

# Northern Alberta Development Council

ANNUAL REPORT  
2016-17





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## Message from the Chair

As Chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC), it is my pleasure to present the 2016-2017 Annual Report on behalf of Council. This report highlights our activities and accomplishments between April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2017.

On April 1, 2016, the NADC started reporting under the newly formed Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. The economic profile of the new ministry demonstrated strong links to the work of Council, and a home in the Economic Development division of the ministry provided a direct link to Council's work to enhance and diversify Alberta's economy. The Council continues to work with other Government of Alberta ministries in fulfilling its mandate and as a trusted advisor to the government.

The 2016/17 year was an exciting one for Council with numerous activities across the NADC region. In June 2016, NADC hosted the Northern Health Summit in partnership with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services in Peace River. The Northern Health Summit was a deliverable from the 2014 Northern Leaders' Summit in Athabasca where health care was identified among the top priorities for northern communities. Following the Summit, the NADC prepared and released the Northern Health Summit Proceedings Report, summarizing key discussions and feedback.

The 2016/17 fiscal year was wrapped up with Opportunity Seminars across the north in March 2017. A seminar on Industrial Hemp and Flax: A Growing Northern Alberta Opportunity was held in St. Paul, while seminars on Energizing the North: Alternative and Renewable Energy were held in Athabasca and Peace River.

The Council remains dedicated to building a stronger north and advancing northern priorities through engagement with northern stakeholders, elected officials, municipalities, communities, industries and other jurisdictions. Communicating and engaging with northern stakeholders through collaboration on projects, conferences, seminars and forums is fundamental to the work of Council and this is evidenced by the accomplishments shared in this report. Transportation and infrastructure, resource management, developing a skilled workforce and local and regional engagement continue to be key issues that Council focuses on.

The Council appreciates the commitment and efforts of our staff and diverse partners. We look forward to welcoming new Council members in the coming fiscal year to join us in showcasing the north and advocating for northern priorities.

Debbie Jabbour, MLA for Peace River  
Chair

# Overview of the Northern Alberta Development Council

## Overview

The Northern Alberta Development Council is a provincial government agency that investigates northern Alberta's social and economic development priorities, programs, and services as required by northern residents and provides advice and recommendations to the Government of Alberta.

The Council is a vital part of the ongoing work of growing healthy northern communities and supporting a robust economy. Established under the Northern Alberta Development Council Act (S.A. 1963, c.41), the Council is an advisory agency accountable to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The Council regularly engages with northern stakeholders, including northern MLAs, and continues to serve as key community contacts, bringing local perspective and the northern lens to discussions on the trends and issues with the greatest impact on the north.

## Mandate

The mandate of the Council, 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 Council may investigate the requirements of the people living in northern Alberta and make recommendations related to:

- social and economic development;
- development of communities and service delivery; and
- development of government services and programs.

## Governance

The Northern Alberta Development Council champions the cause of Alberta's northern economy and communities by exploring opportunities for growth and working on strategic priorities. It currently reports to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

The Council is made up of no less than eight and no more than 10 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, one of whom must be designated as Chair.

Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities.

## Chair

Name	Constituency	Appointment Date	Expiration Date
Debbie Jabbour, MLA	Peace River	September 28, 2016	September 13, 2017

## Council

Name	Region	Appointment Date	Expiration Date
Brian Allen (Vice Chair from June 2016)	Grimshaw	May 7, 2008	March 31, 2017
Williard Strebchuk (Vice Chair until May 2016)	Whitecourt	April 26, 2006	May 14, 2016
Andre Harpe	Grande Prairie	April 16, 2009	May 14, 2016
Ken Noskey	High Prairie	March 8, 2012	March 31, 2018
Pat O'Neill	St. Paul	May 7, 2008	March 31, 2017
Eva Urlacher	Cold Lake	April 15, 2010	May 14, 2017
Jason Schulz	Fort McMurray	May 7, 2014	March 31, 2017
Brad Sakowich	Athabasca	May 7, 2014	March 31, 2017
Peter Braun	La Crete	May 7, 2014	March 31, 2017



# Vision, Mission and Key Strategies

## Vision

A stronger Alberta through a stronger north.

## Mission

The NADC's mission is to identify and implement sustainable measures that will advance northern development and advise government on opportunities and issues for the benefit of Albertans.

## Key Strategies

In keeping with the NADC's legislated mandate, the following lines of business are actively pursued:

- Advising government on issues affecting northern Alberta.
- Outreach and community engagement.
- Supporting initiatives to increase northern skill levels.

## NADC Office Locations

Office locations are in Peace River, Bonnyville, Fort McMurray and Edmonton.



**60%**

Natural region is largely Boreal Forest



**9.1%**

of Alberta's population in 2015

At least **88** languages  
Over **100** ethnic groups



**8** Métis Settlements

**32** First Nations

**3** Treaty areas (6, 8, and 10)



**19** Municipal Districts

**23** Towns

**9** Villages

**11** Summer Villages

**101** Hamlets

**2** Cities (Cold Lake and Grande Prairie)

**2** Specialized Municipalities (Mackenzie County and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo)

**2** Improvement Districts (No. 24 - Wood Buffalo and No. 349)

*Data for this section is adapted from: Alberta Economic Dashboard, 2016; Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2016; Alberta Parks, 2014; Statistics Canada Census, 2011; and Statistics Canada GeoSuite, 2011.*



## Key Engagements & Milestones

 NADC began reporting to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade

 NADC was asked to share on “Northern Exposure: The Value of Northern Perspectives in Policy Development” at the Policy Matters conference. This was delivered by NADC Executive Director Janis Simpkins.

 NADC engaged with Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA) to discuss the significance of the Softwood Lumber agreement, and other possible forestry/ lumber ventures in Alberta.

 An Order in Council was passed appointing Ms. Debbie Jabbour, MLA for Peace River as NADC’s Chair.

2016-17  
NADC at a Glance



 In partnership with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, NADC hosted the Northern Health Summit in Peace River to discuss key health challenges and priorities in the north.

 The Council met with the Honourable Deron Bilous, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, to discuss current NADC projects, priorities, and engagement initiatives.



Council members held a roundtable meeting with eight northern MLAs discussing transportation, Caribou Action and Range Plan, economic development, health care, northern workforce recruitment and retention challenges, and communications.



The NADC hosted opportunity seminars across the north on “Industrial Hemp and Flax: A Growing Northern Alberta Opportunity” and “Energizing the North: Alternative and Renewable Energy.”

