

Speech from the Throne

FIRST SESSION OF THE THIRTY-SECOND YUKON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DELIVERED BY COMMISSIONER GERALDINE VAN BIBBER

NOVEMBER 23, 2006





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BUILDING YUKON'S FUTURE TOGETHER

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Yukon Legislative Assembly, Yukoners, visitors and honoured guests, I welcome you in our Sovereign's name to the First Session of the Thirty-Second Legislative Assembly.

In today's Yukon, there is a rekindled economy, unemployment is at historic lows, our population is increasing, property values are on the rise and my government's financial health is among the best of all jurisdictions in Canada.

The Yukon is poised to continue its advance on the pathway to growth and prosperity by continuing the vision and the direction that was established by my government in the election of 2002.

It was through dedication and hard work that my government built a strong foundation for Yukon's future over the past four years. On October 10, 2006, my government received a second mandate from the people of Yukon to continue to advance and to keep the territory on its current pathway of growth and prosperity.

It is worthy to note that my government is the only government since 1989 to achieve a second mandate. This is indeed historic and clearly demonstrates that the people of Yukon wanted political stability and continuity.

My government's vision, "Building Yukon's Future Together – A Clear Vision for a Bright Future," has four major pillars:

- achieving a better quality of life by building healthy, safe communities with skilled and adaptable people;
- protecting Yukon's pristine environment, preserving our wildlife; and studying and mitigating the impacts of climate change;
- promoting a strong, diversified private sector economy by developing Yukon's vast natural resources, wilderness tourism potential, agriculture, arts and culture, information technology, and film and sound, as well as the traditional industries of outfitting and trapping; and
- practising good governance with strong fiscal management and a climate of cooperation, collaboration and partnership with our First Nation governments, our two sister territories, our provincial counterparts and the federal government.



These are the pillars upon which my government will build Yukon's future.

In the recent 2006 election, my government asked Yukoners to imagine a better and brighter tomorrow.

It asked Yukoners to imagine a tomorrow where our children are not faced with crack houses and drug dealers in their neighbourhoods.

In order to achieve this objective, my government is committed to implementing its Substance Abuse Action Plan based on four strategic directions: harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and enforcement.

My government has stated that there will be zero-tolerance for drug dealers and that the enforcement provisions of the Substance Abuse Action Plan will be utilized to ensure drug houses are shut down in Yukon and drug dealers leave the territory.

One of the enforcement tools is the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* that allows enforcement officers to shut down drug houses and other illegal activities in our communities.

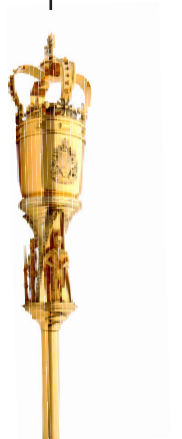
Investigators have now been hired and the office should be in operation in the very near future.

My government is also focusing on new treatment options and facilities for those who have become addicted to drugs in accordance with the initiatives outlined in its Corrections Action Plan.

To this end, my government will be introducing a therapeutic problem-solving court to the Yukon justice system where those offenders with challenges, such as addictions, FASD, or mental health problems are able to work with the court in a 'holistic' manner to address the treatment needs of the offender.

During the election, Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where our elders and seniors are able to stay in their homes and within their communities as their needs increase.

To achieve this end, my government is committed to delivering expanded homecare services, re-opening the Thomson Centre, establishing a palliative care unit, and consulting with Yukoners on new elders and seniors facilities in Teslin and other communities in addition to those being planned or under construction in Watson Lake, Dawson City and Haines Junction.



Yukoners were also asked to imagine a tomorrow where affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare and early learning services are available for children and parents in all Yukon communities.

My government is committed to delivering a territory-wide childcare and early learning strategy for children and parents based on the priorities that parents themselves have established.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where children with disabilities receive therapies and support services they need to achieve their full potential and live happy productive lives.

My government is committed to expanding support services currently provided to children with autism to include children with other severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and Down syndrome.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow with more doctors and other health care professionals because more of our children have been given access to higher education and have returned home to practice here.

My government is committed to ensuring that Yukon families have improved access to the doctors and other medical professionals they need through measures designed to increase accessible health care for Yukon families.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where all the skills and trades training that Yukoners and their children need is available in Yukon schools and more and more Yukon children are able to graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education.

