectives

The Northern Alberta Development Council was created in 1963 as a five-member advisory body to the provincial government. It was enlarged in 1973 to a membership of 10 and currently consists of eight private citizens appointed on the basis of public nominations and two elected members of the Legislative Assembly.

Through the Northern Alberta Development Council Act, Council is charged with the responsibility to "investigate, monitor, plan, and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta, and to advise the government thereon." The Act makes specific reference to social and economic development, the development of communities and service delivery, and the development of government services and programs.

The Northern Alberta Development Council serves as a facilitator and catalyst, assisting the line departments of government responsible for the implementation of changes and service improvements. The Council's public participation role provides an enhanced two-way flow of information, which results in improvements for all northern Albertans.

The Council has a full-time MLA Chairman and reports to Cabinet through the Minister responsible for Northern Development.

The Council's primary role is to provide government with a northern point-of-view on a wide range of issues, supplementing and complementing the perspectives of northern MLAs. A major objective of Council since 1973 has been to increase public participation in the planning and design of delivery systems for various government services in northern Alberta.

The general purposes that Council wishes to promote are:

- to enhance economic growth and educational opportunities within northern Alberta in order to encourage young people to stay
- to improve the viability of traditional northern small town and rural life
- to support the desires and aspirations of all residents in northern Alberta for a fair share in the wealth and potential of the area
- to support the desires of various cultural and ethnic groups within northern Alberta for maintenance of their distinctive heritage

Through regularly scheduled public meetings and sponsorship of major conferences and seminars, the Council serves as a forum to which residents can express their ideas and concerns regarding development of the north. In addition to receiving briefs at public meetings, the Council can initiate research into particular opportunities or needs, and often pursues, on behalf of northern residents, efforts toward the development of new programs or coordination of the existing service delivery.

Council spends much of its time following up and responding to public briefs. Nearly 60 percent of the briefs presented to the Northern Alberta Development Council since 1973 have resulted in positive responses.

The Northern Alberta Development Council considered many issues of social and economic concern in the year under review. The most prominent social concerns related to the recruitment of physicians and other medical professionals, health services and health care reform, mental health and social services, services to remote and native communities, and recycling. Council considered major

economic concerns related to access, management, and protection of natural resources including fish and wildlife, forests, and water resources; roads and transportation; infrastructure concerns such as electrification, gasification, and water and sewer; and agriculture and rural development. Other important issues included tourism, education and training, municipal and local government concerns, provincial government services, business and economic development, native culture and economy, community development, and policing.

The Northern Alberta Development Council sponsored a major seminar called *Policing in Northern Alberta* held June, 1992 in Lac La Biche. The seminar attracted 120 delegates from northern communities, various agencies and the RCMP "K" Division. The delegates reviewed a research report on policy issues and suggested various priorities and actions for follow-up. As a result, the NADC developed a position paper with recommendations on the topics of policing costs, community policing, and the justice system.

The Northern Alberta Development Council played a key role in the formation of the *Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council*. As follow-up to a 1991 NADC seminar on tourism marketing, Council worked with the five northern tourism zones to establish the Alberta North initiative. It is dedicated to increasing tourism visitations to the north through the coordinated packaging and marketing of northern tourism products. A full-time marketing director was hired in August 1992 to carry out a multi-year marketing initiative on behalf of Alberta North.

In June 1992 the NADC presented a submission to the panel reviewing Alberta's *Electric Energy Marketing Act*. The NADC emphasized the important role EEMA plays in the promotion of economic development that benefits all Albertans. Council stressed that the north's special contribution to the Alberta economy should be considered in the review of EEMA.

NEW COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Through public advertisements in northern newspapers, nominations were solicited from northern community groups and organizations for nominees to replace retiring public members of the Council. The membership for 1992/93 included:

Bob Elliott, MLA, Grande Prairie, Chairman
Marlin Sexauer, Whitecourt, Deputy Chairman
Saran Ahluwalia, Cold Lake
Pearl Calahasen, MLA, Lesser Slave Lake
Jim Carbery, Fort McMurray
Diana Knight, Valleyview
Don Lussier, Athabasca
Floyd McLennan, Grande Cache
Jack Newman, Fort Vermilion
Gwen Tegart, Fairview

In January 1993, Premier Ralph Klein became the Minister responsible for Northern Development. Al "Boomer" Adair, MLA for Peace River, was appointed Chairman of the Council, replacing Bob Elliott.

Northern Alberta Development Council Activities

Public Meetings

1992-93 Public Meetings of the Northern Alberta Development Council	
Valleyview	April
Kikino	June
Gouard	August
Keg River	October
Bonnyville	November
Wembley	February

In addition to public meetings, Council held a retreat in September 1992, two administrative meetings in Peace River, and one in Edmonton.

