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**PREMIER RECOGNIZES LITERACY LEADER THROUGH AWARD**

WHITEHORSE – Premier Dennis Fentie is presenting the 2006 Council of the Federation Literacy Award to Yukon literacy leader Rock Brisson today.

The Council of the Federation Literacy Award is a national award presented to a literacy leader in each province and territory.

“A literacy leader is any person who works to achieve their literacy goals or helps others to achieve their literacy goals,” Mr. Fentie said. “I congratulate Rock Brisson for receiving this prestigious award and I would like to thank him for his dedication to learning and for sharing the challenges of his own journey with others.”

“It’s never too late to learn,” Rock Brisson said. “There are so many different opportunities to express yourself through reading and writing.”

“As both a learner and as an advocate for the importance of lifelong learning, Rock Brisson has contributed to literacy in Yukon,” Fentie said. “Literacy is a priority for the Government of Yukon because it is very important to maintaining and developing healthy communities and a vibrant economy.”

To learn more about the Council of the Federation Literacy Award please call 667-5690 or 1-800-661-0408, extension 5690.

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**Backgrounder:**

Rock Brisson was born in Shawinigan, Quebec, the fourth of 10 children. His difficult early life in foster homes and orphanages led to changing schools. At age 13 he was at a grade 3 level.

In spite of this, Rock was placed in high school classes. When alcohol and illegal activities clashed with school, Rock left formal learning for the next 30 years.

Rock married and had a family. He became a successful businessman as a property manager. Now, he is the owner of Northern Lights Painting and Renovation--all this without the ability to read or write.

While seeking help from Yukon Learn for one of his children, Rock asked for help for himself. He also wanted to be a role model. Rock is learning to read in both French and English and to use assistive technology. He works with tutors through Yukon Learn, Association Franco-Yukonnaise, Yukon Council on Disability and in an Essential Skills program at Yukon College. He is able to write letters of support for educational programs, write poetry, and work on an autobiography. Rock is Yukon's "learner representative" at Ottawa meetings for French learners.

Rock continues to be a motivation as he allows his story to be made public in newspapers, and through talks to church and school groups.