
**Northern Alberta
Development
Council**

Annual Report
1994-95

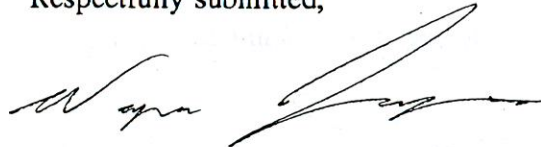
August, 1995

Honourable Ralph Klein
Premier of Alberta
Minister Responsible for
Northern Development
Edmonton, AB

Sir:

It is my honour to present the thirty-first annual report of the Northern Alberta Development Council, covering the fiscal year from April 1, 1994 to March 31, 1995.

Respectfully submitted,



Wayne Jacques, MLA
Grande Prairie-Wapiti
Chairman



NORTHERN ALBERTA
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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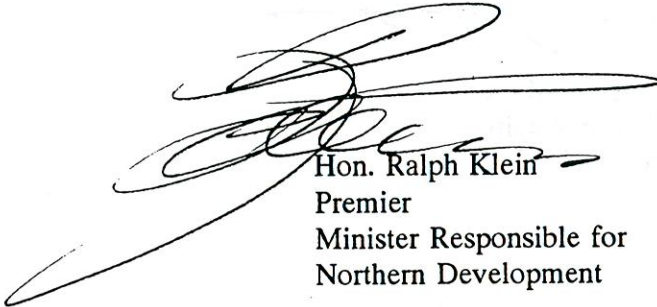
August, 1995

The Honourable Gordon Towers
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of Alberta
Edmonton, AB

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-first annual report of the Northern Alberta Development Council, covering the fiscal year from April 1, 1994 to March 31, 1995.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ralph Klein", written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Ralph Klein
Premier
Minister Responsible for
Northern Development

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Chairman's Report

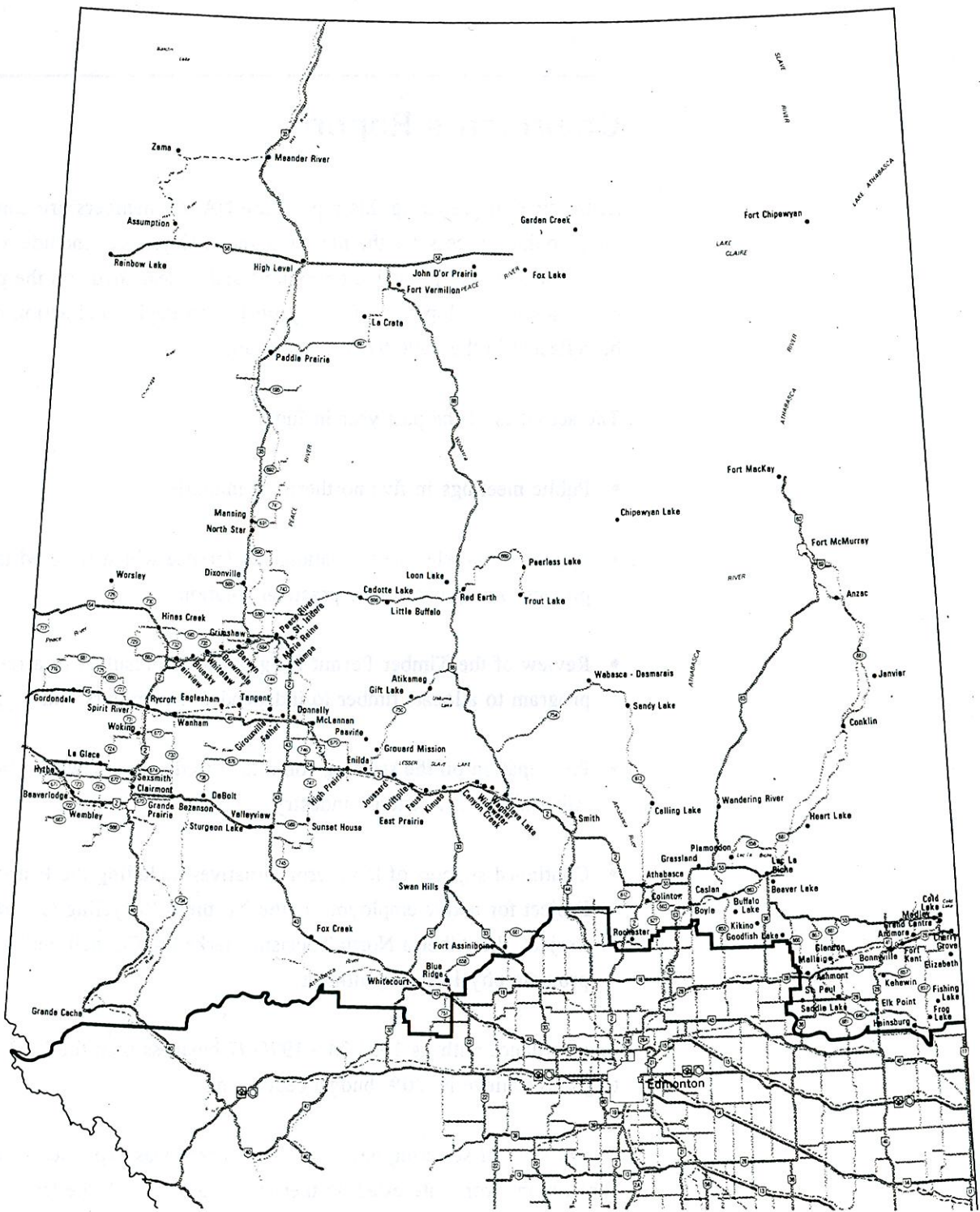
At the time of preparing this report, the NADC members are concluding the planning process for the next two years. Objectives include a continuing shift to proactive operations and a clear focus on the promotion of economic development. The appropriate strategies and action plans will be reflected in the 1996/97 business plan.