Northern individuals and groups presented 177 briefs at public meetings in 1992-93. Each brief is first reviewed by Council and Branch staff. In most cases the brief is then sent to the relevant government department or agency for consideration and comment. If the department is unable to respond the Council may take further steps. At times Council will work with a number of government departments or they may bring public and private groups together to resolve an issue. In other cases Branch staff discussed issues with the responsible officials to achieve action. In all cases Council keeps the brief presenters advised of the progress that has been made.

The Council must follow up some briefs for an extended period before a practical solution is reached.

Council members have earned a reputation as hard-working intermediaries, helping northern MLAs communicate their constituents' concerns to government service providers. Their intention is to improve communication, and to reduce misunderstanding and confrontation.

The status of any brief submitted to Council is available from the Northern Development Branch in Peace River.

Briefs

During the year, a total of 35 briefs were received from Buffalo Head Prairie, Carcajou, Fairview, Fort Vermilion, Grimshaw, High Level, Keg River, La Crete, Manning, Paddle Prairie, Peace River, and Zama Lake in the northwest region; three from Fort Fitzgerald and Fort McMurray in the northeast region; 37 from Enilda, Faust, Gift Lake, Grouard, High Prairie, Kinuso, Slave Lake, Wabasca, and Whitecourt in the central region; 49 from Athabasca, Bonnyville, Cold Lake, Elk Point, Fort Kent, Grand Centre, Kikino, Lac La Biche, Medley, and St. Paul in the southeast region; and 53 from Beaverlodge, Debolt, Eaglesham, Falher, Fox Creek, Grande Prairie, Hythe, Sexsmith, Spirit River, Valleyview, and Wembley in the southwest region.

Research and Coordination

Many of the issues brought to the attention of the Northern Alberta Development Council require intensive background work and follow-up. As a result, the Council initiated efforts directed at improving government service delivery in various areas.

Major Council activities in 1992/93 included:

- completion of a technical report and an NADC position paper called *A Review of Policing in Northern Alberta* and sponsorship of the *Policing in Northern Alberta* seminar
- a meeting with the Associate Minister of Agriculture to discuss the Rural Development Initiative
- development of a data base information system to allow the Athabasca/Lac La Biche Community Advisory Committee to monitor the community and economic impacts of the Al-Pac pulp mill
- a meeting with an official of Economic Development and Trade to get an update on the Toward 2000 Together initiative

- submission of an NADC position paper and presentation to the Electric Energy Marketing Act Review Panel
- a meeting with the Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs to discuss the rural district concept and revenue sharing
- continued active participation in the Peace Arch Project, which seeks to generate employment and business benefits from the energy and forestry industries in remote communities
- a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife to get an update on forestry developments in the north
- participation in the 1992 national conference of Ministers Responsible for Northern Development in Sudbury, Ontario
- follow-up of several briefs regarding community recycling which resulted in a northern project to improve market access for recyclable products
- signing by the Minister responsible for Northern Development of the new three-year Northern Alberta Agreement, a Canada/Alberta Partnership
- a review of the effects on northern producers of a change in the method of benefit payments under the Western Grain Transportation Act
- a meeting with an official of the Northern River Basins Study
- initiation of a major review of public involvement in fish and wildlife management issues
- a speech by the NADC to the Canadian Water Resources Association conference in Lethbridge on northern water management issues and priorities
- continued cooperation with Alberta Environment to promote sub-basin water management
- follow-up of several public briefs related to the recruitment of physicians in northern Alberta
- continued involvement on the Fort McKay Interface Committee
- a meeting with officials of the Rural Physician Action Plan to discuss doctor shortages
- continued sponsorship of the Student Bursary Program
- a meeting with officials of the Wild Rose Foundation
- completion of the study *Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Needs and Services in the East Lakeland Area*
- assistance to the residents of Wabasca-Desmarais in the establishment of a local benefits project to secure employment and business opportunities in the forestry sector
- assistance to the residents of Fort Fitzgerald to secure financial support for the installation of electric power in the community
- cooperation with the five northern Alberta tourism zones in the development of a three-year tourism marketing project

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RESEARCH

Submission to the Electric Energy Marketing Act Review

In June 1992, Council presented a submission to the panel reviewing Alberta's Electric Energy Marketing Act (EEMA). The submission's objective was twofold:

- to state the NADC's view of EEMA's impact on northern Alberta
- to make recommendations on future EEMA policy

Information supporting the submission was gathered from a variety of sources including:

