

**THE HONOURABLE TOM BEAULIEU
MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION**

INUVIK TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories has committed to building a strong, prosperous territory and ensuring its benefits are shared in all communities and regions. Strategic investments in transportation infrastructure will help support the long-term growth of our economy and provide jobs and opportunities to our people. The Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway is one of these projects and I am pleased to report on the success of the first winter of construction.

The highway is one of the largest construction projects ever undertaken by the GNWT and is significant as the first leg of the proposed Mackenzie Valley highway that will continue south to Wrigley to connect the entire NWT.

Mr. Speaker, the project is progressing according to the Department of Transportation's estimates. Operations ran smoothly and efficiently this winter to make the most of the construction season.

Work began this winter following the procurement and delivery of new equipment. 75% of the major equipment on site is either new or near new. This allowed work to continue without delay as breakdowns were minimized, safety was increased, and the carbon footprint of operations was reduced.

72 days of construction took place on the North end of the project near Tuktoyaktuk, lasting from mid-February to the end of April. During this time, crews made progress on the construction of 16 kilometres of embankment, one bridge, and 6 large diameter culverts. On the South end by Inuvik, there were 58 days of construction from March 3 to the end of April, resulting in progress on the construction of 13 kilometres of embankment, 2 bridges, and 7 large diameter culverts.

Over 1 million cubic metres of embankment material was moved during this time.

Mr. Speaker, this success should be attributed to the effort of crew members who worked days and nights during some of the coldest and darkest part of winter. The resiliency and determination of these men and women is essential to the project's success. At the peak of construction, 425 individuals were employed by EGT Northwind, of which approximately 10% were female employees involved in all aspects of the construction project from environmental monitoring to operating 40-tonne rock trucks.

Mr. Speaker, Northerners are already benefitting from this highway construction project. Over 18-thousand person/days of employment were created during winter construction, including almost 15-thousand person/days for NWT and Inuvik Region residents. This does not include employees working for the 41 subcontractors hired by EGT Northwind to provide a range of services from wildlife monitoring to medical services. In addition, 83% of these subcontracts were awarded to Northern companies.

The project company used simulators to train more than 70 individuals on different types of rock truck and excavator equipment during the first construction season. Training activity is expected to increase during the next construction season that is anticipated to last up to six months.

While most construction activities occur during the winter, shaping, grading, and compacting activities will resume at the end of June until fall. During this time, no movement of material from the borrow pits will take place. This plan is developed to protect the permafrost underneath the highway.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to encourage residents spending time in the Inuvik Region this summer to learn more about this spectacular project by attending the Inuvik Petroleum Show. The department will be featuring a booth where photos and additional information regarding the construction of the highway can be found. Residents may also find information on the project's dedicated website located at: inuviktotuk.gov.nt.ca

Thank you, Mr. Speaker