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newsletter

February 2005

Sharon A. Firth, C.M. **Winner of a 2005 National Aboriginal Award**



"Dare to lose in order to win."

Sharon A. Firth will be honoured with a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on March 31, 2005. She is being recognized for her tremendous work speaking to northern youth about self-esteem, goal-setting and being the best they can be.

The outstanding accomplishments of Sharon Anne Firth as a world-class athlete and exceptional role model have earned her a place in the hearts of the Gwich'in Nation and the people of the Northwest Territories (NWT). Sharon and her twin sister Shirley were among the first Aboriginal women to compete in various international cross country ski competitions including three world ski championships and four winter Olympics.

Sharon's competitive accomplishments include 37 Canadian National Championship medals (19 gold, 14 silver, and 4 bronze). She was a member of the Canadian National Cross Country Ski team for 14 years. Over her 20-year career she has garnered many awards and much recognition. Sharon has been honored by the northern people and the Canadian Government with awards such as the NWT Commissioner's Award, the Order of Canada, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award, induction into the Canadian Museum Ski Hall of Fame and most recently, a 2005 National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

At a time when many people of the North still survived on the land by hunting, fishing and trapping as her family did, Sharon followed her dream to see the world. Her story is an inspiration and motivation for all youth. Sharon speaks with great humility and fondness for the life she was born into and how it was the foundation for her success. Being raised on the land and learning traditional skills gave her the discipline, perseverance and courage to achieve. Sharon made cross-country skiing a way of life and firmly believes that it is her key to being successful.

Sharon looks forward to continuing to share her passion for cross-country skiing with northerners of all ages. She believes that cross-country skiing can be enjoyed from the time one learns to walk, well into old age, bringing with it numerous health benefits. She looks forward to continuing to provide guidance and advice to our northern kids.

Gas Tax Allocation

As part of its 2004-05 Budget, the federal government stated that it was committed to working with the provinces/territories to share gas tax revenues or to determine other fiscal mechanisms, which achieve the same goals.

The three territories have taken a Pan-Territorial approach to the gas tax allocation. The position has been that the three territories have unique pressures and needs from southern provinces, which need to be recognized when allocating infrastructure funding.

On February 1, 2005, John Godfrey, the federal Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities) announced details on how Canada will negotiate the federal New Deal for Cities and Communities with each jurisdiction.

Minister Godfrey announced that gas tax allocations add up to a total investment of \$5 billion over five years. Funding will be distributed to provinces and territories on a per capita basis, with a .75% targeted allocation for the three territories and Prince Edward Island. For the NWT, this equates to funding on the following basis:

- \$4.5 million in each of 2005/2006 and 2006/2007;
- \$6.0 million in 2007/2008;
- \$7.5 million in 2008/2009; and
- \$15 million in 2009/2010 and ongoing.

MACA will work in consultation with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities to determine how the funding will be rolled out to communities.

Gas tax allocations will be directed to environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure such as public transit, water and wastewater systems, community energy systems, solid waste management, rehabilitation of roads and bridges, and capacity building in areas such as asset management.

Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund \$39 million joint fund launched in January



On January 18, 2005, the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada signed the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) Agreement.

This Agreement translates into joint federal-territorial community infrastructure funding of \$32 million over the next four years. With matching investments by the six tax-based communities, there is expected to be at least \$39 million in total infrastructure investments made through MRIF. This funding demonstrates a significant move on the part of the territorial and federal governments to address the significant infrastructure gap in both tax-based and non-tax-based communities.

Recent analysis undertaken by MACA, in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, has indicated that the current level of investment is only meeting 60% of community infrastructure needs. The MRIF funding will allow the territorial government to undertake substantial upgrades and improvements to key elements of community infrastructure - water, wastewater and solid waste - and will allow community governments to move forward with projects they have identified as being of highest priority.

NWT Governance Conference: Eye on Today To be held in Yellowknife April 12-14, 2005

Eye on Today offers a series of compelling keynote addresses and presentations, opportunities to network and discuss community governance issues, workshops relating to innovative governance practices and NWT best practices and successful governance transformation models.

Master of Ceremonies: Mr. Steve Kakfwi, former Premier of the NWT

Keynote Address: Honourable Michael McLeod, Minister of MACA (Topic: Changing Governance in the NWT)

Feature Dinner Speaker: Mr. Ted Nolan *former NHL player and Coach* (Topic: Accentuate the Positive)

National and local presenters include:

- Mr. Doug Mcnamara: Governing With a Dynamic Strategic Plan
- Mr. Bill Reid: Performance Measurement for Governing Groups
- Ms. Jean Christie: Governments Working Together to Develop Relevant Policy
- Mr. Graeme Dargo: Supporting Community Economic Development
- Mr. Blake Lyons: Governance Issues in the NWT: A Facilitated Discussion
- Mr. Ron Dennill: Managing Your Governance Infrastructure Risks

The conference is organized and hosted by the Department of MACA, Northwest Territories Association of Communities, Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

For more information, or to register, check out the MACA website or call (867) 920-6105.

Building Healthy Communities

Addressing the Infrastructure Deficit in the NWT

There is increasing recognition nationally of the large and growing municipal infrastructure deficit across Canada, and the impact of this deficit on our quality of life and economic prosperity. The shortfall in infrastructure investment at the municipal level - i.e. the failure to invest appropriately in maintenance, rehabilitation or replacement of existing infrastructure, or to acquire new infrastructure to meet demographic and service demands - has an immediate and direct impact on the quality of life of all our residents. This is a compounding problem - every required infrastructure investment that is delayed leads to increased costs for repair or replacement down the road.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) estimates the national municipal infrastructure deficit at \$60 billion. This represents the investment required to replace, repair or maintain municipal infrastructure across the country. Pressures that are contributing to the deficit include the impact of the fiscal imbalance on municipal governments; increased regulatory requirements in the areas of water, wastewater and solid waste; population growth and the demand for enhanced programs and services.

