
Northern Alberta Development Council



**April 9, 10 & 11, 2003
Fort McMurray, Alberta**

Conference Proceedings



Message from the Chair of the
Northern Alberta Development Council

Gary Friedel,
Member of the Legislative Assembly for Peace River

I am pleased to present you with a copy of the Conference Proceedings for **Challenge NORTH 2003: Opportunities – Strategies – Success.**

In my opening remarks, I noted, “*We need to develop strategies to maximize our many northern opportunities, and turn them into enhanced economy and quality of life.*” The Conference provided a chance for us to meet with leaders from the private and public sectors to discuss northern issues, and to build on the significant progress we have made in past years.

The strength and perseverance of a collective voice is an important factor in creating awareness of northern opportunities, issues, and challenges, as well as promoting northern solutions. Your advice on effective strategies for development will help the Northern Alberta Development Council establish priorities for its business plan for the next three years.

I look forward to seeing the recommendations from the Conference implemented in the near future. With your involvement, I am sure we will realize the opportunities and overcome the challenges.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Friedel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary Friedel,
Chair
NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MLA for Peace River

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TO ADD: Northern Alberta Development Council Area Map

Introduction and Opening Remarks

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a regional development council with a focus on advancing the development of the northern economy. The NADC acts as a catalyst to identify, prioritize and analyze northern issues and opportunities. This is done in partnership with the private sector, communities, Aboriginal groups, government departments, northern jurisdictions and other agencies.

The NADC holds four or five leaders' roundtable meetings throughout the North on an annual basis, as well as a "**Challenge NORTH Conference**" every three years. "**Challenge NORTH 2003: Opportunities – Strategies – Success**" provided an opportunity for leaders of northern communities, industry, service providers and government to discuss key northern development challenges and opportunities. Speakers presented their perspectives of the influence of economics, relationships and other factors on the development of the north. This conference will help establish priorities and strategic directions to guide future development of northern Alberta.

Past NADC Members (2002-2003)

Gary Friedel, Chair; M.L.A. for Peace River
Art Avery
Sandra Cardinal
Doris Courtoreille
Berkley Ferguson
Ernie Isley
Pete Merlo
Gary Pollock
Michael Procter
Al Toews

Present NADC Members (2003-2004)

Gary Friedel, Chair; M.L.A. for Peace River
Sandra Cardinal
Doris Courtoreille
Ron Faulkner
Berkley Ferguson
Wendell MacEachern
Pete Merlo
Mike Mihaly
Gary Pollock
Maurice Rivard

OPENING REMARKS

Gary Friedel,
Chair, Northern Alberta Development Council
M.L.A. for Peace River

Mr. Friedel welcomed delegates and thanked everyone for attending Challenge NORTH 2003. Special thanks were extended to conference sponsors, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the NADC staff members, hotel staff, and the many volunteers who assisted with the Conference.

Honourable Guy Boutilier,
Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs,
M.L.A. for Fort McMurray

Minister Boutilier told delegates that, "Fort McMurray's slogan, '*We Have the Energy*,' truly captures the spirit of who we are, what we are and how we do it – through energy." Forums such as Challenge NORTH 2003 are very important in capturing the spirit of the North, as each northerner is an ambassador in terms of promoting what Northern Alberta has to offer. He affirmed that

people in the south know the kind of development that Northern Alberta is providing to the rest of Alberta, and to the rest of Canada.

Doug Faulkner,
Mayor, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Mr. Faulkner welcomed fellow mayors and reeves. He noted that the theme of Challenge NORTH 2003, "*Opportunity – Strategies – Success*," is similar to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's vision, which is "*A dynamic region with opportunity for all*." He noted that the opportunities for all are abounding.

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

Eric Newell,
Chairman and CEO,
Syncrude Canada Ltd.

Mr. Newell discussed northern opportunities in context with Syncrude and the Alberta oil sands.

“While the oil sands have presented opportunity from the time human beings first laid eyes on the resource, it’s taken a long time to figure it out.”

“Today the oil sands are a widely recognized source of energy security and economic prosperity for the region and even for Canada. The resource has been, and will remain, a huge source of opportunity for the people of northern Alberta.”

Mr. Newell shared his perceptions of success:

- rely on the ingenuity and commitment of others and do not work alone;
- learn from the successes and failures of those who came before you, then strive to improve;
- do not avoid conflict but do your best not to breed antagonism – respect and engage your stakeholders and understand that they may be able to teach you a better way; and
- do the right thing (e.g. improving the environment).

The Alberta oil sands owe a lot to the people who lived in the 1920’s and 1930’s – to those who solved the mystery of how to separate oil from sand. Organizations such as the Alberta Research Council, the visionaries, and history, in general, represent the foundations for what is built today.

The National Oil Sands Task Force is an excellent example of an effective, united economic development initiative with a northern focus. The Task Force involves stakeholders from all areas – stakeholders whose interests lie in the economic, in the social and in the environmental development of the Fort McMurray area. These stakeholders unite around a common objective and work together to achieve a vision.

We can learn some valuable lessons by building on success and by blazing new innovative trails. On the basis of continuous improvement, Syncrude is the world’s largest producer of oil derived from oil sands, and Canada’s largest single source of crude oil.

Northern Opportunities

More than 70 oil sands projects valued at \$87 billion have been announced industry-wide. Of that, \$24 billion in projects have been completed since 1996; and an additional \$7 billion are under construction and will be completed within the next year or two. That leaves \$65 billion worth of northern opportunity to come.

The oil sands industry is expected to be responsible for an average of 135,000 highly paid, highly skilled jobs between 1996 and 2015.

To the year 2025, it is forecasted that \$390 billion in total revenue will flow from the oil sands industry to all levels of government. This is based on a conservative \$18 to \$20 U.S. dollars per barrel (over the past year, the price per barrel has been riding up to \$30 U.S.). This revenue helps sustain Canada’s health and social programs.

With Syncrude alone spending over \$1 billion per year for goods and services in mainly Northern Alberta, there are plenty of opportunities for northern development.

Syncrude represents a source of significant employment and economic opportunity for Aboriginal communities and it has come to rely heavily on the workforce in its own backyard. Recent figures indicate that Aboriginal employment in the oil sands has increased approximately 50% over the past four years and that contracts awarded to Aboriginal firms have increased by about 250%. Last year alone, Aboriginal firms did over \$250 million worth of business with oil sands companies. The Capacity Building Agreement between the Athabasca Tribal Council and regional developers aims to increase the capacity of the Aboriginal community to deal with an influx of oil sands expansion.

Challenges – Opportunities to Excel

At Syncrude, challenges fall under corporate social responsibility. Things like respect, empathy, inclusion and innovation are focused on. The concerns and priorities of their people and stakeholders are considered, as well as how the environment should be treated. Challenges help build an appropriate corporate culture - a way of doing business - and, ultimately, an opportunity to excel.

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

The oil sands are challenged to abide by environmental rules and regulations, to meet public expectations, and to do the right thing – these are not challenges so much as responsibilities and opportunities. For example:

- Across the industry, about \$100 million per year is currently spent on oil sands research and development to look at ways to lessen the industry's impact on the environment. As a result of this research and development, the industry can produce one barrel of bitumen at 40% less energy than it did just five years ago.
- As a result of co-generation, the oil sands industry is putting electricity back into the grid to supply other western Canadian consumers.
- As a result of improved tailings management and reclamation techniques, land is being reclaimed earlier, land disturbance has been reduced and the size of tailings and recycle ponds has been reduced.
- Environmental consideration has put Syncrude into the wood bison business. Syncrude was encouraged by stakeholders to put bison onto the land rather than scrub spruce trees. With over 300 head now, these wood bison will provide a substantial revenue stream for Fort McKay for years to come.

Dr. Michael Percy,
Past President, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce;
Dean, Faculty of Business, University of Alberta

“When you look at the economic growth in the Province today, it certainly is driven by what has been happening in Northern Alberta over the past two years.”

Dr. Percy discussed Northern Alberta's resources sector as an economic driver, the procurement of goods and services as an economic driver, and policy challenges facing the north.

How Do We Make People Aware of the Importance of Northern Alberta's Economic Activity?

Canadians in general do not appear to understand the importance of the northern resources sector as a driver of growth. Even within the Province of Alberta, the significance of the economic activity happening in Northern Alberta to the expansion of large urban centres and to the continued expansion of the Calgary-Edmonton corridor is not clearly understood.

Two fundamentally important challenges for Northern Alberta are:

1. How to demonstrate that the northern resources sector is a generator of wealth and economic activity second to none in Canada; and
2. How to dispel the belief that resources are “sunset” industries and instead convince people that natural resources do indeed provide a viable and sustainable basis for growth in the longer term.

Answer: With Data Showing the Extent to Which Northern Alberta Generates Growth

The Northern Alberta resources sector generates growth through three basic channels. If the data related to these channels was pulled together, it could be used to demonstrate the relative importance of this economic activity.

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

The Channels:

1. Gross capital formation (investment) is currently the dominant channel. Approximately 31% of the provincial gross domestic product arises from fixed capital formation. Alberta's economic activity over the past two years has been driven by investments in Northern Alberta. The value of investments in Northern Alberta's resources sector (from Red Deer north) in March 2003 was \$81.7 billion. \$52.5 billion of that is in the gas, oil and oil sands. A significant part of the remaining investments also arise in the North (i.e. pipelines, forestry, etc.).
2. Operating expenditures (procurement of goods and services) is, in the longer term, a more important channel. Growth can be demonstrated by looking at the gross expenditures of major companies, by looking at the allocation of those expenditures by category (i.e. by category of business, distributor, manufacturer) and by looking at the regional distribution of those expenditures in the continuing longer term.
3. Revenue flow to all levels of government through royalties, and through personal, corporate and property taxes. These revenues are recycled back, in varying degrees, to the regions that generate the income.

Policy Issues – Common Themes

Not all regions or municipalities across the North are experiencing rapid growth and accelerated economies. With such differences across the northern region, it can be difficult to provide an integrated development strategy. There are, however, some common issues:

- **Meeting the challenges of growth**, especially the demand for population-sensitive infrastructure and transportation access. A fundamental problem that faces high-growth regions is in accommodating and managing growth, specifically in managing the financing of the growth in a timely fashion so we don't abort it through supply bottlenecks (i.e. in residential or urban infrastructure).
- **Environmental issues.** We need to move away from looking at projects in terms of their contribution and move towards looking at the cumulative impact of incremental projects. Dr. Percy suggested that the Alberta Research Council and similar organizations focus on setting

benchmarks and on providing a longer-term approach to assessing these issues.

There needs to be more integration of federal and provincial environmental assessment processes.

It will become increasingly important to look at how water will be allocated across competing uses and for the provinces to bring in a water management strategy sooner rather than later.

There needs to be certification and quality control processes (i.e. external benchmarking of environmental stewardship) in order to demonstrate commitment to environmental quality.

Many significant issues remain with regard to Kyoto that could cause some uncertainty in terms of investment in the North.

- **Tenure/resource pricing issues.** Stability in the generic fiscal regime is an absolute requirement if the growth path we are on is to be sustained. There is going to be some real pressures on the forestry industry on how to structure the sector to allow us to export to the United States and, at the same time, allow us to be competitive with what British Columbia and other provinces might propose.
- **Partnerships with the Aboriginal population.** Given the presumed labour supply shortage for the future, these partnerships are very sensible and will increasingly benefit all.
- **Attraction and retention of skilled labour.** Amenities, the quality of life, the social infrastructure (i.e. quality of education) and access to health care are going to be increasingly important to attract and retain labour in general and skilled labour in particular.
- **Competitiveness of the resources sector.** The bottom line for continued sustainability of wealth generation is the competitiveness of the resources sector.

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

We need continuous investment in research and development, as well as an assurance that research and development occurs, to ensure that cost structures of industries within the northern resources sector fall relative to competitors' cost structures.

Stability in tenure and royalty regimes is fundamentally important, as is a competitive tax regime.

Policy Responses

It is critical to document the relative contribution that the northern resources sector makes towards Alberta's and towards Canada's incremental growth. This can be demonstrated by the levels of investment, procurement expenditures and by the level of federal, provincial and local tax revenues that are generated by the resources sector in any given year.

In addition, by documenting the sustainability of growth arising from resources, we can create awareness of the sustainability and environmental stewardships that are happening within the sector. We need to make people aware that the resources sector is not a "sunset" industry.

Dr. Percy noted that there needs to be a visible commitment to environmental values and that these should be demonstrated by external benchmarking – either through entities such as the Alberta Research Council, by certification processes in the forest industry or by the ISO quality criteria in the energy industry.

An underlining factor is the necessity for partnerships and strategic alliances (i.e. with Chambers of Commerce, with other regions that are experiencing rapid growth or whose growth is driven by northern economic activity, etc.).

The Northern Alberta Development Council is a key player in policy responses. With interests spanning the entire region, it can articulate common themes that are appropriate for the region as a whole.

Examples of the Northern Resources Sector Supply Chain

Dr. Percy discussed the results of two supply chain studies completed by the University of Alberta, School of Business.

In the study on Syncrude, the company's procurement expenditures, for manufactured goods alone, equalled \$265 million – this is 2.4% of all energy-related manufacturing in Alberta. 32% of the \$265 million went to Alberta firms, 27% went to the rest of Canada and 41% went to foreign companies. In the study done for Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd. (Alpac), AlPac's procurement expenditures on goods and services equalled \$194 million. 52% of that remained within Alberta, 21% went to the rest of Canada and 27% was spent internationally.

How Do We Get More Wealth to "Stick" in the North?

- Through responsive funding mechanisms at the provincial and federal levels of government. So that, when revenues are generated in the North and the pressures of growth emerge, there are expeditious ways of dealing with those pressures.
- Through participation in the procurement or supply chain of big and small resource companies.
- By promoting policies that enhance the competitiveness of the resources industry and local businesses. Ultimately, the more competitive the resources sector is, the higher it can pay its employees who, in turn, lessen the issue of attraction and retention of labour.
- Through community building by local governments and the resources sector. This has a very positive effect on retention of skilled labour.
- By fostering strategic alliances between northern firms and local governments with southern counterparts so there can be joint lobbying and promotion.

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

Jim Boucher,
Grande Chief of the Athabasca Tribal Council;
Chief of the Fort McKay First Nation

Chief Boucher discussed the benefits of the Athabasca oil sands and provided insight into the benefits of partnerships such as the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) Agreement.

Benefits of the Athabasca Oil Sands

The Athabasca oil sands are a key component of Alberta's and of western Canada's economic future. It provides a large new oil source and, as such, provides stability with regard to oil production. The oil sands will be Canada's main oil supply as reserves of conventional sources dwindle. Production from the oil sands is forecasted to grow from 350,000 barrels per day to over one million barrels per day by the year 2010.

“The oil sands provides Aboriginal communities with opportunities by way of jobs and socio-economic benefits.”

In fact, the oil sands provide significant socio-economic benefits throughout Canada – there is a lot of procurement being done in Ontario and Quebec, and a large part of the industry's infrastructure money is expended in Alberta. Since 1996, \$87 billion worth of projects have been announced and/or are under consideration. Of the \$87 billion, \$24 billion worth of projects have been completed, \$7 billion are under construction and \$56 billion are under consideration. This converts to upwards of \$200 billion in government revenue. The job forecast for 2020 is 60,000 per year.