The activities of the past year include:

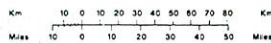
- Public meetings in five northern communities
- Sponsoring a telecommunications conference which resulted in a project to help coordinate practical solutions
- Review of the Timber Permit Program which resulted in a revised program to allocate timber to independent sawmillers and loggers
- Participation on the steering committee to develop new legislation for Alberta's electric energy industry
- Continued support of long term initiatives including the Peace Arch Project for native employment, the Northern Recycling Coordination Project, the Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council and measures to promote physician recruitment.

In accordance with its 1993-94 - 1996-97 business plan the NADC is on target to achieve its 20% budget reduction.

The process of selecting new NADC members was expanded to include applications from interested northerners, together with the traditional approach of receiving nominations from community organizations. We welcome four new members, Elmer Anderson of Peavine Metis Settlement, Louise Faulkner of McLennan, Don Wieben of Fairview and Charles Wood of Saddle Lake. We express our sincere appreciation to retiring NADC members Marlin Sexauer of Whitecourt, Diana Knight of Valleyview, Jerry Noskey of Loon Lake and Gwen Tegart of Fairview.



NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA



PRIMARY HIGHWAY

SECONDARY HIGHWAY

L.O.C. ROAD

RAILWAY

Northern Alberta Development Council

Goals

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) was established by an act of the Legislature. Its mission is to promote economic and social development in northern Alberta through practical advice to government and through the delivery of development services to northerners. The NADC's goals are:

- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how northern concerns are transmitted to us.
- To help northerners take best advantage of NADC's advocacy services.
- To increase northern input into key programs and policies that affect the development of the north.
- To support the development of community and regional projects that address northern problems and opportunities.

The Council consists of eight public members and one elected member of the legislative assembly. The Council reports to Cabinet through Premier Klein, the Minister responsible for Northern Development.

The NADC Region

The NADC region includes 60% of Alberta's area and 10% of its population. Much of the region is still developing its resource base.

The North's population is younger than the provincial average. Education, literacy and income levels are below the provincial average. Many small native communities face significant development challenges. The issues of distance to markets and delivery of services in this vast part of Alberta are challenges that northerners address on a daily basis.

Northern Development's Business Plan

Each department and agency of government produces a three year business plan to guide its operations. The highlights of Northern Development's current plan are:

- We will reduce our costs while minimizing the impact upon our effectiveness. Operations have been re-organized and downsized.
- Achieve no less than a 20% expenditure reduction over the three year period 1993/94 - 1996/97.
- We will continue our advisory role to government. NADC's advice will focus on practical ways to lessen the impact of reduced government services and ways to take advantage of the opportunities for development in the region.
- We will examine ways to more effectively advise government on the north's unique needs.

Northern Development Performance Measures

There are two key measures for the performance of Northern Development as outlined in the chart below. The first measure represents an outcome or result of NADC's work on issues. The second measure is connected to development of the economy and social development of the north.

