

# YAMAL-NENETS - ALBERTA RELATIONS



## PROFILE

**Capital:** Salekhard

**Population:** 507,000 (2002)

**Language:** Russian, Nentsi

**Government:** Yamal-Nenets is an autonomous okrug located within Tyumen Region. It is administered by a Governor & elected legislative council (Duma). Also holds seats in the Russian Federal Assembly.

**Head of Government:** Governor Yuri Neyelov

**Currency:** Russian Rouble,  
\$1 CDN = 22.13 roubles (2004 average)

**Key Industry Sectors:** Natural gas, oil, minerals (manganese, phosphorus & rare precious metals)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The indigenous peoples in the region have maintained their traditional way of life – they still travel by sled and reindeer; live in tepee-like structures called *cham*; exist off the land; and worship their own deities.
- In 1993, the new Russian constitution gave Yamal-Nenets an enhanced autonomous status within the Tyumen Region.
- 2005 marks both the anniversary of Alberta's 100 years as a province, and Yamal-Nenets' 75 years as an autonomous region.

## RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Commercial relations between Alberta and the Western Siberian region of Yamal-Nenets are long-standing and focused on the gas industry.
- Since 1993, there has been an increase in construction contracts for hospitals, schools and hotels in Yamal-Nenets for Alberta companies.
- Both Alberta and Yamal-Nenets are members of Northern Forum, an organization that brings together sub-national governments from a number of northern countries to address common political, environmental and economic issues.
- Yamal-Nenets participated for the first time as a guest contingent in the 18<sup>th</sup> Arctic Winter Games, which were held in Fort McMurray in March 2004. The 26-member team competed in traditional winter sport events. The AWG, held once every two years, brings together over 2,000 young amateur athletes from north of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel from Alberta, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Quebec, Alaska, Greenland, Russia, and Finland.

## YAMAL-NENETS ECONOMY

- There is considerable foreign investment in Yamal-Nenets, totalling 6% of all foreign capital investment in Russia. The volume of capital investments per capita exceeds that of Russia by 18 times.
- Natural gas production remains the most important sector of Yamal's economy.
- Yamal-Nenets is home to 70% of Russia's stock of white salmon. Fishing remains an important economic activity.
- The northern Ural Mountains in western Yamal-Nenets contain vast mineral resources.
- Other important industries include processing of canned fish, hydroelectricity, forestry, and woodworking.

## **EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES**

- With such large gas reserves, Yamal-Nenets will continue to be an important strategic partner for Alberta, enabling Alberta to gain a foothold for access to other sectors and regions.
- Possible areas for future growth and development in Yamal-Nenets are: infrastructure improvement and construction; energy and environmental regulatory systems; medical equipment and training; education and training, and aboriginal affairs.

## **ENERGY**

- Yamal-Nenets contains 72% of Russia's gas reserves, and 15% of Russia's oil reserves.
- In 2004, Yamal-Nenets produced about 20 trillion cubic feet (Tcf) of natural gas, almost 90% of Russia's total natural gas production, supporting Russia's position as the world's largest producer and exporter of gas.
- In 2004, the region was responsible for 12% of Russia's crude oil output or about 1.06 million barrels (bbl) per day. By comparison, Alberta was responsible for 67% of Canada's crude oil and equivalent output, producing about 1.7 million barrels per day.
- Alberta companies have been working in the oil and gas sector in this region since the 1970s.
- The region is an important supplier of gas to Europe. The Yamal-Europe pipeline supplies Poland and Germany with natural gas via Belarus, and there is a proposal to build a second line (Yamal-Europe II) via Poland.
- Another proposed pipeline, North-European Gas Pipeline, if constructed, would carry gas from Yamal deposits to Germany, Great Britain and other European countries.

## **EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

- Alberta Learning offers an International Education Ministerial Award to a Yamal student to come study in Alberta.
- Yamal looks to Alberta when sourcing infrastructure development, equipment and training partnerships, as a result of previous training programs for mid- and senior- level officials from Yamal. Their resulting familiarity with Alberta has deepened ties.
- In the fall of 1999, Grant MacEwan College hosted a CIDA-funded regional healthcare conference regarding the Canada-Russia Initiative in Nursing (CRIN).
- In November 1997, there was an Alberta-Yamal-Nenets International Comparative Conference on Health Care Issues in Salekhard.
- In 1995, a 17-member delegation of secondary education administrators from Yamal-Nenets came to Alberta to study Alberta's educational system and curricula development.

## **ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY**

- Seven indigenous populations, including the Nentsi and Khanty peoples, inhabit the Yamal-Nenets Okrug.
- One major problem facing the Okrug administration is how to assure a sustainable future for its indigenous population.
- There are 35,000 Aboriginal people in Yamal-Nenets, many of who continue to live by reindeer herding.

## **AGREEMENTS**

- December 1997: Memorandum of Understanding signed between Alberta and Yamal-Nenets covering such matters as education, training and aboriginal issues.
- Alberta has provided customized training programs to Yamal-Nenets government officials, on a cost recovery basis, in the areas of public expenditure management, healthcare, and secondary education administration.

## **RECENT AND UPCOMING VISITS**

- July 2005: Yamal-Nenets sent a large delegation and exhibit to Edmonton's Klondike Days to celebrate Alberta's Centennial. The delegation was headed by Duma Chairman, the Honourable Sergey Kharyuchi.
- July 2005: Yamal-Nenets showcases a cultural exhibit at Klondike Days.
- February 2003: the Governor of Yamal-Nenets, Governor Neyelov, met with Premier Klein in Calgary.
- February 2002: The Yamal-Nenets Deputy Governor met with Premier Klein in Moscow during the Team Canada Trade Mission.
- September 2000: Alberta delegation led by Minister Paszkowski and MLA LeRoy Johnson, visited Yamal-Nenets.
- June 2000: Governor Neyelov made his fourth visit to Alberta to attend the World Petroleum Congress and met with Premier Klein and Minister of IIR.
- December 1997: Governor Neyelov visited Alberta for the signing of the Alberta-Yamal-Nenets MOU.
- February 1997: Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health in Yamal-Nenets visited Alberta.

## **DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION**

- The Russian Ambassador to Canada is His Excellency Georgy Mamedov.
- The Canadian Ambassador to Russia is Mr. Christopher Westdal.
- Boris Belostotsky is Yamal-Nenets' representative in Alberta.