



Northern Alberta Development Council

Annual Report
2009 - 2010

Message from the Chair



I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 2009-2010 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 experienced an exciting year both project wise and administratively. While we were faced with budget cuts and staffing shortages, the NADC team still performed with great results. In April of 2009 we hosted our Challenge North Conference, *Transitions for a Dynamic Region*, in Cold Lake Alberta. The conference saw more than 230 delegates and featured guest speakers from industry, government and the research sector.

Challenge North was privileged to have Premier Ed Stelmach speak to the conference delegates. This was followed by a question and answer session with more than 20 Ministers and MLAs. The conference provided an excellent networking opportunity for delegates.

Engaging and communicating with northerners through conferences, seminars, Regional Stakeholders Forums, the *NADC Communiqué*, and our website remained fundamental to our work. 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 continued to be involved with in the past year.

This past year the NADC team researched and prepared a number of documents and reports on a variety of topics. In working with Branding the Peace and the Alberta Research Council, we initiated a nutritional analysis of northern grown alfalfa. We also produced the 2009 Economic Contribution Study and the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Scan.

NADC, its council members and its northern team have travelled throughout the region to listen to concerns and opportunities. We met with municipal leaders through the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders meetings, met with post-secondary through the Northern Labour Market Clearinghouse and with industry, community organizations and other levels of governments through a variety of opportunities. We listened and we have started establishing our workplan for the coming year.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Robin Campbell, Chair
MLA West Yellowhead

NADC at a glance

NADC

- Chair, Robin Campbell, MLA West Yellowhead
- 9 Council members
 - Brian Allen, Grimshaw
 - Sharon Anderson, Gift Lake
 - Iris Callioux, Peace River
 - Andre Harpe, Valhalla Centre
 - David Kirschner, Fort McMurray
 - Andy Neigel, Athabasca
 - Pat O'Neill, St. Paul
 - Michael Ouellette, Grande Prairie
 - Williard Strebchuk, Whitecourt
- 12 staff members
- 3 offices: Peace River, Lac La Biche, Edmonton
- Many partner organizations

Workshops, meetings and events

- Challenge North 2009 – Lead the Way
- Regional Stakeholder meetings
- Growing the North: A Community Economic Development Conference
- Affordable Housing workshop
- Physician Recruitment and Retention Workshop
- Alternative Energy Trade Fair
- Boreal bird tourism meetings
- Thrive! Canada Positive Youth Development Train-the-Trainer Sessions

Participation/support for organizations

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

Inter-jurisdictional work

- 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

- 87% NADC Bursary return service rate
- 81 NADC Bursaries
- 9 Medical Student Bursaries
- 5 Pharmacy Student Bursaries
- 56 Partnership Bursaries
- 543 Northern Student Supplements
- 13 Northern Health Care Practicum

Reports

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

- Challenge North 2009 Conference Proceedings
- Municipal Infrastructure Required Investment Scan
- Analysis of the Economic Contribution of the Northern Alberta Development Council region to Alberta and Canada

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a regional development council with a focus on advancing the development of the northern economy.

The mission of the NADC is to identify and implement measures that will advance northern development, as well as advise government on opportunities and issues.

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Northern Alberta Development Council Annual Report 2009-2010

OVERVIEW

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a council of and for northerners. In 2009-2010, 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. Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead, is Chair. In 2009-2010 the public members were:

Brian Allen, Grimshaw
Sharon Anderson, Gift Lake
Iris Callioux, Peace River
Andre Harpe, Valhalla Centre
David Kirschner, Fort McMurray
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 the ministry's Core Business focussed on Enterprise and its supporting goal: *Alberta has a competitive and productive economy.*

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.

