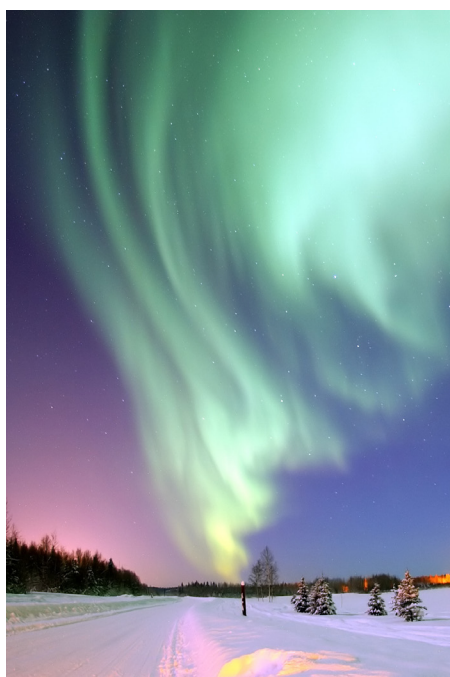




JUSTICE IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES – NEWSLETTER

ACCESS · SERVICES · COMMUNITIES · TRAINING

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WELCOME TO THE JOL NEWSLETTER

Breathtaking landscapes, thousands of hectares of forest and tundra, extreme temperatures, vast horizons and spectacular aurora borealis – Canada's North is a fascinating place getting increasing attention. Several linguistic communities are located at the heart of these wide open spaces, cohabiting through the seasons and contributing to Canadian economic development. But what is the place of French within these northern communities? How can the vitality of Francophone communities be enhanced? What are some of the challenges they face?

This issue presents an overview of the realities of Francophone communities in the North, the opportunities they have and the problems they face. As you will discover, northern Francophone communities are constantly innovating and striving to create a place for themselves on the territories they share with the other linguistic communities.

The preparation of this issue was largely facilitated by the Regional Coordinators for the Implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*. We would like to highlight the contributions of Maegan Hough and Jason Steele, two Section 41 Coordinators who have since left the Department of Justice Canada. Maegan left in September 2012 to pursue graduate studies at the University of Victoria, while Jason left in October 2012 to face new professional challenges with the Government of the Northwest Territories. We would like to take this opportunity to wish both of them success in their new endeavours.

We encourage you to visit our Web site for more information on our Department's commitment to promoting linguistic duality, and to read Justice's *2011-2012 Annual Review on the Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act*.

Happy reading!
The Justice in Official Languages Team



Come visit our website at the following address:

<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/franc/index.html>



FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES NORTH OF THE 60TH PARALLEL

As the second largest country in the world, Canada covers 9,984,670 square km¹ of land and freshwater resources, more than a third of which is occupied by Yukon, the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut. More impressive still, the populations in these three territories speak several languages other than English and French. For example, the NWT's *Official Languages Act* recognizes a total of eleven official languages², including English and French. Generally speaking, territorial language laws contain provisions regarding the English and French languages, all the while recognizing the important place of Aboriginal languages. Language and culture are highly valued by northern linguistic communities, and languages are recognized as a mode of expression that helps to keep the different cultures alive.



The best way to understand the linguistic context north of the 60th parallel is to put it into perspective. The situation varies greatly from one territory to the next: more than 85 percent of Yukon's population is Anglophone, and 4 percent is Francophone; the NWT's population is 77 percent Anglophone and 2.5 percent Francophone; and Nunavut has a 27 percent Anglophone and a 1.6 percent Francophone population³.

The largest concentrations of Francophone communities are found in the capitals of each of the three territories, but some are spread out across the territories, often several hours' drive from major cities. For example, although the majority of Francophone communities in Yukon are located near its capital, Whitehorse, the situation is very different in the other two territories: in the NWT, the Francophone community nearest to Yellowknife is more than a nine-hour drive away; in Nunavut, Francophone communities are spread out over the entire territory, some totally isolated with no road access. Communities that are very widely spread out and sometimes isolated across the northern territory face challenges unheard of elsewhere in the

country.

The revolving door syndrome



As is often the case, networking and the development of strong ties between the members of a community are essential to its survival. This is especially true of northern communities, which are confronted with the "revolving door syndrome." According to the available data⁴, people who migrate to the North tend to go there for a short period initially, unsure of what to expect. Consequently, they often don't have any plans for staying in the long term, which poses a challenge for Francophones who wish to develop a stable Francophone community life. Northern Francophones are much more mobile than the Canadian average: their length of stay varies between two and three years in Nunavut, three and four years in NWT and between four and five years in the Yukon⁵. Thus, the survival of French depends upon the energy and determination of those involved in promoting and developing their community. Fortunately, the Francophone communities in the North possess a spirit that is especially vibrant and noteworthy. Many governmental and non-governmental⁶ stakeholders are making an effort to adapt the delivery of government services, programs and policies to the needs of Francophone communities and make them easily accessible through information technologies such as the Internet.



