

**Northern Alberta  
Development Council**

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**Annual Report  
2006-2007**

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## 2006-2007 Annual Report

### Message from the Chair

I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 2006-2007 on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC). The report highlights Council's achievements that contribute to the development of the North.

The NADC began the year by holding its triennial conference, Challenge North 2006, in High Level. It was a tremendous success with more than 250 community and business leaders from across the region coming together to discuss northern challenges and opportunities, as well as to provide input on strategic directions to advance development in the North. The theme of the conference - building vibrant communities and effective partnerships for Northern Alberta - was reflected in the energy and collaborative spirit of the delegates.

Engaging and communicating with northerners through conferences, seminars, Regional Stakeholders Forums, the *NADC Communiqué*, and our website is fundamental to our work. The NADC continued to partner with communities, business, industry, and other northern jurisdictions on a wide range of initiatives and issues related to education, transportation, agriculture, forestry and tourism. The Youth Apprenticeship Program, Northwest Corridor Development Corporation, Branding the Peace, Woodlands Operations Learning Foundation, and the Deh Cho Travel Connection are only a few of the organizations and programs Council was involved with in the past year.

Health issues received significant attention as a priority of Council. Meetings were hosted with local stakeholders, community health councils and Regional Health Authorities. In addition, over 80 people participated in two workshops on effective physician recruitment and retention practices and understanding the health funding formula.

Increasing northern skills level remained an NADC priority through the continued success of the NADC Bursary Programs and Northern *LINKS*, a program to encourage students to complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. Changes to the Northern *LINKS* program this year meant that school divisions were better able to target funding to schools where it was most beneficial.

The Northern Alberta Development Council appreciates the commitment and efforts of our diverse partners and remains firmly committed to advancing northern development.



Denis Ducharme, Chair  
MLA Bonnyville-Cold Lake

# **NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007**

## **NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

### **OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW**

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a council of and for northerners. In 2006-2007, the Council was a reporting entity of the Ministry of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to December, 2006, at which time Council became part of Employment, Immigration and Industry.

The NADC consists of nine public members and one elected Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (MLA). Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities. In 2006-2007, the Council was chaired by Ray Danyluk, MLA for Lac La Biche-St. Paul until December, 2006 and then by Denis Ducharme, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake. The public members were:

Kim Courtoreille, Wabasca  
Helen Henderson, High Prairie  
Mike Mihaly, High Level  
Maurice Rivard, Bonnyville  
Harvey Yoder, Lac La Biche

Carmen Ewing, Girouxville  
Wendell MacEachern, Fort McMurray  
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.

### ***The NADC Region***

The Northern Alberta Development Council region represents 60% of Alberta's landmass and only 9% 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 and 75% of the forestry portion of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product.

The region contributed more than \$5.8 billion to Alberta Government revenues in 2004-05, almost 20% of the \$29.3 billion in total revenues of the Alberta Government. In the same period, 39% of Alberta Government revenues from non-renewable resource revenues were generated

in the North. In 2005, northern exports of \$32 billion accounted for 38% of Alberta's total international exports.

Although the northern economy is flourishing, the region faces significant challenges for continued and sustainable growth. These challenges include: inadequate transportation and municipal infrastructure; a shortage of skilled workers; a relatively small and sparse population; a lack of economic diversification and value-added activity; and growth pressures associated with resource development. Accordingly, regional priorities include: improving access to markets through better transportation networks; raising skill levels so northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities; adding value to and diversifying northern products; continued exploration of additional resource development opportunities; and raising awareness of what makes the north important to the rest of Alberta and Canada.

## **BUSINESS PLAN GOAL, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES**

### **GOAL: Advance the development of Northern Alberta**

The Northern Alberta Development Council partners with northern communities, organizations, businesses, industry and other jurisdictions to coordinate, plan for and support the sustainable development of northern Alberta. Initiatives include economic diversification, transportation, infrastructure, tourism development, and improving skills among northern Albertans.