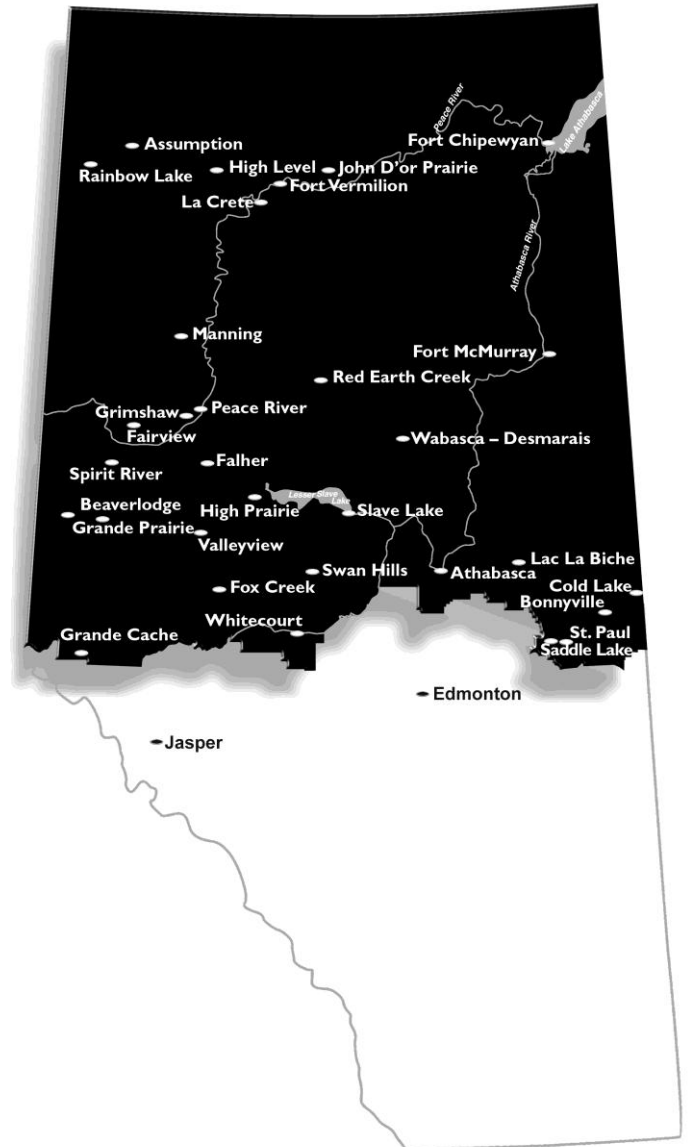
THE NADC REGION

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 downturn in the global economy over the past year has had a slowing effect on the northern economy and impacted northern employment over of the fiscal year. The following are indicators of a recovery.

- The forest industry increased moderately during the first quarter of 2010, as compared to the first quarter of 2009. This is a positive sign after the slump in demand over the previous year, although some mills remain idle or have reduced output waiting for demand to increase further.
- The percentage of Alberta's natural gas that is produced in the north has fluctuated between 35% and 36% over the past two years. An estimated 7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas was produced in the north in 2009-2010.
- Oil production in the NADC region for the year ending in April 2010 was over 291 million barrels of oil or 72% of the Alberta total. This is an increase of 68% over last year.
- Production of bitumen from northern Alberta's mined oilsands increased from 263 million barrels in 2008 to 321 million barrels in 2009. Production from the north's oilsands will increase as more plants are brought into production.
- From April 2009 to April 2010 northern Alberta was the only region in the Province to record positive growth of major construction projects valued at \$5 million or greater. In the Northeast (Wood Buffalo–Cold Lake) major construction projects increased +7.9% while the northwest (Athabasca–Grande Prairie–Peace River) led the province with a +40.2% increase.
- The northeast region (Wood Buffalo–Cold Lake) experienced a 2.1% drop in its unemployment rate (April 2010 rate: 4.7%),



making it the lowest of all the regions in Alberta. The northwest (Athabasca–Grande Prairie–Peace River) recorded a 0.2% drop in its unemployment rate (April 2010 rate: 7.8%). During the same period (April 2009 - April 2010) both the northeast (+7.1%) and northwest (+2.1%) experienced an increase in its respective labour forces.

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. PARTNERSHIPS

Inter-jurisdictional Initiatives

Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development

The Northwest Territories – Alberta Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development (MOU) provides a forum for the two jurisdictions to discuss topics of mutual interest and to share information. The NADC coordinates meetings on Alberta's behalf. MOU meetings are scheduled approximately twice per year, with each jurisdiction taking turns to host. The last meeting was in Edmonton in October 2009. Some of the main issues discussed by the Ministers included: current financial climate, hydro projects and Alberta's Land Use Framework. The next meeting will be hosted by the Northwest Territories.

