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## **TRANSPORTATION HALL OF FAME RECOGNIZES TWO NEW INDUCTEES**

WHITEHORSE – This year’s Yukon Transportation Hall of Fame ceremony will recognize two inductees for a vision to better Yukon highways and a stunning air rescue.

Ray Magnuson, a long-time Yukoner, will be inducted as transportation “Person of the Year” and will be honoured for his lasting contribution of introducing “bituminous surface treatment” or BST on our Yukon roads.

Everett Wasson, who will be posthumously honoured as transportation “Pioneer of the Year”, had successfully conducted one of the most intense and difficult air searches in Canadian aviation history.

“These two men have made profound contributions to safety and have demonstrated pride so many Yukoners can share in our transportation history,” Minister of Highways and Public Works Glenn Hart said. “Tonight’s induction ceremony is one way we can say thank-you and pay tribute to the achievements of these two individuals.”

The Transportation Hall of Fame Awards were created in 1996 by the Yukon Transportation Museum, the Yukon Transportation Association and the Yukon government to honour people who have made a significant and lasting contribution to transportation in the Yukon. Inductees are chosen by an independent panel.

The induction ceremony begins tonight at 7 p.m. at the Yukon Transportation Museum, located at 30 Electra Crescent (next to the Whitehorse Airport).

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**Note: Backgrounder attached.**

This news release is also available on the internet at: <http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/>

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# **Transportation Hall of Fame Honorees**

## **Backgrounder**

### **Ray Magnuson:**

Ray Magnuson was born in Atlin, British Columbia in 1937 where his career in transportation began. As a very young man he worked at his father's sawmill. As soon as he was old enough to drive, one of his main duties at the mill was to transport railroad ties from the mill to Carcross for use on the White Pass Railroad.

Magnuson began his highway maintenance career in 1960 when he went to work as a heavy equipment operator for the Department of National Defence in Swift River. In 1965, he moved his family to Brooks Brook, Yukon, where he continued to work as a heavy equipment operator. In 1972, he joined the Government of Yukon and moved to Whitehorse to be the Highway Superintendent of the eastern area. It was during this time that he made his most significant contribution to transportation in the Yukon. In 1973, Magnuson decided that the cost of gravel road maintenance was becoming significant and highway surfaces were deteriorating quickly due to the harsh northern climate. He decided to test a "bituminous surface treatment", also known as BST for short, or chip-seal, on a stretch of Yukon highway. This product had been used in southern Canada, but had never been subjected to the severe northern climate and continuous road surface movements.

BST was first tested on approximately four miles of highway near Teslin. Many did not believe this new product would stand up to northern conditions. Magnuson was a man with a vision and he believed BST was the right product to be used on the highway. Time has proven him right. Today, BST is one of the main surfacing treatments used on Yukon highways. In 1990, Ray received the BC and Yukon National Transportation Award of Excellence for his lifetime work in transportation in the Yukon.

### **Everett Wasson: (1910 – 1961)**

Everett Wasson, originally from California, arrived in the Yukon in 1928 to work for Treadmill Yukon, a silver mining company stationed in Keno. His flying experience allowed him an opportunity to fly short hauls with the small company plane.

It was the stunning air rescue mission that Wasson is remembered for the most, because he succeeded where others had failed and endured great hardship in accomplishing such a daring rescue. A plane had gone missing in bad weather and little was known of its whereabouts or the condition of the three men on board.

During this search and rescue mission, Everett Wasson was accompanied by Yukon woodsman, Joe Walsh. The two men searched hundreds of square miles of wilderness and uncharted territory.

They were forced to land many times on water because of bad weather, and would then attach spruce bows to the plane's skis so the plane wouldn't freeze into place overnight. They had to clear their own runways through metres of snow, so that the plane could take-off. In the end it was figured that the two men snowshoed over 320 kilometers during the rescue.

Wasson went on to marry a nurse (originally from Vancouver) who was working in the Yukon. They had two children, Barbara, who was born in Whitehorse and John, born in California. In 1941 the family moved back to California. In 1961, Wasson passed away at 51 years of age.