Thanks to research and development by the industry, there have been steep breakthroughs in terms of oil sands technology. And, because the industry in general is committed to exemplary environment performance, we have seen increased consideration for the environment.

In addition, there has been considerable improvement to stakeholder relations and an industry-wide commitment to sustainable development.

Sharing the Benefits – The Athabasca Tribal Council Agreement

In 1999, the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) signed an agreement with a number of industry participants (i.e., Suncor, Syncrude, AIPac, etc.) and with the local, provincial and federal governments. The development of this framework, which identifies and addresses the interests of all involved, has brought about significant benefits for Aboriginal communities in the areas of:

- employment;
- education and training;
- business development;
- resolution of environmental issues; and
- addressing First Nations issues.

The ATC was prompted towards such an Agreement because of its concerns with:

- cumulative effects assessments with respect to environmental issues;
- the lack of consultation on environmental matters;
- employment opportunities;
- education and training opportunities;
- economic and entrepreneurship opportunities for Aboriginal people;
- the substandard community infrastructure and facilities within the communities;
- the limited benefit from resource development – most of the benefits were going south; and
- settlement of outstanding claims.

Essentially, the ATC wanted to work through a number of opportunity areas in the partnership:

- continuous improvement to the number of Aboriginal jobs in the region;
- apprenticeship development and employment programs (careers, Aboriginal apprenticeships);
- development of integrated and regional needs assessment; and
- an implementation proposal.

The ATC Agreement provides for:

- continuous improvement in environmental performance;
- standards of consultation which have been developed and agreed to in concert with the Aboriginal community;

The North's Future: Exciting and Challenging

- incorporation of Industry Relations Companies (IRCs) within communities;
- regional cumulative effects guidelines which are currently underway with participation by all the parties who need to be involved; and
- resolving of land claims either through negotiation or through litigation (negotiations being the preferred route).

- to see effective and timely federal/provincial regulatory review processes;
- to address the skilled labour shortage and apprenticeship training problem;
- to address education priorities; and
- to address transportation and mobility.

Since the contract was signed, benefits to Aboriginal communities include:

- a 50% increase to the number of Aboriginal employees (from just under 800 in 1998 to a little over 1,200 in 2001) – this is direct employment with some of the major companies in the region;
- a 250% increase to Aboriginal contracts (in dollar value, the contracts rose from approximately \$60 million in 1998 to about \$250 million in 2001);
- a decrease to the length of service, from 9 to 6.5 years, as a result of the Aboriginal community being gainfully employed; and
- an increase to the average gross salary from approximately \$55,000 to \$65,000 per year being incurred by the Aboriginal community.

Signing of the ATC Agreement has been positive for the Aboriginal communities in Northern Alberta. The Agreement was recently renewed with an expanded list of participants from the industry.

There is still work that needs to be done. A long-term “benefits” agreement is being negotiated. This will provide a process for:

- the continuous improvement in the value of contracts awarded;
- the funding of the ATC Agreement and renewal of future agreements;
- addressing social and physical infrastructure needs and economic development; and
- the development of long-term “benefits sharing” solutions.

Further ATC priorities:

- to conclude the long-term benefits negotiations;
- resolution of land claims;
- to be very competitive (i.e. exports to the United States);

Advancing The North: The Northern Alberta Development Council's Focus

OVERVIEW

**Gary Friedel,
Chair, Northern Alberta Development Council;
M.L.A. for Peace River**

Mr. Friedel provided delegates with an overview of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) noting that the Council is comprised of ten members from across Northern Alberta.

“If someone else does the work for you, you might get some results; but if an individual or a community can be part of making it happen, it’s going to be a lot more sustainable.”

With a budget of just under \$2 million, partnerships and inter-agency working groups are key components of the work being done by the NADC. These partnerships and working groups give the players a pride of ownership and lend to successful projects. A lot of the work being done by the NADC is also funded through other Provincial Government departments (i.e. the Bursary Program through Alberta Learning).

Working with municipalities, local organizations, businesses, individuals and government agencies, the NADC acts as a catalyst to identify problems, concerns and solutions. The Council tries to prioritize these issues in terms of the best ways to deal with them. With coaching and assistance from local communities, the NADC follows up on the issues. The Council’s role then turns into a kind of brokerage system where it tries to match potential partners. A typical partnership could include a community or business with a concern, and a government agency that can help resolve the problem.

The NADC watches for trends of high concern and works with northern Albertans and government departments in these areas of concern. The Council works predominantly in the following areas:

- Transportation. While infrastructure ranks extremely high at community meetings, transportation is of particular concern.
- Attraction of skilled workforce/trained employees, the ability to provide on-the-job training, and retention of trained and skilled workers in the North.
- Tourism development. The Council works with communities to develop tourism.

- Human resources. This ties into attraction, retention and training.
- Infrastructure of various sorts, outside of transportation and highways.
- Value-added. There is a key emphasis on value-added, particularly in the agricultural sector.
- Aboriginal participation.

The NADC’s bursaries are a significant part of the recruiting program. They provide incentives to specific professionals to live in Northern Alberta. Many of the bursaries, while they started out being government-funded, are now partnerships with industry.

Through the *Northern LINKS* program, the Northern Alberta Development Council encourages young people to complete high school, makes them aware of training opportunities and helps them in their transition to post-secondary training.

BURSARIES

**Art Avery,
Past Member,
Northern Alberta Development Council**

Mr. Avery stated, *“I believe the greatest commodity is our young people. We have to always find ways to keep our young people in our community. One of these ways is by promoting education.”*

NADC offers four bursary programs to people living or willing to live in Northern Alberta. The total value of bursaries awarded by the NADC and its partners each year is over \$1.3 million. These bursaries focus on increasing skill development of northern employees and on meeting the recruitment needs of northern employers.

The Northern Student Supplement

The Northern Student Supplement is now in its fifth year. This program is a supplement to the Provincial Alberta Opportunities Bursary. The Northern Student Supplement is aimed at students from Northern Alberta who have a high financial need and who are entering their first or second year of post secondary education.

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It encourages students to enter and to continue their post secondary education by reducing their student loans by \$500 to \$1,500.

Close to 600 students received the Northern Student Supplement in 2002.

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) Bursary Program

The NADC Bursary Program is aimed at individuals interested in working in Northern Alberta. Each bursary is worth \$3,000, for a full academic year. Upon graduation, recipients must work in Northern Alberta for a minimum of one year for each bursary they receive.

This program has been running for close to 30 years and has assisted over 2,800 individuals. Approximately 115 NADC Bursaries are currently awarded each year.

The Selection Committee favours applicants who are studying for high demand occupations. These high demand areas are determined through contact with northern communities and with northern employers.

Over the past few years, the NADC Bursary Program has focused on the following key areas:

- Education. Approximately 20% of the Bursaries awarded go to students studying to be teachers.
- Health. Another 20% of the Bursaries go to students in health careers – primarily nursing.
- Technical. Students in engineering and technical programs receive another 20% of the bursaries.

The Bursary Partnerships Program

In partnership with the NADC, northern employers and community organizations can co-sponsor students through the Bursary Partnerships Program.

Through Bursary Partnerships:

- The NADC will match corporate/community sponsorships of between \$500 and \$1,500 per student for a maximum bursary of \$3,000.
- Sponsors are able to contact students directly to secure their expertise upon completion of their studies.
- Many sponsors have created bursaries to assist a member of their community get a College diploma or degree in return for service within the community.

This program has been available since 1983. Well over \$2 million worth of bursaries have been awarded through this program to over 800 students.

The Bursary for Medical Students Program

The Bursary for Medical Students is a new bursary that provides medical students with \$5,000 per year for each of their four years of medical training. Recipients are required to live and work in Northern Alberta for a minimum of one year for every year of bursary support they receive.

Community organizations and businesses may co-sponsor this scholarship to provide the recipient with up to \$10,000 per year. This could be used as a recruitment tool for health regions and communities wanting to entice medical school graduates to locate in their area.

NORTHERN LINKS

The *Northern LINKS* Program was established in 1999 to increase the skill level of northern Albertans.

Objectives of the Program:

- To encourage students to complete high school.
- To ease the transition from high school to post secondary school.

Funding through the *Northern LINKS* Program is available to schools, school jurisdictions, post secondary institutions, Aboriginal communities, Métis settlements, municipalities and community organizations. Projects most likely to receive funding are those that directly benefit students, have measurable objectives and have a demonstrated partnership for funding.

The *Northern LINKS* Program:

- provides up to \$450,000 annually;
- provides funding for up to 50% of total project costs to a maximum of \$40,000;
- targets grade nine to twelve students;
- benefits 2,000 to 3,000 Aboriginal students per year;
- projects less than \$5,000 are considered throughout the year and can be approved by the *Northern LINKS* staff at local NADC offices;

Advancing The North: The Northern Alberta Development Council's Focus

- projects over \$5,000 are considered three times per year and are reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of members from across Northern Alberta;
- recipients are required to enter into an agreement with the NADC, submit final reports and student evaluations; and
- success is measured through student evaluation.

Approximately 8,000 students participated in forty projects in the 2001-2002 school year. Out of the evaluations received, projects funded through the *Northern LINKS* Program received an average rating of 7.9 out of 10 for their effectiveness in helping to plan post secondary education or encouraging completion of studies.

Examples of *Northern LINKS* projects:

- Campus tours account for about 50% of the allotted funding and reach about 2,000 students each year.
- Career fairs receive close to 20% of the funding and reach about 2,000 students each year.
- Mentorship programs receive about 25% of the funding and benefit a few thousand students each year.

COMMUNICATIONS

**Ernie Isley,
Past Member,
Northern Alberta Development Council**

Mr. Isley noted that communication is extremely important to the work being done by the NADC.

“Through our communication with northerners, we are able to determine priorities, identify opportunities to advance northern development and address challenges that may influence what is happening in the North.”

How the Northern Alberta Development Council communicates with northerners:

- Quarterly newsletters provide information on the NADC's activities.
- Annual reports provide background on projects and programs undertaken by the NADC during the previous year.

- Updates to the NADC's annual business plans provide insight to the organization's goals and priorities for the next three years.
- Organization and/or assistance with the organization of workshops, seminars and conferences. These events provide the NADC with opportunities to hear about new projects, hear about work being done by other organizations and assist in identifying issues.
- Leaders' Roundtable meetings provide opportunities for organizations and individuals to make presentations to the Council's members. These meetings are organized in conjunction with the NADC's Regular meetings. They allow the Council to question presenters and learn more about their initiatives.
- Delegations at the NADC's Regular meetings provide the NADC with insight on specific topics. Delegates may provide recommendations on how the NADC can best assist them.
- NADC staff in Lac La Biche and Peace River and Council members from across Northern Alberta are available to discuss northern projects and issues.
- Continuous contact with northern Alberta Members of the Legislative Assembly (M.L.A.'s). In addition, activity updates are sent to the M.L.A.'s every two months and the NADC meets with them, as a group, once per year.
- The NADC website provides information on subjects such as northern bursaries, NADC publications and the *Northern LINKS* Program.
- The Challenge NORTH Conference brings northerners together once every three years to discuss northern development.

Mr. Isley noted that the NADC is always open to suggestions on how the Council can more effectively communicate with northerners.

Advancing The North: The Northern Alberta Development Council's Focus

PROJECTS

**Sandra Cardinal,
Member,
Northern Alberta Development Council**

Ms. Cardinal provided an overview of projects and initiatives involving the NADC.

"The NADC continues to take on various projects and initiatives that address the needs and advance opportunities in the North."

More detailed project information and many of the reports are available on the NADC's website.

NADC Projects and Initiatives:

- The Northern Highways Strategy. In cooperation with northern municipalities and industry, the NADC has proposed a strategy for the funding of northern highways with regard to the implementation of the North-western Canada Integrated Road Concept Plan. The Highways Strategy is based on the use of special, one-time funding as opposed to the use of Alberta Transportation's annual budget and/or committed project funding.
- Opportunity North. With the guidance of a cross-sector employer committee, the NADC developed high quality recruitment materials that provide an overview of community and work life in Northern Alberta. Recruitment materials include a website (www.opportunitynorth.ca), CD, brochure and business card.
- Opportunities Seminars. These seminars provide northern communities with a broad range of business and employment information. They foster improved community and business relationships to help diversify and benefit regional economies.
- Confined Feeding Operations. A study commissioned by the NADC confirmed that increasing the production of livestock and intensive livestock operations is potentially an environmentally and economically viable option for Northern Alberta. The study had a significant impact on identifying the need for water management studies. As a result of the study's findings, the NADC is assisting producers and

government officials prepare a strategy to attract beef producers to Northern Alberta.

- Water Management in Northern Alberta. The NADC led a collaborative initiative involving federal, provincial and municipal governments and regional health and municipal services bodies. Findings brought about an increased awareness of issues regarding water management including gaps in available information. The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation and Administration department of the Federal Government was able to secure funds to conduct groundwater mapping of the Northwest Boreal Region.
- Economic and Demographic Research. Data related to Northern Alberta is gathered on an on-going basis. This data, which is available to the public, can be used for marketing, business planning, assessing demographic trends, etc.

Cooperative Initiatives in Partnership with Other Stakeholders

The NADC assists and works with municipal governments, industries and community organizations on activities that advance economic development opportunities in Northern Alberta. The NADC has assisted by preparing business plans, providing support through participation, serving in an advisory role, working with steering committees and through follow-up.

Cooperative initiatives include:

- Northern Alberta Recycling Initiatives;
- Tourism Industry Development;
- Northern Alberta Tourism Research Centre Project;
- Northern Tourism Summit; and
- Value-Added Agriculture Opportunities in the Peace Region.

Working with Regional Groups:

The NADC participates in several regional working groups by providing input, feedback and support.

These regional groups and activities include:

- The Regional Issues Working Group (RIWG) which addresses transportation issues that affect development of the oil sands industry.
- The Regional Roads Committee – Regional Municipal of Wood Buffalo – regarding a northeast road network to serve the Municipality.

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- The Wood Buffalo Human Resource Management Board. The NADC co-hosted the Northern Focus Human Resources Management Conference in 2002.
- Healthy Lake Project in Lac La Biche – an environmental awareness project.
- Lac La Biche/Lakeland County Interpretive Centre – a development project to be used as a tourist attraction and as a community amenity.
- Athabasca Landing Foundation – a development project to be used as a tourist attraction and as a community amenity.
- Branding the Peace Project – a strategy to produce distinct branding and marketing of products produced in the Peace River Regions of British Columbia and Alberta.
- Alberta New Crops Network. A network for the new crops industry in Alberta.
- Pembina Hills Economic Development Initiative (GROWTH) – identifies economic development opportunities for the region.
- Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF) – establishes training and certification standards for forest equipment operators.