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, and supporting the development of an east-west transportation corridor. In 2009-2010, the NADC continued financial and advisory support and participated in regular meetings.



www.nwcorridor.com

"The Northwest Corridor Development Corporation has been able to draw on the expertise of the NADC in advocating for transportation networks in northern communities in BC and Alberta. This has been a successful working relationship."

Carolyn Kolebaba, Chair, NCDC

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. Its objective is to advance the diverse and common interests of Northerners while raising awareness about the accomplishments, contributions and potential of the North.

The 2009 Forum was postponed to 2010. Reports are being prepared on three new priority projects: Changing Northern Economies; Northern Infrastructure; and Climate Change: Boreal Forest Management. 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 2010 Forum.

www.focusnorth.ca

Cross Ministry Activities

The NADC provides input into cross ministry activities such as the Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plan (CRISP) being developed by the Alberta Treasury Board. The NADC routinely coordinates its activities with other ministries, to ensure effective collaboration for its projects.

Opportunities and Initiatives

Growing the North: A Community Economic Development Conference

On January 20 and 21, 2010, the NADC, Farm Credit Canada, Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce and County of Grande Prairie partnered to host Growing the North: A Community Economic Development Conference. The conference brought together municipal and business leaders from across the north. Over 350 delegates attended the two day conference.



Delegates heard high profile speakers and expert panels discuss economic development and its application in northern Alberta's unique setting. Among the most popular speakers were former Federal Minister David Emerson, author Dan Gardner and Venture Communications' president Arlene Dickinson, also of CBC's Dragon's Den.

Based on evaluations of the event, delegates ranked their overall satisfaction with the conference at over 80%. The event was considered a huge success by the Grande Prairie region and all organizations involved. The NADC is poised to partner once again in 2011 with the County and City of Grande Prairie to help host a similar event.

"The NADC has always been a strong partner and advocate in identifying northern issues and opportunities. Their work in research, northern advocacy or partnering with others has helped find solutions and opened opportunities to bring success to the north. The County of Grande Prairie has benefitted from the NADC, whether it be on transportation issues, hosting regional conferences, developing tourism opportunities or any other issue pertaining to northern needs."

*Walter Paszkowski, Economic Development Officer,
County of Grande Prairie*

Analysis of the Economic Contribution of the Northern Alberta Development Council region to Alberta and Canada

This report updates a previous study about the NADC region's economic contributions. The report demonstrates northern Alberta's continued importance to the economies of the Province of Alberta and Canada. Read the highlights of the report in the text box on this page.

Electric Power report

In follow-up to input at the Challenge North 2009 Conference and a survey of northern business leaders, the NADC prepared a draft report examining electric power generation and transmission. The report will be completed in the upcoming year.

Highlights from...

Analysis of the Economic Contribution of the Northern Alberta Development Council region to Alberta and Canada

Population

- From 2000 to 2008, the NADC region's population grew 27% while Alberta's population grew 19%. The NADC region is home to 9% of Alberta's population.

Exports

- In 2007, the NADC region exported \$31 billion of goods and services to foreign countries. This was 35% of Alberta's international exports.
- In 2005, the NADC region exported \$7 billion of goods and services to other provinces (15% of Alberta's interprovincial exports).

Investments

- \$31 billion (32% of Alberta's total public and private investment) was invested in the NADC region in 2008 compared to \$11 billion (27%) in 2002.
- \$74 billion was invested in the NADC region just for the construction of oilsands plants and a total of \$42 billion was spent on operations of oil sands plants, in the period from 1997 to 2007.

Materials and Supplies

- Manufacturing firms in the NADC region spend \$1.5 to \$2.0 billion a year on materials and supplies for their production.
- In the period from 1997 to 2007, oilsands development and operations created a total demand of \$48 billion in Alberta, \$7 billion in the rest of Canada and \$18 billion in foreign countries for goods, services and labour in the NADC region.
- In the period from 1997 to 2007, \$42 billion was spent on the operations of oilsands plants in the NADC region and created a total demand of \$34 billion in Alberta, \$2 billion in other provinces and \$6 billion in foreign countries.

Government revenues

- In 2007, municipal governments in the NADC region received total revenue of \$1.2 billion. This was 14% of the total revenue of all municipal governments in Alberta.
- In the 2007-08 fiscal year, the NADC region contributed \$8 billion to the revenue of the Government of Alberta. This was 24% of the total amount of revenue of the Government of Alberta.
- In 2006, the NADC region contributed \$4 billion to the revenue of the Government of Canada. This was 12% of Alberta revenue received by the Government of Canada.