November

January

March

2017



With the appointment of Ms. Debbie Jabbour as Chair of the NADC, the Council engaged in a Strategic Planning Session resulting in seven identified priorities:

- Alignment of goals, clarity of roles and mandate.
- Budget increase to meet increasing demands.
- Expansion of bursaries by 10%/year over 5 years.
- Centre of Excellence.
- Development of the East West Transportation Corridor.
- Follow up on Summits.
- Marketing the North.



Council members held a roundtable meeting with four northern college presidents discussing trades and continuing education, the changing face of northern colleges and education, challenges faced by students, underfunded facility upgrades and renovations, and access to broadband.



Appointment terms of some Council members were coming to their term end date. Members met to close the loop on follow-up pieces from exiting members. Outgoing members collectively served 50 years with the NADC.



## NADC Goals and Key Strategies:

### Overarching Goal: Timely communication with government and northerners

To ensure the work of the Council is relevant and timely, the NADC has a diversified communications strategy and a variety of mediums through which they can engage with northern stakeholders, partners, and government departments and officials. Supporting this engagement, the NADC has communications protocols and channels through which key messages are shared internally with government and to stakeholders in the north and across the province. NADC staff work internally to build connections and synergies with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade's senior leadership and advance the business of the NADC through representation on cross-ministry collaboration. The Council works through the Chair and Minister responsible for the NADC to advance its work on an advocacy level throughout the region.

#### Key Strategies:

- Build the Council's knowledge and timely understanding of the gaps, issues, and potential related to industry and community development in northern Alberta to equip them to advocate for and inform government of emerging issues, trends, and northern priorities.
- Facilitate and collaborate on cross ministry initiatives to address critical issues and advance policy objectives.
- Support northern residents and communities in maintaining access to essential services, training and business development opportunities.
- Encourage dialogue between northern residents, small and medium enterprises, industry, municipalities, and Indigenous communities to further opportunities for growth and new business ventures.
- Partner with other jurisdictions to explore and advance coordinated approaches to development and the promotion of the north's potential.



## Goal One: Skilled, Educated, Local Workforce

To support the economy in northern Alberta, its labour force has to address the identified needs of northern communities and the requirements of industries operating within the region. The provision of specialized and localized training options and the inclusion of underrepresented groups is essential in ensuring that local residents participate fully in the region's growth, development and prosperity.

### Key Strategies:

- In partnership with Advanced Education, attract and retain skilled workers in the north.
- In partnership with Advanced Education, enhance support for training and workforce participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples in the north.
- Support northern student, employer and community training needs through labour market research, capacity building and responsive post-secondary programming delivered through the northern colleges.
- Align bursary program funding and programming to reflect the current education and employment trends in the region. Conduct research to support initiatives that advance future growth in the region.
- Increase retention potential of northern professionals through promotion of northern career opportunities and engagement of northern business and industry in the recruitment process for high demand/hard to recruit to careers.
- Partner to explore new training opportunities in the region to meet the needs of northern students who wish to remain in the north for their post-secondary education.

## Goal Two: Robust, Diversified Economy

This goal recognizes that continued economic growth is dependent on having the necessary transportation networks, access to markets and infrastructure to support this growth as well as looking at diversifying the economy based on the unique characteristics of the region. Additionally, the resilience of northern communities in the face of volatility in resource prices and limited alternatives to economic diversification remains a challenge.

### Key Strategies:

- Research and deliver expert information on key social and economic development opportunities in the northern region.
- Build and develop relationships with northern municipalities and Indigenous communities to ensure timely access to intelligence on municipal priorities and issues.
- Build on existing data to ensure the Council and northerners have access to appropriate regional data to advocate for required programs and initiatives through a medium that is user friendly and applicable to northern businesses, industry and municipalities.
- Advance rationale for funding requirements for northern priorities through comprehensive, sector specific economic data.
- Encourage the development of forestry and other renewable resources in northern Alberta.
- Investigate and develop viable services and infrastructure in the north to support small business and secondary industry diversification and expansion.
- Partner with northern Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) to identify and promote small business development, tourism, manufacturing and processing opportunities in the north.
- Support potential value-added agriculture and opportunities for northern producers.

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### Fort McMurray Wildfire: Impacts and Continuing Efforts

On May 3, 2016, the Horse River Wildfire moved towards the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), resulting in the evacuation of almost 88,000 people. The wildfire grew rapidly, reaching over 589,000 hectares by June 10. The communities of the RMWB lost 1,958 buildings and structures, containing 2,579 dwelling units. The Insurance Bureau of Canada has reported it as the costliest natural disaster in Canadian history, at an estimated \$3.6 billion in property damage.

Further estimates of the total impact, including reduced oil sands revenue, losses to public infrastructure, environmental impact, and physical and mental health aftereffect of residents and first responders reach almost \$8.9 billion.

## Goal Three: Strong, Vibrant Communities

Strong, vibrant communities are essential to a strong northern Alberta. This goal recognizes the need to identify and increase the awareness of the key health (both individual and community) and human services priorities of northern Albertans, and work collaboratively to resolve these issues.

### Key Strategies:

- Facilitate conversations between provincial and northern leadership to determine priorities, opportunities and strategies with respect to essential services in northern Alberta.
- Support and advocate for sustainable solutions to address northern water and wastewater management challenges.
- In partnership with northern municipalities, regional economic development and industry experts, advocate for transportation infrastructure required to build the north's connectivity and access to new markets.
- Research and share community best practices and approaches to address socio-economic challenges during fluctuating economic cycles.
- Support northern communities in assessing the gaps and potential impacts of socio-economic development with respect to new social infrastructure and services.
- Deliver a one-stop shop for northern leaders to engage directly with government Ministers to discuss key priorities for the north.

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While no lives were lost as a direct result of the wildfire, a tragic motor vehicle accident during evacuation claimed the lives of two young Fort McMurray residents.

One year after the fire, 645 development permits had been issued for rebuilds. Currently accepted population numbers estimate that approximately 75,600 – 77,600 permanent residents live in the RMWB, indicating a substantial drop post-fire. Full fire recovery is estimated to be completed by 2021.

The NADC commends the resiliency of the RMWB residents and continues to engage with regional stakeholders in support of the ongoing recovery process.



## Key Strategic Deliverables

All reports associated with the initiatives and studies discussed in this section can be found on our website at [www.nadc.ca/our-actions](http://www.nadc.ca/our-actions).