- public briefs to the NADC regarding electric energy costs
- a mail-out survey of community leaders conducted by the NADC
- recent NADC reports and position papers pertaining to northern development
- interviews with representatives of provincial utilities, industry organizations and provincial government departments
- published reports on Alberta's electric energy system

Principal Findings

- A key objective of the EEMA review was to determine whether the Act's original objectives were still valid for the 1990s. Of the five objectives established for EEMA, its primary goal of reducing rate differences across Alberta is still vital to the north. The secondary objectives of assuring the most efficient use of power sources, reducing the rate of increase to Alberta consumers in electric energy costs, allowing for the province-wide import and export of power, and permitting the continued operation of utilities, are still relevant in the 1990s.
- The mail-out survey of community leaders, as well as recent briefs to the NADC, revealed strong support for the concept of reducing rate differences across Alberta. This objective was supported by people living within both the Alberta Power and Trans Alta Utilities service areas. The survey also reaffirmed support for cost pooling as a means of reducing rate differences. However, concerns were expressed about the fairness of the current averaging system.

- A review of electricity costs in the north reveals that EEMA has been effective in reducing the historically high rate differences between Alberta Power customers in the north and the rest of Alberta. Despite this success, concerns have arisen over whether all of the costs being pooled by EEMA are justifiable and whether customers of the north's two investor-owned utilities are being fairly treated under the current regulatory system.

NADC Recommendations

The NADC feels that EEMA is an important factor in:

- promoting economic development that benefits all Albertans
- recognizing the special contribution of the north to the provincial economy
- addressing the special costs involved in providing electrical services to residents in the north

Accordingly, the NADC recommended:

- that the principle of cost pooling be retained with modifications to ensure that the averaging formula is fair to all consumers
- that a full review of the electric energy regulatory system be undertaken to determine whether decisions that affect the costs that EEMA pools are fair to all consumers and suppliers
- that the province's utilities undertake systems planning province-wide to ensure that Alberta's electric energy system is managed in the most efficient manner possible
- that market-oriented mechanisms be developed to ensure each utility is fully accountable for those business decisions that affect all provincial consumers through EEMA
- that efforts be made to standardize rate design across the province to enable direct comparison of electricity rates and to improve the monitoring of EEMA
- that the province make allowances in the EEMA averaging formula for tax payments paid by investor-owned utilities on their distribution income

A Review of Policing in Northern Alberta

In response to public briefs about policing costs and services, the NADC, in cooperation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Alberta's Solicitor General, commissioned a study to review policing in northern Alberta. A northern steering committee was selected to oversee the study. It consisted of municipal representatives, RCMP and Solicitor General's officials, community and aboriginal representatives, and the NADC.

The study commenced in January of 1992.

The objectives of the study were to:

- identify municipalities with unusually high policing expenditures
- review factors that led to high policing costs
- describe community involvement in policing
- identify existing or new cost-effective policing strategies

Policing Seminar

One hundred and twenty delegates attended an NADC-sponsored seminar, "*Policing in Northern Alberta*", held in Lac La Biche on June 4th and 5th, 1992. The seminar delegates reviewed the NADC research and shared their ideas and experiences. The seminar assisted the NADC to develop recommendations to government and the RCMP on policing in northern communities.

Principal Findings of the Research and Seminar

Extensive public involvement through the research and the seminar served as the basis of an NADC position paper titled, "*A Review of Policing in Northern Alberta: Findings and Recommendations*". Highlights of Council's findings include:

- nine policing cost indicators are higher than the provincial average for nearly half the northern detachments
- there are nine northern municipal detachments and eight provincial detachments with both high crime and high policing costs
- almost half of all northern detachments experience policing costs higher than southern locations
- the justice system process raises policing costs
- northern communities wish to increase their influence

on how policing affects them

- northerners want to see a greater emphasis on the problem-solving, peace-keeping, and crime prevention roles of their police services

NADC Recommendations

Financing

- The Solicitor General should review existing funding structures and the Municipal Police Assistance Grant to address the issue of fairness for those municipalities with very high policing costs.
- "K" Division and the local detachment should work with northern municipalities to identify and implement local cost ideas to reduce policing costs.
- The RCMP and northern communities should jointly develop expanded use of auxiliary constables, special constables, and clerical support to fulfil lower level functions.

Community Policing

- A clear vision for the role of community advisory committees in northern Alberta should be developed by the RCMP in partnership with northern communities. A user or participant manual which covers roles and directions for successful implementation is needed.
- Social service agencies should continue to support programs and services which aim to reduce the incidence of youth crime, family violence, and substance abuse.
- Government should continue to support new policing initiatives, such as aboriginal services, which meet the unique needs of the north's native communities.