Transportation

The NADC is pleased to see work continuing on the feasibility of implementing the *Northern Highways Strategy*, particularly the Red Earth Creek to Fort McMurray east-west link. The NADC attended the Stantec Open House in Red Earth Creek during which detailed plans of the proposed link were available. The Stantec report is scheduled to be released late 2010 to the public. The *Northern Highways Strategy – Building Tomorrow Today* is on the NADC website. The NADC also provided information to the Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta about the aviation needs of northern residents.

Intermodal Rail Container Depot – Grande Prairie Site

The NADC provided planning and some financial support to the County of Grande Prairie container facility. A container facility in northwestern Alberta will allow for reduced costs to local entrepreneurs and increased access to foreign markets. This facility will also help build stronger ties with Canadian National (CN) in our communities and build infrastructure for future economic growth in the north. CN has committed its support for the facility.

There is a parcel of land dedicated to the project. The group is reviewing submissions to develop site plans and the NADC is currently surveying potential facility users. The NADC has worked with the County to retain a consultant to proceed with grant applications for the development of the site. Pending approval of funding, construction could take place in the upcoming year.

Non-Timber Forest Products

The NADC staff examined the viability of the non-timber forest product industry within the NADC region. Non-timber forest products are all biological forest resources and services, excluding conventional wood products such as timber, and pulp. In other western provinces, non-timber forest products provide revenues of up to one million dollars annually, which is distributed among vast, typically northern, populations. However several issues plague the industry, such as lack of regulations, concerns about sustainability and the effect on ecosystems. Other issues included the cost of transportation and the decline in demand for specialty products due to the global recession. It

was concluded that the industry seems an unlikely candidate for community economic development opportunities at this time.

Thrive! Canada Positive Youth Development Train-the-Trainer Sessions

The NADC partnered with Thrive! Canada



to host several positive youth development train-the-trainer workshops across the north. The two-day sessions were held from May 2009 to April 2010 in Grande Prairie, Slave Lake, Cold Lake, Lac La Biche and Fort McMurray. In Slave Lake the NADC co-sponsored the training with the RCMP and in Fort McMurray with Conoco Phillips. Thrive! Canada is dedicated to fostering positive youth development in all aspects of young people's lives. Workshop participants work closely with local youth and with local youth coalitions and initiatives, which in many cases includes "at risk" youth. Over 175 northern Albertans have completed the training.

www.thrivecanada.ca

Northern Municipal Infrastructure Required Investment Scan

The *Municipal Infrastructure Required Investment Scan* was undertaken to collect information on the current and future municipal infrastructure needs across northern Alberta. This report provides an overview of current and future challenges to municipal infrastructure needs and then looks at the future estimated costs for infrastructure over the next 20 years as reported by northern municipalities. The report was provided to the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders in September 2009.

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. In the 2009-2010 year, the group, with the Alberta Research Council as a partner, began a chemical analysis of Peace Country grown alfalfa. The NADC contributed funding and support to the organization.

www.canadapeacecountry.com

Deh Cho Travel Connection

The Deh Cho Travel Connection markets northern Alberta, British Columbia and

Northwest Territories as a place to discover a drivable northern vacation experience. The NADC is the Alberta lead for the inter-jurisdictional group that markets the route. This group includes organizations and visitor information centres from the three jurisdictions. A key activity is the “*Diamonds in the Rough*” passport contest which ran once again throughout the summer 2009.



The Deh Cho Travel Connection’s marketing coalition and annual general meeting took place October 6-7, 2009. The group worked on marketing initiatives and reviewed the increase in tourism around the route during the summer of 2009, with a 60% increase in distributed passports. It also updated its website www.dehchotravel.ca for launching prior to the 2010 season. The website is part of the group’s continuing efforts to actively promote tourism visitations to “*Natural Wonders of Canada’s North*”.

www.dehchotravel.ca

Travel Alberta North

The NADC is a voting director on the Travel Alberta North Board. This Tourism Destination Region (TDR) works with Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and tourism operators to promote the 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 DMOs. Eighty four different projects were funded, with a 97% success rate. This year there was an increased focus on destination awareness of northern Alberta by increasing media familiarization tours.



www1.travelalberta.com/en-north

The Boreal Bird Network

In collaboration with Travel Alberta In-Province, the NADC organized meetings with local District Marketing Organizations and area birding societies to finalize plans for a brochure introducing a Boreal Bird Network. Meetings in Slave Lake and McLennan in April 2009

followed the March 2009 meeting in Lac La Biche. Travel Alberta In-Province provided the seed funding to design and print the brochure. It was distributed to the marketing organizations and operators across the region.