Indicator	Measure	Results		
		92/93	93/94	94/95
Positive Brief Resolution	60% partially or fully resolved in five year rolling time frame	58%	58%	n/a
		1992	1993	1994
Northern Family Income	Increase to Alberta average	-9.14%	n/a	n/a

Council Members

Each year the NADC solicits nominations from northerners to replace retiring public members of the Council. Council's membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities.

The members are:

Wayne Jacques, MLA, Grande Prairie-Wapiti, Chairman

Marlin Sexauer, Whitecourt, Deputy Chairman

Jim Carbery, Fort McMurray

Diana Knight, Valleyview

Don Lussier, Athabasca

Floyd McLennan, Grande Cache

Jerry Noskey, Loon Lake

Irwin Packham, High Level

Gwen Tegart, Fairview

Hon. Premier Ralph Klein is the Minister responsible for Northern Development.

Northern Alberta Development Council Activities

Summary of Major NADC Projects

Telecommunications in Northern Alberta

In May 1994, the NADC initiated a major review of telecommunication issues in northern Alberta and distance delivery of public services. This review was in response to briefs from northern organizations which stated:

- The need to deliver better services at less cost.
- There are service delivery problems due to large distances between scattered populations.
- There are opportunities to use telecommunications to reduce costs and to deliver better services in the areas of remote medical consulting, long distance education, and electronic transfer of information.

The NADC established an advisory committee of representatives from school divisions, post-secondary institutions, health-care providers, industry, library systems, municipalities, Industry Canada, Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services (APWSS), and the NADC. The committee guided a study that identified northern telecommunication opportunities and potential solutions.

Background Study

The NADC commissioned independent research on the topic. The study examined three main ideas:

- Northern Albertans could receive better services at lower costs, if northern organizations aggregated their needs and pooled their telecommunication resources.

- The public and the private sectors could benefit from integrating their telecommunication resources.
- The use of telecommunications for videoconferences, electronic data transfer and other applications would increase if costs could be reduced.

Consultants gathered background information from northern organizations through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups. Workshops were held in St. Paul, Peace River and Fort McMurray.

Conference/Trade Show

One hundred and fifty delegates attended the conference/trade show held in Edmonton on January 31 - February 1, 1995. They reviewed the study and made the following suggestions to meet northern needs and implement solutions:

- Delegates were generally supportive of the concept to expand access to the Alberta government network and to privatize the network. They raised some concerns and provided a number of recommendations for the Public Works, Supply & Services' consideration.
- Delegates viewed community telecommunication centres as a reasonable approach and a good beginning. They identified services that this type of facility should provide.
- A key recommendation was for a task force to be established consisting of high level representatives from government, carriers, public and private users.
- Delegates recommended that APWSS address northern organizations' concerns about the impact that long distances between small scattered populations has on the delivery of services.
- Delegates recommended that the NADC continue to assist by coordinating and facilitating the implementation of telecommunication projects in the north.

The NADC agreed to help form a northern society to address these needs.

A Review of the Timber Permit Program

In March 1994 the NADC, in cooperation with Alberta Environmental Protection, began a review of the timber permit program. The review was requested by sawmillers, loggers and communities who expressed concerns to the NADC about local wood supply. The program includes commercial timber permits (CTPs) and local timber permits (LTPs) that provide wood to sawmillers and loggers on an annual basis. The review focused on the Peace River and Footner Lake forests.

Objectives

An industry advisory committee consisting of sawmillers and loggers was established to guide the review. The three main objectives of the review were to:

- Document the timber permit sale methods (CTP & LTP) and the allocation procedures used in Alberta.
- Collect and analyze the viewpoints of program users and affected communities.
- Examine ways to improve client satisfaction with the program.

Workshops

Seventy-five people participated in three workshops held in Hines Creek, Manning and LaCrete. Program users and local community representatives identified issues, priorities and suggestions for program improvements. Their suggestions formed the basis of a new program structure.

Main Recommendations

A report summarizing the findings recommended that:

- Two types of permits be established - personal use and commercial use. In the personal use category any individual may acquire a permit for firewood, Christmas trees, transplants, fencing or any other use where the wood is processed solely for that person's consumption. A private vendor licensing system similar to the fishing license system is suggested.
- Three types of commercial use permits be established: wood for established sawmills, wood for established loggers and wood for competitive sale.
- Advisory committees be established to make recommendations to Environmental Protection on the allocation of the local wood supply.
- Permit holders should pay rates similar to the longer term FMA and quota holders. This system is more closely linked to market values and, at the same time, ensures that Alberta receives a fair return for the wood sold.
- Program users pay an increased portion of the timber permit program administration costs.

