



# The Gwich'in News

## The PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Fellow Beneficiaries and friends, as the new year begins, I want to wish you all the best, and thank you for your friendship and support over the last year.*

Looking back over the year, we have a number of accomplishments in which we can take pride. We had an exceptionally productive, harmonious Assembly; a successful settlement of the Sahtu Royalty case; strong performance by our business arm, the Gwich'in

Development Corporation; and important decisions on social programs and the role of TI'oondih Healing Camp. And as we move into the new year, we will focus on our strategic planning process, to prepare and restructure the GTC for the challenges ahead. To keep

all Beneficiaries informed of the work of the GTC's departments, we chose to build this issue of the *Gwich'in News* around the various departmental updates.



The return of oil and gas exploration to the Beaufort-Delta region has stimulated discussion and debate on the economic development opportunities this activity brings. Much of the discussion has centered on the proposed Mackenzie Valley natural gas pipeline.

Like you, I have been concerned that any pipeline project respect the interests of the Gwich'in Nation, and provide us with our fair share of the benefits it brings. For that reason, I was happy to participate in the Aboriginal Pipeline Group (APG), and to ensure that our voice was heard in the ongoing discussion of a possible pipeline. Last November, I succeeded Nellie Cournoyea as Chairman of the APG.

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**“Where would that be?” Can you identify the location in this photograph? If you can, let us know! Send your guess to the Gwich'in Tribal Council, Box 1509, Inuvik, NT, XOE OTO, Attn: “Photo Contest.”**

## The **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**, *continued*

During my tenure in this position, I will continue to insist that any pipeline project respect our rights and our land. Whether the question is one of protecting the natural environment or of providing jobs and business opportunities for Gwich'in Beneficiaries, the fact that we have a "place at the table" means that our concerns must be taken into account by all parties, whatever the future may bring.

The present climate of renewed interest in oil and gas exploration also means that we must be vigilant in ensuring that development take place only on conditions that do not harm our heritage. At this year's Assembly, many of you spoke with passion and eloquence about the need to protect the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd, in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife others in raising awareness of this issue in the U.S. The results of the American midterm

elections make the issue even more pressing. President Bush, who strongly supports opening ANWR to oil and gas development, now has Republican majorities in both houses of Congress. And Frank Murkowski, who pushed for such development as a Senator, has been elected Governor of Alaska.

To raise American public and Congressional awareness of the importance of the Porcupine Caribou to our economy, our diet, and our way of life, and the dangers posed by oil drilling in ANWR, Gwich'in leaders took part in the November "Walk to Washington". Chief Abe Wilson of Fort McPherson, Chief Peter Ross of Tsiigehtchic, and I participated in an open forum and a press conference, which generated considerable media coverage and public interest. I was also happy to take part in a subsequent press conference and reception in Ottawa to educate the public about this issue. Gwich'in leaders from the NWT were accompanied by

their colleagues from the Yukon and Alaska as well as the MLA for Mackenzie Delta, David Krutko. I will continue to voice your concerns about oil and gas activity in ANWR as well as to work towards the broader goal of ensuring that energy-related economic development go ahead only on terms that respect our land, our people, and our rights.

My work over this last year has been made easier by the assistance of the many skilled and hard-working employees of the GTC, as well as by the understanding and the support of you, my fellow Beneficiaries. May you all have a happy and prosperous New Year.



Mahsi Cho and God bless,  
Fred Carmichael  
President, Gwich'in Tribal Council

## *Human Resources Department Update*

Since joining the GTC early in 2002, Office Manager Tammy Rogers has devoted much of her time and energy to human resources (HR) issues.

One major project she inherited from Chief Operating Officer Tom Williams was updating job descriptions for GTC employees. She has now completed that task, as well as coordinating the preparation of a new employee handbook which summarizes the GTC's HR policies and outlines the new package of standardized benefits we adopted in 2002. These benefits include a utility allowance for employees who are not in subsidized staff housing, and a 5% RSP, deposited twice a year. Standardized benefits ensure that all employees are treated equitably, and will help make the GTC an "employer of choice" in the region. Current HR projects include a comprehensive HR



***GTC Office Manager Tammy Rogers.***

manual, as well as an orientation package for new staff in the works.

