

**Northern Alberta
Development Council**

**Annual Report
2004-2005**

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC), I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 2004-2005 which highlights the Council's achievements that contribute to the development of the North.

Communication with Northern Albertans remained a key priority for the Council. Initiatives such as key leader meetings, newsletters, the website and seminars are just some of the ways the NADC listened to Northerners and engaged in discussions about current opportunities and challenges.

The NADC continued its role as secretariat to several inter-jurisdictional initiatives outside Alberta such as the Northern Development Ministers' Forum and the Alberta/Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development. Through these inter-jurisdictional partnerships, the Council was able to discuss opportunities to advance northern development and to address northern development challenges with northern regions from across Canada.

Transportation issues received significant attention in 2004-2005. The NADC worked with a number of partners on a priority issues including road, rail and air transportation. Progress was made on several initiatives, and we'll continue to focus considerable effort on improving transportation routes and access.

NADC's skill development initiatives enjoyed a successful year. A new bursary for pharmacy students was introduced as part of the NADC Bursary Programs. A review of the Northern Links Program resulted in recommendations which will streamline the Program. These recommendations will be implemented over the coming year.

The Northern Alberta Development Council's commitment to advancing northern development remains strong. Together, with our partners, we will continue to work toward a strong, progressive, prosperous North.

Ray Danyluk, Chair
MLA Lac La Biche-St. Paul



NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA



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NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a council of and for northerners. The NADC works in partnership with northern communities, industry, other jurisdictions and ministries to develop and implement strategies and initiatives to advance the development of Northern Alberta. The Council is a reporting entity of the Ministry of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

The NADC consists of nine public members and one elected Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (MLA). Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities. In 2004-2005, the Council was chaired by Gary Friedel, MLA for Peace River until October, 2004. In December, 2004, Ray Danyluk, MLA for Lac La Biche - St. Paul was appointed Chair. The public members were:

Kim Courtoreille, Wabasca
Helen Henderson, High Prairie
Mike Mihaly, High Level
Gary Pollock, Swan Hills
Harvey Yoder, Lac La Biche

Carmen Ewing, Girouxville
Wendell MacEachern, Fort McMurray
Michael Ouellette, Grande Prairie
Maurice Rivard, Bonnyville

Mission

The mission of the NADC is to advance northern development through regional initiatives in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations and other government agencies.

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." The NADC supports the government's commitment to prosperity by facilitating the development of a thriving and progressive northern economy.

The NADC Region

The Northern Alberta Development Council region represents 60% of Alberta's landmass and only 9% of the Province's total population. The region is responsible for 100% of the province's oil sands development, 21% of provincial crop production, 10% of provincial livestock production

and 75% of the forestry portion of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product. This diverse resource base is a key contributor to the provincial economy and provides limitless opportunities for development prosperity in northern Alberta.

Key challenges for the region include: geographical factors such as distances to market and transportation costs; a low population base; limited infrastructure; and a shortage of skilled workers. Priorities include, improving access to markets through better transportation networks; raising skill levels so northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities; adding value to and diversifying northern products; continued exploration of additional resource development opportunities and raising awareness of what makes the north unique.

BUSINESS PLAN GOAL, STRATEGIES AND MEASURES

GOAL: To advance the development of Northern Alberta.

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

Key Strategies

- Engage northern communities, business, industry and other stakeholders, to identify, coordinate and address strategic Northern socio-economic priorities, opportunities and challenges.
- Partner with other jurisdictions, other ministries, Northern communities, business and industry, to promote Northern opportunities and address challenges.
- Promote awareness of the importance of northern development to the well-being of Alberta.
- In partnership with Northern communities, business, industry, learning providers and students, support initiatives to increase northern skill levels.
- Advance tourism development in Northern Alberta through partnerships with other jurisdictions and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal tourism organizations, industry stakeholders and communities.

Performance measures

- Partner satisfaction with Northern Alberta Development Council's contribution in advancing northern interests. The target is an average rating of 80%.

- Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary recipients' return service rate. Target return service rate is 75%.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

ENGAGEMENT

Communication with Northern Albertans remains a key priority for the Northern Alberta Development Council. Leaders' Roundtables and Key leader meetings are just some of the ways the NADC listens to Northerners and engages in discussions about current opportunities and challenges.

