

FOR RELEASE #07-092

May 15, 2007

CEREMONY TO CELEBRATE YUKON FRANCOPHONE DAY

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon is hosting a ceremony today to celebrate the Commissioner’s proclamation of May 15, 2007 as *la Journée de la francophonie yukonnaise* or Yukon Francophone Day.

“French-speaking people have been in the Yukon region over 150 years contributing to its economic, social and cultural growth,” Glenn Hart, minister responsible for the Directorate of French Language Services, said. “We congratulate Yukon francophones for helping to make our territory the wonderful place it is.”

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the *Association franco-yukonnaise*. The proclamation ceremony is one of many events marking the anniversary, which will start at 12:15 p.m. in the foyer of the Government of Yukon administration building on 2nd Avenue. The ceremony will include musical performances and refreshments, and everyone is welcome.

“We thank the Government of Yukon for honouring us with this special day and ceremony,” Association franco-yukonnaise President Jean-Marc Perreault said. “This day, which highlights the francophones’ contributions in the territory, is an important recognition of all French-speaking Yukoners and it will further strengthen the advancement of our community, whose numbers may be small but whose presence is strong in all spheres of activities across Yukon.”

The Francophone community has organized activities for later in the day to highlight the contributions of volunteers and youth. A dinner honouring francophone volunteers will be held at 5 p.m. at Rotary Peace Park followed by *Spectacle sans nom*, a surprise-packed show produced by the students of Émilie-Tremblay School. Everyone is welcome to these events as well.

-30-

Attachment: Background information about Yukon’s francophone community

Contact:

Roxanne Vallevand
Cabinet Communications
(867) 633-7949
roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca

Becky Striegler
Communications, French Language Services
(867) 667-8970
becky.striegler@gov.yk.ca

Marianne Théorêt-Poupart
Communications, *Association franco-yukonnaise*
(867) 668-2663, ext. 315
mtpoupart@afy.yk.ca

Background Information About Yukon's Francophone Community

- French-speaking people have been in the Yukon for more than 150 years. Some of the familiar names:
 - Émilie Tremblay, the first white woman to climb the Chilkoot Trail in the late 1800s
 - Joseph Ladue, a Klondike pioneer and another Chilkoot climber
- Association franco-yukonnaise (AFY) was created in 1982 to improve the quality of life for Francophones in Yukon. It is the officially recognized voice of the Francophone community.
- AFY worked to set up institutions for the Francophone community including:
 - École Émilie Tremblay, a French school officially recognized in 1988
 - La Garderie du petit cheval blanc, a French daycare established in 1990
 - Centre de la Francophonie, which opened in 2001
- The Legislative Assembly passed the Yukon *Languages Act* in 1988, stipulating:
 - People have the right to receive services from government head or central offices in English or in French
 - French may be used in the legislature and the courts
 - All Yukon laws are to be in English and in French
- Canada and Yukon signed the *Canada-Yukon Language Agreement* in 1988, in which Canada agreed to cover the costs of French language services.
- In 1988, the Government of Yukon created the Bureau of French Language Services to assist government departments and corporations in providing services in French.
- In April 2006, the government changed the Bureau of French Language Services to the Directorate of French Language Services, providing its own minister and elevating its status within the government.
- Yukon has 1,200 Francophones and about 3,300 citizens who speak French, according to 2001 figures from Statistics Canada.