#### ***Key Strategies***

- Engage northern and Aboriginal communities, businesses, industry and other stakeholders, to address northern socio-economic priorities, opportunities and challenges to support northern strategies and initiatives.
- Partner with other jurisdictions, other ministries, northern and Aboriginal communities, business and industry, to promote northern opportunities and address challenges.
- Promote awareness of the significance of northern development to all Albertans.
- Support initiatives to increase northern skill levels in partnership with northern communities, business, industry, learning providers and students.

#### ***Performance measures***

- Partner satisfaction with Northern Alberta Development Council's contribution in advancing northern interests. The target is an average rating of 8 out of 10 or 80%.
- Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary recipients' return service rate. The target return service rate is 76%.

## **RESULTS ANALYSIS**

### **ENGAGEMENT AND AWARENESS**

Communication continues to be 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 to sustainable solutions.

#### ***Regional Stakeholders Forum***

The NADC schedules regular Council and Regional Stakeholders Forums with northern community and business leaders. These meetings provide an opportunity for northern stakeholders to present issues and concerns to Council and identify specific opportunities and/or barriers to development. In 2006-2007, Regional Stakeholders Forums were held at the Peavine Métis Settlement and the City of Cold Lake.

#### ***Meetings with Key Northern Stakeholders***

The NADC met with northwestern Mayors and Reeves on an ongoing basis to discuss significant issues common to northern municipalities. **Topics discussed this year included: transportation including road, rail and runways, forest industry concerns, recruitment and retention of staff, along with a variety of other topics. The organization also chose to formalize this year allowing them to make motions and form a joint voice for the north.**

**The NADC has used these meetings to present to northern leaders the work being undertaken by the NADC. Additionally, these meetings allow the NADC to identify issues and opportunities faced by northern municipalities. In some cases these meetings have provided opportunities for NADC to pursue research that addresses municipal concerns and identify areas where more research or work may need to be done.**

**The NADC hosted its annual breakfast meeting with Northern Members of the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton to share regional concerns and successes. This meeting allowed northern Ministers and MLAs to discuss with the NADC council areas of concern or opportunities that exist in their constituencies. Additionally this meeting allows NADC to inform Northern MLAs and Ministers of the work of NADC and any issues they may need to be aware of.**

**For the first time in 2006-2007 NADC also hosted a meeting with southern MLAs and Ministers to communicate to them the role of NADC in northern Alberta and in particular why it is relevant to southern Albertans. This tradition will continue.**

Presentations were also made to a number of northern organizations to provide an overview of the Council's activities and projects. In 2006-2007, representatives of the Northern Alberta Development Council met with: the Energy Utilities Board (EUB) in Fort McMurray; the Veterans Memorial Highway 36 Committee; the NE Labour Market Best Practices Committee; Lakeland County; the Town of Lac La Biche; the Town of Athabasca, and the County of Athabasca.

The NADC also met with various Chambers of Commerce and Rotary groups to provide information and to receive feedback on potential issues or opportunities. The NADC also met with Alberta's Oil Sands Ministerial Strategy Committee to provide input on a coordinated short-

term action plan to address the social, environmental and economic impacts of oil sands developments.

### ***Challenge North***

The NADC hosts Challenge North, a major conference, every three years to get input from northern stakeholders on strategic directions to advance development in the North. Challenge North 2006: Today's Promise -Tomorrow's Reality was held on April 5-7, 2006 in High Level in collaboration with the Town of High Level. This was the first time the NADC had held its major conference in a small community. The host community, the speakers, displays and entertainment embodied the theme of Building Vibrant Communities and Effective Partnerships for Northern Alberta. Over 250 participants representing community, organization and business representatives from across the north travelled to High Level and provided input to the NADC on key topics of concern. A conference proceedings report is available on the NADC website. The NADC has undertaken many follow-up activities in response to delegate input, which are reflected in this annual report.

### ***Opportunities Seminars***

The NADC hosts Opportunities Seminars at various locations within its region to address and highlight opportunities for economic and community development specific to that area. Open to the public, the seminars are targeted at municipal and Aboriginal leaders, industry, businesses and community members who contribute to the growth of the region.

