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PREMIER FENTIE TO ADVANCE YUKON INTERESTS WITH PRIME MINISTER

WHITEHORSE – Premier Dennis Fentie along with his colleagues from the Council of the Federation will meet with Prime Minister Stephen Harper tomorrow. The meeting will allow the premiers to discuss their common priorities with the prime minister.

The Council of the Federation consists of premiers from all provinces and the three territories. It was created in 2003 by premiers to play a leadership role in revitalizing the Canadian federation and building a more constructive and cooperative federal system.

“I look forward to meeting with Prime Minister Harper,” Fentie said. “The premiers want the prime minister to know that we have common priorities that we want to see addressed, like fiscal imbalance.”

This will be the first meeting with the new prime minister for many of the premiers including Premier Fentie. The following day, the three northern premiers will meet with Harper to discuss areas of common interest to the territories.

“While we share some issues with other provinces, we also face some very different issues and I’m pleased that Prime Minister Harper acknowledges this and wants to meet with the northern premiers so early into his mandate,” Fentie said. “There are unique challenges and opportunities for the territorial and federal governments and it is important that we discuss these directly with him.”

There is no formal agenda for the Saturday meeting but the northern premiers have agreed to focus discussions in priority areas identified by the Conservative party during the election campaign. These include sovereignty, revenue sharing, regulatory certainty, environment and the economy, and comparable standards for Northerners in health, education and economic opportunity.

“I will certainly want to raise Yukon issues like territorial formula financing, land claims implementation, ANWR and economic related issues.

“More than anything,” Fentie added, “I expect to acquaint the prime minister with our core issues and to establish a strong working relationship with him.”

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