Leaders' Roundtables

The Northern Alberta Development Council schedules regular meetings with community and business leaders across the north. These meetings, called Leaders' Roundtables, provide an opportunity for northern leaders to present issues or concerns to the NADC and to identify specific opportunities and/or barriers to development. In 2004-2005, Leaders' Roundtable meetings were held in Grimshaw, Fort McMurray, High Level and Lac La Biche.

Meetings with Key Northern Stakeholders

In addition to the regular Council meetings and Leaders' Roundtables, NADC members and staff meet with public and private organizations across northern Alberta to obtain their insight into current issues. Ray Danyluk, Chair, conducted a significant tour of Northwest Alberta, meeting with municipalities, individuals, industry, health, education and recreational authorities and boards. Highlights of these meetings were summarized and forwarded to the Premier, northern MLAs and Ministers.

PARTNERSHIPS

Inter-jurisdictional Initiatives

Alberta/Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development.

Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and Honorable Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Health and Social Services; Minister Responsible for Environment and Natural Resources, Northwest Territories are the co-chairs of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The NADC continued to work, as Alberta's secretariat for the MOU, with the Northwest Territories on transportation, tourism, skill development, resource development and research/innovation initiatives identified in the Memorandum.

The Northern Forum

The Northern Forum is an international consortium consisting of northern regional governments. Its mandate is to promote cooperation and exchange information on northern socio-economic issues and initiatives. The Northern Alberta Development Council continued to support the Minister's role as North American Vice-Chair of The Northern Forum. In 2004-2005, the NADC prepared an in-depth assessment of Alberta's involvement with The Northern Forum to assist with future planning. Council also began preparations for the 7th General Assembly of The Northern Forum to be held in Harbin, Heilongjiang, Peoples Republic of China in June 2005.

Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

Substantial progress was made to increase awareness and usage of the Northwest Corridor. Work on reopening the rail line between Dawson Creek, British Columbia and Hythe, Alberta is well underway. The Prince Rupert Port, Canada and the Government of British Columbia have taken significant steps toward establishing a container site at the Port. Efforts to promote building a highway connection between Rainbow Lake and Fort Nelson are continuing. During the past year, the NADC assisted the Corporation with the planning of its annual conference in High Level.

Northern Development Ministers' Forum

The NADC is the Secretariat for Alberta's participation as a member of the Northern Development Ministers' Forum. The Forum is composed of membership from seven provinces, three territories and the Federal Government. The 2004 Annual Conference was held in Chibougamau, Quebec in late October. The Ministers adopted an updated Action Plan that addresses priority projects which include northern transportation, recruitment and retention, and northern innovation. In partnership with other northern jurisdictions in Canada, the Northern Alberta Development Council designed, produced and distributed a Northern Awareness Enhancement Campaign Information package called *Focus North* to raise awareness of Canada's North among decision-makers.

Saskatchewan Northern Affairs

The Northern Alberta Development Council continues to explore possible areas of cooperation with Saskatchewan Northern Affairs. Alberta and Saskatchewan share many common interests and issues related to development of the north and there is an opportunity to share information and collaborate to address these common areas.

Working with Northern Organizations

Northern Alberta Municipalities

The Northern Alberta Development Council acts as the Secretariat for the Northwest Alberta Mayors and Reeves Group. The Council assisted with meeting logistics, coordination of follow-up actions and research into areas of interest expressed by the mayors and reeves.

Regional Economic Alliances

The NADC worked with regional economic alliances to advance northern resource development. In April 2004, the NADC updated and presented "Opportunities for Northern

Alberta Associated with Economic Development in the Northwest Territories” at Peace Region Economic Development Alliance Annual General Meeting.

Northeast and Northwest Interdepartmental Groups

The NADC participated in semi-annual meetings of service providers in northeast and northwest Alberta. Participants discussed how to collaborate on common issues and how to coordinate approaches on such issues as regional economic and social development, research needs and staff training.

Regional Issues Working Group (RIWG)

The Council continued to participate in this very important committee that addresses specific infrastructure and transportation needs in the Fort McMurray region.