The Smoky River Opportunities Seminar took place in the Village of Girouxville. The seminar was developed through consultation with local municipal officials from the Village of Girouxville, the Town of Falher and the MD of Smoky River. The seminar helped local residents build ideas around community capacity building, how to develop employment and business opportunities, and pursue entrepreneurial goals. The seminar also produced a community building toolkit that can be used to help increase the participation of local people in community economic development initiatives.

The NADC also worked with the Slave Lake & District Chamber of Commerce to host an Opportunities Seminar in that community. The seminar focused on labour issues and the housing crisis associated with a booming market in the province. Topics discussed at the one day seminar included: hiring and retaining Aboriginal workers, hiring foreign workers, the impact of housing on employment in Slave Lake and local experiences in finding employees.

### ***Opportunity North***

The Opportunity North website, CD-ROM, business cards and brochures continued to be a valuable tool for northern employers and organizations in recruitment and promotional activities. The website received 392,186 hits in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

### ***NADC Communiqué***

The NADC produced and distributed four editions of the *NADC Communiqué*, a one-page report outlining key discussions, directions and events of the NADC following regular council meetings. The report was distributed to northern businesses, industries, municipal governments, Aboriginal organizations, and community groups, as well as government departments and all MLAs. The *NADC Communiqué* is also available on the NADC website.

### ***NADC Website***

The Northern Alberta Development Council updated and enhanced its website on a regular basis. The website contains information on NADC programs, specifically northern student bursary programs and Northern *LINKS*, in addition to northern statistics, northern industry profiles, publications and news releases. Between April 1, 2006 and March 31, 2007, the NADC website received 319,440 hits.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

### ***Inter-jurisdictional Initiatives***

#### **Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development**

The NADC is the secretariat for this Memorandum of Understanding and continued to work with the Northwest Territories on issues of common interest including leading practices in housing program delivery in northern and remote and Aboriginal communities, transportation, pipeline development, and interjurisdictional water issues. **A meeting was held on October 5, 2006 in Edmonton between the two jurisdictions.**

#### **The Northern Forum**

The Northern Forum is an international consortium consisting of northern regional governments with the mandate to promote cooperation and exchange information on northern socio-economic issues and initiatives. The NADC continued to support the Minister's role as North American Vice-Chair of The Northern Forum.

#### **Northwest Corridor Development Corporation**

The NADC continued to provide technical and organization support to the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation. Key objectives of the NCDC and the NADC include the promotion of the transportation corridor to Prince Rupert, development of a container port at Prince Rupert and upgrading the rail line to Prince Rupert. **The NADC participated in regular meetings as well as planning sessions to provide advice on direction and ensure Alberta's' interests were at the table.**

#### **Northern Development Ministers' Forum**

The NADC acts as the secretariat for Alberta's participation in the Northern Development Ministers' Forum. Forum membership is composed of seven provinces, the three territories and the Federal Government. The NADC successfully concluded the Northern Awareness Enhancement Campaign and Transportation Investment priority projects at the Northern Development Ministers' conference held in the Yukon in February 2007. The NADC also participated as members of the Knowledge North and the website priority project working groups. Preparations were also underway for the annual meeting scheduled for the fall of 2007.

#### **Saskatchewan Northern Affairs**

The NADC has worked with Saskatchewan Northern Affairs to explore areas of potential cooperation. The NADC organized and participated in meetings to discuss topics of mutual interest between Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Northern Affairs and Saskatchewan Education with Fort McMurray Regional Community Development Corporation and representatives of the oil sands developers in Fort McMurray. As a result,

these organizations held the Northeast Opportunities Seminar in Fort McMurray in September with over 90 people in attendance. Speakers provided participants with information regarding oil sands human resource requirements, apprenticeship and trades training requirements, and apprenticeship opportunities.

### ***Working with Northern Organizations***

#### **Northeast Natural Resource Education Society**

The Northern Alberta Development Council provides organizational, administrative and technical support to the organization. The NADC assisted with a fund raising dinner for the Society, in order for the Society to hire a full time Education Coordinator in September 2006.