Staff development is a high priority for the GTC, most recently through a workplace computer training program in which two of our employees took part. One of our most exciting current projects is the development of an HR

database for Beneficiaries, adapting the current Enrolment database and adding an HR component. In the next few months, Beneficiaries will receive questionnaires requesting information on their education and job skills.

The data we collect will help us identify training needs, and, where the GTC lacks present staff with particular skills, direct potential future employees toward the relevant training. The information we gather from the questionnaires will also provide us with a more detailed picture of education and training levels among our Beneficiaries, useful in program development and delivery.

When we complete this HR database, it will be linked to the Enrolment database. Arctic Digital has the contract to complete the new database early in 2003.

# The CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S REPORT

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The new era of self-government and energy-related economic development brings changes with it, and the GTC must change as well. Over the coming year, we will proceed with our strategic planning process, to develop a fresh mandate and road-map for the organization. This process will entail extensive consultations with present and former Gwich'in leaders as well as Beneficiaries in every GSA community. We aim to bring the results of these discussions together in a document that will be brought before this year's Annual General Assembly for its approval.

Ensuring that all Beneficiaries, whether they live in the GSA or outside it, have the chance to be involved in GTC affairs remains one of our highest priorities. I recently attended the Gwich'in gathering of Beneficiaries living in Yellowknife, bringing them up to date on GTC activities and programs as well as enjoying the old-time dancing and feast.

We are also at work on an updated, more user-friendly web page, which we hope to launch early in the new year. More information will be available to Beneficiaries, including the minutes of our monthly Board meetings and the Annual General Assembly, as well as the texts of Resolutions passed.

On other fronts, we are consolidating our legal services to ensure lower costs and a higher quality of service, and are now finalizing arrangements with several major law firms. Our ongoing review of GTC programs, to ensure that they are efficiently run and reflect your priorities, will move on to deal with the Gwich'in Lands Administration and our implementation division, once our new Implementation Adviser, Deb Bisson, is on board and up to speed.

Deb, who has a B.Sc. in environmental sciences, an MBA, and a law degree, is highly qualified to deal with the challenging issues that come under the implementation portfolio, and replaces Alex Benitah, who left to go to law school last September. We have hired Joe Benoit as the manager of the Gwich'in Lands Administration, to replace Howard Townsend, who has moved on. We thank Howard for his hard work in recent years and wish him good luck in his future endeavours.



*Tom Williams welcoming Senator Nick Sibeston.*

We also bid a fond farewell to our departing long-term casual employee, Kim Brown, whose friendly smile always brightened the office.

There are other new GTC employees to welcome. Dwayne Semple, previously Land and Water Technician, comes on board as Lands Officer, succeeding Edna Tobac. Barb Crawford brings a strong teaching background to the position of Manager of our Education and Training Department, replacing Pat McKinnon, who has moved over to the Beaufort-Delta Self-government Negotiations Office. Eleanor Firth has been hired on a casual basis until March 31, 2003, to replace Mary Ann Ross in the new position of Employment Liaison Officer. Ross is filling a temporary assignment as President Carmichael's Executive Assistant until June 30, 2003.

The various departmental updates in this issue of the *Gwich'in News* and the next will give you more detailed information on what these people, and the other hardworking GTC staff who work on your behalf, have accomplished in recent months and are planning for the future. I wish to thank them all, for the assistance which has made my own job easier, as well as for their untiring efforts to help build a brighter future for all Gwich'in.

Happy new year, and Mahsi cho,  
Tom R. Williams  
Chief Operating Officer, Gwich'in Tribal Council

# The HARVESTERS' ASSISTANCE REPORT

The 2002 year's allocations under the Gwich'in Harvesters' Assistance Program (GHAP) went to support harvesters in all four GSA communities. The Trustees of the Harvesters' Fund met over the Fall to review applications, with all communities represented in the decision making process. Leonard DeBastien of Inuvik served as Chair, with Peter James Vittrekwa representing Fort McPherson. David Edwards of Aklavik and John Norbert of Tsiigehtchic served as interim members, appointed by the Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) in their respective communities, while Tammy Rogers represented the GTC. Despite the high number of applications, the program was able to provide funding to a majority of individual applicants as well as to RRCs and for community hunts.

