

# The Transporter

ISSUE 64 - December 2006/January 2007  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER



**CELEBRATING** *Years of dedication*

## Finally set to retire after 43 years of hard work

Richard Lafferty will retire this April as the GNWT's longest serving employee

He has a great sense of humor, can play a fiddle like no one else and knows the NWT highway system and his job better than almost anyone else.

You'll hear people say all of these things when you ask about Richard Lafferty. They always add that he will be missed when he retires this April.

As the Government of the Northwest Territories' longest serving employee, Richard has done almost every job in highway operations within the department. Currently the Manager of Highway Operations in the South Slave region, Richard was recruited straight out of high school in 1963 by the federal government's Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources to be a heavy equipment operator in Fort Providence.

Ask Richard about his 43 years working in transportation and he will tell you he doesn't have a single regret about his lifetime of work.

"I was lucky to come back and work in my home town," he says. "The work was always good. There was always something to go fix, always a challenge somewhere."

Throughout his career, Richard has seen many challenges and changes within the transportation sector of government. He has held many positions in four different departments under federal and territorial governments.

When Richard isn't out fixing things with his own hands or heading up ice bridge construction on the Mackenzie River near Fort Providence he is helping others to solve problems however he can.



Richard Lafferty stands on the Mackenzie River ice bridge at Fort Providence with an ice auger that is used to test the thickness of ice and access water for surface flooding.

"Richard is very personable, you can approach him about anything," says Fort Smith Highway Maintenance Supervisor, Earl Evans. "He will help you all the way through and he will do whatever he can to solve your problem. If he can't solve it, he will find someone who can."

Earl has worked with Richard for 36 years and will tell you that Richard will be sadly missed within the department.

"He is a real asset; his wealth of knowledge helps everyone, from the guys on the road to the people in the office. If anyone has a question about highways, Richard is the one they ask."

Besides being a fountain of knowledge for information on roads throughout the North, Richard is also a testament to the success of transportation in a landscape that provides endless logistical problems for which innovative solutions are required.

"Richard is a great employee," says Deputy Minister Russell Neudorf. "People like him are important in our organization because of their invaluable knowledge and experience."

"People trust Richard. They trust his knowledge and they know he will do what is right to solve a problem," said South Slave Superintendent Art Barnes.

After 43 years of keeping traffic moving in the North, Richard says he is ready to call it quits. During his retirement he plans to spend time doing what he loves: spending time with family and playing his fiddle for people across Canada.

"I get invited to festivals all year round in the North and around the country," says Richard.

"Before I was only able to go to two or three a year. Now I will be able to go to more. I'll also have more time to record some more fiddle music."

In the department and among his co-workers, Richard's footsteps and his music will echo for many years to come. [T](#)

### **SAFETY TIP** *Sharing the road with large trucks*

One of the hazards of the winter season is sharing the road with large transport trucks. With more trucks on the road due to economic development northerners have to use extra caution when travelling highways in the winter. Practicing these basic defensive driving habits will lower the risk of a collision and keep you and your passengers safe.

1. Avoid changing lanes abruptly
2. Drive at a safe speed
3. Stay alert to traffic signals and road conditions
4. Use turn signals
5. Never cut in front of a truck
6. Avoid driving alongside trucks whenever possible. If you can't see the truck driver's face in the side mirror, they can't see you
7. Avoid tailgating
8. Stay back. Large trucks can create blowing snow and reduce your visibility
9. Don't stop abruptly. Large trucks need a greater distance to stop
10. Be patient

Knowing about the limitations of large trucks and driving with caution will keep you and your family safe.

## CELEBRATING *Us*

### TRACR II system gives Hay River Airport the power of direct communication



Al Buth, Airfield Maintenance Specialist, Hay River Airport, uses the the TRACR II system to send a report to air carriers.

Airfield Maintenance Specialists (AMS) in Hay River are using a new tool to keep air carriers in the NWT better informed about local runway conditions.

The TracrII system, developed by Tradewind Scientific in Ottawa, provides real-time, unedited runway condition reports directly to any number of recipients via e-mail or fax.

Before the TracrII, reports were

faxed only to Nav Canada, who then distributed them through their network. Now the reports go directly to Nav Canada and carriers who request the information. So far Canadian North, First Air, Air Tindi and Buffalo Airways have started receiving reports.

"Former Airports Assistant Director, Programs and Standards, Paul Guy, introduced the program," said Hay River Airport Manager,

Kelly O'Connor. "The purpose of the program is to investigate new technology to keep current with national air industry standards."