Initiatives to Increase Northern Skill Levels

- Northern Alberta Access to a Social Work Degree Program. The NADC provides organizational support to organizations in collaboration with the University of Calgary to offer a social work degree program to students from Northern Alberta.
- Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse. This joint initiative between the NADC and four Northern Alberta colleges provides the post-secondary institutions with industry trends and economic information to help them identify potential training programs so they can make decisions to modify or cancel existing programs.

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES

**Tom Baldwin,
Executive Director,
Northern Alberta Development Council**

Mr. Baldwin stated, *“Over the past few years, working with various jurisdictions across the North on northern issues has become a very important part of the work of the Northern Alberta Development Council.”*

Mr. Baldwin discussed some of these inter-jurisdictional relationships.

The Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Alberta-Northwest MOU was signed by the Premiers of Alberta and the Northwest Territories in 1998. The relationship continues to develop and flourish.

Initially, seven topics were chosen as priority items for this agreement: trade; tourism; economic development; resources; transportation; skill development; and health. Research and innovation was later added.

Alberta and the Northwest Territories have been able to move forward in the areas of tourism and skill development/education. The MOU has worked so well that the Co-chairs have recommended a five-year extension to allow the jurisdictions to move forward in the other areas. It was suggested that, if the Mackenzie Pipeline moves forward, there could be even greater interaction and opportunities for both jurisdictions.

The Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC)

The NCDC is a group that promotes northwest trade and transportation routes to ports at Prince Rupert, Kitimat and Stewart on British Columbia's northwest coastline. While there are challenges, development of this Corridor offers many advantages to producers in Northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Development of the Northwest Corridor could potentially increase tourism opportunities, increase access to resources and perhaps even enhance agricultural activities. In addition, containerization of

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the Corridor and the Port of Prince Rupert would open International and North American trade opportunities.

Some major initiatives of benefit to Northern Alberta include:

- The extension of Highway 58 from Rainbow Lake, Alberta to Fort Nelson, British Columbia.
- A study of agricultural potential in the area from Fort Vermilion, Alberta to Fort Nelson, British Columbia.
- Efforts to reopen the rail line between Hythe, Alberta and Dawson Creek, British Columbia.
- Containerization of the Northwest Corridor and Port of Prince Rupert.

The Northern Development Ministers Forum

About three years ago, Northern Development Ministers from across Canada met and formed the Northern Development Ministers Forum. The group meets annually to set priority areas and to move forward on a northern agenda for Canada. It was noted that issues related to the North are common across the country.

Current priority projects include:

- the strategic investment of infrastructure dollars with a focus on northern highways;
- recruitment and retention – a study of best practices; and
- a northern enhancement awareness campaign (in phase one, the campaign is currently aimed at making key decision-makers aware of the benefits that the northern regions bring to Canada as a whole).

Research and innovation will be discussed as a new priority area at the 2003 Northern Development Ministers Conference in Nunavut.

The Northern Forum

The Northern Forum is a group of northern regions from countries around the globe. The Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, is currently Vice-Chair for North America.

The Alberta Declaration was approved by The Northern Forum at the 2000 General Assembly in the City of Edmonton. The Declaration moved The Forum towards

northern economic development issues and, more specifically, towards consideration of northern tourism initiatives.

Paddy Meade, Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Ms. Meade discussed the direction of the Alberta Government from a business planning perspective, noting that, "By having a plan, you start to see what the future possibilities are." The building of successful partnerships was also discussed.

Alberta Government – From a Business Planning Perspective

"Within the Government, we are continually challenged to look at new and better ways of doing things and to look at how we can more holistically approach challenges."

Over the past decade, the Alberta Government has placed increased focus on results through goal-based planning and reporting. The Plans require a vision, goals, strategies and measurable performance targets – an example that can be used to address opportunities in the North. In addition, the Alberta Government went through reorganization at many levels to break down the "silo thinking" or turf wars.

The result is that departments work closer together toward common goals. There are now cross-government initiatives, there is a more open partnership approach, and there is the seeking of input from Albertans on the direction for the Government and how to get there.

In this year's business plan:

- Cross-ministry initiatives focus on Health Sustainability, Children and Youth, Economic Development (including a Rural Development Strategy), and the Aboriginal Policy Initiative.
- Budget priorities are based on preferences made known to the Government by Albertans and include:
 - Health care spending at \$7.3 billion;
 - Education spending at \$5 billion with \$32 million for the Alberta Student Loans Relief Benefit Program;

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- \$5.5 billion to be invested in capital projects over the next three years. Highlights include the Rural Transportation Partnership, a three-year resource road program, \$14 million to local bridges and \$14 million to Métis Settlement access roads;
- Children's Services funding at \$708 million; and
- Income Support to address the Alberta Seniors Benefit program, Supports for Independence and the development of affordable housing.
- Stability was a key word. There is an emphasis on the stable delivery of programs and services. The Sustainability Fund will alleviate the volatility of fiscal uncertainty brought on by fluctuating provincial revenues.
- There are no tax increases or no new taxes, and there are business tax decreases (Alberta continues to have the lowest overall tax burden in Canada).
- 37,000 new jobs are forecasted for Alberta in 2003 and an additional 100,000 jobs are forecasted by 2006.
- One of the Government's twelve primary goals is "Aboriginal communities in Alberta will be effective and self-reliant."

It is important to understand business planning when addressing northern development. Addressing challenges within organizations requires thoughtful planning and strategic thinking. Knowing the planning cycle of government can help communities understand how to promote issues of concern and how to align needs with already recognized priorities. Understanding how the government operates will also help organizations promote issues of concern.

Partnerships

Common objectives, complementary interests and having the right partners are key to successful partnerships:

"Be very clear about the objectives, understand where you want to go and keep that vision in front of you – create it together and hold yourselves accountable to it."

Getting your message out:

- plan collectively;
- be consistent;
- be aggressive;
- understand the Government's cycles; and build partnerships

Building successful partnerships includes sharing your vision up front and exploring the areas of flexibility. Communication is critical and needs to be done with a broad perspective.

Ms. Meade recognized the NADC for its leadership and support in building relationships. She noted that building relationships with key organizations and across jurisdictions is critical. "We can get there faster if we work together."

Trends, Barriers and Challenges To Northern Development

**Bill Smith,
Mayor,
City of Edmonton**

The theme of Mayor Smith's presentation was about working together in order to succeed. He reminded delegates that the City of Edmonton places a high priority on northern development and noted some of the ways in which the City is meeting northern needs and advancing northern prosperity.

“The heart of almost every successful venture is a good working relationship. The parties involved need to get together, they need to commit to a common vision, develop trust and do the things that will allow everyone to benefit.”

The City is committed to working with fellow northerners to reach shared goals. Mayor Smith noted the strong relationships already in place between the City of Edmonton and its “northern neighbours” and that he takes Edmonton's relationship with the North very seriously. “Edmonton's long-term success depends on the North's success. Jobs in the North lead to jobs in the south.”

Many of the City's concerns are the same as other northerners' concerns. For example, The City of Edmonton also:

- works to further diversify its economy so it can more easily manage market fluctuations in the energy industry;
- faces infrastructure challenges such as seeing the completion of road networks to speed and secure trade; and
- faces challenges in terms of accommodating the pace of population and economic growth.

“In short, our problems, our challenges, our successes are shared and the more we recognize this fact, the more we can ensure a prosperous future for all of Northern Alberta.”

City of Edmonton Initiatives

The City of Edmonton has put relationship building and partnerships with the North front and centre. A few City of Edmonton initiatives include:

- A Travelling Business Forum. City Council and administration will be visiting northern communities

to speak with local political and business leaders. In addition, the City will try to bring in leaders from the regional health authority, education field and transportation sector to help broaden the scope of discussions. The purpose of this initiative is to share technical experience and expertise in administration. Mr. Smith is looking forward to hearing what priorities are out there and to gaining a better understanding of specific goals and needs. In addition, Council will be looking for ways to promote common interests.

- **Project Germany.** This initiative draws investors from Germany to the Capital Region. Since this initiative began in 1999, the Region has brought in six investments benefiting Edmonton by approximately \$50 million. In addition, the Project has helped a German company form a partnership in the Northwest Territories. The City is excited about the potential to broaden the benefits to include other northern communities.
- **Meet the North Conference.** This initiative brings business leaders from the North and South together. Past *Meet the North* Conferences have been successful in sparking new business relationships. This year's Conference will put a greater emphasis on face-to-face dialogue and will offer a one-day seminar geared to small business development.
- **Deal Generator Program.** This three to four month program, offered by Economic Development Edmonton, takes participants through the investment attraction process including the building of a business development plan. Participants have the opportunity to rehearse their pitch and then are connected to potential investors.

In closing, Mayor Smith commented that the City of Edmonton is proud of its role in northern development and wants to continue to meet the needs of the North and to advance northern prosperity. “We are fully committed to being your gateway to the south – to working with you to expand our shared horizons and capitalize on our endless opportunities.”

Trends, Barriers and Challenges To Northern Development

Marcel Desjarlais,
Executive Committee,
Métis Settlements General Council

Mr. Desjarlais highlighted trends, barriers and challenges to northern development.

He noted that, *“Understanding the trends and barriers to northern development is one thing – overcoming them is another, and that is how we are going to find success in Northern Alberta.”*

Past Trends:

- In the 1960’s and 1970’s, the push was for jobs and the creation of jobs. Métis Settlements provided an unskilled labour force. There was a focus on construction.
- Vocational Colleges were established.
- Local employment assistance programs were developed through federal and provincial initiatives. Make-work projects were aimed at taking people off social assistance and making them job ready and employable.
- Native housing programs were developed.
- The 1980’s saw business opportunities develop in the oil and gas industry and in construction.
- The Native Affairs Department was established.
- The forest industry was booming.
- Native venture capital companies were formed.
- Aboriginal Business Canada was assisting with business plans and was providing the equity for those plans.
- The Métis communities implemented small business capital in their budgets to help their people with business plans, seed capital and support to continue in their ventures.
- In 2000, and today, the focus is on Aboriginal equity partnerships, ownership and business activity.
- Capacity building – investing in our human resources by educating our youth, retooling our older generations – educating and re-educating.

Solutions to Barriers

Mr. Desjarlais provided solutions to some of the barriers facing northern development. He noted that these may really be hurdles instead of barriers, and that “we need to get over them.” His solutions included:

- More streamlined and non-political governments and institutions. Bring the democratic approach back into communities. Build trust within the community before going elsewhere.
- Settle discrimination among Aboriginal people.
- Raising of academic requirements for the Aboriginal youth of Northern Alberta has been very successful in raising the level of education to meet the Provincial standard.
- Elections to governance for the Métis and First Nations. Aboriginal people need to get more involved in their communities, municipalities and boards.

Challenges to Northern Development

Mr. Desjarlais listed a number of challenges that need to be conquered. He would like to see:

- Governance institutions that are transparent, effective and accountable.
- Sharing of equitable opportunities by working together to compromise and finding resolution to disputes (i.e. settling long-outstanding land claims for equity purposes).
- Understanding of jurisdictional issues. For example, most people are not aware that First Nations communities and reservations are governed by the Federal Government while Métis Settlements are governed by the Provincial Government.
- Effective northern connections. The Métis community needs to market themselves. Get their message out – let people know who they are and that they are open for business.

Initiatives and Strategies

The Métis Settlements General Council is currently working on the following initiatives:

- Developing an Aboriginal Affairs Management Guide.
- Effective communication.
- Setting up of community offices, scholarships and bursaries.

Mr. Desjarlais commented “Mr. Eric Newell spoke about three simple things yesterday that speak perfectly of initiatives and strategies for northern development. The first one is respect – respecting persons and individuals for who they are; understanding them and their needs; and doing what is right.”

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

LUNCHEON SPEAKER

**Honourable Pearl Calahasen,
Minister,
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development**

Minister Calahasen discussed major challenges facing Northern Alberta and some of the strategies in place to help overcome the challenges.

“We know the challenges and we see the opportunities. Again, the question is: how do we capitalize on them? We need a strategic plan for the North, and to be strategic we must look at what to expect in the future.”

Major challenges facing Northern Alberta:

- with only 10% of the Province’s population, Northern Alberta faces major challenges in terms of population-based funding programs;
- human resources needs abound and skills shortages are critical;
- more housing is needed to attract and retain skilled labour;
- a growing population of Aboriginal youth;
- a need to increase Aboriginal involvement in the economy; and
- improvements to infrastructure are needed (i.e. transportation corridors, water and sewer treatment facilities).

Some work has been done to solve these challenges and people are starting to recognize that the opportunities are in the North. We need to take advantage of these opportunities.

Strategies for Success

The economic activity in Fort McMurray alone has been unprecedented. Through lobby efforts, northern infrastructure needs have been identified in the Government’s five-year plan.

Strategies to meet northern infrastructure needs include:

- 103 major construction and rehabilitation projects have been approved for the North.
- A high level study will investigate and compare alternative corridors from Highway 686 to Highway 63.

- Discussions have been held with the Federal Government regarding a Northern Development Infrastructure Strategy.
- The Construction Association of Alberta has been involved with lobbying efforts for funding to improve facilities in Northern Alberta.
- Lobbying efforts to ensure the North is connected to the supernet.

In terms of meeting housing needs:

- \$15 million in new provincial funding has been made available in the 2003 budget for the development of affordable housing in Northern Alberta.
- All interested parties are to review their affordable housing needs and submit proposals.

The Alberta Government is dealing with human resources needs through a number of strategies:

- By training an increasing number of workers.
- The NADC recently hosted a Human Resources Conference to provide opportunities to practitioners, business owners and managers to learn and exchange ideas about successful recruitment and retention strategies.
- Alberta’s Labour force Management Committee has recommended a number of strategies (i.e. increased emphasis on education, apprenticeship and training and facilitating inter-provincial mobility for skilled workers and immigration).
- Several companies have processes in place to hire and train Aboriginal people.
- The Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project was launched last fall. Over the next few years, a minimum of 180 Aboriginal people will pursue careers in trades through this project.
- The NADC coordinates bursary programs for students interested in living in Northern Alberta. The bursary programs continue to evolve to meet community needs.
- Alberta Learning has responded to changing needs by making new options available (i.e. Applied Degrees).
- Human Resources and Employment has some initiatives in place (i.e. “Careers in Motion,” job placement services, Labour Market Information Centres) and they continue to work with the Aboriginal and Métis communities.

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Aboriginal involvement in the community is a hot topic. In Fort McMurray, the opportunities have been excellent. The Province of Alberta has been working as quickly as it can to address concerns in a positive way. For example, the Government of Alberta:

- encourages companies to involve First Nations and Métis people in economic activity; and
- through consultation with First Nations, ensures that Treaty Rights are not compromised (this has resulted in a cross-ministry initiative to develop guidelines with First Nations and industry - \$6 million has been allocated to this initiative).

National and International Initiatives

The Alberta Government has developed a number of relationships with other northern jurisdictions. These national and international relationships are important to Northern Alberta. They:

- provide opportunities for new trade and investment in the North;
- promote the development of transportation corridors that open Northern Alberta markets to the world;
- ensure that northern inter-jurisdictional transportation routes connect effectively to move goods, services and people;
- provide opportunities to exchange ideas, concepts, and proposals that will further develop the social and economic fabric of the North;
- promote research potential for Northern Albertans and for Canada;
- underline Alberta's leadership in the advancement of northern regions;
- create the environment for new markets, new customers and perhaps new residents for Northern Alberta; and
- provide an effective way to showcase Northern Alberta.