This past year we conducted a comprehensive review of GHAP. The review was discussed at a regional meeting of the RRCs, and copies are available at the offices of the Designated Gwich'in Organization (DGO) in each community. One of the major recommendations was that the RRC for each community make allocations to local harvesters, from a fixed total drawn from overall GHAP funding, with the Trustees then meeting to review and approve allocations. This procedure will ensure a greater degree of community involvement in administering GHAP.

ALLOCATIONS OVERALL, AND TO EACH COMMUNITY, WERE AS FOLLOWS:

## Aklavik:

Applications received: 11  
 Applications approved: 9  
 Applications denied: 2

Funding requested: \$ 14,515  
 Funding approved: \$8,848  
 RRC: \$2,500  
 Community hunt: \$2,000

Allocations: \$13,348

## Tsiigehtchic:

Applications received: 20  
 Applications approved: 15  
 Applications denied: 5

Funding requested: \$44,140  
 Funding approved: \$18,000  
 RRC: \$2,500  
 Community hunt: \$2,000

Allocations: \$22,500

## Inuvik:

Applications received: 14  
 Applications approved: 11  
 Applications denied: 3

Funding requested: \$20,170  
 Funding approved: \$11,600  
 RRC: \$2,500  
 Community hunt: \$2,000

Allocations: \$16,100

## Fort McPherson:

Applications received: 107  
 Applications approved: 78  
 Applications denied: 29

Funding requested: \$131,575.53  
 Funding approved: \$71,578.38  
 RRC: \$2,500  
 Community hunt: \$2,000

Allocations: \$76,078.38

## Allocations Total:

— Applications received: 152	Funding requested: \$210,400.53
— Applications approved: 113	Funding approved: \$128,026.38
— Applications denied: 39	Total available: \$127,966

Balance: **(\$60.38)**

# The EMPLOYMENT LIAISON REPORT

In August, Mary Ann Ross took on the new position of Employment Liaison Officer for the GTC. Prior to joining us, Mary Ann worked for the GNWT, including a stint as a Compensation Administrator, giving her an extensive knowledge of HR policies and programs that she uses to help Beneficiaries in her new role.

Soon after joining the GTC, Mary Ann attended the Annual General Assembly in Aklavik, introducing herself to Beneficiaries and community leaders. She then took steps to increase awareness of both the employment opportunities available to Beneficiaries and the help she can provide them.

A new bulletin board in the GTC office lists GNWT and other jobs as well as training opportunities. Another bulletin board, in Samuel Hearne High School, lists job openings and future training opportunities for students, and is a joint effort of the GTC, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) and Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), NWT.

Giving direct assistance to Beneficiaries takes up much of Mary Ann's work day. "People come in daily for help with resumes, applications, and covering letters", she says, "and I'm happy to provide that."

Mary Ann also works closely with the Community Employment Officers in the GSA communities, and tries to "stay in contact" with people in each community. She has traveled to communities with Ruth Elanik of the IRC and Debra English of ECE, to hold "information sessions" on employment-related services and



*Mary Ann Ross, the GTC's new Employment Liaison Officer, showing one of her information displays for Canada Career Week.*

programs. In recent weeks she has visited Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson, Aklavik, and Tuktoyaktuk.

Mary Ann emphasizes working with other organizations in order to pool resources and coordinate policies. She represented the GTC in last September's Literacy Week, and is active in the Literacy Committee that has now been organized on a permanent basis to provide ongoing support for increased literacy. Other recent projects include National Addictions Awareness Week, and information displays for Canada Career Week, which circulated among the GTC, IRC and Samuel Hearne High School.

This month, ECE will bring the Community Employment Officers together for a two-and-a-half day workshop, including a session on apprenticeship programs with

Clarence Wood of ECE. Goals for the new year include more coordinated training of the Employment Officers, along with enhanced professional development opportunities.

The GTC will host the 2003 Career Fair, taking a lead role in staffing, budgeting and administering this event, which rotates among different organizations in the Beaufort-Delta region. Danielle Nason has been hired as Coordinator, and will work hard to ensure the Career Fair is a success.

Ross is currently filling a temporary assignment as President Carmichael's Executive Assistant until June 30, 2003.