Grizzly Regional Economic Development Alliance (GROWTH)

The Northern Alberta Development Council is a member of the Grizzly Regional Economic Development Alliance and participates in regular meetings. GROWTH is made up of eleven partners including the Town of Swan Hills, Woodland County and Pembina Hills School Board, which are part of the NADC area. GROWTH accomplishments for the past year include: completion of reports for Agricultural Diversification, Recreational Tourism and Senior Care sectors; update of the Regional Business Directory; and participation in national and international trade shows.

Canadian Circumpolar Institute (CCI)

The Canadian Circumpolar Institute operates out of the University of Alberta to coordinate and monitor research in the Arctic region. The University of Alberta (U of A) has been a leader in northern research. Northern Peoples, environments and economies are experiencing rapid change. The CCI has been instrumental in developing a Northern Strategy for: research excellence; quality education; and recruitment of graduate students, advisors and faculty. Current projects and program themes include: environmental change and its impacts; social and cultural resilience and adaptation; as well as resource and economic development. The NADC is a member of the advisory committee for the Institute and provides input into initiatives.

Northern Opportunities and Initiatives

Transportation

Further studies are underway on the engineering cost to rebuild the Watino Rail connection between Girouxville and Wanham. Considerable emphasis was placed on the importance of the future use of the Edmonton City Centre Airport. The Council is continuing its efforts to increase the awareness of the need for greater investment in northern highways to ensure Northern Alberta continues its considerable contribution to the Alberta economy.

Housing

Northern communities have identified housing as a priority issue for the current and future development of Northern Alberta. In response, the NADC initiated research into housing issues in Northern Alberta. The NADC surveyed 21 municipalities, 4 Métis Settlements, and 14 social

housing management bodies in the NADC region. Respondents were asked about their role in housing and the issues, challenges, strategies, and desired changes or assistance needed in performing their role. The research confirmed that communities throughout Northern Alberta face a range of housing issues and challenges.

Specific concerns include:

- the lack of social affordable housing for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals and families;
- the lack of affordable and adequate housing for low to moderate-income individuals and families as a barrier to economic growth; and,
- the lack of agreement on how to achieve more affordable housing in Northern Alberta.

A summary of issues was prepared and shared with the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports in March 2005. Further follow-up is planned for 2005-2006.

Value-Added Agriculture

Value-added opportunities abound in the NADC region. Work continues with the Alberta Natural Health Agricultural Network in the testing and development of new crops. Research to obtain data and information for a report on the status of agriculture in Northern Alberta has been completed.

The profiling of Peace Region products and the development of market niches through the Branding the Peace initiative is well under way. Many organizations, both government and private, from the Peace Regions of British Columbia and Alberta are actively involved in this initiative. The Brand was officially unveiled in the spring of 2005. This project raises the Peace Regions competitive advantages, and the benefits and opportunities of adding value to agricultural production among entrepreneurs, investors.

Forestry

Forest resource management was identified as an increasingly contentious and very important northern issue. The NADC provided support to communities experiencing either closure or changes in their local forestry operations. This work will continue in 2005-2006.

Recycling

The NADC continued to work with Northern Coordinated Action for Recycling Enterprises (Northern CARE) to improve recycling strategies in northern Alberta. In 2004-2005 the Electronic Waste Recycling Initiative was implemented, the first program of its kind in North America.

Resource Development

In 2004-2005 a representative from the Northern Alberta Development Council attended a sustainable energy workshop in Dawson Creek, BC and shared resulting information with the NADC and the Lac Cardinal Regional Economic Development Board. The workshop covered both wind and solar energy options.

The Council also participated in the establishment of a Natural Resource Education Society for Northeast Alberta as well as Northwest Forest Education Societies. These groups of interested business and industry people, government agencies, and community organizations promote increased public awareness of the boreal forest through boreal forest education.

Telecommunications

Northern Communities and organizations are looking forward to the completion of the Alberta SuperNet. The Council will continue to monitor the progress of this initiative as well as the usage of the SuperNet once it is completed.

Water Management

Water management has been identified as a major environment issue for northern Alberta. The NADC continued to work with economic development organizations and other Ministries to promote northern concerns.