The Northern Forum

The Northern Forum is a mechanism for members from circum-polar countries to share knowledge and experiences on common social and economic challenges and opportunities. Minister Calahasen is currently the Vice-Chair for North America.

The Northern Development Ministers Forum

Northern Development Ministers from across Canada are working together on initiatives including recruitment and

retention of skilled labour, identification of northern infrastructure needs, innovation and science for the North, and a northern awareness campaign.

Alberta is leading a project to enhance awareness about the importance of Canada's north to the country's central and southern regions and also to the circum-polar north.

Northwest Territories-Alberta Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Through the Northwest Territories-Alberta MOU, Alberta has gained a better understanding of the economic impacts that development in the Northwest Territories has on the Province of Alberta. Together, the Northwest Territories and the Province of Alberta have been working on projects related to tourism, skills development, economic development opportunities (i.e. pipelines), and a wildlife management research project.

The State of Alaska

Alberta is involved in the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alaska. This MOU will be modelled similar to the one with the Northwest Territories in that it will also look at related potential economic development opportunities.

The Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC)

The Northern Alberta Development Council has been working with the NCDC towards the development of a northwest corridor to improve infrastructure systems that connect northern communities to each other and to global markets.

The Province of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is interested in developing a Memorandum of Understanding similar to that which Alberta has with the Northwest Territories. The two Provinces are currently discussing the possibilities in this regard.

Vision for Northern Alberta

Minister Calahasen's vision for Northern Alberta is to develop a northern development strategy.

"We need to face our challenges head on, focus on the opportunities and build strategies which will help us advance our cause."

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Most communities have the potential to remain prosperous and maintain a high quality of life for their residents. The strategy will highlight the importance of Northern Alberta to the Provincial economy. It will help the Government align its broader policy goals towards encouraging the advancement of northern priorities.

The strategy will integrate aspects of both social and economic development to ensure sustained and balanced growth in the North. It must be visionary and include key themes such as: participation of northern residents in a sustainable economy, building of positive relationships, a high quality of life, training opportunities and economic possibilities.

Northern Rail Transportation

Peter Ladouceur,
Assistant Vice President Sales, Pacific Division,
Canadian National Railway (CN Rail)

Transporting goods by rail is often thought of as a last resort but rail can be cost effective and can reduce the overall greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Ladouceur encouraged delegates to think about rail when discussing resource allocation or when spending money on roads.

Evolution of CN Rail

Mr. Ladouceur noted that shippers don't want to connect through a number of terminals to get their products to the southwest – they want a single line rail service.

After it was privatized in 1995, CN Rail went on a buying spree so it could provide a single line rail service to its customers.

Sequence of events:

- 1995 – Privatization of CN Rail in 1995 makes CN the largest initial public offering in Canadian history.
- 1999 – CN Rail buys and merges with the Illinois Central Railroad. This \$2 billion (approximate) transaction gave CN access to the Gulf Coast giving CN and its client's access to the markets there.
- 2001 – CN Rail buys the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd. ships a lot of their pulp to markets in Wisconsin.

CN Rail is currently the best “Class One” railroad in North America – by any standard (i.e. injury statistics, operating ratio, etc.) – and it is now operated out of Edmonton as opposed to “the old days” when it was operated out of Montreal.

CN Rail – Serving the Northwest

CN Rail has the world's largest railcar barge operation. It delivers oil patch materials to Alaska through Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

Also serving the northwest are short lines running up to Fort McMurray, Alberta and to Hay River in the Northwest Territories. Specifically, the short line to Fort McMurray is a full service railroad that runs five days a week and hauls 10,000 cars a year. Mr. Ladouceur noted that short lining this railroad was probably the best thing

CN could have done in terms of keeping it in operation five days a week.

An extension has been proposed from the short line in Fort McMurray out to the Athabasca oil sands. As well, direct access to oil sands sites is a possibility under the right framework. Cost is a factor in any expansion and, although CN is willing to work with industry, it cannot foot the whole bill.

The building of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline would bring more opportunities for CN to serve the northwest.

Mr. Ladouceur noted, “It is fine to have the products – Alberta excels in this. The problem is, there are not a lot of people that consume the stuff in Alberta. If you looked at a map of North America at night, and looked where the lights are, that is where the markets are.” CN Rail can help with this. In fact, their focus has been to get the Alberta Advantage as far south as possible. Mr. Ladouceur commented that they could do this because they have good rates and good service.

Benefits of Rail

“When you move a tonne of freight one kilometre down the road, trucks generate 10 times as much greenhouse gas emissions as rail does.” In terms of the Kyoto Accord, transporting goods by rail could save shippers a lot of money down the road.

Many leading edge shippers (e.g. AlPac) are already thinking about this and benefiting in other ways. Through an agreement with Athabasca Northern, Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd. has taken about 10,000 long-haul trucks off the highway per year. Not only has this reduced the amount of greenhouse gas emissions but it has also resulted in cost savings equal to 5,000 tonnes per year for Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd.

In terms of resource allocation and saving money on roads, Mr. Ladouceur noted that there are about 200,000 tonnes of sulphur per year moving south on Highway 63 that could be transported via rail.

Northwest Territories' Perspective

BANQUET SPEAKER

**Honourable Joseph L. Handley,
House Leader, Minister of Finance,
Government of Northwest Territories**

Minister Handley discussed the importance of maintaining good working relationships. He also provided insight into the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project and the economic future of the Northwest Territories.

"We are committed to working with Alberta," noted Minister Handley on behalf of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Under the Northwest Territories-Alberta Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a number of inter-governmental agreements have been developed. A few of the important ones include working together on oil and gas, transportation, post-secondary education and training, research and innovation and tourism.

The same oil and gas basin that runs through Alberta continues north through the Northwest Territories. Minister Handley believes that "we can maximize the benefit and keep it as sustainable as possible by working very closely together."

Alberta gains, in a big way, from any development that takes place in the Northwest Territories. According to an assessment done by the Conference Board of Canada, between 20% and 30% of every dollar that is spent in the Northwest Territories ends up directly in Alberta. The Territories' only road connection is through Alberta. With the exception of two flights a week from Winnipeg, all of the Northwest Territories' transportation connections are through Alberta. The City of Edmonton is currently the Territories' main aviation and commercial centre. The City of Grande Prairie is quickly also becoming an important commerce centre.

With a population between 43,000 and 45,000 people, the Northwest Territories does not have a big voice. Minister Handley strongly believes that it is time for the Northwest Territories to evolve into more of a provincial status and that an agreement on resource revenue sharing will come with this change. The Northwest Territories is working with other northerners to ensure this political evolution and increased economic activity occurs.

Economic Potential

Diamond Mining

Diamond mining is very lucrative in the Northwest Territories. Minister Handley noted that the first diamond mine (BHP) paid back its full capital investment within the first four years of operation. Socio-economic agreements with diamond mines guarantee that a certain level of employment and contractor work is done by residents of the Northwest Territories and other northern areas. In addition, 10% of all rough diamonds mined in the North are to be polished in the North.

The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Project

Minister Handley believes that the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline project is going to be a reality and that the economic potential of this project is enormous for the Northwest Territories, for Alberta and for the rest of Canada.

During the construction phase:

- Work and investment is estimated to be about \$3.3 billion in the Territories alone (\$7.6 for the entire project). The total project will require more than 22,000 person years of work. This is beyond what the Northwest Territories can handle in terms of employees. The Northwest Territories hopes to work closely with Alberta on training initiatives.
- About 1,000 kilometres of pipeline will be constructed. Minister Handley hopes that this 30-inch diameter pipe will be made in Canada.
- The National Gross Domestic Product will increase by about \$40 to \$57 billion when you take into consideration the equipment needed, manufacturing of the pipe, etc.

Northwest Territories' Perspective

- It may be feasible to develop the Northwest Territories' hydro potential. "If we don't do it as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline goes ahead, then I'm afraid it won't be economical to do it later on – our population is too small."
- We may see a road system alongside the Mackenzie Valley. This would provide access to communities for tourism and to mines and oil and gas fields.

Minister Handley noted that development of hydro in the Northwest Territories is far beyond the Territories' capacity - they simply do not have the manpower. Minister Handley again stressed the need for northwestern Canada to work together to make these types of projects happen.

With all this potential development growth comes pains. In the Northwest Territories:

- Aboriginal partnerships are being encouraged for large projects in hope that the Aboriginal people will build the capacity to take on smaller projects later on. In doing this though, some of the small business owners are getting squeezed out. Over the next while, the Northwest Territories will be trying to find ways for smaller business owners, who are in for the long haul, to also become involved in the large projects.
- Housing prices are about the same as in Fort McMurray (i.e. \$200,000 for a modular and lot).
- Other infrastructure is getting maxed out and roads need to be built. Roads, for example, were not built for the heavy loads hauled by B-trains. A surface transportation route is also needed into the mining area north of Yellowknife and the Slave Lake Geographical area. The railway into Hay River needs to be upgraded.
- The Northwest Territories cannot pay for its own infrastructure requirements because the tax base is too small. A lot of this funding comes from the Federal Government in the form of grants as opposed to being based on economic activity. The Northwest Territories loses hugely on anything that is per capita.
- A plan is being studied regarding the possibility of supplying the Northwest Territories (specifically their mines) from offshore via a proposed port at Bathurst. This is an issue that needs to be watched very closely. It could have a huge negative impact

for the oil and gas industry in Alberta and in the Northwest Territories.

There are some good opportunities for Alberta and the Northwest Territories to work together. It is becoming more and more important for industrial development to be coordinated (i.e. to think about diamond development, oil and gas, hydro development and transportation systems all at the same time). "But if any of this is going to happen, then we have to have that vision. And we need the will to carry through with it." The Northwest Territories needs the western Provinces' expertise, markets and investment.

Minister Handley noted that Prime Minister Diefenbaker was probably the last Federal Prime Minister who had a vision for the North. He thinks it would be interesting to see what the North would look like today if that vision had been followed through.

Partnerships - Relationships

**Karen Collins,
President of Zone 2,
Métis Nation of Alberta**

Ms. Collins provided a “sampling” of the partnerships and relationships that the Métis Nation of Alberta is involved in.

Ms. Collins stated, *“We are compelled to seek partnerships and relationships if we wish to improve our socio-economic circumstances.”*

She believes the Métis Nation of Alberta is making significant strides in meeting their mission: Self-sufficiency and self-reliance without access to other economic resources for the Nation.

Partnerships and Relationships

The Métis Nation of Alberta Framework Agreement

- Originally signed with the Government of Alberta in 1987, this agreement was most recently renewed in 1999 for seven additional years.
- Objectives are to ensure effective Métis participation in the development of and access to the Provincial Government’s policies, programs, initiatives, resources and services; and to promote joint planning and action in areas such as: education; economic development; community development, environmental protection; municipal affairs and housing; justice; agriculture, food and rural development; and family and social services.
- Outcomes have enabled the Métis Nation to develop and maintain a cohesive operating infrastructure and to pursue opportunities in many of the defined areas.

Tri-Partied Agreement

- Signed in 1992 with the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta.
- Intended to compliment the Framework Agreement, the purpose of this agreement is to provide a forum for development opportunities as the Métis Nation progresses toward self-management and self-reliance.
- Key areas of interest include: tourism; environmental protection; economic development; agriculture, food and rural isolated community development; health; and justice.

Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement (AHRDA)

- Partnership with Human Resources Development Canada
- Provides the Métis Nation with funding to design, develop and implement Métis driven training programs that help Métis people prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. These programs have assisted in the development of several small businesses.

In the Area of Housing

In partnership with Central Mortgage Housing Corporation, Métis Urban Housing has accessed 880 houses in urban areas throughout Alberta for low-income families. When they are paid for in full (by 2028), these houses will provide the Métis Nation with some substantial equity to pursue other housing initiatives.

In the Area of Oil and Gas

A partnership with Encana Corporation and Lakota Drilling has resulted in the purchase of a drilling rig to service a guaranteed four-year contract to drill wells. The rig is manned mainly with Métis personnel. The rig is operating at a significant profit at this time and discussions are underway to pursue expansion opportunities. Most importantly, the Métis Nation has accessed employment, long-term contracts, industry recognition, credibility and internal confidence.

In the Area of Tourism

- The Métis Nation has been acquiring land to ensure there is a Métis component to the tourism circle-tours in the Province of Alberta. One of their sites, the Boss Hill site, has been designated as a Provincial Métis historic site.
- Participation in the Métis Heritage Alliance, which was formed to assist the Métis Nation with the promotion of their culture and to help develop a unique cultural and tourism program.
- Discussions with the Manitoba and the Saskatchewan Métis Nations to pursue further development of Métis specific tourism destinations. The ultimate desire is to see an internationally recognized Métis specific tourism designation for the link of Métis sites.

Partnerships – Relationships

In the Area of Forestry

A partnership agreement is being discussed with the forestry industry that will result in increased Métis participation in the industry. Specific opportunities and projects are being discussed with Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Ltd., Weyerhaeuser and Ainsworth.

In the Area of Mining

The Métis Nation is currently working with government and industry to ensure there is Métis participation at the start of this relatively new industry in Alberta. “It is our vision that the Métis be part of the exploration, the discovery and operation of the first diamond mine in Alberta.”

In the Area of Environment

- Participation in *Building Environment Aboriginal Human Resources* (BEAR). This is a national initiative of governments, municipalities and private industry partnerships to increase Aboriginal participation in forecasted environmental activities. A Métis Nation staff member is currently sitting on BEAR’s national steering committee.
- Participation as a stakeholder in the Provincial Clean Water Ministers Forum. This Forum includes members from all levels of government and industry and private stakeholders. The objective of this group is to investigate ways to inventory, protect and preserve a clean water supply for Albertans.
- Participation as a stakeholder in the Mackenzie River Basin Study.
- Participation in a cumulative effects management initiative in Fort McMurray, which looks at the effects of contaminants resulting from industrial development in the area.
- The Métis Nation is currently looking at participating in the Beaver River Basin Studies.

In closing, Ms. Collins noted that the Métis Nation of Alberta would consider partnerships and relationships with almost anyone who is moving in the same direction they are.

Roger Harris, Chair, British Columbia Northern M.L.A.’s Caucus, M.L.A. for Skeena

Mr. Harris discussed the importance of productive, working partnerships.

“Real effective, productive and working partnerships are essential in today’s economic climate. It has been my long contention that the regional development of northern British Columbia cannot be fragmented. The development of any part of the North is invariably linked to the rest of the region – just as it is linked to the rest of the Province. As in the example of the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation, we can make a significant impact by working together.”

The British Columbia Heartlands Strategy

The British Columbia Heartlands Strategy is about re-establishing community and regional partnerships in every corner of the Province. Mr. Harris commented that British Columbia’s rural communities, referred to as “The Heartlands,” are where the economic strengths of the Province are. The Strategy ensures that resources are available to develop a thriving private sector industry. The Province has introduced a new forestry revitalization plan and is re-investing in its transportation infrastructure

In turn, these partnerships will open the Province to new opportunities, new investment and improved service delivery.