Eleanor Firth has been hired on a casual basis until March 31, 2003, to replace Mary Ann Ross in the new position of Employment Liaison Officer.

# The EDUCATION & TRAINING REPORT

In September of 2002, Barb Crawford took over as Manager of the GTC's Education and Training Department from Pat McKinnon, who returned to Inuvik to take up a position with the Beaufort-Delta Self-government Negotiations Office. Barb has taught school in Inuvik, and her teaching background will help her to serve Beneficiaries who wish to take advantage of the training and educational opportunities open to them. Barb looks forward to working with the Education and Training team that includes Coordinator Margaret Thompson and Student Services Trainee Lucy Kay.

Barb had meetings in October with the Crime Prevention Advisory Committee; Education and Training

Committee; Capacity Building Subcommittee; Aurora College; Territorial Oil and Gas Training Committee; and literacy and Self-government organizations. As she points out, "with the onset of Self-government and the cutbacks that most organizations have experienced, it is imperative that we work together to form partnerships. This will allow everyone to benefit by sharing costs, ideas and information."

The Education and Training Department was recently busy helping students with the aid applications and paperwork required to meet the deadline for Winter semester assistance.

In the months ahead, the Department will build on Pat's work visiting the

GSA communities to inform residents of available benefits and programs, and develop close working relationships with the other organizations involved in training and education.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to think ahead in formulating their own educational and training plans and in making inquiries about financial assistance. For information on programs and deadlines, or to obtain applications for assistance, please contact the Education and Training Department at:

P.O. Box 30, Fort McPherson,  
NT. • XOE OJO

Tel. (867) 952-2330

Fax. (867) 952-2238

email: [barbaracrawford1@lycos.com](mailto:barbaracrawford1@lycos.com)

# The IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATOR REPORT

The GTC's Implementation Division is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the programs and activities related to implementing the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA). Implementation Coordinator Alex Benitah left the GTC to attend law school in September, and Deb Bisson replaced him effective November 25.

Implementation activities are covered in the GCLCA Implementation Plan, signed in 1992, and which expires this December. Since July of 2001 the GTC has been engaged in negotiations with the Federal and

Territorial Governments for a new Plan, to cover the next implementation period. Negotiators meet on a monthly basis to discuss implementation issues and obligations.

On October 8, Bob Simpson of the Beaufort-Delta Self-government Negotiations Office and Gwich'in Implementation Negotiator Richard Nerysoo reported to the GTC Board on recent negotiations and sought further direction. They emphasized the need for the next Implementation Agreement to improve on the initial one, with better financing arrangements for the GTC, Designated Gwich'in Organizations



**Implementation Coordinator Deb Bisson.**

(DGOs) and Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs)..

Negotiations to date have dealt with implementation management; resource management and lands; economic measures; heritage issues;

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**GTC Resource Manager  
Norman Snowshoe.**

The Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement requires that all rights agreed to in the Claim be integrated into resource management in the GSA. Resource Manager Norman Snowshoe and the GTC Resource Management Department are responsible for ensuring that the interests of the Gwich'in people and Gwich'in communities are included

## The LAND CLAIM AGREEMENT REPORT

and respected in resource management activities in and around the GSA. This mandate includes developing and maintaining good working relationships with all Gwich'in organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the Yukon & NWT Territorial Governments.

In recent months the Resource Manager's office has been involved in wildlife management, forest management, and political overlap issues, which are covered by the requirements of the GCLCA.

Resource Management personnel also represent the GTC on the NWT Environmental Contaminants Com-

mittee, which was established in 1998 to deal with concerns relating to contaminants in the NWT. Representatives of Federal and Territorial Government departments and Aboriginal organizations discuss contaminants issue by teleconference on a monthly basis, and meet in person each year. Environmental Contaminants Coordinator Johnny Edwards is the GTC's current representative on the Committee.

Please feel free to bring any questions or concerns on resource management issues to the attention of the Resource Management Department, either by visiting us at the GTC office in Inuvik, or by telephone, at 867-777-4869.