In fulfilling the Council's vision and mission to identify and implement sustainable measures that will advance northern development, several priority issue initiatives were undertaken during the past year.



### Infrastructure

#### **Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project**

The NADC partnered in an important initiative, the Northern Alberta Broadband Preparedness Project with Economic Development and Trade (Entrepreneurship and Regional Development (ERD) Branch and five northern Alberta Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs)). The project will provide information on the current state of broadband capacity in northern Alberta and the related barriers towards economic growth, current usage, and requirements to support the emerging technology needs and demands. The assessment will be carried out for the NADC region as a whole and will include individual sub-regions for each northern Alberta REDA.

The project report will include three phases:

- 1) Current state of broadband in the north.
- 2) Desired state by northern communities.
- 3) Business case for a regional broadband strategy.

The final report will be distributed through community seminars hosted by the five northern Alberta REDA partners at project completion.

#### **Impact and Gap Study for the New Grande Prairie Regional Hospital**

The presence of the regional hospital in the city of Grande Prairie is expected to bring about socio-economic benefits to the Grande Prairie region including improved quality of education, increased overall standard of living, increased labour productivity, industry diversification, and business attraction, in addition to improved health care services in the region.

To support strong and vibrant communities in northern Alberta, the NADC and regional project stakeholders contributed resources for a project initiated by the Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce. The project's goal was to conduct a regional gap and economic impact analysis in connection with the construction of a new regional hospital slated to open in 2019. Study findings were presented to project stakeholders in November 2016 in Grande Prairie.

The identification of gaps, in terms of importance and priority, in the areas of labour supply, accommodations, supporting medical services and facilities, education and training, retail and food services, and transportation, informs the community in taking proactive steps to address identified gaps in services and economic opportunities. The NADC will continue to provide input into the discussion prioritizing next steps through the newly developed Community Readiness Group.



## Resource Management

### Flax Research

Industrial hemp and flax is a rapidly growing bio-food and fibre sector in Alberta. Both offer a wide range of existing and potential uses for food, natural health products, textiles, building materials and industrial products. Industrial hemp and flax could play a key role in a diversified sustainable economic option for rural Alberta. Building on the promising results achieved from the past research of field screenings and trials, the NADC partnered with the research team from InnoTech Alberta, with a new research project. For the period of February 2016 – March 2018, InnoTech Alberta will study the biochemical profiling of selected varieties of northern adapted and full utilization of Alberta's flax fibre. The objectives will:

- Provide fundamental national data for the northern Alberta and Canada flax-industry, promoting and marketing its product to full potential.
- Verify performance of selected elite flax lines developed for early maturity under northern prairie conditions.
- Initiate development of markets for Alberta's flax fibre and build the foundations for full utilization of Alberta's bio-fibre potential.



## **Industrial Hemp and Flax Opportunity Seminar: A Growing Northern Alberta Opportunity**

The growing bio food and fibre industry has captured the attention of national and international investors and offers unique growth opportunities for northern Alberta's agricultural market. The NADC hosted an Industrial Hemp and Flax Opportunities Seminar to inform communities of the emerging opportunities available today and in the future to prepare for new business and growth prospects. A seminar was held in St. Paul on March 30, 2017 with approximately 70 delegates in attendance.

Seminar partners included Alberta Economic Development and Trade (Entrepreneurship and Regional Development), InnoTech Alberta, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, several northern Regional Economic Development Alliances (GROWTH Alberta, Alberta HUB, PREDA, REDI) and Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta (CDEA).

Participants expressed interest in industrial hemp/flax market expansion and economic development and diversification in northern Alberta; including, but not limited to, the advancement of processing plants, continued education and research, reducing regulatory barriers, further collaboration with industry and business community, and formation of a provincial industrial hemp/flax association.

## **Water North Coalition**

The Water North Coalition (WNC) has grown to include over 51 municipalities and water and wastewater partners across the north. Their quarterly meetings, hosted by member municipalities across the north are serving as a productive forum for the exchange of information and advancement of northern solutions to water and wastewater management.

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“The Hemp and Flax Opportunity Seminar that NADC presented in St. Paul March 2017 was honestly the most fact-filled and well-organized event I attended all year. Aside from the wide variety of quality speakers, the “Education Toolkit” provided was a veritable how-to resource on all the important topics; appropriate for introductory or advanced needs. The events networking opportunities furthered our organization’s strategic goals, and two of the speakers will in fact be speaking at our Community Futures Network of Alberta Symposium September 2017!” - *Gene Wesley, General Manager, Community Futures, Lac la Biche*

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In 2016, the WNC finalized its Communications Plan and Protocols that serve to build its operational capacity. WNC's four subcommittees of Advocacy, Public Education, Recruitment and Retention, and Training are continuing their work in advancing actions relating to the Coalition's strategic priorities:

- Exploring ways to collaborate on water literacy with Alberta Environment and Parks' Water Literacy Team.
- Creating a shared water resources library and grants resources list.
- Developing short and long-term mutual aid templates for municipalities sharing operator resources.

The NADC created an animated video providing an overview of the Coalition and highlights of its achievements to date for the Coalition to use and market its work. A progress report was released in January 2017 with an overview of the Coalition's work since its formation. The NADC will continue to provide support through knowledge sharing, capacity building and administrative support until 2018. An evaluation of outcomes at that time will help determine future direction and support.



## **Development of a Skilled Workforce**

### **NADC Region's Economic Profile**

An updated NADC region economic profile was completed in 2016 that will help inform investors and entrepreneurs to consider business opportunities in the region, attract visitors, and brief the residents and governments on the structure, state, developments, and outlook of the local economy. Additionally, it helps to identify data gaps and areas of research that are relevant in understanding socio-economic issues.

The study provides statistical information on the NADC region which serves as a foundation for other regional economic analyses. It also includes brief descriptions of development policies and economic factors that impact the local economy. Profiling a local economy is one of the key economic analysis tools for economic development planning.

## NADC Bursary Programs

The NADC bursaries help attract and retain the skilled professionals in demand in northern Alberta. Since 2000, the NADC has awarded 4,119 bursaries, and the program maintains a high return-service rate of 76%. Demand for the bursaries far exceeds available funding.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education, the NADC offered 249 return service bursaries to Alberta students in 2016-2017. This number includes the NADC Bursaries, the higher-valued specialty bursaries, the Bursary Partnerships, the newly created First Nation (status or non-status), Metis and Inuit Bursary, and the Northern Student Teacher Bursary. Details on NADC bursaries can be found at [www.nadc.gov.ab.ca/our-bursaries](http://www.nadc.gov.ab.ca/our-bursaries).

