

Your Yellowknife South Newsletter

winter edition 2021



The last few months have seen the NWT reopen internally and still keep COVID at bay but the work to keep us in this state must continue. It is hard. Our economy was already facing medium term challenges and has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. But I remain solution-oriented and my faith in the resiliency of the people of the NWT is unshaken. We will get through this together.

The Yellowknife South office has been busy since the last newsletter update working with constituents (either remotely or in person) on COVID and Isolation questions, miner's pension protections, human resource issues, corrections, workplace support for nurses, as well as looking into ways to improve child advocacy in the North and how to better help immigrants with their applications for permanent residency.

This year the Stanton Territorial Hospital Foundation had to make changes to their annual Mud Run, a fundraising event that my family and I have participated in the last few years. Like many other fundraising events in town, they had to come up with a different way to bring attention to their cause of raising money for cancer care in the North. What they came up with was the Mud Bucket Challenge. Through this challenge the Yellowknife South Office was able to raise \$3,100 by auctioning off the buckets of mud that were to be dumped on yours truly! Thank you to all of you who contributed either through our auction or through others who fundraised.

This summer also brought with it some changes to Cabinet, which included some portfolio changes for me. I have remained the Minister of Finance, but now also hold the portfolios of Industry, Tourism, and Investment, and am the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

On October 1, I spoke at the Status of Women's Tree Ceremony for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ people. This was one of my first public events as the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Across Canada, Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ people are at far higher risk of experiencing violence than other Canadians. Events like this not only remind us of those who are missing or who have been murdered. It also helps keep our minds on the issue of violence directed at Indigenous women, girls and LGBTQ2S+ people. This is a conversation that we need to keep having until the shocking rate of violence is addressed.

We are now a year into me being the MLA for Yellowknife South and I believe we have found a good groove of being able to balance ministerial work and constituent work. I hope going into the new year more of you will be in contact if you need assistance with any government policy, program or service.

Health Care

The Stanton sterilization and surgical equipment issue has been an ongoing concern for those who are awaiting surgery. The main issue that they are finding is that the equipment is coming out of the sterilization units with moisture, which unfortunately can attract bacteria. If you are a patient currently awaiting surgery, a letter should have been sent to you communicating the extent of the issues with the sterilization equipment and how it could affect the status of your surgery timing.

With the pandemic and the long cold winters in the North, now more than ever it is important to keep track of our mental health, to reach out early, often, and get outside.

The NWT Community Counselling Program provides access to mental health services, with trained counsellors available to talk to you about any problems you may be dealing with, including addictions recovery and family violence. To book an appointment or for further information you can contact the Yellowknife office at 767-9110.

Residents also have access to a 24/7 anonymous and confidential help line 1-800-661-0844. If you don't feel like talking over the phone to someone, there is also the option to use the Wellness Together Canada text option. For Adults and Frontline workers text the word "ADULT" or "FRONTLINE" to 741741, for youth messaging text "WELLNESS" to 686868.

COVID-19 Information

So far the NWT has remained relatively COVID free with the measures issued by our Chief Public Health Officer. Compliance with these rules is key to their effectiveness and I thank you all for making those sacrifices. Starting January 5, 2021 if you leave the territory for non-essential reasons, and plan to use an isolation centre the cost will no longer be covered by the GNWT. As a reminder, if you leave the NWT for travel, upon your return you must isolate for 14 days with an approved self-isolation plan.

7200 doses of the Moderna vaccine arrived in the NWT on December 28th and health care workers began administering the vaccine to the residents and staff at the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors Home in Behchoko and AVENS Manor in Yellowknife. A further delivery of 7200 doses arrived in the North on January 14th. As of January 25, 9471 people have been vaccinated.

The GNWT will be receiving enough Moderna Vaccine to vaccinate 75% of the adult population in the NWT within the first few months of 2021. Even if you are not high risk of severe disease from COVID-19, getting the vaccine will help protect those who are around you and the other members of the community.

For further information and answers to your questions on the vaccination process in the NWT, please visit: <https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/en/questions-and-answers>

Protect NWT Contact information:

For general information about COVID-19. Available 8AM to 8PM, 7 days a week:

☎ 8-1-1 ✉ covid@gov.nt.ca

For questions on public health orders, enforcement, travel restrictions, and self-isolation. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

☎ 1-833-378-8297 ✉ protectnwt@gov.nt.ca


Getting in touch:

Our lines of communication are always open, to listen, support, and collaborate on your ideas for a prosperous and healthy NWT.

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The Economy

Through this pandemic the GNWT has had to figure out creative ways of doing more with what we have to work with. The government renewal initiative will help achieve that through priority-based budgeting. This will be a department by department process that I believe will better help demonstrate and delivery value for public dollars spent.

A major project for 2021 is the procurement review. This review will look at the Business Incentive Policy (BIP), NWT Manufactured Products Policy (NMPP), negotiated contracts, and sole sourcing. The aim is to keep more dollars circulating in the north while also staying open to investment, using public dollars effectively and ensuring we responsibly deliver on the much needed infrastructure projects in the North.

Education

To help with the extra costs associated with post-secondary schools moving towards remote learning this year because of COVID-19, SFA was able to provide a one-time grant of \$750 to offset the costs of technology equipment, such as computers, printers, scanners, tablets, etc. SFA also provided the Support Grant, which was an additional \$100 per month for the duration of the student's 2020-21 academic year, to assist with additional costs, such as internet fees.

Bills and Legislation

For those interested in seeing the Bills and Legislation currently before the house, or those that have passed recently, most pertaining to the budget, please visit the Bills and Legislation section of the Legislative Assembly website. <https://www.ntassembly.ca/documents-proceedings/bills>

Minister & Member Statements

To read the full text of my Statements you can find them on my website under the News Banner – Member & Minister Statements.

Walk to Tuk

The Yellowknife South has a Walk to Tuk team, so Sarah and I took advantage of the warm weather and had one of our meetings while skiing instead of sitting to get some of our kilometers in. It's all about multi-tasking in this office.