PROMOTING AWARENESS

NADC Newsletter

The NADC produces a quarterly newsletter called *Northern Developments* which is distributed across northern Alberta. The newsletter is sent to northern businesses, industries, municipal governments, Aboriginal organizations, community groups and government departments. It provides information on current projects and programs being undertaken by the Council.

MLA Updates

In March 2005, the NADC members and staff met with Northern MLAs to discuss opportunities, challenges and issues specific to the North. The Council also provided the MLAs with information about Council activities through the quarterly publication of the *Northern MLA's Update*.

NADC Website

The Northern Alberta Development Council updated and enhanced its website on a regular basis. The website contains information related to northern student bursary programs and northern-based statistics, as well as publications, newsletters and news releases. Between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2005, the NADC website received 176,675 hits.

Opportunity North

Opportunity North website and materials, designed to support northern employers in their recruitment efforts, were updated and reproduced in preparation for distribution to northern employers. The Opportunity North website received 154,645 hits in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The websites have proven a valuable tool for providing information and profiling the North.

Challenge North 2006

The NADC hosts a major conference every three years to get input from northern stakeholders on strategic directions to advance development in the North. Planning for the Challenge North 2006 Conference is well underway. The theme for this Conference is *Today's Promise - Tomorrow's Reality* and it will be held in High Level on April 4-6, 2006. The Conference will provide business and community leaders from across the region with a forum to discuss challenges and opportunities they believe are critical to the future growth of northern Alberta.

Opportunities Seminars

Opportunities Seminars that focused on a broad range of northern opportunities were held in Lac La Biche and Swan Hills. These two-day workshops provided participants with exposure to local programs, services and initiatives that can help them take advantage of the economic development potential. The Lac La Biche Seminar (February 2005) focused on value-added agricultural opportunities. Presenters spoke on topics such as market gardens and potential tourism promotion, the growing of herbs and botanicals, and woodlot production. The Swan Hills Seminar (March 2005) included presentations on seniors housing, tourism, and value-added initiatives.

NORTHERN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

NADC Bursary Programs

The NADC offers bursary programs in collaboration with Alberta Advanced Education. Northern bursary programs include the Northern Student Supplement, the NADC Bursary Program, the Bursary Partnerships Program, and Bursaries for Medical Students and Pharmacy Students. All NADC Bursary programs (except the Northern Student Supplement and Practicum Placement funding) require recipients to live and work in Northern Alberta for a period of time upon completion of their studies. Bursary recipients' return service rates are discussed under Performance Measures.

In 2004-2005, the NADC and three northern Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) (Aspen, Northern Lights and Peace Country) co-sponsored the Northern Health Care Practicum Placement Pilot Program to encourage health care students to complete their practicum placements in Northern Alberta.

Results for the 2004-2005 NADC Bursary Programs are summarized below.

- The Northern Student Supplement encourages first-and second-year students from Northern Alberta to pursue a post-secondary education and reduces their level of student debt. In 2004-2005, 480 students from Northern Alberta received the Northern Student Supplement. Average funding per student was \$1,211, for a total of \$581,210.

- The NADC Bursary Program and the Bursary Partnerships Program (BPP) encourage students to train in occupations with shortages of northern labour. In 2004-2005, 132 return service bursaries were awarded to Northern Alberta students from the NADC Bursary Program. The total value of the NADC Bursaries for 2004-2005 was \$393,000 (130 Bursaries of \$3,000 each and 2 Bursaries of \$1,500 each). The Bursary Partnership Program involves 35 Northern Alberta businesses, community and educational organizations. Funding support for the BPP in 2004-05 was \$243,00 comprising \$133,700 from sponsors and \$110,200 from the NADC. A total of 105 bursaries were awarded from the BPP in 2004-2005.
- The NADC Bursary for Medical Students was introduced in 2003-2004. In 2004-2005, the second year of the program, three co-sponsored Medical Bursaries, valued at \$10,000 each, were awarded through this program.
- The NADC Bursary for Pharmacy Students is a new program introduced in 2004-2005. It matches sponsor bursaries of \$3,000 for a total of \$6,000. Two co-sponsored Pharmacy Bursaries were awarded in the first year of the program.
- In its first full year in 2004-2005, the Northern Health Care Practicum Placement Pilot program provided funding support totaling \$54,612 to 51 students (an average of \$1,070 per student) completing a practicum placement with one of the three participating RHAs.