### The NADC Bursary

The NADC Bursary focuses on students training in professions determined to be in demand by northern employers. In 2016-2017, 257 Alberta students applied and 96 received NADC or NADC Specialty Bursaries. 82 of these bursaries were for the general NADC bursary:

**80** ⇒ **\$6,000**      **2** ⇒ **\$3,000**

Recipients were enrolled in a wide variety and types of education:



**6**  
**Certificate**  
**Programs**



**39**  
**Diploma**  
**Programs**



**31**  
**Degree**  
**Programs**



**6**  
**Master**  
**Programs**

### Higher valued NADC Bursaries for specialty programs

Certain programs in demand receive higher bursary values:

- 7 students received \$12,000 Medical and Dentistry Bursaries – 3 in Medicine and 4 in Dentistry.
- 3 students received the \$9,000 Nurse Practitioner Bursary.
- 3 students received the \$6,000 Pharmacy Bursary.
- 1 student received the \$6,000 Large Animal Veterinary Bursary

## 2016 NADC Bursary Programs at a Glance



**82**  
NADC  
Bursaries



**7**  
Medical  
Bursaries



**3**  
Pharmacy  
Bursaries



**1**  
Large Animal  
Veterinarian



**66**  
Bursary  
Partnerships



**29**  
Teacher  
Bursaries

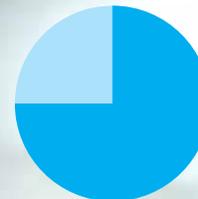


**58**  
First Nation,  
Metis or Inuit



**1**  
Nurse  
Practitioner

**Bursary return  
service rate**



**76%**  
2016-17  
Return Service

### NADC Bursary Return Service Rate

Recipients of the NADC Bursary enter into an agreement to live and work in northern Alberta when they complete their education - 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 repay their bursaries.

### **NADC Bursary Partnerships**

Bursary Partnerships are an excellent opportunity for businesses and community organizations to bring in the skilled professionals that fit their organization. In the program, sponsors provide the students they select between \$1,000 and \$3,000, and then apply to the NADC for matching bursary funds. Specialty bursaries allow for higher matching funding amount ranging from \$6,000 to \$12,000. Recipients are obligated to provide return service within the NADC region, based on one month of fulltime employment for every \$500 of total bursary support received to a maximum of 12 months return service per year.

In 2016-2017, 66 partnership bursaries totalling \$247,400 were awarded, with \$120,450 provided through the NADC. Included in this year's ongoing sponsors was one municipal district that matched funds in the amount of \$12,000 for a dentistry student, and three employers that matched funds of \$6,000 each for three pharmacy students. New sponsorships are accepted on an ongoing basis; potential sponsors can contact the NADC.

### **First Nation (status or non-status), Metis, and Inuit Bursary**

This bursary was launched on October 29, 2015, to assist in meeting the needs of Indigenous learners. The Ministry of Advanced Education provides the funding for the program, and the NADC selects the recipients and administers the program. This is also a return of service bursary. This bursary is in the amount of \$6,000 for students in a certificate or diploma studies and \$10,000 for students in a Bachelors, Masters, or PhD program. Students in one term of studies are eligible for half of the bursary amount depending on their program. In its second year, the NADC received 157 applications, almost double the amount of the first year, and selected 58 individuals. The NADC completed selection in August 2016 and January 2017. Two students received \$5,000, 19 students received \$6,000, and 37 students received \$10,000 for a total of \$494,000 dispersed to students who committed to living and working within the NADC boundary after they complete their studies.

## Northern Student Teacher Bursary

Teacher attraction and retention in northern, rural, and remote Alberta locations is a significant workforce challenge. Population projections for school-age children as well as teacher retirements show that the demand for teachers will only grow.

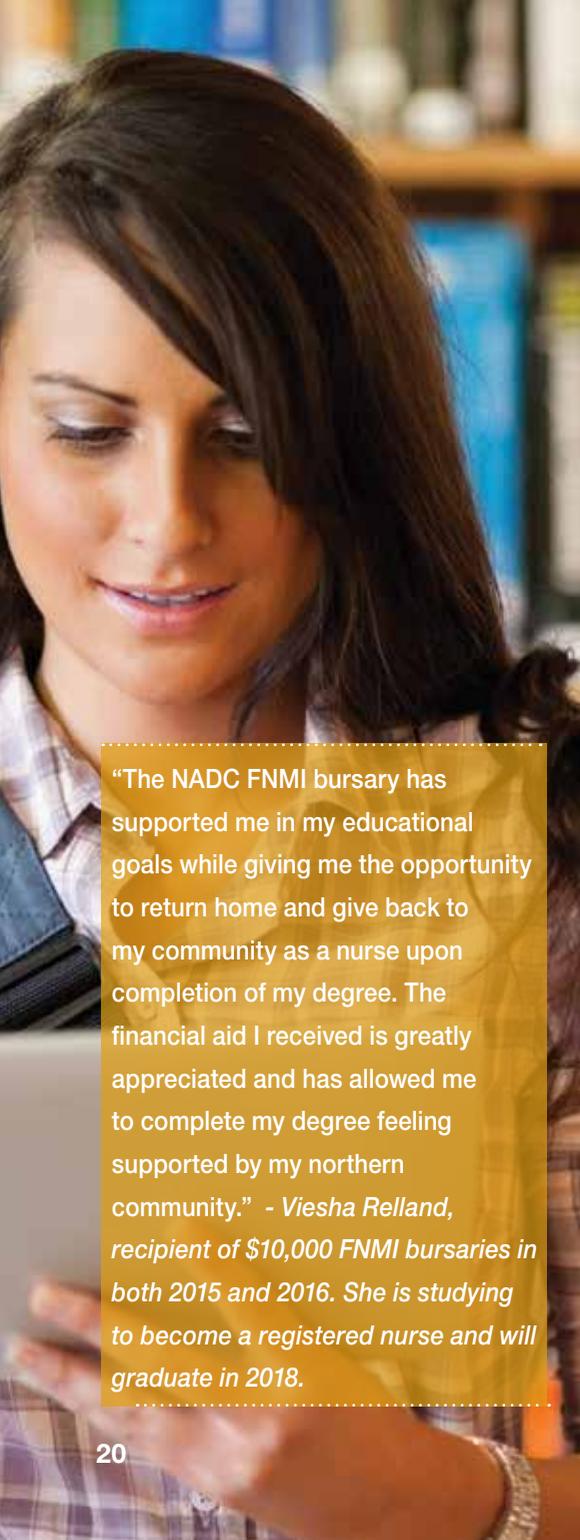
Alberta Education collaborates with Student Aid Alberta and the NADC to offer the Northern Student Teacher Bursary (NSTB). Superintendents of northern school jurisdictions participate in determining eligibility criteria and selection processes to ensure the most qualified applicants are awarded bursaries. In 2016-2017, applicants in their last or second-to-last year of schooling in a Bachelor of Education program were considered for the bursary. The focus was on education students who would be qualified to teach high demand subjects such as math and sciences. There were 92 applications, and 29 bursaries awarded. Eleven of the recipients were entering their last year of schooling and were each awarded \$8,000. Eighteen were in their second to last year of schooling and were awarded \$16,000 each. The total expenditure for this program in 2016 -2017 was \$376,000.