## The ENROLMENT BOARD REPORT

**E**nrolment as Beneficiaries under the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA) is open to all who qualify, regardless of age, so eligible Gwich'in continue to contact the Enrolment Board to register themselves and their children. Enrolment is not automatic, so you must request and complete an application form, which will be presented to the Board at one of its regular meetings.

Upon enrolment, you receive a Gwich'in Enrolment Card, a photo-identification card bearing the Gwich'in Nation logo, your four-digit enrolment number, and associated community.

Enrolment under the GCLCA is not the same thing as membership in a Gwich'in Band. Your ten-digit Treaty Status Card Number (the first

three digits of which designate your community Band) reflects your Band membership. To change Bands, you need to contact the Enrolment Board as well as your current Band office. But you must enroll under the GCLCA to receive such benefits as a vote in GTC elections, Christmas hampers, and participation in future payouts. To continue receiving GCLCA benefits, as well as information from the GTC, it is important to inform us every time you move. As people move, marry, have children, and die, Enrolment Board information should be updated to reflect these changes.

Since taking over as Enrolment Coordinator in October, 2001, Cheryl Wright has worked hard to bring the Enrolment Registry up-to-date. Late last year the Registry passed the 2,700 mark, and continues to grow. Cheryl has visited the GSA



**GTC Enrolment Coordinator  
Cheryl Wright.**

communities to process Enrolment Cards, and recently visited Yellowknife to ensure that Beneficiaries living there who might wish to fly South had picture ID, which airlines now require.

Please contact us at:  
Gwich'in Enrolment Board  
P.O. Box 1509, Inuvik, NT, XOE OTO  
Tel. 867-777-4869, Fax. 867-777-4538  
Attn: Cheryl Wright  
Email: [cherylw@inuvik.net](mailto:cherylw@inuvik.net)

# The ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR REPORT

Johnny Edwards, who became GTC Environmental Contaminants Coordinator in 2002, had a busy Fall. With Chief Abe Wilson and Robert Alexie Sr. of Fort McPherson, he conducted an aerial survey of the Caribou River overland route to confirm that the truck route and cleanup site itself were in good condition. Water testing at the site, as well as upstream and downstream, was done to check for traces of DDT.

Johnny also worked with the DIAND Contaminants Division and the Inuvialuit Contaminants Coordinator on a field evaluation of soil and water samples around the Inuvik landfill, addressing concerns that leachates from the landfill were entering the Boot Lake watershed system. Testing was done at seepage areas for heavy metals traces, hydrocarbons and other possible

contaminants. The GTC also participated in joint studies with the NWT Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development (RWED) of contaminant levels in beaver and muskrat in the Delta area, confirming that beaver and muskrat meat are safe to eat.

Last Fall Johnny also participated in a regional meeting of Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) as well as a meeting of the Protected Areas Strategy Implementation Advisory Committee, which brought together representatives from all regions of the NWT, including Dogrib, Sahtu and Treaty 11 members, to discuss issues of protected areas strategy. On the staff development front, Johnny attended the Alberta waste management course, as well as one-day workshops at Aurora College on hazardous materials and the dangers of working with hydrogen sulfide.



**GTC Environmental Contaminants Coordinator Johnny Edwards.**

Since 1999, the GTC has been a partner in the Northern Contaminants Program (NCP), which is mandated to deal with issues regarding the presence of long-range and local source contaminants in the food chain, a major concern given the importance of traditional foods to the diet of many Gwich'in. We have sent letters to the Federal and Territorial Governments supporting renewal of the NCP for a third five-year phase (2003-2008), and lobbying for continuation and funding of this program is currently a high priority.

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and office operations. Outstanding issues include devolution and transfer of obligations from Ottawa to the Yukon Government. A transfer of responsibilities across a wide spectrum of issues is taking place, affecting Gwich'in rights in the Yukon. Much more needs to be done in order to achieve GCLCA objectives regarding economic measures, and Ottawa's financial obligations remain a major point of contention. Our negotiators proposed agreeing to interim funding levels for periods of up to a year, in order to keep operations going, but to withhold final agreement until a

new Implementation Plan is negotiated, with adequate funding.

The Board accepted the negotiators' recommendations, and passed a

motion reaffirming its support for their work and endorsing the preparation of appropriate implementation issues for arbitration where agreement cannot be reached.

## Coming Next Issue:

