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**YUKON AND FIRST NATION GOVERNMENTS REACH AGREEMENT AT YUKON FORUM ON NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND**

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government and Yukon First Nation governments met at the Yukon Forum this morning and reached agreement on a “made-in-Yukon” application of the principles, criteria and administration of the Northern Economic Development Fund (NEDF) that they intend to jointly present to the Government of Canada next month. Premier Dennis Fentie and Grand Chief Andy Carvill, together with other Yukon First Nation chiefs will be traveling to Kelowna to review their proposal with Prime Minister Martin, Indian Affairs Minister Andy Scott, Minister Ethel Blondin-Andrew and Yukon MP Larry Bagnell.

The Prime Minister and federal ministers will be attending the First Ministers Meeting in Kelowna on Nov. 25, 2005, and the Yukon delegation will make use of this opportunity to make their presentation on the NEDF in a private meeting.

“We believe that this collaborative, Yukon-based intergovernmental approach to allocating funding from the NEDF is superior to the existing process and recognizes the current governmental jurisdictions and intergovernmental working arrangements,” Fentie said.

Grand Chief Carvill stated his belief that this collaborative, intergovernmental approach will better meet the economic needs of Yukoners, while furthering Canada’s interests in the North.

“We see this fund as an important tool to strengthen the self-reliance of Yukoners and to directly improve the Yukon economy as well as our contribution to the national economy. Further, we see the development and implementation of this fund as an opportunity to continue to build on our collaborative and effective tripartite intergovernmental working relationship. This is especially important in the context of our evolving and closely related responsibilities following devolution of federal responsibilities to Yukon and implementation of Yukon First Nation final and self-government agreements,” Carvill said.

The leaders will be encouraging the federal government to join this collaborative approach to the use of the NEDF in Yukon.

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Contact:

Peter Carr  
Cabinet Communications Advisor  
Government of Yukon  
(867) 667-8688

Andy Carvill  
Grand Chief  
Council of Yukon First Nations  
(867) 393-9225