Awards Booklet

A new Awards booklet was developed and distributed to Northern high school students as well as Alberta Service Centres and college awards offices. This Booklet contains information to help those interested in pursuing a post-secondary education find the necessary funding.

Northern Links

Northern LINKS is a funding program coordinated by the Northern Alberta Development Council. Its purpose is to encourage students to complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. In 2004-2005, 149 projects were approved allocating nearly \$390,000 toward projects such as campus tours, student liaisons, workshops and speakers. This represents an increase of 44 projects from the previous year. Over ten thousand students were directly affected by projects with more than 4300 evaluation forms filled out. From the evaluation feedback the overall effectiveness rating was 7.5 (out of ten) as determined from the question: "How well did this project encourage you to further your studies?"

Of the projects that proceeded, there were fifty campus tours (average student satisfaction rating of 7.8); thirty student liaison/mentorship projects (average effectiveness rating of 8.0); a dozen speaker/presentation projects (average rating of 6.9); nine career fairs (rating of 7.4); three retreats (rating of 8.6) and support to attend three skills competitions (rating of 8.6).

Evaluation results were similar to 2003-2004, however the number of student liaison projects doubled and showed a significant increase in the effectiveness of helping students reach career goals. Providing assistance to attend Skills Competitions was a new type of project. This benefited students by directly exposing them to trade skills activities.

Speaker Presentations

Over a dozen speaker presentations made directly to students were supported. These varied from talks on specific career choices and life choices to motivational speakers at conferences. *Northern LINKS* helped sponsor Laurie Gaucher and Wendy Big Charles who used their mountain climbing experiences to talk at ten schools about goal setting, overcoming obstacles and the completion of education. *Northern LINKS* helped the Science Alberta Foundation bring Canadian astronaut Dr. Roberta Bondar and John Acorn, the “Nature Nut” to speak at the 2004 Wood Buffalo Science Festival, where nearly 2,900 students participated.

Workshops for Students

As part of the *Northern LINKS* program, 34 workshops were sponsored in schools across the north to motivate students in their studies and encourage them to complete high school and pursue advanced education. Thousands of students participated in these workshops which included exercises and interaction components.

Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse is a joint initiative that partners the NADC and the five Northern post-secondary institutions to conduct research related to education and employment trends. Included in this research was a major initiative involving a wide scale post-secondary survey, analysis and results report. This survey has been extended to the fall of 2005 with the final report to be available to the colleges in October 2005. The NADC coordinated the activities of the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse.

Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)

The Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF) is a non-profit, non government organization striving to establish forest industry standards in training. Membership includes 60 industry representatives such as: contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, educational institutions and government representatives. The NADC acts as an advisor to WOLF.

In 2004-2005, WOLF delivered courses on Water Crossing, Water Quality, Log Quality and Equipment Maintenance to 187 students; formed partnerships with a similar certification organization in New Zealand and with the Petroleum Institute Training Service (PITS); had a presence at six trade shows; developed relationships with other Western Canadian educational institutions; and acquired additional simulator technology.

Youth Apprenticeship Program

Northern Alberta junior high students will be able to explore career options and gain valuable work experience through the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) that was launched in September 2004. This Pilot Program includes nearly 250 students in five schools in the communities of High Prairie, Lac La Biche and Wabasca/Desmarais. Through YAP, Grade 7 and 8 students will have access to work experience placements, apprenticeship positions, and mentorship or job-shadowing opportunities offered by local businesses. The project also involves business tours and demonstrations by certified tradespeople. Grade 9 students will have the chance to begin apprenticing in a trade or training in an agriculture-related field. This initiative is a result of a joint partnership between Alberta Education and the Northern Alberta Development Council.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Industry Development

The Northern Alberta Development Council continued to provide support to the northern tourism industry through board participation with the Alberta North Tourism Destination Region. The Council serves in an advisory role with Alberta North and uses that organization's close relationships with northern tourism operators and organizations to guide their role in northern tourism industry development. The NADC continued to support and work to improve northern and rural tourism development initiatives. They partnered with Travel Alberta North to attend Canada's West Marketplace, held in Edmonton in December of 2004. The Council participated in other provincial planning processes to ensure coordination of strategy development and consideration of northern and aboriginal tourism issues

The NADC's follow-up work is focused in the priority areas of product development, industry training and encouraging coordinated support for service delivery to the northern tourism industry. In 2004-2005 the NADC increased its participation with the marketing committee and served on Travel Alberta's ALTO Award Committee that recognizes Provincial tourism excellence. A focus for the future will be to increase the Aboriginal component of future Alberta tourism initiatives.