#### **Peace Oilsands Synergy Group**

The Northern Alberta Development Council provides organizational, administrative and technical support to the organization. The NADC assisted with organization, terms of reference and an informational symposium to establish stakeholders.

#### **Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals**

The NADC provided organizational support to the Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals. Through the Coalition, a collaborative governance structure has been formed for the recruitment of physicians between the City of Cold Lake, Municipal District of Bonnyville, Cold Lake Region Chamber of Commerce, Aspen Regional Health Authority, 4 Wing Air Force Base, Cold Lake First Nations, Elizabeth and Fishing Lake Métis Settlements, and industry and business representatives. As part of the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP), the Coalition wants to develop an implementation model for the recruitment of physicians and other professionals to the Cold Lake area. Four new physicians were recruited in 2006-2007 for which the Cold Lake Chamber of Commerce was awarded the annual Rural Community Award of Distinction, sponsored by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and the Alberta Rural Physician Action Plan.

The NADC is assisting the Coalition in planning and organizing a Human Resource Conference to be held in Cold Lake in April 2008. The NADC provides technical support and acts as a liaison with other northern organizations.

#### **Employment, Education and Training Committee**

The Northern Alberta Development Council continued to work with representatives from the Town of St. Paul, Blue Quills First Nations College, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, Family Community Support Services, the St. Paul Abilities Network and Portage College on a Employment, Education and Training Committee. The mandate of the group is to look at issues and challenges faced in the region, to eliminate overlaps, to ensure that all residents in the St. Paul region, including Saddle Lake and Goodfish/Whitfish First Nations, have access to education and employment.

#### **Regional Economic Development Alliances**

The NADC continued to work with regional economic development alliances such as the Northeast HUB Alliance, to advance regional development, diversification, and value-added activities. As an example, the NADC participated on the Grizzly Regional Economic Development Alliance (GROWTH). GROWTH is made up of eleven partners including, from the

NADC region, the Town of Swan Hills, Woodland County and Pembina Hills School Board. GROWTH facilitates regional cooperation through the development and implementation of a five-year strategic plan supporting existing regional economic activities and promoting new investment and tourism opportunities in the area.

### **Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative**

The Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI) is a partnership initiative committed to increasing the participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market. The NADC is a member of AWPI steering committees, providing information and input into the planning and implementation of these initiatives. In 2006-2007, the City of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie Regional College and the Peace Country Health Region Authority were in the process of implementing AWPI partnerships.

### **Northeast/Northwest Interdepartmental Working Groups**

The NADC assisted in organizing and planning inter-departmental meetings for various government departments, agencies and other service delivery organizations to be aware of each others mandate and programs to more effectively serve northern Albertans.

### **Lac La Biche Region Industry Consultation Committee**

The Northern Alberta Development Council supported the development of the Lac La Biche Region Industry Consultation Committee. The Committee is comprised of nine Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD) oil sands developers operating in the Conklin area, the Town of Lac La Biche, Lakeland County, the Lac La Biche Region Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures Lac La Biche, Portage College, and Northern Lights School Division. The mandate of the Committee is to promote and plan for community economic development opportunities that would support industries long-term plans, to identify and resolve issues and opportunities that may arise due to industry development in the area, to collaborate or partner in common initiatives, and to support open communication and dialogue between industry, the municipalities and community organizations.

The NADC along with Portage College and the Northern Lights School Division established an Education Sub-Committee to work with industry in planning long term employment needs, and establishing education training to meet the industry requirements. With industries participation, the Education Sub-Committee was successful in assisting to obtain \$1 million in provincial funding for a new Career and Technologies Studies (CTS) lab at J.A. Williams High School.

### **Regional Issues Working Group**

NADC representatives participated in meetings of the Regional Issues Working Group (RIWG) Transportation Committee to increase awareness of transportation infrastructure needs of Fort McMurray.

