

FOR RELEASE # 189
September 10, 2002

REVISION OF ALASKA HIGHWAY AT CHAMPAGNE OFFICIALLY OPENED

WHITEHORSE – The revised section of the Alaska Highway near Champagne was officially opened today. Infrastructure Minister Scott Kent and Community Services Minister Pam Buckway officially opened the revised section of the highway Tuesday afternoon. The highway construction work consists of a 16-kilometre relocation of the highway starting at the Mendenhall River and rejoining the old highway approximately five kilometres past the village of Champagne.

“This project has spanned more than 15 months and created employment for 50 people on average, which equates to approximately 1800 person weeks of employment,” Kent said. “The result is a safer road, improved highway infrastructure and the elimination of high traffic volumes from the village.”

Citizens from Champagne and Haines Junction, the media and representatives from Pelly Construction and Quest Engineering, and Department of Infrastructure officials joined the politicians in the drive along both the old and new sections of the highway.

“The Champagne revision generated almost \$9 million in construction and consultant contracts for Yukoners,” added Kent. “The old highway section was narrow, with 17 curves, which caused traffic to slow to 70 km/hr or less in many places. The new revision has four curves and is designed to a 100 km/hr standard.”

The project was announced in the spring 2001 and included a skills training component between the Champagne & Aishihik First Nations and the Department of Education. The purpose of the training component was to give individuals the opportunity for entry level in the highway construction business.

“The road construction created a lot of steady employment and training for Champagne and Aishihik First Nations members,” Deputy Chief Kathy Van Bibber said. “Hopefully it will also alleviate accidents on that stretch of highway.”

A total length of 16.2 kilometres of highway was reconstructed. This required moving more than one million cubic metres of earth and sand, placing 67,000 cubic metres of crushed gravel, installing 1.6 kilometres of culvert and replacing a major bridge. The new section of the highway is approximately 1.6 kilometres shorter than the old one.

For information on highway construction projects taking place in the Yukon, visit the Department of Infrastructures Web site at www.gov.yk.ca/roadreport.

-30-

Contact:

Bernie Adilman
Cabinet Communications
(867) 667-8075
bernie.adilman@gov.yk.ca

Laurie Sthamann
Communications, Infrastructure
(867) 393-7193
laurie.sthamann@gov.yk.ca