## Northern Health Care Practicum Funding Program

The Northern Zone of Alberta Health Services administers the Health Care Practicum Funding Program, designed to increase the number of health-care practicum students in the north. Thanks to \$50,000 in funding from the NADC, 49 students who completed a health care practicum in northern Alberta received reimbursement for travel and accommodation to designated locations and practicum positions. Participants were exposed to 17 different AHS locations and are completing their studies in 16 occupations in high demand within the NADC area. This program provides students with a northern opportunity and encourages them to make connections in the north that may assist with future employment once they have completed their studies. Communities and current staff gain the experience of having newly trained individuals who may bring fresh ideas or approaches to the current processes. Communities are given the opportunity to showcase themselves and what they offer to the students. Two students completing their practicum traveled from Calgary and two others from Lethbridge. The longest 2016-2017 practicums were 136 days and almost half the students have indicated an interest in working within the NADC boundary. The program received 70 applications for assistance.

.....  
“Being the recipient of the NADC bursary for three years was one of the best decisions I made for making the costs of dentistry manageable. My only regret is that I did not apply for it a fourth time. As I was raised in Northern Alberta, this was a nice incentive that helped with my decision to go back north.

By receiving the NADC bursary, I was able to keep my focus on my studies and clinical skills, instead of worrying if there would be enough money on my line of credit at the end of the four years. When talking with my cohort about the stresses of debt, I was able to appreciate how beneficial this was to me.” – *Don Beeson, recipient of 3 - \$12,000 bursaries and currently working as a dentist in Grande Prairie.*  
.....



“The NADC FNMI bursary has supported me in my educational goals while giving me the opportunity to return home and give back to my community as a nurse upon completion of my degree. The financial aid I received is greatly appreciated and has allowed me to complete my degree feeling supported by my northern community.” - *Viesha Relland, recipient of \$10,000 FNMI bursaries in both 2015 and 2016. She is studying to become a registered nurse and will graduate in 2018.*

## Workforce Scan

The NADC has conducted scans of northern Alberta’s workforce for over 20 years. The first Workforce Scan report was published in 1995 and since then the NADC has produced 10 versions on an approximate biennial basis. The 2017 Workforce Scan was designed to provide insight into recent hiring and retention experiences of employers across northern Alberta. To gather employer input, the NADC distributed an online questionnaire between February and March 2017 and invited organizations from all industries in the region to participate. Responses were grouped by industry and there was a total of 204 respondents across 19 industries. Compared to previous years, the 2017 scan was expanded to capture more detailed information from respondents.

The objective of the NADC Workforce Scan is to:

- gather industry specific input to help determine post-secondary program priorities for the NADC’s annual selection of its bursary recipient; and
- develop insight into the needs and experiences of employers in northern Alberta in terms of recruiting and retaining employees, with emphasis on recent graduates of post-secondary education programs in high demand fields.

The findings of the 2017 scan offer a collection of workforce experiences across Alberta’s north and provide preliminary insight to inspire more in-depth research.

## Labour Education Applied Research North

Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN) is a joint initiative of the NADC and Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Portage College, and Northern Lakes College. LEARN provides partners with a forum to meet regularly to discuss information about the north and complete research, resulting reports of information on labour market trends and opportunities.

LEARN’s latest project produced an internal Communications Strategy, resulting in the creation of a logo to enhance LEARN’s identity. A new research project, scheduled for completion early 2018 will produce a report on digital education resources in northern Alberta.



## Local and Regional Engagement

### Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

The NADC gains valuable insight into regional issues and cultivates relationships with a wide cross-section of elected leaders across northwestern Alberta through their role as secretariat for the Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL) group, a consortium of northwestern Alberta municipalities that gather to create opportunities and collaborate on numerous issues of common interest in the northwest.

In 2016, NAEL members engaged with the Alberta Government on a number of issues, through the strategic direction provided by NADC. These issues included supporting the North's capacity-building efforts with post-secondary institutions to improve northern residents' labour market skills, and enhancing the region's resiliency to natural disasters through comprehensive emergency management resources. The NADC helped NAEL frame their issues of concern and fortify northern perspectives with the provincial government in advocating for enhanced consultation processes with provincial natural resources initiatives, and highlighting hindrances to local economies from infrastructure project delays.

### Northern Development Ministers Forum

The NADC is Alberta's secretariat to the Forum supporting the Alberta Minister responsible for northern development since the Forum's establishment in 2001. This 11-member inter-jurisdictional Forum provides Ministers responsible for northern development an opportunity to advance common interest and raise awareness of northern issues. The annual Forum was held in Iqaluit, Nunavut, from September 11- 13, 2016 with the theme "The North: A Land of Opportunities." Ministers discussed priority issues, including strengthening working relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments when considering northern development, Impact Benefit Agreements, and northern food security. Presentations from the Inuit Circumpolar Council and the Arctic Economic Council were delivered to Ministers to share information and enhance collaboration. Priorities for 2017 were identified as alternative heating, northern regional data, and labour force development. The 2017 Forum scheduled for September 5-8, 2017 in Montréal, Québec with the theme "The Importance of Collaboration in Northern Development" will provide Ministers an opportunity to build connections and advance common issues facing Canada's northern regions.

## **Economic Change in Northern Alberta: A Preliminary Study of Community Best Practices**

Resource economies are predisposed to cycles of boom and bust. Likewise, northern Alberta has experienced many periods of economic fluctuations, which present opportunities and challenges that require both local ingenuity and resourcefulness to plan for, respond to, and manage.