Police Approach

- Municipalities should be encouraged by the RCMP to contribute to local priority setting. It is anticipated that this will lead to the introduction of new community-based crime prevention programs.
- The RCMP should continue to establish satellite offices particularly in northern remote and native communities.

- The RCMP should adopt an officer placement approach that matches police personnel with the unique characteristics of northern communities.
- The RCMP should continue to support and recognize the contributions police officers make as citizens of northern communities.

Justice System

- The Attorney General should seek ways to reduce delays in the court processes which result in higher policing costs.
- The Attorney General should encourage programs that reflect community values and make sentencing more appropriate and effective.

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Needs and Services in the East Lakeland Area

In 1991, the NADC received a number of briefs on alcohol and drug abuse issues in the East Lakeland area. In response, a report on the current situation in the area was initiated by the NADC with assistance from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC).

The goal of the study was to gain a clearer understanding of the nature and extent of the problems in the area and to provide a common reference for stakeholder groups to examine strategies and solutions to substance abuse problems.

East Lakeland is the area which most closely coincides with the issues and concerns raised in many of the briefs presented to the NADC during the year. This area includes the towns of Cold Lake, Grand Centre, Medley, and Bonnyville. It also includes parts of Improvement District #18(S) and Municipal District #87, the Indian Bands of Cold Lake First Nations and Long Lake Cree Nation, CFB Cold Lake, Elizabeth Metis Settlement, and the Village of Glendon.

Principal Findings

From the research and interviews the following issues and concerns in the community were identified:

- lack of access to detoxification
- high use of off base facilities by CFB Cold Lake personnel

- treatment styles geared to the native population
- lack of rehabilitation facilities

Conclusions and Recommendations

The report documented the communities' perception of the need to increase services for the prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. Enhanced programming that is relevant to local circumstances and physically accessible to local residents is sought.

Initial steps are being taken to plan and promote improved substance abuse services. The Tri-Town Interagency Committee is pursuing various ways to enhance and coordinate the local delivery of services. The report summarizes short- and long-term solutions for more and better services in the East Lakeland area.

Northern Recycling Coordination Project

The NADC has received several briefs on recycling in northern Alberta. The briefs represent a growing network of municipal and private sector groups which have identified recycling as an environmental and business objective. The briefs outline challenges facing northern recycling groups such as low population and large distances to markets for recycled materials.

Based on these briefs, the NADC established a recycling advisory group of northern municipal, industry, and government representatives. The advisory group identified a number of objectives to guide recycling efforts in the north. The advisory group concluded that a coordination project should be developed.

The purpose of the Northern Recycling Coordination Project is to increase the viability of recycling initiatives in northern Alberta. It will address the challenges of low population, great distance, and low volumes of recyclable materials. The project would secure markets and determine practical and innovative approaches to increase the viability of recycling initiatives.

The Northern Recycling Coordination Project is expected to increase the viability of recycling activities in northern Alberta by increasing productivity, efficiency, and capacity of northern recycling projects. The initiative will ensure that the north is up-to-date on the most recent technology and marketing information.

The project will operate for three years under the sponsorship of a northern-based association. Two coordinators will provide advisory, coordination, and technical services to northern municipalities and recycling groups.

Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council

The Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council (Alberta North) was formed in December 1991 as a marketing vehicle for the five northern tourism zones. It is dedicated to increasing tourism visitation to the north through the coordinated packaging and marketing of northern tourism products. A full-time marketing director was hired in August 1992 to carry out a multi-year marketing initiative on behalf of Alberta North. The project's core funding has come from the northern tourism zones and the Canada-Alberta Northern Development Agreement. Additional marketing dollars have been received from Alberta Tourism, the Canada-Alberta Tourism Partnership Agreement, northern tourism operators, and tour wholesalers in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

Organizational Structure

Alberta North is a not-for-profit society run by a board of directors made up of representatives from the five northern zones:

- Lakeland Tourist Association
- Evergreen Country Tourism Council
- Mighty Peace Tourist Association
- Game Country Tourism Association
- Midnight-Twilight Tourist Association

Representatives from the Northern Development Branch and Alberta Economic Development and Tourism (Marketing Division) also serve in an advisory capacity on the Alberta North board.