### **Branding the Peace**

This initiative is an Alberta - British Columbia initiative whose mandate is to achieve the highest dollar for this region' agricultural commodity producers. The organization is attempting to do this through chemical analysis of peace commodities followed by national marketing of positive results. NADC has supplied , organizational, intellectual and financial support to this organization to help secure a value-added agricultural sector in Northern Alberta.

## ***Northern Opportunities and Initiatives***

### **Transportation**

Significant progress was made on several transportation initiatives in northeast Alberta, endorsed by the Northern Alberta Development Council. Highway 881 from Lac La Biche to Anzac paving has been completed, a feasibility study is underway for the East-West Connection between Fort McMurray and Peace River, and only 25 kilometres remain to be paved on the Calling Lake Wabasca connection on Highway 813. The extension and twinning of Highway 63 north of Fort McMurray is progressing, and twinning of Highway 63 from Grassland to Fort McMurray is in the provincial three year plan.

### **Agriculture**

The NADC continues to assist in the development of alternative crops and agriculture products suitable for northern production by providing industry information and communication assistance to value-added agriculture and new crop development groups. Support was provided to the Alberta Natural Health Agriculture Network who produced a [Directory of Growers and Producers of Natural Health Related Agriculture Products and Crops](#).

### **Forestry**

The NADC completed preliminary research on the condition of northern Alberta's forests and forest industry which was reviewed by Council, industry and community stakeholders. The NADC continued to be active in facilitating communication through meetings, presentations, and events, and in preparing communities for the realities and aftermath of mountain pine beetle infestations.

### **Tourism**

The NADC continued to provide support to the Deh Cho Travel Connection, an inter-jurisdictional tourism marketing group comprised of stakeholders from the Northwest Territories, Northeastern British Columbia and Northwestern Alberta marketing the Deh Cho scenic loop. The NADC is specifically involved with the community awareness committee to engage local stakeholders and the marketing committee to monitor and implement the five-year marketing plan.

The NADC also initiated discussions and held meetings on the potential of a Boreal Birding tourism initiative in partnership with northern tourism, economic development, naturalist, and provincial parks partners.

The NADC assisted Alberta's Lakeland Destination Marketing Organization in organizing workshops, and promoting tourism in the northeast region, by assisting with the 'Moving Forward' Conference in St. Paul in December 2006. The NADC promoted and supported the Iron Horse Trail, an inter-municipal marketing group comprised of representatives from thirteen municipalities from the County of Thorhild east to the Saskatchewan border.

The NADC continued to provide support to the Pipestone Creek Dinosaur Bone Bed Interpretive Facility near Grande Prairie. The Project, now called the River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Centre, has developed its business, marketing and fundraising plans and is in the process of hiring a project manager to continue to move the initiative forward.

The NADC remained a voting director on the Travel Alberta North Tourism Destination Region (TDR) Board. The Board had great success with a bold approach to an awareness marketing campaign called "Unwrap the North" for 2006. Building on the success of the 2006 campaign, the Northern Tourism Destination Region will continue with the same promotion for the 2007 season. The TDR continues to work closely with the Destination Marketing Organizations and Pattison Billboards in Edmonton to draw more attention from the Edmonton market to look north as a holiday destination.

### **Housing**

The Northern Alberta Development Council continued to monitor housing issues throughout the year. The NADC made a presentation to the Minister responsible for Housing in November and made a written submission to the Alberta Affordable Housing Task Force in March 2007. The NADC also provided support to and participated in the Grande Prairie affordable housing forum to identify challenges and opportunities for the region.

### **Health**

The Challenge North 2006 conference highlighted northern health funding and physician recruitment and retention as priority items. Meetings were hosted in High Prairie and Cold Lake with local stakeholders, community health councils and representatives from the Regional Health Authorities. Over eighty people participated in workshops held in Lac La Biche and Falher. The workshops were held in collaboration with the Rural Physician Plan and Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing and addressed effective physician recruitment and retention practices and the funding formula. A series of draft recommendations on northern healthcare was prepared for presentation to the Minister of Health and Wellness. The NADC continued to actively pursue opportunities for the advancement of medical training opportunities in the north.