In light of these historical trends as well as the recent economic downturn, the NADC conducted a preliminary study to understand how socio-economic changes have impacted northern Alberta to assist communities in responding to fluctuations in economic activity. A sample of elected officials were interviewed to identify local trends and best practices. A report outlining four priority issues and five best practices along with an infographic visually representing the key ideas shared by leaders was created. The study establishes a base from which larger regional studies could be conducted.



## Energizing the North Opportunity Seminar on Alternative and Renewable Energy

Geothermal, solar, biomass, and wind energy have the potential to transform northern Alberta communities through innovation, economic diversification, and the creation of energy independence. Renewable local energy production offers the opportunity for investment in local businesses and communities. To advance renewable energy production in the north, the NADC hosted two seminars, attracting 115 total delegates in Athabasca on March 28 and in Peace River on March 30.

The seminars showcased experts in each of the energy technologies, successful community energy projects, growing business opportunities, various funding programs, and the development of energy cooperatives. The seminars offered diverse presentations, including an interactive question and answer period, and several opportunities for networking between delegates and experts. The Alberta Community & Cooperatives Association prepared a Community Energy Co-operative Toolkit, provided an overview of the potential for energy cooperatives, and held post-seminar sessions focussed on co-op implementation steps.

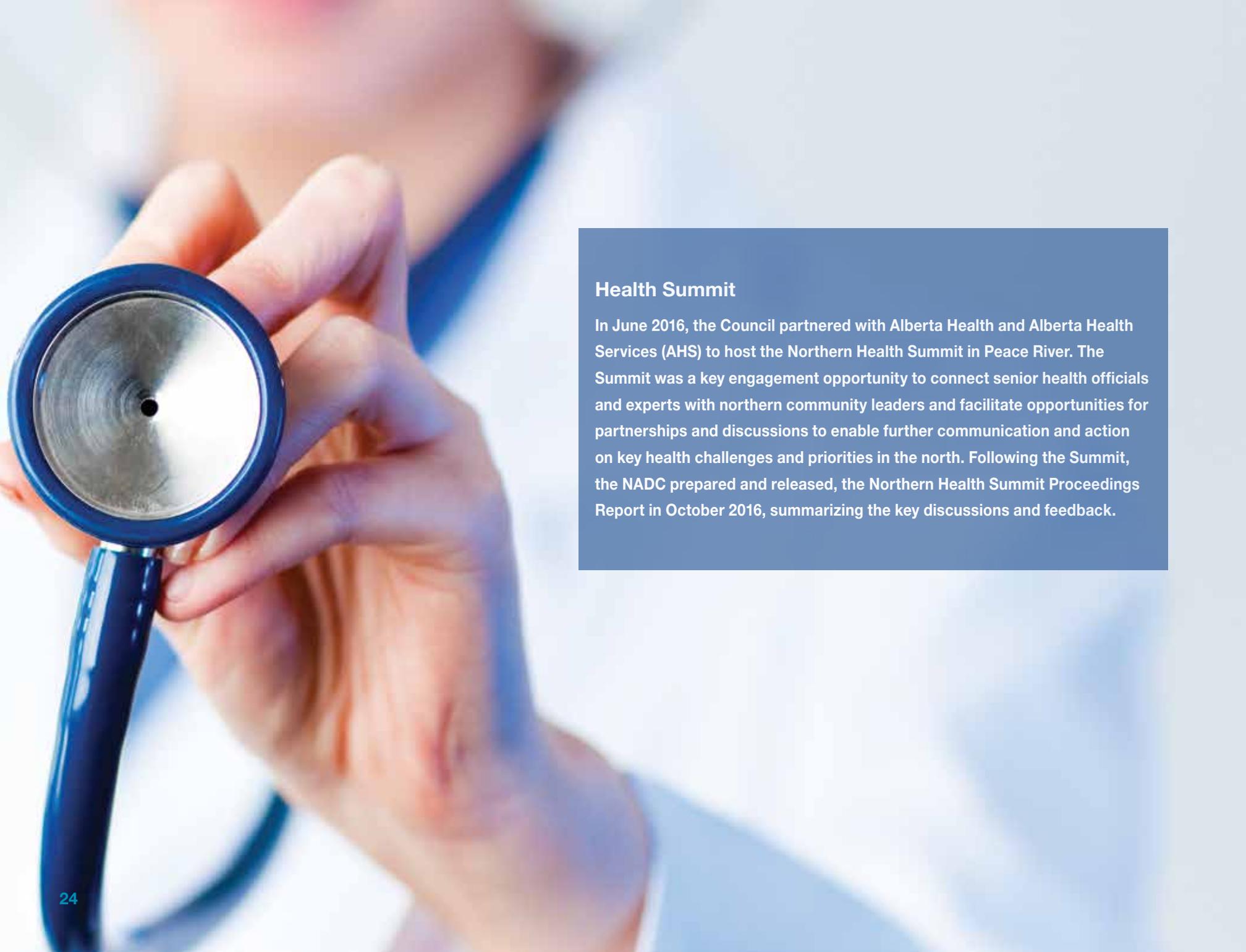
Delegates identified opportunities in their communities for renewable energy. Common responses arose in both regions, including but not limited to: installing solar on residences, and community, municipal, and commercial buildings, and existing infrastructure; transforming brownfields and other open spaces for the installation of solar farms; installing solar carports; adapting orphaned wells to geothermal energy generation; and using solid, wood, and organic waste for biomass energy generation and overall waste reduction. Participants were asked to identify future actions to aid in renewable energy development and five key themes emerged: collaboration, education, funding, research, and policy development.

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“This conference provided the perfect balance of opportunities to hear from experts in alternative and renewable energies and the chance to connect with our Northern peer communities to learn and share with one another about current applied projects. Since the conference, the conversations around alternative and renewable energies have continued as we explore the opportunities for the Wood Buffalo Region.” - *Andrea Haley, Senior Economic Development Officer, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo*

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## Health Summit

In June 2016, the Council partnered with Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services (AHS) to host the Northern Health Summit in Peace River. The Summit was a key engagement opportunity to connect senior health officials and experts with northern community leaders and facilitate opportunities for partnerships and discussions to enable further communication and action on key health challenges and priorities in the north. Following the Summit, the NADC prepared and released, the Northern Health Summit Proceedings Report in October 2016, summarizing the key discussions and feedback.