The NADC reported on tourism developments to the Co-chairs of the Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Development. Staff worked on projects related to increasing "fly-drive" traffic, Aboriginal Tourism and improving tourism highway signage.

Deh Cho Travel Connection

The NADC provides organizational, administrative and technical support to the Deh Cho Travel Connection group, an inter-jurisdictional tourism marketing society, involving the Northwest Territories, Northeastern British Columbia and Alberta. The group's work focuses on the promotion of the circle tour route. The NADC Chairs this group.

As Chair of the Deh Cho Travel Connection, the NADC is responsible for the communication and administrative functions of the group and has made strides in terms of the level of participation in the group and its overall effectiveness. The NADC is also an active participant on the group's marketing and administrative committees. The Deh Cho Travel Connection group met twice during the year in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. They developed their annual business/marketing plan, distributed, redesigned and reprinted the circle tour brochure, continued to develop the website, attended four consumer shows to promote this inter-jurisdictional initiative and made several presentations to tourism stakeholders. In 2004-2005 the NADC increased awareness of the Deh Cho as a touring route among Alberta Visitor Information Centre staff, trade show consumers, and European tour operators.

Northern Alberta Tourism Research Centre Project

The Northern Alberta Development Council has been involved on the steering committee of a group working to establish a tourism research centre in northern Alberta for three years. The Northern Alberta Tourism Research Centre (NATRC) will be an organization that addresses the tourism research and data needs of regional businesses, agencies and communities. The governing group will be made up of public and private sector stakeholders and act as a broker of and clearing house for tourism research and data. The ultimate purpose of the organization is to foster tourism development in the region.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

NADC Performance Measures assess the contribution of NADC efforts to the advancement of Northern interests and the effectiveness of the NADC's Bursary programs.

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

Northern leaders, NADC project partners and stakeholders were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with "the NADC's contribution to advancing northern interests. Respondents were asked to express their satisfaction level on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=very dissatisfied; 10=very satisfied). The average satisfaction rating was 8.2 out of 10, which represents a slight increase from last year (2003-2004 = 8.1). This exceeds the business planning target of 80%.

The NADC Clients and Partners Survey was a random telephone survey conducted by an independent consultant. During April 2005, 126 of 148 identified project partners, stakeholders and Northern leaders were surveyed. The response rate was 85% and results are considered reliable to within +/-5% at a 95% confidence interval.

Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary recipients' return service rate

The NADC Bursary includes a requirements for students to enter into a reciprocal agreement to work in Northern Alberta for a period of time upon completion of their education.

The return service rate measures compliance with their obligation. The rate includes both those students who are completing their return service and those who have fulfilled their obligation. It should be noted that students who do not fulfill their return service obligations are required to repay any bursaries received.

Return service rates are calculated based on bursaries received by students who graduated in the previous three years. The current return service rate for the NADC Bursary is 78% which represents an increase of 4% from last year and exceeds the business planning target of 75%.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Many communities in Northern Alberta are experiencing substantial growth, while at the same time others are trying to maintain their population and industry or even declining. The NADC members and staff will continue its efforts to advance the northern social and economic development.

Priorities for the coming year include: transportation and infrastructure; sustained, efficient and value-added development of existing economic sectors; innovation to create new opportunities (tourism and knowledge-based businesses); trade and market development; improved access to education, skill development and health services; focused labour recruitment and retention; enhanced community capacity; and Aboriginal inclusion. Pan-Northern transportation, infrastructure and housing challenges must be addressed to realize the full potential of Northern growth corridors benefiting the whole Alberta economy.