Airports Division paid for the system and it was installed at the end of August. At first, only fax updates were issued until Kelly worked out the e-mail option.

In early January, the system began to use the automatic e-mail feature. Now the department is awaiting feedback to see how the system could be used in the future.

The system is a big step forward from filling out reports on paper,

taking them to a CARS Station then faxing them to a Flight Service Station or Flight Information Center. The old process might have taken 30-45 minutes before carriers could access a report, depending on the workload at the Nav Canada facility. Now that information is received three or four minutes after the report is completed.

"The other advantage is that the AMS crews can put notes on the reports that go directly to the recipients," said O'Connor

This direct link informs air carriers of exactly what's going on. 

### Building working relationships



Assistant Deputy Minister Daniel Auger (left) and Michael Conway hold the Ticho flag presented by Chief Leon Lafferty.

Michael Conway, North Slave Regional Superintendent, was recently recognized by the Ticho Community Government of Behchoko for his efforts to strengthen the relationship between the Department of Transportation and the community that straddles Highway 3.

Chief Leon Lafferty presented a Ticho flag to Michael and thanked him for building a stronger connection between the two governments by being willing to listen, being responsive to their concerns and innovative in his approach to solutions.

"Michael and North Slave Employees have done great things to improve communication with the community," said Deputy Minister of Transportation, Russell Neudorf. "It's great to see that the community notices the work that he does. Michael pays attention to their concerns and he does work that people appreciate."


Finding innovative solutions to make highway travel safer and more reliable is something Michael

is known for.

"The people of Behchoko were really impressed with how Michael adjusted maintenance schedules so crews now start work at Behchoko and Yellowknife and meet in the middle," said Executive Regional Director for North Slave, Dan O'Neill.

Behchoko residents noticed many other things done by the North Slave regional office to improve their travels, said O'Neill. For example, he said they appreciate placement of an electronic sign at the junction of Behchoko access road and Highway 3 that advises them of road conditions.

Michael credits staff at the North Slave Regional office and highway crews for the work they have done to improve maintenance services.

"The credit here goes to the manager, Mike Borden, and supervisors Lee Franklin and Ernie Constant, who worked as a team to effect positive change to the way we allocate equipment after a storm for maximum efficiency," he said. 

## DM's Dues

This month I would like to acknowledge the following employees for their hard work and contributions:

Congratulations to this year's Awards of Excellence recipients, Suzanne Parent, Darrell Reason and Dave Richards. I would like to thank them for their work within our department. We recognize these individuals for their dedication and consistent efforts to go above and beyond to produce quality work.

Kelly O'Connor and the Hay River airport staff have done a wonderful job in implementing the TRACR II test program at their airport. Their persistent efforts to work through technical problems will show us the real value of this equipment and help us decide about further implementation.

Michael Conway, staff from North Slave regional office and Yellowknife and Edzo highways camps deserve recognition for their efforts to make the road from Behchoko to Yellowknife safe and reliable. Michael's work in finding solutions to better serve those who travel to and from Behchoko has received recognition from residents of the community.

Thank you to the social committees in all the regions for giving us the opportunity to enjoy holiday celebrations with fellow staff. All of the events were a success and a great end to another year.

Everyone involved with the department's new website is doing great work. We've had thousands of visitors since the site's launch in early December and it continues to attract a large daily audience. Thanks to the technical and design group and Road Reports editors in the regions this tool is reaching its potential as an information source for the public.

Dave Richards, Kelley Merilees-Keppel, Eleese Scott, Bob Kelly and everyone who provided input for the update of the Driver's Manuals should be thanked. The look and content of these documents is very professional.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to Richard Lafferty for his 43 years of service with the Department of Transportation and its predecessors. Your years of expertise in northern road maintenance and ice road construction will be missed. We wish you all the best on your upcoming retirement.



## HUMAN RESOURCE *Updates*

### Welcome

**Chelsea Digness** - Highway Operations Administrative Assistant  
**Daniel Zoe** - Highway Maintenance Operator  
**Charlie Mantla** - Highway Maintenance Operator  
**David King** - Highway Maintenance Operator  
**Robert Giroux** - Highway Maintenance Operator

### Farewell

**Daryl Green** - Contracts Manager  
**Kelly Joy** - Director's Secretary  
**Gregory Yates** - Senior Building and Planning Officer

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