

FOR RELEASE #07-137
June 28, 2007

COMMISSIONER INVITES EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE IN CANADA DAY ACTIVITIES

WHITEHORSE - Yukon Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber extends a warm invitation to all Yukoners and visitors to join in Canada Day activities on Sunday, July 01.

“I hope everyone in Yukon has a chance to relax and celebrate Canada Day with family and friends,” Van Bibber said. “It’s a day to remember our history and appreciate the many positive aspects of living in this country,” the Commissioner said.

At Rotary Peace Park in downtown Whitehorse, Commissioner Van Bibber will join a host of community groups and individuals to celebrate Canada and to recognize outstanding Yukoners. She will also participate in the Canadian citizenship ceremony, and welcome 30 new Canadians.

“Canada Day is an opportunity to recognize and acknowledge the community service and dedication of outstanding Yukon citizens. I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who dedicates hours of hard work to make Canada Day celebrations in Yukon a great success year after year,” Commissioner Van Bibber said.

Commissioner’s Awards for Public Service, which honour outstanding individuals who have made a significant contribution to Yukon business, academics, arts, culture or society, will be presented by the Commissioner on Canada Day. Commissioner Van Bibber will also present a Canada Day Youth Award on Sunday. This honour is given to a person 18 years and younger who exemplifies the qualities of citizenship that strengthen social fabric and enrich Canadian national life. The young person must have made a truly exceptional contribution in any number of areas.

The Commissioner’s Award for Public Service will be presented to Lana Dowie and Piers McDonald. The Canada Day Youth Award will be presented to 16-year-old Samantha Beemish of Whitehorse.

Canada Day events in Whitehorse start with a parade at 11 a.m. in Shipyards Park along the Yukon River in Whitehorse.

For more on the Commissioner’s role and activities, please visit <http://www.gov.yk.ca/commissioner>.

-30-

Attached: Backgrounder on Commissioner’s Awards and Canada Day Youth Award recipients

For information, please contact:

Cathy Cheeseman or Lawna MacLeod
Commissioner’s Office
(867) 667-5121

Cathy.Cheeseman@gov.yk.ca or Lawna.MacLeod@gov.yk.ca

BACKGROUND

Commissioner's Awards - Public Service

Lana Dowie - Whitehorse

Lana's association with Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous spans over 20 years, with a history of volunteer leadership that has seen her assume a wide variety of positions on the association's board of directors and coordinate many different Sourdough Rendezvous events.

For many years, beginning each September, Lana has volunteered several hours two to three times a week to choreograph the Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous can can dance line and to train the can can dancers.

In addition to her involvement with the can can dancers, Lana also formed the *Golden Girls*, a Seniors' Dance Troupe. The troupe provides a wonderful opportunity for physical activity and camaraderie for active seniors in the Whitehorse community.

For her 20 years of tireless service to Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous and to many other organizations, Lana is awarded the Commissioner's Public Service Award.

Piers McDonald – Whitehorse

Piers McDonald has been involved in public service for many years, including as premier of Yukon from 1996-2000.

His most recent leadership role as president of the Canada Winter Games Host Society required years of commitment and hundreds of hours of dedication and hard work.

The 2007 Canada Winter Games was the first CWG to be held north of the 60th parallel, and Piers was instrumental in staging this very successful event.

The Games will have long-lasting benefits for all Northerners. The organization of an event of this unprecedented size and complexity in the North required creativity, and was enhanced by Piers' unassuming and inclusive style. For his work on this project, and for helping all Yukoners succeed with the 2007 Canada Winter Games, he is awarded the Commissioner's Award for Public Service.

Canada Day Youth Awards

Samantha Beemish - Whitehorse

Samantha is a Grade 10 student at Porter Creek Secondary School. She was nominated for the Canada Day Youth Award by members of the Yukon Association for Community Living.

Members of the association noted in their letter of recommendation that Samantha is a willing and hardworking volunteer at the association's dances and fundraisers. She also works as a "peer" in many of the association's summer recreation activities. Samantha has an excellent rapport with people of all ages and donates her volunteer time in addition to attending school and holding a part-time job.

For the above reasons, and for her understanding and promotion of the importance of including everyone in our community, Samantha is a deserving recipient of the Canada Day Youth Award.