Inter-Provincial Cooperation with Alberta

Mr. Harris expressed, ***“The benefits that are realized from stronger regional partnerships are tremendous and a natural starting point is Alberta.”***

British Columbia and Alberta already cooperate in terms of trade and investment, economic policy and in the energy sector. Although currently there are not many partnerships between the Provinces, the potential is there.

Many of the challenges faced by northern Albertans are also faced by communities in northern British Columbia. Mr. Harris maintains that the solutions are global in nature. “Competition, while healthy, sometimes does not always take advantage of the tools that the region may hold and in some cases fails to recognize that we all

Partnerships - Relationships

benefit in some way from the success of the communities around us.”

The Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC) – An Effective Model

Mr. Harris provided an overview of the NCDC. The NCDC:

- is a private/public partnership of people and businesses, municipal governments and elected officials from British Columbia and Alberta;
- is community-based and driven;
- works collectively to identify problems, to prioritize issues, to move them forward toward a common solution, and then to promote a common strategy; and
- focuses on marketing and enhancing the Highway 16 Corridor by connecting Northern Alberta, northern British Columbia and the Northwest Territories to a new shorter link from the mid-west United States to a container port at Prince Rupert.

This group foresaw that a new, shorter, northern link to the world was critical in dealing with issues such as competitiveness, diversification and vulnerability. It recognized that a container port in Prince Rupert was just as important for the people and industries in Alberta and the Northwest Territories as it was for those in Prince Rupert.

Potential Opportunities – Removal of Barriers

“It is a global world that we compete in and against. It makes little or no sense to construct more barriers between ourselves than we encounter between some international borders. For us to deal with the challenges we face in the North, I believe we must remove the inter-provincial barriers and create transparent borders wherever possible.”

Mr. Harris noted that the potential exists for British Columbia and Alberta to break down some of these barriers particularly by standardizing regulations. For example:

- In the trucking industry – by introducing common standards for axle configurations and weights, vehicle licensing requirements, insurance, and drivers licenses. Have a common scale at the border, operated by shared staff.

- In the human resources area. There may be opportunities with regard to the Workers Compensation Board.
- In the area of environmental standards. There may be opportunities to harmonize some of the regulatory requirements without compromising environmental standards.
- With regard to training standards – by removing the need for employers to have two or more sets of training standards for operating equipment.

Such standardizations have the potential to create significant savings and efficiencies for these industries and to keep them competitive.

Christine Short, Project Coordinator, The Secretariat of The Northern Forum

Ms. Short provided insight on The Northern Forum and its activities.

“The goal of The Northern Forum is to improve the quality of life of northern peoples by providing their leaders with a means to share their knowledge and experience. The Northern Forum aims to facilitate and improve interregional relations by building partnerships to address common concerns of regions across the North.”

The Northern Forum is a non-profit organization of 27 regional governments from 11 northern countries. It has three types of partnerships: regional; business; and other international organizations.

Partnerships Regional Members

A representative from each regional government serves on The Forum’s Board of Governors. They meet once every two years at a Northern Forum General Assembly to provide direction to The Forum and to approve new projects.

The Executive Committee includes five Governors who assume decision-making responsibility between the General Assemblies. The Honourable Pearl Calahasen, Minister of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern

Partnerships – Relationships

Development sits on the Executive Committee as the current Vice-Chair for North America.

Each Governor appoints a Regional Coordinator to work with the Secretariat on a day-to-day basis. The Northern Alberta Development Council is the Regional Coordinator for Alberta.

Business Members

Although The Northern Forum is not a trade or commercial group, they have established some meaningful business contacts. These contacts help to develop and increase international business opportunities. Business members have helped support projects by putting their membership dues towards specific projects.

Other International Organizations

The Northern Forum works on projects and partnerships with the Arctic Council, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development.

Activities

The Northern Forum addresses, on an international level, many of the same issues discussed at Challenge NORTH 2003. For example:

- infrastructure that supports development;
- east-west transportation routes;
- social programs; and
- programs for youth.

The Northern Forum supports sustainable development and cooperative socio-economic initiatives in five program areas:

- Sustainable Economic Development;
- Environment;
- Society and Culture;
- Governance; and
- Emergency and Disaster Response.

Within these program areas, The Northern Forum has several inter-regional projects. For example:

- The Reindeer Management Project. The goal of this project is to preserve and develop reindeer husbandry in the North. Together, participating regions in Finland and Russia look for ways to

expand their markets. In addition, they share information and best practices.

- The Sustainable Model for Arctic Regional Tourism (SMART) Project. This project will offer a set of culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable practices for businesses within the tourism sector and will look at ways to promote and ensure the competitiveness of these companies.
- Technologies for the North looks at ways to improve access to technology in order to improve living standards, employment opportunities, diversify economies and attract businesses to the North.
- The Northern Forum is involved in a project that looks at ways to establish east-west air routes. The goal is to facilitate business, improve the environment to attract investment and to increase tourism across the North.
- Northern Architecture is an upcoming project that will focus improving the quality of life for those living in northern Russia by looking at housing construction in other northern climates.

The Northern Forum is involved in other activities as well. For example:

- The 2003 Healthy Lifestyles Summit. This summit will look at treatment options and will address problems and solutions toward building support systems that encourage healthy and sober communities.
- The Brown Bear Working Group shares best practices and looks for solutions to problems such as poaching and the increase of interaction between humans and bears.
- Youth programs provide opportunities for youth to participate in activities that encourage them to take an interest in the future of their regions and to develop an understanding of how their regions fit within the international community.
- The Governors of The Northern Forum meet once every two years at General Assemblies to approve new projects. The “Development of Northern Economic Cooperation” is one such project for this year’s consideration.

Ms. Short encouraged delegates to contact her or the NADC office if they would like more information on The Northern Forum or about one of its projects.

Alberta Cabinet Ministers/M.L.A. Forum

Gary Friedel, Chair of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) and M.L.A. for Peace

**Honourable Shirley McClellan,
Deputy Premier,
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural
Development**

Minister McClellan briefly discussed the Ministry's current focus - the Rural Development Initiative.

An M.L.A. Committee has been formed and will be spending time in communities to hear the public's views about opportunities for rural development. The Ministry wants to learn what the barriers are to rural development. Although the Ministry is interested and wants to be supportive in this area, they will not "drive the train." The people in the communities are the appropriate drivers.

The Rural Development Initiative will be a cross-ministry initiative with the Minister of Economic Development.

She noted that the Honourable Victor Doerksen, Minister of Innovation and Science, has announced the Life Sciences Strategy for his Ministry. There will be some huge opportunities for economic growth in those areas.

**Honourable Murray Smith,
Minister of Energy,
M.L.A. for Calgary-Varsity**

Minister Smith provided some of his observations about the North.

Not only has the North created wealth, it is now *building* wealth. People are staying and are creating long-term developments. The North is starting to see infrastructure, mining prospects and development of the forestry industry.

Minister Smith believes that a program of northern development has to be inclusive. There is a need to continue finding solutions that promote inclusiveness for all. He has noticed that people are building sustainable wealth in the North.

River, welcomed and introduced the Alberta Cabinet Ministers and guest M.L.A.'s to the Conference.

The oil sands hold the key for affordable electricity prices in Alberta and will continue to provide economic opportunity for the North. The recent Suncor announcement has major significance.

**Honourable Guy Boutilier,
Minister of Municipal Affairs,
M.L.A. for Fort McMurray**

Minister Boutilier provided his thoughts about regionalization.

He stated, "If we were to create Alberta again we would probably create it with six regional centres as opposed to a few hundred municipalities. This trend is happening already – much of what is talked about is in terms of northwest, northeast, central, southeast, etc. It's just a matter of lifting the artificial government boundaries and continuing to share services."

When the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo was formed in 1995, it was really about getting the best value for limited tax dollars. Eight years later, it is a true testament of the ability of people in natural trading areas to work together.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs fully supports regional partnerships. They do not want to force these partnerships, but there is a considerable amount of money available for those who choose to use it.

Alberta Cabinet Ministers/M.L.A. Forum

**Mel Knight,
M.L.A. for Grande Prairie-Smoky**

Mr. Knight briefly commented on a number of areas.

There are some great cooperative efforts happening in terms of industry working together in Northern Alberta. These types of initiatives will be paramount as we move into more sensitive areas.

The twinning of Highway 43 has been a blessing to northwestern Alberta. This project has tremendously enhanced the ability to move products. The next link is to connect to the northern ports in British Columbia.

The Province of British Columbia is formulating a program in terms of moving softwood lumber products into the United States. How this plays out will be very important to northwestern Alberta.

Bill 3, the Electric Utilities Act 2003, will change how customers see the handling of utilities. With the complete deregulation of the retail market there will be more opportunity for choices for Albertans.

**Bob Fessenden,
Deputy Minister,
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development**

Mr. Fessenden discussed some initiatives in which the Department of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) is involved.

The Department encourages and facilitates *development* as opposed to environmental protection.

SRD staff are being encouraged to participate in regional economic development initiatives. Regional Executive Director positions have been created to provide connections between communities and the Department.

SRD staff are promoting the Fire Smart Program – a very important initiative in terms of fire prevention.

The softwood lumber issue is a priority with SRD. Upcoming decisions will have a significant impact on Alberta's forest industry.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

LUNCHEON SPEAKER

**Ron Bowles,
Director of Resource Planning and Development,
Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs,
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Mr. Bowles provided an overview of Labrador, its transportation corridors, its recruitment and retention initiatives, and its marketing initiatives.

Labrador's landmass is greater than that of all the Maritime Provinces put together. While it constitutes 75% of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador's total landmass, it contains only 5.4% of the population.

Residents of Labrador include settlers and three Aboriginal groups: Innu, Inuit and Métis. There is an overall declining population with youth out-migration.

Labrador is comprised of four regions:

1. Labrador West is a major industrialized resource based area and has Labrador's highest population base. This area is known for two of the world's largest iron ore mines. A hydroelectric facility supplies power to Quebec, some Labrador communities and the two iron ore mines.
2. Central Labrador is often considered the administration/government hub for Labrador. A military base is one of the region's primary economic drivers. Forestry is becoming a predominant industry.
3. The North Coast is comprised of five Inuit communities and one, newly developed, Innu community. While the world's largest nickel deposit is located in this region, the region has low education and income levels. The only land claims negotiation in the Province is located in this area.
4. Southern Labrador is comprised of a strong Métis population that has relied on fishing for years. Tourism and forestry sectors are prevalent in this area.

Transportation

Developing transportation infrastructure in Labrador is difficult. Some of the challenges are:

- a small population disbursed over a large landmass;
- cultural differences (i.e. land claims);
- costs; and
- harsh climate and geographic conditions.

Air

Labrador has two major airports and most communities in Labrador have air service. One of the major carriers recently pulled out of Labrador. While this has negative implications, it has created opportunities for local airlines.

Marine

In 1997, the Province assumed responsibility for the Coastal Labrador ferry service from the Federal Government.

Winter Trails

Labrador has 1,500 kilometres of winter trails along the coast and into the interior. The Province recognizes the importance of these trails and provides annual operating grants for these systems.

Roads

There has been significant progress to Labrador's highway system over the past ten years. The Trans Labrador Highway (TLH) is a multi-million dollar project. Once complete, there will be a circular route providing access to Quebec and to the island portion of the Province.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Recruitment and Retention of Professionals

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is dealing with challenges associated with the recruitment and retention of professionals through a number of initiatives. For example:

- The Strategic Social Plan Initiative addresses the Province's social challenges and changing needs;
- A working group has been doing surveys including exit surveys and surveys of high school students;
- A human resources promotional video is being developed;
- Delivery of a human resources forum;
- The Province has provided flexibility in its policies;
- Northern Benefits Packages; and
- Subsidized Housing.

Through the Northern Development Ministers' Forum, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is working with Manitoba, Nunavut, as well as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, on a best practices recruitment and retention model.

Marketing and Promotion in Labrador

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador uses a number of promotional tools:

- Voisey's Bay – Making It Happen! This promotional campaign was developed for the announcement of the Statement of Principles for the Voisey's Bay Project;
- Land Claims – Our Land, Our People, Our Home. This campaign was developed to create awareness of land claims negotiations;
- Destination Labrador – a tourism campaign; and
- Access North – another tourism campaign.

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Small group discussions were held on Day Two of Challenge NORTH 2003. Each delegate was asked to participate in two of ten small group discussions.

Background

Prior to Challenge NORTH 2003, the NADC divided issues, which had been raised by delegates at the Challenge NORTH 2000 conference and at Leaders Roundtable meetings, into ten priority areas. Delegates were able to add additional comments as discussed. These priority areas were used as a basis for the small group discussions at Challenge NORTH 2003.

Participants of each small group were asked to identify top issues and solutions within their group's single priority area.

On Day Three of Challenge NORTH 2003, delegates were presented with the top issues and solutions as identified by each small group. They were then asked to identify and rank only five, of what they felt were, top solutions for Northern Alberta.

This information will be used to identify future work priorities for NADC.

AGRICULTURE

There were two sessions concerning Agriculture issues (Session I = 12 participants; Session II = 10 participants) with voting as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Restrictive taxation policies, such as the farm fuel tax and property tax on farmland.		5	4
2.	Loss of small farms.		2	5
3.	Need more value-added agriculture initiatives, for example: community kitchens, abattoirs and ethanol plant.		6	12
4.	Request for support for cervid harvesting – preserves.		2	0
5.	Agriculture aid packages need to be fast-tracked.		0	0
6.	Sale and availability of crown-owned agricultural land.		4	0
7.	Opportunity for intensive livestock operations in Northern Alberta.		2	5
8.	Threat to the cattle industry from diseased buffalo in Wood Buffalo National Park.		0	0
9.	Protection of domestic fish stocks from predators.		2	2

Added Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Value-added talk, but little action – government.		0	0
2.	Government needs to actively support, not just talk about value-added agriculture.		8	11

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Priority Issues and Solutions

Session One:

Issue Number One: Lack of value-added agriculture development and the high input costs in agriculture, while product prices are not increasing.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	A consumer awareness campaign for the general public, students and decision makers on agriculture.	9
2.	Rebate system for farm fuel implemented by the federal and provincial governments.	6
3.	A government strategy to encourage value-added industries in the North.	5
4.	Value-added processing facilities in the west.	5
5.	Request support for cervid harvesting.	3
6.	Participate in the Federal Rural Development Strategy.	2

This group identified the need for value-added industries as a top issue. They came up with the two priority issues: the lack of value-added agriculture or diversification; and restrictive taxation policies. As one participant stated, “Costs keep rising, while prices remain low.” They thought an awareness campaign for agriculture would help people learn about the industry. To deal with taxation, the first session proposed a rebate system for farm fuel to help with the high input costs.

Session Two:

Issue Number One: Lack of value-added initiatives and support for value-added agricultural ventures.