Government Response

In response to the NADC report, the Alberta government agreed to make changes to the timber permit program. Highlights include:

- Local Advisory Committees will be established.
- Wood will be allocated to established local sawmills and loggers.
- At least 20% of permit wood will be sold competitively.

Environmental Protection has established a task force to develop guidelines for the advisory committees and to recommend policy and regulation changes.

Health Services in Remote Communities Workshop

The *Health Services in Remote Communities Workshop* was developed in response to briefs from seven remote communities in the NADC area. Several of the northern Regional Health Authorities also expressed a need for information to help make service delivery decisions in remote communities.

The goals of the workshop were to provide northern Regional Health Authorities, health professionals and community representatives with information on health service delivery options and to stimulate ideas for providing health services in remote communities. The specific workshop topics were decided in consultation with the Regional Health Authorities.

Over 70 health professionals and community members attended the workshop in Peace River on November 15-16, 1994. They heard presentations on, and discussed, the following topics:

- Provincial changes to the health system
- Orientation to remote communities
- Resident and visiting health services
- Technology
- Developing partnerships

A workshop summary report was prepared and distributed to all participants. As well, copies of the full workshop proceedings were sent to all of the northern Regional Health Authorities.

Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

The *Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse* initiative will provide labour market information and other strategic information to northern post-secondary institutions and the NADC.

The Clearinghouse will gather information on industry trends and hiring demands. This information will help improve this program development.

The project will be undertaken as a partnership among northern post-secondary institutions and the NADC. Project costs will be shared by the funding partners.

NADC Response to the Alberta Advanced Education & Career Development White Paper

The NADC responded to the department's draft white paper "Agenda for Change". The NADC is largely supportive of the initiatives outlined in the white paper.

The key messages of the NADC in the submission were:

- the NADC encourages improvements in course transferability; recognition of prior learning; and the brokerage of programs
- the department should encourage the coordination and expansion of literacy training
- the NADC will encourage financial help to northerners impacted by increased tuition fees
- the NADC promotes the use of distance learning technologies in order to reduce costs and increase access.

Electric Industry Restructuring

During 1994/95, the NADC actively participated in the development of proposals for restructuring Alberta's electric industry. At the request of the Minister of Energy, the NADC appointed a representative to serve on a stakeholder steering committee preparing proposals to replace the existing Electric Energy Marketing Act (EEMA). These discussions culminated in the release of a white paper in October 1994. The recommendations within formed part of new legislation, the "Electric Energy Marketing Act Repeal Act" adopted by the legislature in May 1995.

As part of its involvement in the restructuring process, the NADC organized an information session in Grande Prairie in June 1994. Over 60 representatives of industry and municipal government in northwest Alberta attended. They generally supported the government's goal of introducing more competition into the electric energy sector. These comments were consistent with the recommendations contained in the NADC's 1992 submission to the EEMA Review Panel.

Overall, the NADC supports the new legislation. Throughout the stakeholder discussions, the NADC worked to ensure that the new legislation would address the special costs involved in supplying electricity to consumers in the north. The competitive electricity rates resulting from the restructuring will help foster continued growth and development in Alberta's north.

Support to Long Term Initiatives

Peace Arch Project

In 1988, the NADC began the Peace Arch project with the participation of eight native communities, industry and government. The project's goal is to increase employment and business opportunities for residents living in small and isolated native communities north of Slave Lake and High Prairie.

The current lead industry sponsor of the Peace Arch Project is International Colin Energy Ltd. The project also receives funds from other oil and gas firms, forestry companies, contractors and member communities: Cadotte Lake, Loon Lake, Peerless Lake, Trout Lake, Atikameg, Gift Lake and Peavine. The Northern Development Branch serves as secretary to this community-based project.

Northern Recycling Coordination Project

In 1993 the NADC helped form the Association of Northern Coordinated Action for Recycling Enterprises (Northern CARE). Northern CARE is a

non-profit society promoting practical and innovative recycling initiatives for northern Alberta. The board of directors includes representatives from northern municipalities, industry, recycling groups and the NADC.

Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council

The NADC continued its support of the Alberta North Tourism Marketing Council. Alberta North is region-wide tourism packaging and marketing initiative that was set up in 1991/92 with the assistance of the NADC. An NADC staff member serves as an advisor to the Alberta North Board which consists of representatives of the tourism industry and various regional marketing organizations. The project is jointly funded by industry and the Northern Alberta Agreement.