My government is committed to introducing a comprehensive skills and trades training strategy to meet the needs of our growing and prosperous economy and to implement the findings of its major Education Reform initiative.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where help is available for seniors, stay-at-home parents, those on social assistance and students to participate in the job market.

My government is committed to assisting potential employees to enter the labour market and help employees fill existing vacancies in the entry-level work force.



Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where Yukoners have ready access to land to meet their needs.

My government is committed to making land available to Yukoners for community, residential, recreational, agricultural, commercial and industrial purposes while respecting the interests of existing land holders.

This will be accomplished by streamlining the land application process and ensuring that appropriate policies and administrative structures are put in place to manage Crown land in the territory.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where the Yukon is renowned for taking innovative steps to address climate change with its own Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence for the North.

As part of its Climate Change Strategy, my government is committed to:

- establishing Yukon College as a Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence for the North;
- building a Cold Climate Innovation Cluster situated at Ayamdigut Campus at Yukon College to specialize in three general areas of cold climate technology including building construction and maintenance, municipal infrastructure and geotechnical works;
- increasing inventory monitoring, data collection and research on the impacts of climate change on the Porcupine Caribou Herd and other wildlife species such as moose, caribou, bears and Yukon wood bison;
- promoting the Old Crow Campus of Yukon College as an integral part of research on the Porcupine Caribou Herd to ensure local and traditional knowledge is utilized in strategies to lessen the impacts of climate change; and
- including the Yukon Wildlife Preserve as an affiliate of the Yukon College Climate Change Research Centre of Excellence in order to study the impacts of climate change on Yukon wildlife.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow where the Yukon is renowned for protecting, preserving and celebrating its pristine environment, sensitive ecosystems and wilderness landscapes for the benefit of future generations and the global community.



My government is committed to meeting its obligations to establish Special Management Areas and Habitat Protection Areas under the land claims settlements as well as to plan and manage a system of wilderness preserves, natural environment parks and ecological reserves throughout the territory.

As part of this initiative, my government is committed to showcasing Yukon parks and urging the Government of Canada to increase its investment in its three national parks in Yukon, including Parks Canada's presence in Dawson City.

Yukon's breathtaking wilderness has been identified as one of the major drivers in promoting the future economic growth of the territory.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a prosperous tomorrow whereby economic activity will be robust from now into the foreseeable future fueled by the demand for the territory's abundance of mineral, oil and gas and other resources as well as a dramatic expansion in the tourism sector due to an increasing demand by international travelers seeking to experience Yukon's breathtaking wilderness and northern cultures.

My government is committed to providing access to land, regulatory certainty, business incentive and marketing programs, and the provision of necessary transportation and energy infrastructure to support the development and growth of a prosperous and diversified private sector economy.

Yukoners were asked to imagine a tomorrow with the Yukon coming of age through effective leadership, political stability, cooperative governance and strong fiscal management.

My government is committed to continuing its cooperative approach to governance whether it be with municipal governments, First Nation governments, our two sister territories, neighbouring jurisdictions such as Alaska, British Columbia and Alberta, the provincial governments, through the Council of the Federation and the Government of Canada.

My government is committed to working with the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Canada to create a new Northern Vision demonstrating that Canada north of 60 is coming of age, that Canada's northern frontier will become Canada's future and that the territories will play an increasingly important role in Canadian confederation. The fact that Yukon, in collaboration with its two sister territories, is hosting the 2007 Canada Winter Games is an acknowledgement of this new reality and gives the North an opportunity to showcase itself to southern Canadians.



My government remains committed to completing and implementing land claims as well as making First Nations full partners in the economic development of the territory. To accomplish this end, my government will work with First Nations, Yukon College and the private sector to provide training for Yukon First Nations for land claims implementation, especially in relation to capacity development for First Nation governance.

My government looks forward to continuing our constructive and cooperative relationship with the dynamic Yukon francophone community.

It also remains committed to practising open, accountable, fiscally responsible government through legislative renewal and the provision of balanced budgets as the way of the future.

My government is committed to working constructively with all members of the House to improve the operation of its committees and the proceedings of the legislature itself.

Most importantly, my government will work closely with all Yukoners, whether it be in the private or public sector to ensure a future filled with promise for every one of our citizens.

During this sitting Honourable Members will be asked to consider Bill No. 2 the *Fourth Appropriation Act 2005-06*, Bill No. 3 *Second Appropriation Act 2006-07* and Bill No. 31 - *Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*.

May divine providence attend your deliberations. I thank you in our Sovereign's name. God Bless Yukon and God Bless Canada.