### **Recycling**

The Council continued to provide technical and administrative support to the Northern Coordinated Action for Recycling Enterprises (Northern C.A.R.E.). Membership is comprised of representatives of northern municipalities, First Nations, Métis Settlements, recycling organizations, and government departments. The organization was established to promote and coordinate recycling initiatives in northern Alberta. Northern CARE promoted e-waste recycling, and has developed two videos for school children to promote recycling: "My Life as a Bottle" and "My Life as a Tire".

## **SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

### ***NADC Bursary Programs***

The NADC offers bursary programs in collaboration with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. Northern bursary programs include the NADC Bursary, Bursary Partnerships Program and NADC Bursary for Medical Students and Pharmacy Students. These programs require recipients to live and work in Northern Alberta for a period of time upon completion of their studies. The NADC Bursary return service rate is discussed under Performance Measures.

The NADC provided policy direction and marketing assistance, while Advanced Education administered the Northern Student Supplement funds. The Northern Student Supplement helps new post-secondary students with the cost of their studies. There is no return service

requirement attached to these funds. The Northern Student Supplement encourages first-and second-year students from Northern Alberta to pursue a post-secondary education and reduces their level of student debt. In 2006-2007, 419 students from Northern Alberta received the Northern Student Supplement. Average funding per student was \$1,215, for a total of \$509,000.

The NADC Bursary Program and the Bursary Partnerships Program encourage students to train in occupations with shortages of northern labour. In 2006-2007, 134 NADC Bursaries were awarded to Alberta students. The total value of the NADC Bursaries for 2006-2007 was \$393,000 (128 Bursaries of \$3,000 each and 6 Bursaries of \$1,500 each).

The Bursary Partnership Program (BPP) involves 31 Northern Alberta businesses, community and educational organizations. Funding support for the BPP in 2006-2007 was \$309,200, comprising \$174,350 from sponsors and \$134,850 from the NADC. A total of 110 bursaries were awarded from the BPP in 2006-2007.

More than one third of the bursary recipients are enrolled in health care programs, followed by recipients studying education (18%) and natural/environmental sciences (15%). Bursaries were also awarded to students in engineering, technical, social services and other programs.

The NADC Bursary for Medical Students was introduced in 2003. Four co-sponsored Medical Bursaries, each valued at \$10,000, were awarded in 2006-07.

The NADC Bursary for Pharmacy Students was introduced in 2004-2005. It matches sponsor bursaries of \$3,000 for a total of \$6,000. Three co-sponsored Pharmacy Bursaries were awarded in the third year of the program and an additional six NADC Bursaries were given to pharmacy students without a co-sponsor.

The Northern Health Care Practicum Funding Pilot Program is offered by the NADC with the three Northern Regional Health Authorities (RHAs): Aspen, Northern Lights, and Peace Country. This program encourages health care students to complete their practicum placements in Northern Alberta. In its third full year in 2006-2007, the Northern Health Care Practicum Placement Pilot program provided funding support totalling \$41,818.67 to 45 students (an average of \$929 per student) completing a practicum placement with one of the three participating RHAs.

#### ***Awards Booklet***

An Awards booklet was produced and distributed to northern high school students, Alberta Service Centres and college awards offices. This booklet contains information to help those interested in pursuing a post-secondary education find the necessary funding.

#### ***Northern LINKS***

The NADC's *Northern LINKS* program has completed its seventh year assisting schools to encourage students' completion of high school and their transition to post secondary education. The Northern LINKS program increases northern students' exposure to post secondary opportunities. In 2006-2007 the program provided grant funding to school divisions rather than individual schools as in previous years. Superintendents are now able to target the funding to schools where it will be most beneficial. Fifty-three projects undertaken by school divisions, Aboriginal schools, and northern Alberta post secondary institutions were funded in 2006-2007.