Together, dynamic Francophone communities and dedicated public administrators are working to improve the dissemination of information and the delivery of services in French. The progress made in the last few years is now translating into a diverse offering of services and resources in French⁷.

1 Statistics Canada, *Land and freshwater area, by province and territory*, 2005

2 *Official Languages Act*, RSNWT 1988, c O-1.

3 Statistics Canada, *Portrait of Official-language Communities in Canada, 2006 Census*, Cat. No. 92-592-XVB.

4 Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, *Vitality of Francophone Communities in the Territories (Summary)*, October 2010.

5 *Ibid.*, page 18.

6 *Ibid.*, pages 32-33.

7 *Ibid.*, pages 31-33.

Who says a small community can't have big motivation?

Despite their small size, Francophone communities in the North are very active. French-language associations organize a number of different types of activities, including festivals, concerts, luncheons, theme days and book fairs. These provide Francophone Northerners with venues and opportunities to get together and live in their own language.

Everyone tunes in!

How do the Francophone communities dispersed across such a vast territory stay informed? According to a study performed in March 2012⁸, radio and newspapers seem to be good vehicles for communication. Francophone commu-

8 Alliance of Minority Media, *Study of the Media Habits of Official Language Minority Communities*, March 2012.

CAPSULE 41

Bonnie Lidstone is a Senior/Principal Analyst, External Relations and Consultations, with the Intergovernmental and External Relations Division at the Department of Justice Canada.

Bibliographical notes

Bonnie holds a Bachelor's Degree in French and Quebec Studies from Bishop's University, as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Common Law (French Program) from the University of Ottawa. Before joining the Department of Justice, she worked in policy development, consultations, regulations, and in programs for various federal government departments, including Health Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Environment Canada.

The Coordinator's role

Bonnie acts as liaison with the Office of La Francophonie, Justice in Official Languages and Legal Dualism for all matters related to Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) as part of departmental consultations. She appreciates the annual meetings with Coordinators 41, as they provide a forum to exchange with colleagues from the Department on the various ways to promote linguistic duality.



nities in each territory have access to a French-language newspaper that covers various topics, from local and national politics to environmental issues. According to Section 41 coordinators, radio communications are a good way for Francophones to stay informed and to promote events in their communities. Radio has the advantage of reaching Francophone communities outside of the main city centres, especially through programs that are also available online. Although Yukon does not have a French radio station per se, several stations allot blocks of time to French music and reserve space for French advertisements.

Francophone communities north of the 60th parallel are not finished growing and evolving – and who knows what they will accomplish next.

Did you know?

Bonnie has travelled to all of Canada's provinces and territories. Actually, the majority of the photographs of Canada that you see in this issue were taken by none other than Bonnie herself! She especially loves the landscapes of Yukon and Newfoundland and Labrador. During her time in university, she worked for two summers as a tour guide at Crête de Vimy (Vimy Ridge), in France, an experience which gave her the opportunity to meet Lieutenant General The Honourable Roméo Dallaire, Senator, who at that time was Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

Contact information

If you have any questions concerning the coordination of the implementation of section 41 of the OLA at the Department of Justice's Intergovernmental and External Relations Division, or if you wish to invite Bonnie Lidstone to attend an official languages activity, feel free to contact her.

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THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES SUPPORT FUND

The Access to Justice in Both Official Languages Support Fund enables the Department of Justice Canada to fund many initiatives and projects that meet the needs of minority Francophone and Anglophone communities.

Just a Click Away

Initiated by the British Columbia Courthouse Library Society, this project includes a series of online seminars and workshops for public legal education and information (PLEI) organizations and the creation of a virtual meeting place for stakeholders from the PLEI community. This virtual meeting place, the first of its kind in Canada, will allow the providers of public legal education and information to share information in both official languages in an exciting new way.

Information sessions on the rights of New Brunswickers

This project, an initiative by the Association des juristes d'expression française du Nouveau-Brunswick, involves developing a Bilingual Legal Guide and distributing it in English and French in the province's high schools. The purpose of the Guide is to increase the students' and the general public's knowledge and understanding of legal concepts by presenting them in accessible language.

Feasibility study for a Community Justice Centre in Nova Scotia

This project by the Association des juristes d'expression française de la Nouvelle-Écosse is a step towards establishing a Community Justice Centre in Dartmouth, which would enable Nova Scotians to get legal information, support and orientation services in both official languages.

RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Droit au quotidien Workshops

The Association des juristes d'expression française de la Colombie-Britannique is offering a series of legal workshops in several of the province's French-language schools. The format is a presentation by a facilitator on a legal topic, followed by discussions and debates with the students.

INFORMATION: www.ajefcb.ca

Legal terminology training

This project by the Association des juristes d'expression française de la Saskatchewan includes a workshop on legal terminology for jurists and the general public. The objective is to improve linguistic abilities and enrich the legal vocabulary of participants.

INFORMATION: www.ajefs.ca