Physician Recruitment

The recruitment and retention of physicians is the health care issue most frequently presented at NADC public meetings. The NADC area has only half of the per capita number of physicians compared to Alberta overall. Some communities experience chronic or cyclical shortages.

NADC activities in physician recruitment in the 1994-95 fiscal year included:

- participation as a member of Alberta Health's Rural Physician Action Plan Committee
- advice to government on the target number of physicians for Alberta
- participation at the physician recruitment fair in Edmonton
- a submission to the Alberta Medical Association evaluation of the Rural Locum Program

NADC Assistance to Northern Communities

- The NADC supports the use of telecommunications to improve services in northern remote communities. Telemedicine (the use of interactive video to allow remote medical diagnosis and treatment) has the potential to improve health care in under-serviced northern communities. The Northwestern Health Services Region (NHSR) requested NADC help to set up a telemedicine system in the region. The NADC helped NHSR research project viability and funding and technology options.
- The NADC played a facilitative role in two community-based policing projects in 1994-95. In response to requests from the communities of Grouard and Peerless Lake the NADC brought together the necessary organizations to enable two RCMP work stations to be set up. The Grouard project also included a community survey to determine community policing needs and priorities. The survey was designed and carried out with the help of Alberta Justice and students from AVC Lesser Slave Lake.
- A presentation of current and future statistical trends in the Peace Country was made to delegates at the Peace Country Opportunities Convention in Grande Prairie. The conference was held on January 27-28, 1995. It featured an overview of the growth and change in the demographics and economics of the region in the past 20 years.
- Hon. Dianne Mirosh, then Minister without Portfolio, held three regional economic development opportunity workshops in Athabasca, Slave Lake and Peace River. The Northern Development Branch provided regional reports detailing population, workforce statistics, current economic sector situation, outlook and developmental issue analysis. Workshop participants used this information in identifying opportunities and devising strategies.
- The 1995 federal budget outlined considerable reductions in the operations of Canadian Forces Base Cold Lake. The communities in the region approached the NADC for assistance. The Northern Development Branch is assisting a regional committee in the coordination, development and planning for an economic impact and opportunity study to be completed in 1995.

- Concerns were raised at NADC public meetings about restructuring of the tourism industry in the north. The Northern Development Branch is helping northern tourism marketing organizations develop a business plan for a new tourism destination region in the north.
- After hearing concerns regarding the Lesser Slave Lake Integrated Resource Plan, Council encouraged Alberta Environmental Protection to include the entire lake and shoreline in the plan to ensure all local communities have input.
- The Little Red River Band and communities in the northwest region expressed the need for an all weather road to Garden River and Fort Smith. The NADC coordinated information among the Band, Alberta Transportation & Utilities and a regional committee. A road study to determine alignment, costs, environmental issues and other details is currently under way.

Public Meetings

The NADC holds periodic public meetings to hear briefs related to social and economic development in the north. Public meetings are an initial step in resolving community concerns with government departments, helping communities find local solutions to issues and compiling northern input for policy reviews.

Public Meetings	
High Level	April, 1994
Slave Lake	June, 1994
Hines Creek	September, 1994
Boyle	November, 1994
Cold Lake	February, 1995

In addition to public meetings, Council held four administrative meetings in Peace River.

Briefs

Northern individuals and groups presented 71 briefs in 1994-95. Out of this total, 24 were received from High Level, La Crete, Fort Vermilion, Fairview, Hines Creek, Cleardale and Worsley in the northwest region; 4 from Grande Prairie and Spirit River in the southwest region; 13 from Slave Lake, High Prairie, Calling Lake, Red Earth, Smith, Faust, Peerless Lake and Trout Lake in the central region; 26 from Boyle, Athabasca, Lac La Biche, Wabasca, St. Paul, Kikino, Bonnyville, Fishing Lake, Grand Centre and Cold Lake in the southeast region; 3 from Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan in the northeast region and one from Edmonton, which is out of the NADC area.

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

The following chart shows a breakdown of the issues addressed in public briefs over the past year:

Economy/Business	28
Health/Social Services	29
Education/Training	11
Federal/Municipal Government	15
Environmental Management	2
Transportation/Utilities	18

Economy/Business

Briefs which encourage strengthening the economy, or improving the business climate.

Health/Social Services

Briefs on health, community, social, leisure or policing services.

Transportation/Utilities

Briefs on roads, rail and air services, or utilities including water, sewer and natural gas.