Other provinces and territories have produced papers outlining the impacts of the municipal infrastructure deficit and proposing solutions. However, to date, no other jurisdiction appears to have gone beyond the FCM estimates and attempted to quantify the magnitude of the deficit, and there is no generally accepted method for doing so.

The federal government has announced the New Deal for Cities and Communities, in part as an attempt to come to grips with the infrastructure crisis.

MACA and the Northwest Territories Association of Communities have produced a discussion paper that:

- Defines and quantifies the magnitude of the community public infrastructure deficit in the NWT;
- Illustrates how the NWT's infrastructure challenges are unique and require unique solutions; and
- Proposes a plan of action.

Using an extremely conservative methodology, it has been determined that the shortfall in investment in community public infrastructure in the NWT over a 10-year-period is \$186 million (2004 dollars). At current investment levels, 62% of the community infrastructure need is being met, and with every year the gap between investment and need is growing. These figures do not reflect the impact of deferred maintenance, or of resource development. If the effects of deferred capital investment and deferred maintenance were included, it would add approximately \$8 million this year to the infrastructure deficit, and the impact would compound over time.

For a copy of the report, check out the MACA website.

Do you have something you would like to see included in the MACA newsletter?

We are always looking for content submissions.

Please forward your ideas to:

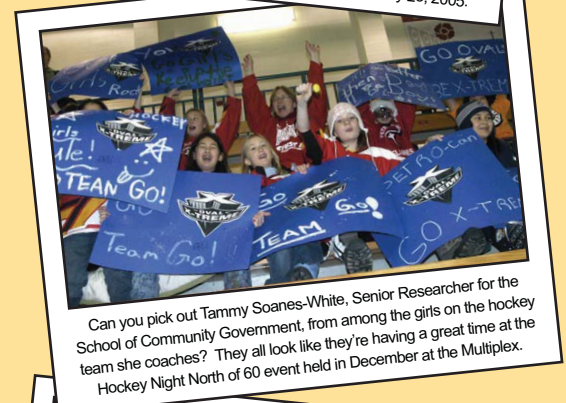
amy_hacala@gov.nt.ca

STAFF CORNER

Photos of our active MACA staff over the past few months.



Jimmy Stewart, Accounting Operations Officer with the North Slave Regional Office, celebrating his 50th birthday on January 23, 2005.



Can you pick out Tammy Soanes-White, Senior Researcher for the School of Community Government, from among the girls on the hockey team she coaches? They all look like they're having a great time at the Hockey Night North of 60 event held in December at the Multiplex.



Penny Johnson (far left), Coordinator - Strategic Initiatives with the School of Community Government, manning the KidSport booth at the Hockey Night North of 60 Hockey Game in December.

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What's Going On? MACA News & Events

Call for Nominations

MACA is seeking nominations for individuals wishing to sit on the NWT Council of Sport and Recreation Partners, a forum for all communities and sport and recreation leaders to have a voice in sport and recreation planning and decision-making. Nominations close *March 7, 2005*. For more info, check out the MACA website, or call (867) 873-7245.

Get Active NWT Community Challenge

The *Get Active NWT Community Challenge* was launched in the Great Hall of the Legislative Assembly on March 1, 2006. If you want to make physical activity part of your life, plan to *Get Active* this spring. For more information, visit the *Get Active NWT* website at www.getactivenwt.ca or call (867) 920-6467.

Pipeline Conference Report is Available

From December 6-8, 2004, 60 leaders from more than 20 communities, as well as government and industry representatives, gathered in Inuvik to discuss how communities, governments and the Project Proponent can work together to identify and minimize negative impacts and maximize the opportunities coming from the construction of a gas pipeline through the NWT. For more info and to obtain a copy, check out the MACA website or call (867) 873-7565.

New Deal for NWT Community Governments

MACA has recently sent community governments and other stakeholders information packages about the New Deal. Included in the package were Informational Posters, and Question & Answer Sheets that will help you understand the New Deal for NWT community governments. Items are also available on the MACA website, or call (867) 873-7571.

For more info:

Contact the Regional Superintendent in your region to learn more about MACA's programs and services.

The NWT Planning Act Empowering Community Governments

The *Planning Act* governs how community governments plan for the orderly development of their communities in the NWT. The *Act* addresses the preparation of general plans and development schemes, the establishment of zoning by-laws, and the public process for making appeals on development decisions. The *Act* also contains provisions dealing with the subdivision of lands, however, those provisions have never been brought into force.

Interested stakeholders, especially those representing community governments in the NWT, and members of the public, have recommended that the *Planning Act* be amended and/or overhauled. Some of the recommendations have included:

- Enacting the provisions dealing with the subdivision of land;
- Amending the provisions that address the functions and authorities of development appeal boards;
- Providing for a greater degree of public input into land use decisions made by community governments; and
- Modernizing the *Act* so that it is less prescriptive and more responsive to the needs, values and resources available within community governments.



MACA's role is changing as a result of the new municipal legislation, which came into effect April 2004. MACA is moving away from its historical role of monitoring and policing the activities of municipal governments, toward focusing on establishing legislative and policy frameworks that empower community governments

MACA recognizes that the *Planning Act* needs to be modernized to reflect this evolving relationship. The

Department, in partnership with the Northwest Territories Association of Communities, is undertaking the development of a Discussion Paper which outlines the current issues with the *Planning Act* and makes recommendations for change. This Discussion Paper will be used as the basis for widespread consultation with community governments and other stakeholders. Amendments to the *Act* will be proposed to the Legislative Assembly after that.

