



FOR RELEASE

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## **Pilot project announced for summer EMS coverage in Haines Junction**

WHITEHORSE—Minister of Community Services Currie Dixon today announced that Yukon Emergency Medical Services (YEMS) is working with the community of Haines Junction and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) to implement three measures that address the community's concerns about EMS coverage during the summer season.

First, a more visible and concerted volunteer recruitment drive will emphasize the benefits of being a YEMS volunteer. The second measure builds on efforts to better equip and train YEMS volunteers. The third – a short-term pilot program for part-time responders – strengthens the current volunteer base in Haines Junction with new YEMS personnel who are willing to volunteer their services in the future.

"In partnership with the community we have created a unique pilot program that will provide paid part-time responders during the summer months to supplement the community's volunteer team," Dixon said. "This solution will address immediate coverage issues and will help build local capacity."

Kluane MLA Wade Istchenko added: "The pilot project is a response to the concerns voiced in our community regarding summertime needs for emergency services. This complements our government's recent investments in improving radios, equipment, uniforms, the ambulance fleet and station management, as well as access to local and online training for our community responders. I'm pleased that community leaders were able to work together with the Yukon government to find a creative solution that will strengthen our model of volunteer EMS in rural Yukon."

Paid part-time responders will soon begin their training and will be in place from May to September.

"This summer pilot project will greatly improve the EMS coverage for our community and is a great example of the Yukon government, a community government and a First Nations government partnering to benefit all Yukoners," Haines Junction Mayor Mike Crawshay said. "This pilot project is able to move forward thanks to the cooperation of many levels of government working together to build stronger, healthier communities."

In addition, YEMS will support the existing volunteer system with a pilot mentorship program that will enhance local capacity. This initiative will be focused on the community at large and on CAFN citizens.

"I'm pleased that people in our community will benefit from improved emergency response coverage and that CAFN citizens will have opportunity to train as responders and volunteers with Yukon Emergency Medical Services," Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Steve Smith said. "I thank our citizens for their participation in the creation of a strong and healthy EMS presence in Haines Junction."

A community-based working group, made up of local first responders and representatives from community nursing, YEMS, the Village of Haines Junction and Champagne and Aishihik First

Nations, recently presented a report to Yukon government with recommended solutions to address the summer coverage issue.

The first two measures – enhanced recruitment and improved equipment – are being implemented territory-wide to support all YEMS volunteers. All three measures are designed to maintain a strong, year-round volunteer program.

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