Based on feedback from community leaders, and information captured through facilitated breakout sessions, challenges, recommendations and innovative ideas for health care provision were identified. Council actively shared the information gathered with northern communities and our partners, Alberta Health and AHS and advanced six recommendations where system improvements would benefit northern communities. These broad recommendations advocated for health service policy makers and providers to consider:

- 1 A mechanism to coordinate ongoing communication and engagement be developed with northern municipalities and Indigenous communities to ensure health policies and services for the north are inclusive of local northern community perspectives
- 2 The use of technology be explored to better serve northern residents, minimize travel for health services where possible, and support patient advocacy and quality of care
- 3 Gaps in transportation infrastructure be addressed to support patients requiring access to health services
- 4 A distributed service delivery and funding model for health services and education that meets the geographical, cultural and vocational realities of the north and its residents be developed
- 5 Municipal and Indigenous leaders be engaged to actively support health promotion and healthy community initiatives in the north
- 6 A sustainable northern health workforce strategy be developed

At the summit, the NADC committed to following up with our partners and providing an update in 2017 to northern leaders regarding the progress on issues raised at the summit.

The NADC met with the Honourable Sarah Hoffman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, to discuss the summit and opportunities for future collaboration. The NADC is working with Alberta Health and AHS to provide an update on northern health and explore ways to partner and share information relevant to northern communities.

## Grey Matters Conference

The NADC is committed to building strong, vibrant communities that include a skilled and educated workforce. That is why the NADC partnered with Alberta Seniors and Housing, the City of Grande Prairie, and the County of Grande Prairie to host the Grey Matters Conference. This conference is a two-day event that offers provincial service providers an opportunity to network, gain knowledge and increase awareness of issues, supports and services for seniors. The 2016 conference marks the first time this conference has been held in northern Alberta.

The conference theme was “Changing Faces: The New Face of Alberta Seniors” with subtopics including:

- Baby Boomer Demographics;
- Aboriginal Seniors;
- Traditional, Immigrant and Cultural Diverse Populations;
- Delivering to Diversity;
- Cross Cultural Care; and
- Social Inclusion.

The keynote speakers were Margaret Trudeau, who spoke about mental health and ‘aging joyfully,’ and Maria Campbell, who spoke about Indigenous elders and their contributions to the next generation. The conference was well received, setting a record for attendance with 395 delegates.

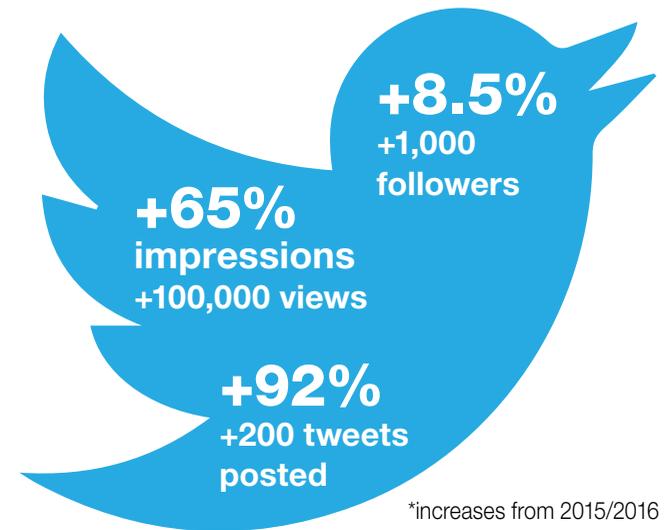




## Communications to the Region

NADC supports Alberta Economic Development and Trade initiatives and where possible coordinates and integrates social media supports to maximize reach to Albertans. The NADC uses different methods to communicate projects and initiatives to northern stakeholders, including the NADC website, newsletter, and social media (Facebook and Twitter). Subscription to the NADC's free newsletter can be made by contacting us through our website at [www.nadc.ca/contact-us](http://www.nadc.ca/contact-us).

During the 2016-2017 fiscal year the NADC achieved many successes in its social media presence. We regularly share information regarding our programs, reports, and other opportunities and areas of interest around the north, so we encourage you to like and follow us to stay up to date.



### NADC Website

The Northern Alberta Development Council has launched a new website with a brand new look and improved functionality. This new look with enhanced features and functions provides quick and easy access to information about our projects, partnerships, and activities. Check out features such as short videos highlighting our Council and our initiatives, searchable reports, and up-to-date announcements and reports on our most recent events. The NADC website will also be the new home for all of our bursary programs. We invite you to explore the new content at [www.nadc.ca](http://www.nadc.ca). Meet the Council, answer our latest survey question, and view the stunning photographs that won our most recent "Capture the North" contest.

## Capture the North Photo Contest

The NADC region is unique, breathtaking, and boundless. Our annual photo contest offers amateur and experienced photographers alike a chance to capture our northern region. From the places we call home, the wilderness that surrounds us, and where we recreate, to the industries and jobsites that keep our economy progressing, the annual photo contest captures our north one picture at a time.

This year, first and second place prizes were awarded in four photo categories:

- Working in the North;
- Scenes of the North/Northern Community;
- People in the North/Fun Outside;
- Wild North.

Throughout the year, the Council uses many of the submitted images in reports, brochures, and publications used to market the region.

### Category 1: Scenes of the North/Northern Community

Photos of northern Alberta's towns, cities, hamlets, villages and homesteads



**1st Place** – “Northern Lights and Tee Pee” by Julie Dewilde taken near Fort Chipewyan



**2nd Place** – “Scenes of Autumn 2” by Lynn Beaupre taken near Bonnyville

### Category 2: Working in the North

Northern Albertans at work in Forestry, Oil & Gas, Waterworks, Health Care & Agriculture



**1st Place** – “Wood Work for Winter” by Julie Dewilde taken near Fort Chipewyan



**2nd Place** – “Working Outside at Horn Ridge” by Taylor Hanna taken near Horn Ridge

### Category 3: People in the North/Fun Outside

Activities such as camping, quadding, fishing, sledding, skiing whatever fun outdoor activities you can enjoy in northern Alberta.



**1st Place** – “It’s All Downhill” by Laurie Sandboe taken near Saddle Hills



**2nd Place** – “Serenity” by Julie Dewilde taken near Fort Chipewyan

### Category 4: Wild North

Wild animals, insects, flowers, plants and the natural landscapes where they live and grow.



