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**PREMIER RECOGNIZES FIREFIGHTERS' OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS**

WHITEHORSE – Premier Dennis Fentie recognized five Yukon firefighters with almost 70 collective years of outstanding service at a special ceremony held today.

“On behalf of all Yukoners, I want to recognize these dedicated people who have done so much to help protect our families, our homes and our communities,” Premier Dennis Fentie said. “The Yukon government recognizes that we have excellent fire services across the whole territory, and is pleased to acknowledge these long-serving members.”

Recipients of the first annual Fire Service Long Service Award are:

Jack Holesworth, Yukon Fire Marshal – 15 years  
Bob Atkinson, Ibex Valley Volunteer Fire Department – 12 years  
Dennis Levy, Marsh Lake Volunteer Fire Department – 16 years  
Brian and Nancy Pope – Tagish Volunteer Fire Department – 13 years

“Firefighting has evolved a lot over the past couple of decades when these people got their start in the business,” Whitehorse Fire Chief Clive Sparks said. “What hasn’t changed is the bravery and commitment to the community that drives someone to be a firefighter.”

“These individuals are the last ones to seek recognition for what they do, and that’s why it’s an honour and privilege for us to do so on this occasion,” Sparks added.

The Yukon government contributed \$5,000 to the development of the fire service long service awards, which was lead by the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs.

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Attachment: Yukon Fire Service Long Service Award recipients

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## BACKGROUND

### **Yukon Fire Service - Long Service Award Recipients**

**BOB ATKINSON** moved to the Yukon in 1990 and settled in the Ibx Valley area. In 1992 there was no fire protection in that area, and after residents lost their dwellings to three fires, a group of people began working on establishing a fire department. In 1993, after much hard work, a society was formed and a grant secured in 1993 to start building a fire hall. Firefighters were recruited and started their training at the fire chief's house which also served as the first fire hall in the area until the current fire hall was completed in 1994. Bob was one of these fire fighters and has served on the department for the past 12 years.

**JACK HOLESWORTH** has been the Yukon Territory Fire Marshal for the past 15 years and has had a major impact on fire protection in all Yukon communities. He initiated the formation of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs, which has developed into a highly successful organization. He was actively involved in the implementation of a rural water supply system for fire suppression within unincorporated communities, and was a key player in advancing the Yukon's mutual aid systems. The level of equipment, training and efficiency of rural fire departments has improved vastly under his leadership.

**DENNIS LEVY** has been involved with the Marsh Lake fire department since it was formed in 1989, serving ten years as deputy chief, as chief from 2000 – 2004, and remains an active member today. He has been the elected president of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs since 2001 and sits on the board of directors of the Canadian Fire Chiefs Association. In 2004, Mr. Levy was the first-ever Yukon chief to receive the national Service Excellence Award. Mr. Levy had a distinguished 26-year career with the RCMP and was posted in the Yukon from 1974 until his retirement in 1990. He is the recipient of the RCMP Long Service Medal and Bronze Clasp and Star, the Queen's Jubilee Medal and the Queen's Anniversary Medal.

**Brian Pope** first came to the Yukon in 1959 with the RCMP. After other postings throughout Canada, he returned to the Yukon in 1979 and retired from the force in 1982. He was Sheriff of the Yukon until 1990 when he and his wife Nancy moved to Tagish. In 1992 he became one of the first members of the Tagish Volunteer Fire Department and has served ever since as a firefighter, deputy chief and for the last six and a half years, fire chief. He resigned as chief on September 30, 2005 but remains as a volunteer. Brian is also supervisor of Tagish Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and a member of the Association of Yukon Fire Chiefs.

**Nancy Pope** was born and raised in Dawson City. She married Brian, an RCMP member and traveled to other areas of Canada. She returned to her roots in 1979 with her husband and four children where all, as well as seven grandchildren still reside. Following 'retirement' in 1990, she moved to Tagish. In 1992, she became one of the original members the Tagish Volunteer Fire Department and still remains active there. Nancy is also a medic with the Tagish EMS.