### ***Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse***

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse coordinates a joint initiative that partners the NADC and the five northern post-secondary institutions. The Clearinghouse provides member institutions with labour force and economic information to help 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. Included in this research were: An Evaluation of High School Leavers and Post-Secondary Entrance in Northern Alberta; Alternative Energy Sources and Associated Education and Skill Requirements; and Evaluation of the Shortage of Skilled Workers in Northern Alberta.

### ***Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)***

The foundation is comprised of industry, government, and Northern Lakes College. Alberta's forest industry struggles to compete in world markets, while maintaining high environmental standards. In order to maintain and build a competitive advantage, Alberta's forest workers must adopt productivity, environmental and information enhancing technologies. These technologies require a highly skilled and properly trained work force. WOLF provides unique training opportunities to forest workers to meet this demand for higher skill levels. The NADC provided advice, assistance with survey design, commentary on funding applications, and letters of support.

### ***Youth Apprenticeship Program***

The Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) is a six year pilot project beginning in the 2003-04 school year operating in five schools in three communities in Northern Alberta. The pilot project introduces trades and technologies to students at the Grade 7 level, providing an opportunity for them to participate in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) starting in Grade 9. The NADC assisted and participated in promoting the Youth Apprenticeship Project, ~~attended~~ inter-department meetings in Edmonton and Local Advisory Committee meetings in Lac La Biche. NADC is represented on the Youth Apprenticeship Project (YAP) Interim Review Committee, along with Alberta Education and Advanced Education. In preparation for an internal review of the pilot project, surveys were prepared and distributed to the teachers, students, parents, and business participants.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS**

### **Partner satisfaction with Northern Alberta Development Council's contribution in advancing Northern interests**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Previous Result (2004-05)</b>	<b>Previous Result (2005-06)</b>	<b>Result (2006-07)</b>	<b>Target (2006-07)</b>
3.a Partner satisfaction with NADC's contribution in advancing northern interests.	8.2	8.2	7.7	8.0

Source: 2006/2007 Clients and Partners Survey, AAND

The Northern Alberta Development Council annually commissions an independent party to conduct a client and partner satisfaction survey. The results of the survey are intended to help the council evaluate its progress in meeting its goals and to rate the satisfaction of the people who are involved in its activities. The following question in the survey was used for the performance measure:

“Overall and on a scale of 1 through 10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, how would you rate your satisfaction of the Northern Alberta Development Council’s contribution to advancing northern interests?”

The average rating for this question was 7.7 out of 10.

### **Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary recipients' return service rate**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Previous Result (2004-05)</b>	<b>Previous Result (2005-06)</b>	<b>Result (2006-07)</b>	<b>Target (2006-07)</b>
3.b Bursary return rate.	78%	80%	81%	76%

Source: NADC bursaries database

The NADC follows-up with each NADC Bursary recipient to confirm fulfillment of the return service obligation. The return rate of service is based on the percentage of students who have completed their studies in the three calendar years preceding and whose status is either Working North or Obligation Fulfilled. Students in default of return service are required to repay the bursary. The weighted average bursary return rate for the three calendar years ending in 2006 was 81%.

### **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

The future of Northern Alberta will be dynamic. Rapid industry expansion is leading to soaring housing costs in all northern communities, severe labor shortages and potential closures of SME due to loss of labor. The year 2007-2008 will see NADC working toward identifying challenges to economic growth, pressures on social infrastructure such as affordable housing, rural health shortages, and social program gaps.

Transportation remains a vital opportunity to ensure the success and expansion of value-added processing and manufacturing in Northern Alberta. Access to rail containers and the ability to reach western ports in a timely manner will remain a focus for NADC. Air access to the Edmonton Municipal Airport, and creating East/west linkages will also remain a priority.

The NADC Bursary program continues to be very successful despite the labor shortages in Alberta. In order to counter labor pressures that are encouraging potential students to seek employment, NADC will continue to seek additional funds to increase bursary amounts and the number of bursaries awarded.

The Northern Links program will start to explore pilot projects to create more concrete measurements to show student retention and completion of high school.

Finally, the NADC will continue to partner with other governments; federal, provincial and municipal to ensure the advancement of the north.