Education/Training

Briefs on primary, secondary or advanced education or employment training.

Environmental Management

Briefs on the environment, water, land or air.

Federal/Municipal Government

Briefs relating to programs or relationships between federal and provincial governments or municipal and provincial governments.

Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary

The Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary program is administered by the Students Finance Board and attracts professionally trained Albertans to the north. Graduates who benefit from bursary funds must work in the north for a minimum of one year after completing their studies. The program also encourages northern students to attend post-secondary educational institutions.

Bursary Element

Over 350 applications were received in the 1994-95 fiscal year. The program awarded 126 bursaries.

Bursaries Awarded by Occupation 1994-95

Education	23
Medical Profession	10
Health Care/Nursing	34
Social Services	20
Business Administration/Law	10
Engineering/Technologies	13
Other Professions	16
Total	126

Bursary Partnership Element

The NADC introduced a Bursary Partnerships program in 1993 to encourage businesses and community organizations to invest in the future of northern Alberta students. The sponsor contributes one half of the award which is matched by the NADB. Students approved for a Bursary Partnership must sign a contract agreeing to work in northern Alberta for a specified amount of time after graduation. The company or community organization may select the student they wish to sponsor.

Partnership awards were made to 40 students in this year. Companies and community organizations which have participated in the Bursary Partnership program are:

- AVC Lesser Slave Lake Council of Community Education
- Fairview College
- Fort McMurray Catholic Schools
- Fort Vermilion Agriculture Society
- Grande Prairie Physiotherapy Clinic
- Grande Prairie Native Friendship Centre
- Grouard Adult Student Society
- Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council
- Metis Settlements Education Society
- Northland School Division
- Peace Air Ltd.
- Syncrude Ltd.

Federal/Provincial Agreements

Northern Development Agreement

The Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement (known as the Northern Development Agreement) concluded and provided the final payments to approved projects in the 1994/95 fiscal year.

Northern Alberta Agreement

The Northern Alberta Agreement is one of the Federal/Provincial Western Economic Partnership Agreements. It provides funding to community organizations, educational institutions, Band Councils and Metis Settlements for projects which strengthen and diversify the northern economy and for training initiatives which improve northerners' access to employment opportunities.

Applications for assistance were accepted until December, 1994 and all funding decisions were reached by March 31, 1995. Between August 1992 and March 1995 the Agreement approved 128 projects. The Agreement will fund approved projects over the next two years as these projects are implemented.

Northern Development Branch

Purpose

The purpose of the Northern Development Branch is to promote social and economic development in northern Alberta.

To achieve its purpose, the Branch provides all the administrative and technical support required by the Northern Alberta Development Council.

Staff carry out projects on behalf of Council and their work includes involvement in multi-departmental project steering committees, policy development, and conducting workshops.

The Branch also administers the federal-provincial Northern Alberta Agreement on behalf of both governments.

1994/95 Financial Statement

Expenditures by Program

	Approved <u>Budget</u>	Actual <u>Expenditures</u>
Northern Alberta Development Council	1 021,000	910,188
Canada/Alberta Northern Development Agreement (Note 1)	907,000	585,520
Canada/Alberta Partnership Agreement (Northern Alberta Agreement) (Note 2)	<u>2 587,000</u>	<u>2 287,122</u>
TOTALS	<u>4 515,000</u>	<u>3 782,830</u>

Expenditures by Category

	Approved <u>Budget</u>	Actual <u>Expenditures</u>
Manpower	901,000	804,818
Supplies/Services	756,000	546,629
Grants	2 827,000	2 404,667
Other Expenditures	16,000	15,123
Fixed Assets	<u>15,000</u>	<u>11,593</u>
TOTALS	<u>4 515,000</u>	<u>3 782,830</u>

Note 1: The Canada/Alberta Northern Development Subsidiary Agreement (known as the Northern Development Agreement) operated from April 1986 to March 1992. The final funding for approved projects was disbursed in the 1994/95 fiscal year. The Agreement provided funding to 422 economic development initiatives at the community, regional, small business and educational level. A program evaluation concluded that the Northern Development Agreement was successful in terms of economic diversification and broad program uptake by northerners.

Note 2: The Northern Alberta Agreement is one of the Western Economic Partnership Agreements. The Agreement ended March 1995. Between August 1992 and March 1995, the Agreement approved 128 community, regional, educational and small business economic development initiatives. Approved projects will be implemented over the next two years and Agreement funding will continue into the 1997/98 fiscal year.

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