Issue Number Two: Loss of small farms and the impact on communities.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	An abattoir in the North. Start up capital and incentives to be provided by the government and run by private industry.	10
2.	Promotion of the agriculture industry by the provincial and federal governments.	7
3.	Producers more involved in trade agreements, farmers are consulted.	7
4.	Quality and quantity of products that are attractive for investors.	3
5.	Brand recognition for products from specific areas, producer driven.	3
6.	Leave marketing boards with government support, e.g. Canadian Wheat Board.	2
7.	Cheaper freight rates, policy for farming rail rates.	1

There was a tie for the second solution in this group. Both of these solutions address the two issues. One is to have the producers more involved in agricultural trade agreements by consulting the farmers. The other is for the government to promote the agricultural industry. Similar to the first group, this group thought that a federal awareness campaign would help. Another runner-up solution was for the government to develop a strategy to encourage value-added industries in the North.

Both groups want to see more agricultural development and better promotion and enhancement of value-added industries. They want government support, but not with more regulations. Individuals within the group were often divided on this issue of government support – some thought the producers should do it on their own while others thought the government should provide support to smaller farmers.

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There were two sessions looking at issues related to Economic Development (Session I = 17 participants; Session II = 28 participants) with voting as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	II
1.	Lack of unique northern strategies.		0	1
2.	High demand for and lack of a skilled labour force.		7	7
3.	Economy not sufficiently diverse.		5	3
4.	Not enough land-use planning.		0	0
5.	Unwieldy and unclear regulatory and approval processes.		1	5
6.	Environmental and resource stewardship issues affect industrial development.		0	0
7.	Northern communities struggle to access markets; they must have the ability to compete in the global market.		3	6
8.	Lack of access to capital, research funds and seed capital.		3	8
9.	Communities are isolated, working alone and there is disparity in economic benefits among communities.		8	9
10.	High cost of doing business and a lack of business programs to assist northerners.		3	0
11.	Revenue generated in the region is disproportionate to the amount reinvested.		7	9
12.	Aboriginal people want more opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy.		3	8
13.	Financial institutions' lending policies don't consider the northern situation.		3	3
14.	There is a lack of access to capital, and assistance is needed in attracting investment.		7	1
15.	The potential for wind power and/or clean coal technology should be evaluated.		2	0
16.	Regional economic development initiatives are required.		7	4

Priority Issues and Solutions

Session One:

Issue Number One: Communities are isolated; working alone and there is disparity in economic benefits among communities.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Infrastructure creation to promote development.	21
2.	Regionalize services, communities.	14
3.	Split mill rate (non resident).	6
4.	Assist senior bureaucrats and provincial leaders through education.	0
5.	AUMA – support organizations with priority.	0
6.	Work through organizations (AAMDC + AUMA).	0
7.	Work together (i.e. inter-municipal organizations).	0
8.	Share tax revenues.	0
9.	Share industrial tax base.	0
10.	Municipalities take control through development permits, to leverage funding from provinces.	0
11.	Sharing of new developments across jurisdictions.	0

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Session Two:

Issue Number One: Lack of access to capital, research funds and seed capital.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Awareness of capital and research programs. Who: www canadian venture capital association Canada/Alberta business.	8
2.	Do small business needs assistance with business and financial planning.	5
3.	Have industry talk to the local municipal governments to do research on resources and centre of excellence.	2

Issue Number Two: Revenue generated in the region is disproportionate to the amount invested.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Need to look at communication strategy and messaging regarding royalties. The northern part of Alberta is consuming so many things. Need to change the way we do messaging. Do not just talk to M.L.A.'s and M.P.'s. Talk to others.	9
2.	Selling yourself helps people come to invest in the region. Sell self on the Northern Alberta region rather than individual cases.	7
3.	Create partnerships and allies. Create internal partnerships with community goal.	5
4.	Access to capital equity (start up own business) will cause less leakage to Edmonton and Calgary.	4
5.	Develop relationship with top guys of company (e.g. Suncor).	2
6.	Larger companies find it easier to access capital but smaller businesses do not have time to get this.	2

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There were two sessions related to Education and Training (Session I = 22 participants; Session II = 16 participants).
Voting was not recorded.

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	High cost of delivering services and inadequate funding formulas.			
2.	High dropout rates from school.			
3.	High cost of post-secondary education.			
4.	Lack of assistance for northern students.			
5.	High demand and shortage of skilled workers.			
6.	High average age of entry to apprenticeship programs and under-utilized training institutions.			
7.	Insufficient oil, gas and forestry training programs in the North.			
8.	Outdated, non-standardized apprenticeship classifications, regulations and licenses.			
9.	Need for quality education in Northern Alberta.			
10.	Per capita funding does not meet northern needs, high cost of doing business.			
11.	Unequal opportunities for students in small schools which struggle to provide a core academic program; other programming and services such as counselling are virtually non-existent in some schools.			
12.	Assistance is needed to develop distance education.			
13.	High dropout rates and declining enrollment.			
14.	Shortage of skilled trades.			
15.	Increased requirements for firefighters.			
16.	Need to promote and develop youth leadership in the North.			
17.	Need to share resources.			
18.	Support funding of northern forestry and social work programs.			
19.	Need for student accommodation.			

Priority Issues and Solutions

Session One:

Issue Number One: Shortage of a skilled labour force.

Solution Offered:

		Votes
1.	Develop a strong Aboriginal workforce.	

Issue Number Two: Accessibility of Education

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Build a strong education foundation (suggestions included: additional funding; meeting special needs in early grades; exposing students to a variety of options; apprenticeship training through composite high schools; and removing the “trades” stigma).	
2.	Child and Family Services to integrate early intervention programs.	

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Session Two:

Issue Number One: Shortage of a skilled labour force.

Solution Offered:

	Votes
1. Balance local opportunities for training against immigration option for solving labour training needs.	

Issue Number Two: High cost of delivery and adequacy of funding.

Solution Offered:

	Votes
1. Direct support to students to bridge gap between cost and ability to pay.	

This group also discussed the high cost of education. Their recommendation focussed on increasing direct funding to students, and suggested that the student loan criteria needs to be reviewed to reflect regional costs.

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

ENVIRONMENT

There were two sessions related to Environment (Session I = 6 participants; Session II = 12 participants). Thirty issues were grouped into seventeen areas and voted on as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need a vision or consensus on an overall plan. ● Need communication and consultation among stakeholders. ● Local community input into decisions affecting the region. 		2	2
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Awareness of environmental issues and of industry and government responses. ● Views may not be reflected in current environmental policies. ● Concerns about industry self-monitoring. 		3	6
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Polarized views on environment issues 		0	0
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inadequate land use planning. 		0	2
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The relationship between economic development, the environment and quality of life. 		4	8
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the effects of development on air, water and soil. ● Air quality. 		1	0
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cumbersome governmental regulatory review and approval processes. 		1	3
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inadequate wildlife management of endangered species and declining fish stock. 		0	2
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need fish, wildlife and environmental enforcement and deterrent penalties ● Fish and wildlife management. 		0	3
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issues regarding the importation of toxic waste. ● Greater public input regarding Swan Hills toxic waste plant and spill risk. ● Environmental management of special wastes and economic impact on the local region. 		3	1
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address the recreational impact on the environment. 		0	2
12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Address the inefficiencies in energy production and use. * NEW ISSUE added to this one: The potential for wind power and/or clean coal technology to be evaluated. 		0	0
13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has limited recycling initiatives. 		1	0
14.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Insufficient reclamation initiatives. 		0	0
15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deficient reforestation policies, programs and standards. 		0	0
16.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water policy. ● Lake water levels and stabilization of these levels. ● Riverbank erosion. 		2	7
17.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forest fire impact on wildlife and resource development. 		0	0

Other Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Requirements for a provincial recycling program.		1	2
2.	The potential for wind power and/or clean coal technology to be evaluated.		(see #12 above)	(see #12 above)

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Priority Issues and Solutions

Session One:

Issue Number One: How environmental issues affect economic growth and quality of life.

Solution Offered:

		Votes
1.	Areas of economic growth have to have a plan for an outcome with positive results (for environment, economic growth and quality of life) while recognizing the need for credible information to assess impacts.	3

Issue Number Two: Importation of toxic wastes.

Solution Offered:

		Votes
1.	Improved communications on what is going on – highlight benefits, keep public informed, acknowledge the fact that toxic wastes will be produced and need to be safely disposed of, acknowledge that many regulations exist.	4

Issue Number Three: Environmental policies and issues re: industry and government response.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Encourage joint government- industry partnerships in addressing policy development making commitment to monitoring and enforcement to address things like: concern that forest industry self-monitoring is not working (e.g. failure to leave buffers, destruction of access); open houses would help and need better monitoring.	11
2.	Fund municipalities to enforce legislation and regulations.	0

Session Two:

Issue Number One: Sustained quality of life by balancing economic growth with environmental considerations.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	More stakeholder awareness and education particularly prior to development.	17
2.	Establish partnership with three levels of government on planning and approvals toward joint jurisdictions (include regions).	12
3.	Better process to resolve jurisdictional disputes (not go to court).	5
4.	Be proactive in building relationships.	4

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Six participants reviewed issues related to Health and Social Services. Participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Votes
1.	Per capita funding formulas do not meet northern needs.	4
2.	Inadequate levels of ambulance services and funding and high-related operational costs.	0
3.	Need for new health care facilities.	0
4.	Amalgamation and funding for Regional Health Authorities.	0
5.	Communities trying to tackle issues alone.	1
6.	Focus of community support systems to deal with poverty, family violence and addictions.	4
7.	Increase funding for social and affordable housing but not limited to senior, community and special needs housing. <i>(combined with #9)</i>	6
8.	High cost of operating seniors' lodge - <i>not considered</i>	0
9.	Need for senior, community and special needs housing.	2

Priority Issues and Solutions

Issue Number One: Increased funding for social affordable housing but not limited to senior, community and special needs housing.

Solution Offered:

		Votes
1.	Companies should be responsible for housing.	5

Issue Number Two: Per capita funding formulas do not meet the northern needs.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Acknowledgement of shadow population (working transients) – develop a method of ongoing data on the working transient population identifying criteria of who working transients are – communicating information to the public.	7
2.	Acknowledge travel costs eat up a big part of the budget before we start services.	3

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

LABOUR FORCE

Twenty-three people signed up for the Labour Forces issues – session two. Participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting
1.	The cost to recruit and retain workers is high.	3
2.	Industry's human resources policies do not reflect northern situations.	0
3.	Young workers are migrating south.	1
4.	There is insufficient industry commitment to training.	1
5.	The North lacks incentives to attract and retain qualified people.	1
6.	The lack of housing, services and recreational facilities in remote and high-growth communities hinders recruitment.	14
7.	The northern living allowance is insufficient.	0
8.	It is difficult to attract professionals to remote areas, particularly specialties.	8
9.	Health regions experience difficulty attracting healthcare professionals.	0

Other Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting
1.	High demand for and lack of a skilled labour force.	8
2.	Aboriginal people want more opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy	14

Priority Issues and Solutions

Issue Number One: The lack of housing, services and recreational facilities in remote (and high growth) communities hinder recruitment.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Regional cost sharing agreements – including employers and industries (all users) as one entity cannot afford it on its own – but if costs were shared...	16
2.	Job diversification that will enable others (non-trades) to be gainfully employed and afford housing.	7
3.	Promote the positive/benefits of living in the North (stop talking about what is missing).	7
4.	Housing subsidies.	2

Issue Number Two: Aboriginal people want to participate more in the mainstream economy.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Integration of federal/provincial responsibilities for training and upgrading – disagreed with provincial decision to discontinue paying living allowances to First Nation students still living on reserve but attending upgrading in a college. Province claims (living allowance) are federal government's responsibility.	14
2.	Aboriginal job fairs – large employers don't go to small northern communities to promote careers/jobs in their industry.	12
3.	Focus on skill training for the available labour force that already live in Northern communities	11
4.	Challenge industry/employers to provide transportation for employees to get to jobsite.	3
5.	Take it to the school classroom.	3
6.	Employers should focus their recruitment on all Aboriginal communities (industry hires outside province for specific skills/trades that in some cases already exist in people living in Northern Alberta communities?). Part of the problem is that sometimes skilled northern Aboriginal people don't know how to go about connecting to that employer or are not aware of the job opportunity.	2

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Sixteen people signed up to discuss Municipal and Community Support Services. One session was held, and participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting
1.	Landfill regulations are costly for municipalities.	6
2.	Municipalities lack funding.	13
3.	Ensure municipal voice in decision-making about Aboriginal land and resource issues.	6
4.	Inter-municipal planning and cooperation.	4
5.	Rising costs.	2
6.	Distribution of the Alberta Centennial Legacy Grant.	2
7.	Provincial and federal boundaries review.	0
8.	Impact of changing demographics on communities.	0
9.	Need for greater attention on northern rural and urban communities and their issues.	2
10.	Sustainability of libraries.	0
11.	Loss of tax revenue due to elevator closure.	0
12.	Impact on communities of farm and grain elevator consolidation.	0
13.	Law enforcement costs.	9
14.	Rural and urban policing costs.	0
15.	Lack of municipal funding for infrastructure programs.	5

Priority Issues and Solutions

Issue Number One: Lack of funding for municipalities.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Leave municipal taxes.	18
2.	Allocation of dollars toward structures that allocate those dollars.	6
3.	Review how managing bodies are structured.	4
4.	Formation of regional governments.	3
5.	Government department imposing regulations to offer funding solutions.	2
6.	Longer term funding stability – provincial and federal.	1
7.	Lobby government through organizations (e.g. AUMA).	0
8.	Equalization of mill rates.	0
9.	Communicate with bureaucrats.	0
10.	Local cooperation on issues is critical.	0

Issue Number Two: High Policing Costs.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Equitable contributions from province.	6
2.	Crime prevention.	2
3.	Get at underlying social issues (e.g. addictions).	0
4.	Sustainable funding (e.g. use VLT revenue).	0
5.	Centralize administration locally (not Ottawa) – keep detachments in community.	0
6.	Clearer definition of who is responsible for what.	0

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Issue Number Three: Government Regulations costly to implement (e.g. landfill guidelines) – Province increases regulations but no funding – Legislation did not allow for local situations.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	More realistic funding from the province with local input and solutions, and allows local flexibility.	
2.	Reduce, recycle, reuse. More education. More collaboration among municipalities to make it cost effective (AUMA etc.).	

Key Solutions:

The key solutions for Municipal and Community Support Services:

1. Maintain local property taxes.
2. Equitable funding that considers local tax base and usage of service.
3. Realistic provincial funding that allows local flexibility.