Role of NADC

The NADC played a key role in the start up of Alberta North. The idea for this project was first put forward at the *Tourism North 91* seminar sponsored by the NADC. Following the seminar, NADC staff worked with the five zones to prepare a funding proposal. The Northern Development Branch continues to play an active role in the project. Some of the tasks performed by staff include:

- preparation of a business plan for Alberta North

- development and implementation of a recruitment strategy
- participation on the board of directors
- development of the terms of reference for the project evaluation
- liaison with other government departments
- promotion of the project through NADC brief follow-up activities

Activities

In its first full year of operation, Alberta North made significant progress in developing and marketing northern tourism packages. Two areas have received particular attention:

- development of an outdoor adventure product featuring 16 fishing and guiding operators
- preparation of a summer touring guide highlighting five regional circle tours

These products are being marketed through tour companies and marketing organizations located in Canada, the United States, and Europe. The 1993/94 marketing plan will build on these activities as well as develop new products linked to summer recreation and regional attractions and events.

ONGOING NADC PROJECTS AND SERVICES

Student Bursary Program

Created in 1974, the Northern Alberta Development Council Student Bursary Program is designed to facilitate the training of a technical and professional work force. Such a work force is in demand in northern areas of the province.

Students assisted through the program are obligated to work in northern Alberta, preferably in rural locations, for at least one year for each year of bursary support received.

The bursary program is administered by the Students Finance Board. A selection committee made up of four members of the Northern Alberta Development Council and one representative each from the Metis Nation of Alberta, the Students Finance Board, and Alberta Career Development and Employment, is responsible for establishing guidelines and selecting candidates.

In the 1992/93 fiscal year, assistance was provided to 150 applicants for total funding of \$459,000. Since the

1974 inception of the program, 2,647 bursaries have been awarded. These bursaries attracted professional graduates into the health care system, education, social services, agriculture, law, business, and engineering. Most bursary graduates have returned to the north, and at least 50% have remained there after completing their return service obligation.

The Northern Alberta Development Council also sponsors the Medical Professional Project. This project provides small grants to students to defray their travel and accommodation costs while taking course electives in northern Alberta. The intent is to encourage health care professionals to locate in northern Alberta upon graduation by giving them a sample of life in the north.

Since the project began in 1984, 122 medical students, 11 occupational therapists, four speech therapists, five pharmacy students, and 67 physiotherapists have been given the opportunity to experience rural practice as part of their undergraduate training.

Partnership Awards Project

The Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary (NADB) is examining the potential of establishing partnership bursaries with community organizations and industry for the 1993-94 fiscal year. The intent of the partnership awards project is to increase the pool of funds available to post secondary students. The project will match NADB funds with equal contributions from employers or community groups to provide bursaries to students.

The project will address three long standing northern community concerns including retention of northern youth, student financial need, and the recruitment of highly qualified manpower into northern Alberta. The bursaries awarded under the partnership project will meet the minimum criteria required under the NADB. Each student assisted will be required to return to live and work in northern Alberta after they graduate.

The purpose of the Northern Development Branch is to promote social and economic development in northern Alberta. It does this through practical advice to government and through the delivery of services to northerners.

To achieve its purpose, the Branch provides all the administrative and technical support required by the Northern Alberta Development Council. The Branch also works toward achieving specific socio-economic improvements in the area.

The Branch seeks to advance the development of human and natural resources in northern Alberta, as well as to aid in community development goals such as local decision-making and planning. It delves into a wide variety of issues as a result of briefs received by the Northern Alberta Development Council. Examples include agriculture, resource development, business development, tourism, manpower training, community and regional infrastructure, education, social services, recreation, communications, and transportation.

The **Research and Coordination Section** of the Branch provides research on community and regional needs in the north, program evaluations and analysis, and policy development as requested by the Northern Alberta Development Council. It also monitors and coordinates program delivery and special enrichment projects for the north.

Although not directly involved in Council activities, the **Agreement Administration Section** provides information to the members as required. The purpose of this section is to implement the Canada/Alberta Cooperation Agreement on Northern Development over the 1992-95

time frame and through its windup phase. This involves assessing applications and undertaking the necessary financial disbursement and control procedures.

The **Council Administration Section** provides technical and logistical support to the NADC chairman and to individual Council members. The section facilitates Council public participation activity and coordinates follow-up to briefs presented to the Council. It also offers special project support for Council and Branch initiatives.

In support of Council's public participation role, section staff members visit community leaders prior to public meetings to prepare advance briefing material for Council members. Contact is made with town councils, chambers of commerce, and other interested community members to discuss concerns related to the development of business, industry, and government services in their region. Staff members are available at any time to answer questions from the public about the brief presentation process. Each year Council holds six public meetings in communities across northern Alberta.

Section staff are responsible for the preliminary investigation of issues presented either at public meetings or directly to the chairman between meetings. The section also provides long term support for the Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary.

In its role as coordinator and facilitator, and particularly as a supplier of technical support to the Northern Alberta Development Council, the Branch maintains a vital communication link between northern people and government.