Community/Industry Associations

The NADC is a member of the Peace Synergy Association, the Lac La Biche Region Industry Consultation Committee and the Lakeland Industry and Community Association. The NADC participated in Peace Synergy Association’s finance committee to develop financial models for the organization and offered recommendations on organizational structure.

Housing

As follow up to past research about affordable housing and a series of community consultations, the NADC held an affordable housing workshop in Westlock in September 2009. There were 46 participants including municipal and aboriginal community leaders, housing developers, housing organizations and local economic developers. The NADC also compiled contacts of housing organizations and their area of responsibility and shared this with housing stakeholders.

Health Care

The NADC assisted the Rural Physician Action Plan (RPAP) and Alberta Culture and Community Spirit to host a second “Provincial Physician Recruitment and Retention Workshop.” Close to 60 participants from rural communities across Alberta learned about recruitment and retention from a cross-generational and multi-cultural perspective. They heard from a panel of medical students and also shared their community recruitment materials. Communities such as Cold Lake, Bonnyville, St. Paul, La Crete, Manning and Grimshaw participated in the workshop and have since successfully recruited physicians.

“RPAP truly appreciates the fantastic support received from NADC to make the annual recruitment and retention workshops a success.”
David Kay, Executive Director, Rural Physician Action Plan

The NADC continued to collaborate with the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce, Peace Regional Economic

Development Alliance and Grande Prairie Regional College to pursue increased rural medical education. The group has supported distributed education plans developed by the University of Alberta. In addition, the NADC provides input to the Alberta Rural Integrated Community Clerkship Stakeholder's Committee, which provides advice to Alberta's medical schools about extended rural clerkships.

Stories of success - keeping children out of care

The NADC supported a research project of Blue Quills First Nations College to collect stories about practices that keep children from coming into care in First Nations Communities. The project also collected stories from children who were in care about what worked well to support them. The stories touched on many themes, including the importance of kinship community, and continuity. The findings were presented at a gathering of child welfare workers and policy makers in March 2010 at Blue Quills First Nations College.

Alternative Energy Trade Fair

The Peace Regional Recycling Society, with help from Northern Lakes College and the NADC, organized a second workshop and trade fair in Peace River in November 2009. The event brought in over 200 regional residents to learn about alternative energy options such as solar, wind, and geothermal.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

The NADC is a partner with Alberta and Employment and Immigration and others piloting the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities project, which aims to enhance the settlement of newcomers and to celebrate community diversity. The project partners held a Canada Celebration with a multi-cultural breakfast, newcomers' orientation session and international potluck. The group is working on a newcomer's booklet that provides easy to understand information on services available and where to find them.



Research and information

The NADC responds to enquiries on a wide range of topics from entities such as small businesses, municipalities and other

organizations. This year the NADC provided information about the following:

- funding opportunities for the Alberta Summer Games organizers
- economic and demographic data to the Alberta-North Post-secondary Institutions Society for use in their business plan
- industry activity and production information for the Municipal District 23
- demographic data to help Alberta Health Services differentiate between geographical areas in Northern Alberta in their evaluation of various employment initiatives
- Alberta's Pharmaceutical Strategy and the price schedule of generic drugs in Alberta
- information to Covenant Health to identify any unmet needs in seniors housing in northern Alberta
- in response to enquiries about certification of professionals coming from outside Alberta and Canada, the NADC identified Alberta Immigration and Industry's work to facilitate the recognition of qualifications.

"As one of the many growing communities in northern Alberta, the City of Cold Lake appreciates any opportunity to work with the NADC. Partnering in 2009 to host 'Challenge North' was a great demonstration our working relationship and the success we can achieve together. We look forward to continuing this valuable partnership in the future."

Craig Copeland, Mayor, City of Cold Lake

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



A highlight for the NADC this year was the “Challenge North 2009 - Lead the Way”

conference, which took place in Cold Lake April 22-24, 2009. Over 230 participants came to hear the excellent speakers, to share and to network. The NADC was privileged to welcome Premier Ed Stelmach to the conference. The Premier spoke about Alberta’s plan to emerge from the economic downturn, the challenges and opportunities facing the province and northern Alberta’s important role in this.



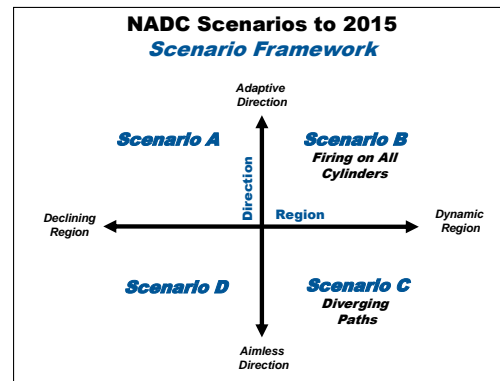
A summary of the discussions and of the speakers presentation are included in the *Challenge North 2009 Conference Proceedings*, available on the NADC website.

Keynote presentations focussed on the volatile economic situation, the merging of the many factors which are changing the north and the challenges facing northern communities during times of economic growth or decline.

Three streams of concurrent sessions allowed more in depth discussions about: Governance; Community and Culture; and Economy and Environment. The sessions covered six themes:

- Re-tooling Communities for the 21st Century
- Sustainability Planning
- Planning for Populations
- Exploring Opportunities for Northern and Rural Community Sustainability through Education, Health, and Community Development Policy
- Perspectives on Policy
- Impacts of Climate Change on Energy and Environment.

Delegates joined in working group discussions based on two scenarios: “Firing on All Cylinders”, and “Diverging Paths.” This was the first time the NADC used a scenario process during a Challenge North Conference. The focal



question of the scenarios was: “Looking ahead to 2015, how can Northerners build a strong northern economy, protect the northern environment and provide northerners with a high quality of life?”

Delegate responses to the scenarios touched on the following topics:

- support for municipal networking, leadership, knowledge, collaboration and communication
- municipal funding formulas
- multi-sector interdisciplinary networking participation and action
- economic development
- transportation and Infrastructure
- energy
- housing
- health

A panel of Ministers and MLAs joined delegates for a question & answer session. Four delegates then shared their observations on the conference proceedings and personal ideas on how northern Alberta can be a leader in the province, especially through the economic downturn.

The NADC integrated various priorities into its business plan, such as a study of municipal infrastructure needs electrical energy generation and support for the Growing the North conference. The NADC hopes that delegates will have identified ways in which they can work on solutions to the issues they identified.

Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

The NADC provides administrative services to the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL). This is a useful venue for elected leaders to share information. This group also provides valuable feedback to the NADC on opportunities and issues in the region. NAEL met four times this year, in Manning, Grimshaw, High Level and Grande Prairie. Some key discussion topics include:

- health care, including the impact of Phase 2 of the proposed Alberta Pharmaceutical Strategy on small rural pharmacies
- rail transportation and development of an intermodal facility in Grande Prairie
- difficulties in attracting accredited planners to northern communities.

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.

The majority of the forums in 2009-2010 focussed on health care issues. In September in Wabasca, Council heard about the many innovative solutions that the Municipal District of Opportunity has developed particularly related to doctor shortages. The NADC met with Edmonton City Council in December and discussed importance of the City Centre Airport to the north. Dr. Stephen Duckett also met with Council to discuss future direction for Alberta health care. In February Council visited the communities of McLennan and La Crete. La Crete's main focus was the shortage of doctors. In McLennan the Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance presented on their pennycress bio-fuel project.

Annual Meeting with Northern MLAs

The NADC met for its annual meeting with northern Members of the Legislative Assembly in April 2009 in Edmonton. Northern Ministers, MLAs and the NADC were able to share concerns, successes and opportunities in the region and their respective constituencies. A variety of topics were discussed including the work of the Seniors Advisory Council, the global economic crisis and its effect on Alberta, and the need for specialty health care services in the

north. Various transportation topics were highlighted: Highway 88, the importance of both the East-West connector and the Edmonton City Centre Airport to northern Alberta. The May 2009 *NADC Communiqué*, which summarizes the meeting, was sent to stakeholders.

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 May and September of 2009, and March 2010. 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 2009-2010 the NADC website received 82,260 hits, similar to previous years.

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 2009-2010 the Opportunity North website received 57,522 hits, a 7% increase from 2008-2009.

BeNorth Branding and Website



The NADC bursary programs are marketed through its 'BeNorth' brand and supporting www.benorth.ca website. The website received 37,890 hits; this was over 210% more than last year. A new on-line application process was added to the website in January 2010, with student applications being submitted within days of its launch.

3. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

NADC Bursary Programs

81	NADC Bursaries
9	Medical Students
5	Pharmacy Students
56	Bursary Partnerships Program

In collaboration with the Alberta Scholarship Programs office of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, the NADC offered over 150 return service bursaries to Alberta students this year. Recipients of these bursaries live and work in northern Alberta after their studies.

The **NADC Bursary** focuses on students training in a variety of professions in high demand. In 2009-2010, 81 Alberta students received NADC Bursaries, 80 receiving \$6,000 and one who received \$3,000.



Eight students received \$12,000 **Medical Bursaries**; one student received a \$5,000 Medical Bursary and \$5,000 in matching funding.

Five students received a \$6,000 **Pharmacy Bursary**; one of these received a matching bursary from a sponsor.

There were no **Nurse Practitioner** Bursary recipients in 2009-2010.

Through **Bursary Partnerships**, businesses and community organizations sponsor return service bursaries with the NADC. In 2009-2010 52 bursaries were awarded, with a total value of \$125,936. This is a decrease from last year, largely due to the loss of matching bursaries through Alberta Health Services. Previously northern health regions were sponsors in the Bursary Partnership Program.

NADC Bursary Return Service Rate

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.

NADC Bursary recipients' return service rate continues to be very high at 87%. This reflects the high demand for skilled labour the last few years, and does not seem to have been affected by the economic downturn.

Bursary return service rate

2005-06	80%
2006-07	81%
2007-08	78%
2008-09	88%
2009-10	87%

Source: NADC bursaries database

Northern Student Supplement

543 Northern Student Supplement

The Northern Student Supplement was started in the 2000-2001 school year and, with changes in provincial students finance programs, ended with the 2009-2010 year. The Northern Student Supplement was intended to encourage first- and second-year students from Northern Alberta to pursue a post-secondary education and reduces their level of student debt. There was no return service requirement attached to these funds.

In 2008-2009, 543 students from Northern Alberta received the Northern Student Supplement, an increase of 99 students over last year's 444. Average funding per student was \$1,291, for a total of \$ 701,000.

Northern Health Care Practicum Funding

13 Northern Health Care Practicum

The Health Care Practicum Funding Program is offered jointly by the Northern Zone of Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the NADC. In 2009, Alberta Health Services – Learning Partnerships replaced the former northern health regions as

partner. Within the boundaries of the NADC, there are designated locations and practicum positions that can be funded. This year almost \$30,000 funded thirteen student placements in the north.

Northern Student Teacher Bursary

56 Northern Student Teacher Bursaries

Alberta Education approached the NADC to work together to offer a new Northern Student Teacher Bursary as part of their workforce strategy. Teacher attraction and retention in northern, rural and remote Alberta locations is a significant workforce challenge and population projections show the demand will grow.

This initiative provides bursaries of \$8,000 to teacher education program students in the last two years of their studies. Upon graduation, the student will be obligated to provide return service for an agreed length of time in participating northern Alberta school jurisdictions.



The NADC worked with Alberta Scholarship Programs and Alberta Education to develop and launch the program. Superintendents of northern jurisdictions participated in determining eligibility criteria and selection processes. There were 147 applications and 56 bursaries awarded to students. Resumes of successful applicants are made available to participating school divisions.

2010 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 updated for distribution 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 website with hyperlinks to post-secondary and funding sites.

Northern LINKS

The Northern Links program concluded this year with all remaining projects finalized in October 2009. A small number of projects were funded

during this time, focussing on student liaisons and mentors and funding to support participation in skills competitions. The NADC considered alternate programs, such as a regional hairdresser school, and has refocused its support this year to THRIVE workshops.

Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse is a joint initiative of the NADC and three northern post-secondary institutions: Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College and Northern Lakes College. 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 the Clearinghouse focussed on two topics: student recruitment and professional development for college staff. The study on student recruitment investigated the recruitment of target student groups and possible partnerships with industry. The final analysis included best practices and gave recommendations for colleges and other stakeholders.

The Clearinghouse investigation of staff professional development recommended ways to improve and enhance the planning, administration and operation of professional development programs and activities. Suggestions were also provided on how to encourage, facilitate and advance the use of learning technologies at the northern colleges.

“Northern post-secondary institutions appreciate the NADC’s considerable support to enhance post-secondary opportunities in the north. Examples are the highly valued student bursary, the longstanding research service provided through the Northern Labour Market Clearinghouse, and regional opportunities for dialog on current issues and trends.”

Rick Neidig, President & CEO, Northern Lakes College

Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)

The NADC supports Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF) in the development and delivery of woodlands operation training to increase productivity and make an already competitive industry more competitive. WOLF is an industry lead not-for-profit training initiative that helps make Alberta's forestry industry one of the most environmentally sound and productive in the world. WOLF implemented the e-courses developed last year with support from the NADC. The NADC provided marketing and organizational advice.

www.w-o-l-f.ca

NADC support has enabled the development of online and face to face training opportunities for many WOLF students. This has improved personal opportunities in a variety of environmental and business skill sets in Alberta's rural northern communities.

Dave Blackmore, Executive Director, WOLF

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 is nearing completion this year. The NADC provided funding to assist in a qualitative evaluation of this program. One of the evaluations findings was that student transformations had ripple effects in the Aboriginal home communities of students and inspired many. The Planning Circle continued its efforts to promote an MSW in Northwest Alberta.

Youth Apprenticeship Program

The NADC continues to provide financial and technical support to the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP). This six-year pilot project 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. In 2009-2010, 148 students in Grades 7 through 11 took part in YAP.

Aboriginal Student Job Shadow Program

The Aboriginal Student Job Shadow Program places First Nations and Métis students between 15-17 years old into job shadowing positions. Students will shadow in a career of interest to them with a corporate mentor. The ultimate goal is for the youth to develop relationships within industry, gain exposure to employment/career prospects and to keep them motivated to finish high school. The NADC and five area sponsors are contributing to the project.

Youth Entrepreneurship

Since its launch last year, the Ventures program has expanded from the Grande Prairie region to other areas of the north. The program works with community futures to offer business training and entrepreneurial skills to youth. It was developed with the intent of keeping youth in school. The initial success of this program is encouraging and results will be assessed in the spring of 2011 to determine whether this pilot program should be extended. Planning and development of this project began in the fall of 2009, will continue over the spring and summer of 2010 and be completed in the fall of 2010.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The NADC has many exciting new initiatives lined up for the 2010-2011 year. We will be completing a study of alternative delivery methods for primary education for rural and remote schools as well as successful practices for small rural schools. We will also examine bio-fuel options, and with the Alberta Research Council complete the last stage of an investigation into the nutritional value of Peace Country flax.

The NADC will examine volunteerism in the region. The Alberta Summer Games that are taking place in the region will provide a ready example and case study. We will also look into municipal emergency services in the region and examine fire protection concerns and recruitment and retention of staff.

In follow up to the very successful *Growing the North: A Community Economic Development Conference*, the NADC will be distributing an Economic Development Toolkit. In light of the tremendous success of the past conference we will work with Grande Prairie region stakeholders to host a second conference.

On a related topic, we will be partnering with Northern Lakes College to develop a business retention, attraction and expansion survey for use by communities across the north.

Transportation remains a key focus for the NADC. We will be working with the Northwest Corridor Development Corridor and communities in the region to see how they can best access the corridor to the benefit of local economies. As well, we will continue to work on an inland multimodal rail site in the Grande Prairie region and provide continued support to the Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta.

NADC's bursary programs will continue to be offered and evolve to benefit students in need and help recruit professional to the region. We will once again work with Alberta Education to assist in teacher recruitment.

The NADC plans to take a different approach to our regional stakeholder meetings this year through smaller, more localized and frequent meetings. We will also be meeting regularly in Edmonton to enable our council to meet with ministers, organizations and industries that impact the north. As well, we are updating our communications and marketing materials both for the NADC and Opportunity North. Stay tuned for updates on these.

2010–2011 promises to be busy and productive year.



Government of Alberta ■

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