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

RESOURCES: FORESTRY, OIL AND GAS, MINING

There were two sessions related to Resources: Forestry, Oil and Gas, Mining (Session I = 17 participants; Session II = 8 participants). Participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Need for value-added forestry development. <i>(combined with #10)</i>		14	1
2.	Impact of the United States softwood lumber tariffs.		1	1
3.	Secure timber supply for mills.		0	0
4.	Request for changes to the Forestry Act so that all industrial land users have a common reference point. <i>(combined with #9)</i>		3	0
5.	Secure timber supply for forest equipment operation training program.		0	0
6.	Forest Management Area quota holders roles and responsibilities.		0	0
7.	Forest protection plans for the North.		0	1
8.	Purchase of private wood by forest manufacturing companies.		0	0
9.	Unwieldy and unclear regulatory and approval processes.		n/a	n/a
10.	Aboriginal people want more opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy.		n/a	n/a
11.	Insufficient oil, gas and forestry training programs in the North.		1	3
12.	Aboriginal input into management, conservation and development of resources.		1	0

Other Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting	Session I	Session II
1.	High demand for, and lack of, a skilled labour force.		4	2
2.	Need for integrated resource management planning. <i>(combined with #3)</i>		9	3
3.	Need for integration of operations and resource management planning in all resource developed. (Integrated Land Management)		n/a	n/a
4.	Need to get message out to Albertans and Canadians of importance about the impact of Northern Alberta resource developments.		3	6

Priority Issues and Solutions

Session One:

Issue Number One: Value-added forestry development including Aboriginal participation.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Expand the number and type of wood products derived from current resource base.	10
2.	Government needs to provide critical infrastructure (electricity, gas, roads) to allow industry expansion.	7
3.	Aboriginal communities need training tied directly to industry needs.	7
4.	Wood producers need to build “business alliances” or “networks” to foster and establish new market opportunities especially new Aspen wood products.	2
5.	Establish a regional kiln / re-manufacturing centre.	1

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

Issue Number Two: Resource management planning.

Solutions Offered:

	Votes
1. Share development plans.	10
2. Improved coordination (amongst all departments and agencies) including community input.	0
3. Forestry and oil and gas firms need to maintain all communications including formal, informal and broader networks.	0

Session Two:

Issue Number One: Need to get the message out to Albertans and Canadians of importance about the impact of Northern Alberta resource developments.

Solutions Offered:

	Votes
1. Measure the impacts of northern developments.	5
2. Need to tell the northern story – benefits to others.	3
3. Market the Alberta resource development success story – internal and external audiences	4
4. The importance and impacts of Kyoto.	0
5. Branding the “North” image.	0
6. Lobby southern M.L.A.’s	0

Issue Number Two: Insufficient oil, gas and forestry training programs in the North.

Solutions Offered:

	Votes
1. Where demand warrants, deliver programs in partnership with industry.	3
2. Establish a northern industrial training centre.	2
3. Deliver more programs in the North.	0

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

TOURISM

There was one session for Tourism issues. Participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting
1.	Tourism initiatives need to be developed.	5
2.	Northern communities need support in developing and promoting product.	13
3.	Marina development.	2

Other Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting
1.	Regional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and Tourism Destination Region (TDR) need access to federal dollars and also provincial to be truly regional.	6
2.	Strong relationships, need partnerships, cooperation.	11
3.	Long-term thinking.	2

Priority Issues and Solutions

Issue Number One: Northern communities need support in developing and promoting product.

Solutions Offered:

		Votes
1.	Initiate a study to identify barriers and ways to remove them.	12
2.	Clean up the process, prepare a developers guide.	7
3.	Promotion (efforts) align tourism borders with NADC – need to improve communications with NADC as well as with communities outside the NADC area.	7
4.	Use relationships and partnerships to get expertise and support industry association.	7
5.	Improve access to the tourism resources (land, water) i.e. the government rules/complexity – effective advocacy for access.	2
6.	Develop interpretative centres in several northern areas.	0
7.	Industry certification – tourism operators need “industry” development people/training.	0

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Two sessions were held on Transportation and Infrastructure. Participants voted as follows:

Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2000 and at Leaders Roundtable Meetings

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Air transport is costly and provides limited services.			6
2.	There is insufficient rail competition and access to railcars; regarding containers, there is no direct access to Canadian Pacific Railway and British Columbia Railway.		4	3
3.	Northern Alberta needs scheduled airlines with affordable rates.		1	0
4.	There needs to be increased awareness of the importance of air services to the North and its impact on development.		0	0
5.	There should be an integrated rail strategy.		3	3
6.	The impact of cumulative changes in rail services on roads, highways and communities must be considered.		0	0
7.	The road system is inadequate and in disrepair.		8	1
8.	Many highways and road infrastructure issues, resource roads.		11	20
9.	Need high-speed data linkage for business and education.		0	0
10.	Water quality and distribution, wastewater and sewage systems.		3	3
11.	Rising costs of electricity and natural gas.		3	17
12.	Lack of municipal funding for infrastructure programs.		0	0

Other Issues Raised at Challenge NORTH 2003

		Voting:	Session I	Session II
1.	Governance		0	0
2.	How do you ensure that the Edmonton City Centre Airport does not close and that it is economically viable?		1	1
3.	Timelines for infrastructure (power pipeline) approvals increasing, may affect overall economic development.		0	0
4.	Need new cross-country highways, Peace River to Fort McMurray.		8	14
5.	Time for action not words. How do we make it happen?		3	4

The first session focused on main highways, secondary highways and those that could be classified in these categories. The second group focused on both the road and rail system. Delegates in both groups contributed to the development of the solution although they approached it from different directions.

Issue: How to position Northern Alberta's highway requirements.

Solution Offered

Inform and lobby for a proactive northern transportation plan and a capital fund to develop northern roads. As part of the process, conduct an analysis of the direct and indirect - current and future economic contribution of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories; a cost benefit analysis of investment into northern roads; and form a rural road advisory task force.

- The consensus was that: funding formulas did not meet northern needs; there is a lack of recognition of the contribution Northern Alberta makes to the rest of the economy; that northern infrastructure does not receive adequate attention; and proactive long-term planning and coordinated lobbying is required. There must be greater consideration of the relationship between rail and truck traffic. Investment in northern infrastructure must be made to continue the development of the North and its contribution to the economy.

Priority Areas – Small Group Discussions

- The second session identified rising costs of electricity and natural gas as a major issue. Although this issue was not discussed in the group, it was raised with the Cabinet Ministers and Northern M.L.A.s.
- Concern was raised that “Infrastructure” was included with transportation. Some delegates were particularly concerned about the need for improved school infrastructure. Although this topic was only indirectly discussed, delegates indicated that to some extent the solution required is similar to that for transportation (identify the northern contribution, develop a collective view of priorities and lobby). As a first step, it was suggested that northern M.L.A.s should meet with northern municipalities and school divisions to develop a collective approach.

Priority Areas - Ranking of Small Group Discussions

In the Small Group Discussions, delegates were asked to prioritize issues and to develop solutions that might be promoted and/or implemented. After the small group sessions, delegates were presented with the top ranking solutions in all priority areas. They were to choose five solutions that were most important to them and rank them in order of importance. 104 delegates submitted responses.

Caution is advised when referring to these rankings. The importance of an issue should not be diminished by a low number as all issues will be reviewed by the NADC. This information will assist the NADC in developing business and operational plans based on the public's perception of priorities. Some high-ranking items may not fall within the NADC's mandate.

Rank the top 5 solutions with #1 being highest

Session	Issue	Solutions	Rank	Total Vote
Agriculture	<i>Lack of value-added agriculture development</i>	1. Awareness consumer campaign for the general public, students and federal decision makers	31	4
		2. Government strategy to encourage value-added industries in the North	6	27
		3. Start up capital incentive for an abattoir provided by the government and run by private industry	28	6
		4. Producers more involved in trade agreements. Farmers need to be consulted.	32	4
	<i>High input costs in agriculture, but product prices are not increasing</i>	Improved rebate system for farm fuel implemented by federal and provincial governments	25	7
	<i>Loss of small farms and the impact on communities</i>	Promotion of the agriculture industry by the provincial and federal governments with an awareness campaign	26	7
Economic Development	<i>Communities are isolated, working alone; there is economic disparity</i>	Regionalize services and communities	5	28
	<i>High demand for and lack of a skilled labour force</i>	Infrastructure creation to bring development	9	21
	<i>Revenue generated in the region is disproportionate to the amount invested by government</i>	Develop a communication strategy with messages about royalties	12	19
	<i>Lack of access to capital research funds and seed capital</i>	Awareness of capital and research programs.	22	9
Education & Training	<i>Shortage of skilled labour force</i>	1. Develop Aboriginal labour force	10	20
		2. Balance local opportunities for training against immigration, option for solving labour training needs	13	19
	<i>Accessibility</i>	1. Build a strong educational foundation	4	29
		2. Need Child and Family Services to integrate early intervention programs	19	12

Priority Areas - Ranking of Small Group Discussions

Rank the top 5 solutions with #1 being highest

Session	Issue	Solutions	Rank	Total Vote
Education & Training con't	<i>High cost of delivery and adequacy of funding</i>	Direct support to students to bridge gap between cost and ability to pay	23	9
Environment	<i>Inadequate policy and enforcement</i>	Joint government-industry partnerships to include monitoring and enforcement	20	11
	<i>Toxic waste disposal</i>	Inform public that toxic waste will be produced, needs safe disposal and there will be benefits	29	6
	<i>Balancing quality of life, economic growth and environment</i>	1. More stakeholder awareness and education, particularly prior to development	27	7
		2. Joint jurisdiction approval process with all levels of government	17	12
Health & Social Services	<i>Per capita funding formulas do not meet the northern needs</i>	Identify the working transients (shadow population) and develop a method of data collection and communicate information to the public	2	39
	<i>Increased funding for social affordable housing but not limited to seniors, community and special needs housing</i>	Companies should be responsible for housing	30	6
Labour Force	<i>Lack of housing, services and recreational facilities in remote and high-growth communities hinders recruitment Aboriginal people want more opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy</i>	Regional cost sharing agreement to build and operate amenities (include all users – private and public)	3	29
		1. Integration of Federal/Provincial responsibilities to remove barriers to skill training	11	19
		2. Communication/awareness between industry and communities	16	13
Municipal & Community Support Services	<i>Lack of funding for municipalities</i>	Municipalities retain and allocate property and education taxes	7	26
	<i>High policing costs</i>	Equitable funding that considers local tax bases and usage of service	15	14
	<i>Government regulations costly to implement i.e. landfill guidelines</i>	Realistic provincial funding that allows local flexibility	18	12
Resource Development	<i>Need for value-added forestry development</i>	1. Create industry/government alliances to expand and market the wood product base	24	8
		2. Establish regional manufacturing centres i.e. regional drying kilns	21	10
	<i>Raise importance of Northern Alberta resource sectors</i>	Develop a strategy to measure and market the significance of northern resource sectors	14	17

Priority Areas - Ranking of Small Group Discussions

Rank the top 5 solutions with #1 being highest

Session	Issue	Solutions	Rank	Total Vote
Tourism	<i>Northern communities need support in developing and promoting products</i>	A study to identify barriers and ways to remove them	8	25
Transportation & Infrastructure	<i>How to position Northern Alberta's highways requirements</i>	Inform and lobby for a proactive northern transportation plan and a capital fund to develop northern roads. Needs analysis of the direct and indirect current and future economic contribution of Northern Alberta and the NWT; a cost/benefit analysis of investment into northern roads; a rural road advisory task force.	1	64

ADDITIONAL DELEGATE COMMENTS

Delegates were given the opportunity to submit written comments regarding issues, constraints and opportunities that they felt were either missed or for which time did not permit discussion during the small discussion groups. These comments will also be reviewed and considered by the NADC in the development of future business and operational plans.

Agriculture

- Fuel rebate at this time for farmers would sure help.
- Promote farm workshop learning programs for young people.
- Good information. Good group discussions. Informative.

Economic Development

- What was covered was sufficient.
- Do to industrial and lineal assessment what provinces did with education tax collection. Give back to all communities on a per capita basis. Just because a pipeline is passing through one county, why can the adjacent municipality not benefit?
- Need more value-added projects and funding.
- More advertising in papers and radio.
- More funds and government involvement:
 - promotion,
 - conference talks promoting value-added.

Education and Training

- Image problem with trades. Need to educate parents and kids that “trades” are honourable professions/careers/good options to consider, i.e. “gold collar” workers.
- I am First Nation, and I disagree with the “facilitator’s” solution to skilled labour needs. He stated that Immigration was a solution and to provide English Second Language training. My point is, First Nations need work - why go out and recruit? Don’t ignore a real issue here.
- We need to educate in our remote communities so they can meet the demands of the workforce. Looking outside Canada for workers is not an answer we would like to see. We have the people but sustainable funding needs to be in place for northern people to gain the educational requirements to fulfill the workforce needs.
- ALBERTA-NORTH can address remote accessibility to educational needs but needs sustainable funding to successfully continue. Remote communities would like their students to stay “at home” but educational opportunities are not always available to allow this. These types of needs could be met through distance education.
- The quotas at University, etc, do not always indicate the need of that particular field.

Priority Areas - Ranking of Small Group Discussions

- Aboriginal participation in the workforce: jurisdictional boundaries to allocate money. Who is responsible? We are federal responsibility, yet we are Albertans.
- Once training has been provided we must find (on the job) experience to properly familiarize the trainee so they can fit into the workforce.
- Provide basic safety and trades training in school.
- Use common sense, trade-related everyday counselors in schools.
- Education – Culture. Aboriginal topics were touched on, however my feeling is counseling needs to take place then the person can feel worthy and more forward. Therefore, self-empowerment equals self-sufficiency.
- Family and moral teaching are directly related to success of a student. Youth groups with a purpose (guides, scouts, plus others), these types of things can put a purpose and a goal in the life of a young person (self worth).
- Northern funding for northern students to attend northern post-secondary schools.

Environment

- Government and industry need to work through partnerships where both develop solutions. Government should not abandon their policy responsibility.
- The importance of government monitoring and what enforcements or penalties issued.
- I think all the issues I wanted to review were discussed. However as an Aboriginal I wanted to discuss environmental issues on reserves, how do these issues impact on growth on reserve? Government regulations?

Infrastructure

- More heavy-duty representation for infrastructure needs if the rest of the province/country wants the resource revenue.
- The North provides a huge energy and gas, and agriculture products to the province. Natural gas and electricity are unreasonably high. Put cost (price) at levels, that recognize northern contribution.
- Transportation and Infrastructure were one session. They are two different departments (Ministries) of government, the issues overlap but there are some things that could be better dealt with separate.
- Infrastructure development will bring economic development.
- Create infrastructure, mainly roads and utilities to develop royalties, break the barriers of municipal governments to work to get regionalized, we must work together and pull together

Labour Force

- I feel that we did not really address the issues that are of major importance. And they are:
- Education that is focused on the skilled labour required in Northern Alberta.
- When focus is placed only on one sector of the population everyone loses. All children require an education that will enable them to become successful in adult life. I truly feel that there needs to be a focus placed back on the “child” not the nationality.

Municipalities and Community Services

- Regionalization of municipalities and /or service areas
- When discussing recreational facilities, it is very important that everyone using the facility contribute, and these facilities can become much more viable. This includes First Nations and Métis. They must also be included in planning and development. But this does mean that they have to come to the table and talk, then participate with ideas, strategies and then dollars.

Tourism

- Discussion on communication and partnerships among Northern Alberta agencies/communities/businesses “missed the boat.” What about communication and partnerships beyond the borders – to southern AB, BC, SK, NT, Canada, global? Have a bigger vision; there are also similar issues for all northern Canadian communities.