**1st Place** – “Hello World” by Lynn Beaupre taken near Bonnyville



**2nd Place** – “Grey Owl” by Tara Lowry taken near Elk Point

## Appendix A: Council Biographies

### **Debbie Jabbour, Chair (from September 2016) Peace River**



Debbie Jabbour was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, representing the constituency of Peace River, on May 5, 2015. On June 11, 2015, she was elected Deputy Speaker

and Chair of Committees. She currently serves as a member of the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices and the Special Standing Committee on Members' Services.

Prior to serving as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, she worked as a mental health specialist, an analyst with Alberta Health, financial accountability and as a Hansard input editor with the Alberta Legislative Assembly.

### **Brian Allen, Vice Chair (June 2016 – March 2017) Grimshaw**



Brian is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Grimshaw and was Mayor of Grimshaw from 2000 to 2013. He is the past owner/operator of Grimshaw Super A Foods. He has extensive

experience in local government and he has experience with a number of regional organizations.

### **Williard Strebchuk, Vice Chair (April 2016 – May 2016) Whitecourt**



Williard is an active community member with more than 19 years municipal government experience, including former Mayor of Whitecourt and town councillor. He is a member of local

boards, agencies and committees in support of economic and community development including a town and county joint Economic Development and Tourism Committee, and the Whitecourt Economic Development Committee, on both of which he sits as chair. He has had past experience on the Strategic Tourism Marketing Council and as the Director of the West Central Tourism Association. Williard was born and raised in the Peace Country; he grew up on a farm, which contributed to his working knowledge of agriculture, forestry and the oil industries. He started in the service industry running a family business in High Prairie in 1976, and moved to Whitecourt with a family business opportunity in 1986. Williard is a current business owner in Whitecourt with a variety of business interests throughout northern Alberta.

### **Andre Harpe Valhalla Centre**



Andre has a strong background in agriculture and in the oilfield sectors. He has experience with several governance boards such as STARS, Peace Country Health, Mistahia Health Region

and Grande Prairie Regional College. He is an avid volunteer within his community and region. Andre is chair and has been co-chair with the Valhalla School Foundation, which created a charter school based in Valhalla community.

### **Peter Braun La Crete**



Peter has lived in La Crete his entire life and he has been a Mackenzie County councillor since 2004. He is active in a number of community organizations, including the Regional Economic

Development Initiative, the La Crete Co-op Board and the La Crete Recreation Society. His past work experience includes a total of 20 years as a petroleum agent and manager, first with the La Crete Co-op and then with the United Farmers of Alberta; and 18 years as an owner-operator, first of an automotive parts store and then of a mobile home park and apartment rentals.

**Ken Noskey  
Peavine**



Ken is the former chairman of the Peavine Metis Settlement and he also served for nine years as the president of the Metis Settlements General Council; he has been elected 12 times over 27 years.

Ken has participated in overseas Canada and Alberta trade missions, presented to the Senate on Aboriginal governance and presented to the Royal Aboriginal Commission. He has been a member on a number of provincial government advisory committees. He is the owner/operator of a trucking and skid steer services company, and he has experience in the forestry and logging industry. He farms livestock such as horses and cows and produces hay for his livestock. He is also an active volunteer within his community, and an avid runner.

**Pat O'Neill  
St. Paul**



Pat has experience as a municipal councillor and significant experience in the agricultural and recreational sectors. He worked with the St. Paul Municipal Seed Cleaning Plant as director and chairman of the board. He is the former director of

the Alberta Development Corporation Appeal Board and was instrumental in developing the St. Paul Breeders Co-op.

**Brad Sakowich  
Athabasca**



Brad is a valued member of the business community in the Athabasca region, having spent a number of years in the oilfield service industry. He also spent two years as the Chief Executive

Officer of Alberta's Best W-T Group. Prior to that, he worked for more than ten years with Alberta Treasury Branches in various capacities. He holds a diploma in agri-business from the Lakeland College in Vermilion, as well as a certificate in environmental resource management from the U of A.

**Jason Schulz  
Fort McMurray**



Jason has lived in the Fort McMurray area since 2006. During his residence he has been active in the community through the Board of Directors for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Alberta and through Child and Family Services Alberta. He was also a member of the Wood Buffalo

Real Estate and Zoning Development Appeals Board. Jason has considerable experience working with diverse groups.

**Eva Urlacher  
Cold Lake**



Eva is the first recipient of a newly created Woman of Influence – Volunteerism award (2013). She has background as a business owner and as a director for the Rural Alberta Development Fund.

She served as Reeve of the MD of Bonnyville, Director of the Cold Lake and District Chamber of Commerce, and she currently serves as Director of the Cold Lake and District Agricultural Society. She participates on many community boards and foundations such as Hearts for Healthcare, Hospital Foundation, Medical Development and Kinosoo Performing Arts. Eva is an avid volunteer with a sincere interest in her community and region.

# Appendix B: Council Members in Northern Communities

## April 2016

- Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Workforce event in Fort McMurray
- Bursary Selection Committee meeting
- Economic Developers Alberta conference in Kananaskis

## June 2016

- Northern Health Summit in Peace River
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities Annual Conference in Winnipeg
- Lesser Slave Lake Rural Innovation Forum in Slave Lake
- Northern Transportation Advocacy Bureau in Grimshaw

## July 2016

- Bursary Selection Committee meeting in Edmonton
- Meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education regarding NADC Bursary programs in Edmonton
- Alberta Innovates Technology Futures meeting in Vegreville

## September 2016

- Grey Matters conference in Grande Prairie
- Alberta Forest Products of Association conference in Jasper
- Rural Physician Action Plan 2016 conference in Vermilion
- Labour Education Applied Research North meeting in Edmonton

## October 2016

- Athabasca Oil Sands Area Transportation Coordination Committee (AOSA TCC) meeting in Fort McMurray
- Digital Futures Alberta North seminar in Lac La Biche
- Travel Alberta Industry conference in Banff
- Urban Municipalities Association Fall convention in Edmonton

## November 2016

- Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties Fall convention in Edmonton

## February 2017

- Northland School Division Open House in Janvier
- Northland School Division Open House in Peace River
- Growing the North conference in Grande Prairie

## March 2017

- Industrial Hemp & Flax: A Growing Northern Alberta Opportunity seminar in St. Paul
- Energizing the North: Alternative and Renewable Energy Opportunity Seminars were held in Athabasca and Peace River
- Northern Transportation Advocacy Bureau meeting in Grimshaw





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