Priority Areas - Ranking of Small Group Discussions

- Roads are a huge barrier to the vision and goals for development of tourism. When developing the cost benefit analysis it is important to take a holistic approach to all economic sectors.

Transportation

- There must be a prioritizing of issues in Northern Alberta outside individual municipalities. These issues could then be taken forward by the NADC as regionally identified issues. There could be focus and solutions placed on the issues. I believe that this is a critical element of development of Northern Alberta. One of the goals of the NADC could be facilitating this process so that the issues could be placed on provincial government's table by budget deliberations for 2004. And then integrated into next year's budget.
- We have a resource road that goes into another jurisdiction that collects tax and we have to look after it. Also Highway 55 needs widening badly in M.D. of Bonnyville.
- Roads are a huge barrier to the vision and goals for development of tourism. When developing the cost benefit analysis, it is important to take a holistic approach to all economic sectors.
- To understand the impact a view of the WHOLE is needed – all economic department VISIONS must be understood, not developed in isolation or silos.
- Should be a better all encompassing plan of transportation, road, rail and air; north probably sees more of the needs because of resource development; We cannot leave rail services out of planning or leave it to private sector without public input.
- While not discussed by the group, the cost of air travel, especially to the remote north, is prohibitive and a major impediment to northern development. It needs to be addressed.

A Message from the Chair, Gary Friedel Northern Alberta Development Council

On behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC), I wish to express our sincerest appreciation for the generous support of the following sponsors of the Challenge NORTH 2003 Conference. Their sponsorship went a long way to ensuring the success of the Conference.

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Town of St. Paul

Challenge NORTH 2003

Delegates

Only those who have agreed to have their names released are listed here

Name	Organization	City/Town
Ali	Abdelrahman Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Edmonton
Joe	Ahmad Athabasca Tribal Organization	Fort McMurray
Bill	Almdal Athabasca Regional Issues	Fort McMurray
Art	Avery Northern Alberta Development Council	Fort McMurray
Tom	Baldwin Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Neil	Barker Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Lac La Biche
Sharil	Baumgardner County of St. Paul No. 19	St. Paul
Mike	Bergeron County of St. Paul No. 19	St. Paul
Brad	Bishop Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Veronica	Bliska Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency	Berwyn
Ben	Boettcher Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties	Edmonton
Ron	Boisvert Town of St. Paul	St. Paul
Jim	Boucher Athabasca Tribal Council	Fort McMurray
Rick P.	Boucher Metis Nation of Alberta	Lac La Biche
Guy	Boutilier Alberta Municipal Affairs	Edmonton
Ron	Bowles Government of Newfoundland and Labrador	Happy Valley - Goose Bay
John	Brodrick Town of High Prairie	High Prairie
Al	Bromling Persons with Developmental Disabilities	Fort Vermilion
Eric	Brown Meyers Norris Penny	Edmonton
Kelly	Bunn Town of Peace River	Peace River
Pearl	Calahasen Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Edmonton
Dwayne	Calliou Municipal District of Opportunity No. 17	Wabasca
George D.	Calliou Athabasca Tribal Council	Fort McMurray
George E.	Cardinal Saddle Lake First Nation Economic Development	Saddle Lake
Brian K.	Cardinal Saddle Lake First Nation	Saddle Lake
Sandra	Cardinal Northern Alberta Development Council	Lac La Biche
Ken	Chapman Cambridge Strategies	Edmonton
Dareld	Cholak Smoky Lake County	Smoky Lake
Joyce	Choukalos Peace Region Economic Development Alliance	Fairview
Stephen	Clarke Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
Sharon	Clarkson Fort McMurray Public School District	Fort McMurray
Karen	Collins Métis Nation of Alberta	Edmonton
Roger	Corbiere Slave Lake & District Chamber of Commerce	Slave Lake
Willie	Courtoreille Mikisew Cree First Nation	Fort Chipewyan
Helen	Cryer Saddle Lake First Nations	Saddle Lake

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Delegates

Only those who have agreed to have their names released are listed here

Name	Organization	City/Town
Tom Day	Town of Peace River	Peace River
Alphonse Delver	Saddle Lake First Nation Economic Development	St. Paul
Marcel Desjarlais	Métis Settlements General Council	Edmonton
Onno DeVries	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP)	Calgary
Audrey DeWit	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Les Diachinsky	Syncrude Canada Ltd.	Fort McMurray
Douglas M. Doan	Government of the Northwest Territories	Yellowknife
Dale Drummond	Alberta Community Development	St. Paul
Daniel Dunwoody	Fairview College	Fairview
Diane Durnford	Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Fort McMurray
Joyce Dvornek	Municipal District of Big Lakes	High Prairie
Ed Dziengielewski	Northern Sunrise County	Peace River
Dick Ebersohn	Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
John Eriksson	Municipal District of Big Lakes	High Prairie
John Faber	Government of Canada	Edmonton
Ron Faulkner	Northern Alberta Development Council	McLennan
Doug Faulkner	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
Rick Fiedosiewich	Fort McMurray Business Development Centre	Fort McMurray
Frank Florkewich	Norcan Consulting Group Inc.	Carvel
Mike Franchuk	Smoky Lake County	Smoky Lake
Gary Friedel	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
David Gates	Government of Canada	Edmonton
Anisha Gatner	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Allen Geary	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Tom Ghostkeeper	Métis Settlements Strategic Training Initiatives Society	Edmonton
Gordon Giles	Alberta Sustainable Resource Development	Edmonton
Don Good	Town of Peace River	Peace River
Allan Grandison	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	Fort McMurray
Patrick Gratton	Town of St. Paul	St. Paul
James Halabisky	Municipal District of Northern Lights No. 22	Keg River
Joe Handley	Government of the Northwest Territories	Yellowknife
Harald Hansen	Peace River Regional District	Dawson Creek
Hildy Hanson	Keyano College	Fort McMurray
Randy Hardy	Kikino Métis Settlement	Kikino
Roger Harris	British Columbia Northern M.L.A.'s Caucus	Terrace

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>City/Town</i>
Lenore Harwood	Peace River Regional District	Dawson Creek
Bernadette Hebert	Village of Nampa	Nampa
Howard Heffernan	Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce	Fort McMurray
Larry Hickey	Keyano College	Fort McMurray
Todd Hisey	Petro-Canada	Fort McMurray
Brian Hjelsovold	RBC - Royal Bank	Edmonton
Robert Hornbrook	Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	Edmonton
Corinne Huberdeau	Northern Alberta Development Council	Lac La Biche
Bonnie Huculak	Government of Canada	Edmonton
Dianne Hunter	Town of High Level	High Level
Ron Hystad	Carmacks Enterprises Ltd.	Edmonton
Ernie Isley	Northern Alberta Development Council	Bonnyville
Rick Janvier	Cold Lake First Nations	Cold Lake
Ken Jardine	Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Slave Lake
Marylea Jarvis	Keyano College	Fort McMurray
Kim Jenkins	Fort McMurray Catholic Board of Education	Fort McMurray
Diane Jenkinson	City of Cold Lake	Cold Lake
Balvir Joshi	Keyano College	Fort McMurray
Terry Katerenchuk	Smoky Lake County	Smoky Lake
Graham Kedgley	Northwest Corridor Development Corporation	Vancouver
Ken Killeen	Municipal District of Big Lakes	High Prairie
Jim Kincaid	MD of Northern Lights No. 22	Manning
Mel Knight	Grande Prairie - Smoky Region	Grande Prairie
Carolyn Kolebaba	Northern Sunrise County	Peace River
Jack Kramer	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Linda Kupp	Fairview College	Fairview
Peter Ladouceur	Canadian National Railway	North Delta
Drew Lamont	Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Grande Prairie
Phil Lane	Lakeland County	Lac La Biche
Evens Lavoie	Northern Sunrise County	Peace River
Garry Lindstrom	Northern Sunrise County	Peace River
Pat Lobregt	City of Edmonton	Edmonton
Linda Mabbott	Economic Development Edmonton	Edmonton
Wendell MacEachern	Northern Alberta Development Council	Fort McMurray
Pam MacGillivray	Keyano College	Fort McMurray

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>City/Town</i>	
Esther	Makinaw	Montana Band	Hobbema
Eddy	Makokis	Saddle Lake First Nation	Saddle Lake
Neil	Martin	Town of Peace River	Peace River
Jan	Mazurik	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Clark	McAskile	Town of High Level	High Level
Shirley	McClellan	Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development	Edmonton
Ken	McCrae	Sustainable Resource Development - Integrated Regional Services	Peace River
Mervin	McIntyre	Meadow Lake Tribal Council	Meadow Lake
Dan	Mclsaac	Fort McMurray Catholic Board of Education	Fort McMurray
Paddy	Meade	Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development	Edmonton
Frank	Menezes	Fort McMurray Regional Business Centre	Fort McMurray
Mike	Mihaly	Northern Alberta Development Council	High Level
R.A. (Bob)	Miles	Northern Sunrise County	Peace River
Sylvia	Monterrosa	Louis Bull First Nation	Hobbema
Shawna	Morning Bull	Treaty Seven Economic Development Corporation	Calgary
Don	Mudryk	County of St. Paul No. 19	St. Paul
Roxanne	Myers	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Colin	Needham	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Terry	Neraasen	Neraasen Consulting Ltd.	Edmonton
Bev	New	Métis Nation of Alberta	Slave Lake
Eric	Newell	Syncrude Canada Ltd.	Fort McMurray
Clayton	Norris	Bank of Montreal	Tsuu Tina
Bud	Norris	EXH Engineering Services Ltd.	Edmonton
Steve	Noskey	Northland School Division No. 61	Peace River
Cory	Ollikka	Smoky Lake County	Smoky Lake
Mike	Osborn	Mackenzie Economic Development Corporation	High Level
Jane	Palmer	Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation	Lac La Biche
Michael	Percy	University of Alberta	Edmonton
Bill	Persley	Portage College	Lac La Biche
Jack	Phelps	Alberta Transportation	Edmonton
Pauline	Phibbs	St. Paul Chamber of Commerce	St. Paul
Rita	Phillips	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Derrick	Pieters	Government of Canada	Edmonton
Gary	Pollock	Northern Alberta Development Council	Swan Hills
Kal	Polturak	Lac La Biche Regional Community Development Corporation	Lac La Biche

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>City/Town</i>	
Bert	Pomeroy	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador	Happy Valley - Goose Bay
Kim	Price	Northern Alberta Development Council	Lac La Biche
Annette	Ramrattan	Northland School Division No. 61	Peace River
Robert	Richard	Lakeland County	Lac La Biche
Maurice	Rivard	Northern Alberta Development Council	Bonnyville
Clyde	Roasting	Louis Bull First Nation	Hobbema
Elaine	Roasting	Louis Bull First Nation	Hobbema
Blaise	Ryan	Lakeland County	Lac La Biche
Olie	Schell	Alberta Learning	Edmonton
Blain	Sepos	Travel Alberta North (TDR)	Slave Lake
Carol	Severf	Travel Alberta North (TDR)	Fort McMurray
Ken	Shewchuk	AHR&E Regional Services Delivery	Lac La Biche
Christine	Short	The Northern Forum	Anchorage
Rick	Siddle	Alberta Economic Development	Edmonton
Paul	Sinclair	MD of Opportunity No. 17	Wabasca
Elaine	Sky	Peace River School Division	Peace River
Murray	Smith	Alberta Energy	Edmonton
Michael	Smith	MD of Northern Lights No. 22	Manning
Bill	Smith	City of Edmonton	Edmonton
Lil	Sokoloski	Mackenzie Economic Development Corporation	High Level
Ken	Staples	Heart Lake First Nation	Lac La Biche
David	Steer	Fort Vermilion School Division	Fort Vermilion
Roy	Steinhauer	Imperial Oil Resources	Calgary
Larry	Stewart	Alberta Community Development	Peace River
Marnie	Suitor	Meyers Norris Penny	Edmonton
Sue	Sych	Fairview College	Brownvale
Dean	Thompson	Kikino Métis Settlement	Kikino
Floyd	Thompson	Kikino Métis Settlement	Kikino
Adele	Thompson	Canadian Natural Resources Limited	Fort McMurray
Al	Toews	Northern Alberta Development Council	Fort Vermillion
Bernice	Van Iderstine	Smoky Lake County	Smoky Lake
Dave	van Tamelen	Peace River School Division	Peace River
Peter	Vician	Government of the Northwest Territories	Yellowknife
Terry	Vulcano	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Jenny	Wallace	Lac Cardinal Regional Economic Development Board	Grimshaw

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<i>Name</i>		<i>Organization</i>	<i>City/Town</i>
Sam	Warrior	Northern Alberta Development Council	Peace River
Roxanne	Warrior	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Edmonton
Fern	Welch	Municipal District of Big Lakes	High Prairie
Rick	Wesolowski	Town of Peace River	Peace River
Art	Whetstone	Keyano College	Fort McMurray
Eugene	Whiskeyjack	Alberta Indian Investment Corporation	Enoch
Hector	White	Kikino Métis Settlement	Kikino
Denise	White	Kikino Métis Settlement	Kikino
Doug	Willy	Alberta Pacific Forest Industries Inc.	Boyle
Robin	Witt	Alberta Human Resources and Employment	Lac La Biche
Wayne D.G.	Wood	Alberta Indian Investment Corporation	Enoch
Charles E.	Wood	Saddle Lake First Nation Economic Development	Saddle Lake
Jim	Woodward	County of Athabasca	Athabasca
Louise	Woroniuk	Peace River School Division	Peace River
Stuart	Wraight	Town of Peace River	Peace River
Al	Wurfel	Town of Athabasca	Athabasca
Carol	Yayechnick	Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce	Fort McMurray
Allen	Young	County of St. Paul. No. 19	St. Paul

Message from:
Tom Baldwin,
Executive Director,
Northern Alberta Development Council

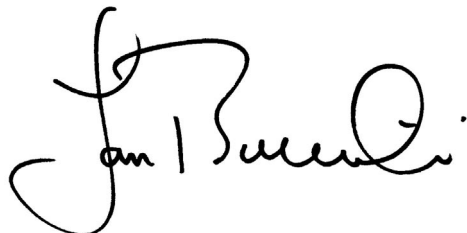
It is a pleasure for me to present the Conference Proceedings for **Challenge NORTH 2003: Opportunities – Strategies – Success.**

The Northern Alberta Development Council is proud to have hosted this successful event with the generous support of northern communities, industries, business associations, and the Provincial Government. Their support was greatly appreciated. As well, the Council would like to thank the Conference Delegates for taking the time to attend, while making an important and significant contribution to the discussions at the Conference.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the NADC staff who contributed a great deal of effort in making this Conference a success, Brad Bishop, Corinne Huberdeau, Allen Geary, Anisha Gatner, Audrey DeWit, Colin Needham, Jack Kramer, Jan Mazurik, Kim Price, Rita Phillips, Roxanne Heinen, Sam Warrior, and Terry Vulcano.

The Northern Alberta Development Council encourages you to read the Conference Proceedings and provide your feedback to the members and staff. The Council looks forward to your participation in the next Challenge North Conference scheduled for 2006.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "B".

Tom Baldwin,
Executive Director,
NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL