

FOR RELEASE
March 2, 2016

Premier attending national meetings in Vancouver

WHITEHORSE—Premier Darrell Pasloski will represent Yukoners and take their priorities to meetings with the prime minister, his fellow premiers and Indigenous leaders in Vancouver March 2 and 3.

"These meetings are an opportunity to discuss topics central to strengthening Yukon and Canada's economy," Pasloski said. "Because of our government's focus on strong fiscal management and infrastructure, Yukon is well-placed to grow our economy as global market conditions improve."

Today, provincial and territorial premiers will discuss the economy, infrastructure, climate change and how to better engage with Indigenous leaders. That same day, the prime minister, premiers and Indigenous leaders will discuss the economy and climate change.

Yukon's Kluane First Nation Chief Mathieya Alatini and Kwanlin Dün First Nation Chief Doris Bill will travel with Premier Pasloski to attend the national meeting of federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous leaders.

"Yukon is a leader in the country with almost half of the nation's modern-day treaties," Pasloski added. "We understand the importance of including Indigenous leaders in discussions of regional and national significance."

Premiers and the prime minister will meet March 3, to discuss Canada's efforts to address climate change and grow the economy.

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See backgrounder.

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Backgrounder—Yukon's work on climate change

The Government of Yukon's climate change approach follows the four climate change goals set out in its 2006 *Climate Change Strategy*:

- Enhance our knowledge and understanding of climate change;
- improve our ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- reduce our greenhouse gas emissions; and
- lead Yukon action in response to climate change.

In December 2015, the Yukon government released its second *Climate Change Action Plan Progress Report*. The report shows significant progress since we began work in 2009 and includes 28 new actions to help us reach our goals.

The Yukon government supported the development of the *Climate Change Indicators and Key Findings Report* released through the Yukon Research Centre. The report will allow the Yukon government to continue to act on up-to-date information and provide relevant programs.

Yukon is also a leader in clean energy with 95 per cent of our electricity generated by hydro generation. In contrast, the Canadian average is 79 per cent and the G7 average is only 38 per cent.

Projects and investments

Kluane First Nation wind-diesel project

Providing one-time financial assistance of \$1 million to support construction of a 300 kW wind energy facility on Kluane Lake, which will generate power for sale to ATCO Electric Yukon. The project will supply electricity to Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay via the existing micro-grid, and reduce the use of diesel to generate power for these communities.

Education and innovation

The Yukon government provided the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Yukon Research Centre at Yukon College with \$9.5 million over five years beginning in 2012.

In 2015 the Yukon government provided \$822,000 in funding to the Cold Climate Innovation Centre and the Technology Innovation Centre to promote innovation in applied research, as well as \$100,000 to host the first Yukon Innovation Prize supporting innovation in cold climate construction.

Biomass energy

In February 2016, the Yukon government released the *Biomass Energy Strategy*, which is designed to reduce our dependence on imported fuels by using a local renewable resource and to guide the development of a biomass energy sector in the territory.

The Yukon government is currently using biomass energy in two of its buildings: Dawson City's wastewater treatment plant features a successful biomass heating system that demonstrates the viability of utilizing locally produced wood; and the Whitehorse Correctional Centre uses a combination of biomass and propane to heat its building.

Energy/hydro

In 2015, the Yukon Energy Corporation replaced two aging diesel generators with cleaner burning liquefied natural gas generators.

Through 2015 the Yukon Development Corporation (YDC) investigated the viability of a Next Generation Hydro Project for Yukon. In keeping with the project directive, YDC has consulted with the public and Yukon First Nations to propose the size and location of an economically sound and scalable hydro facility that will meet Yukon's energy needs over the next 20-50 years and decrease our reliance on non-renewable resources. To date YDC has identified six feasible sites around the territory for further investigation.

The Government of Yukon adopted an Independent Power Production policy and a Micro-generation policy, part of the government's larger efforts to support strategic investments in infrastructure to increase the supply of electricity from renewable sources. Both policies enable other governments and residents to develop renewably sourced energy options and sell power back into the grid.

Energy efficiency

Commercial Energy Incentive Program

This program was introduced in May 2015. It targets two areas. The first directly assists Yukon apartment and condominium owners in retrofitting their buildings to improve energy performance and reduce energy consumption, costs and emissions. The second targets the lighting efficiency of commercial buildings by encouraging owners to upgrade to energy-efficient and long-lasting LED lighting systems. To date the LED program has led directly to \$142,474 in annual cost savings for clients. Four hotels account for the bulk of annual energy savings of eight completed projects (1,174,000 kWh).

Residential Energy Incentive Program

Introduced in January 2015, this program assists Yukoners with improving the energy efficiency of their homes and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Products that qualify for incentives include: super-insulated new homes, air sealing and insulation renovations to existing homes, heat-recovery ventilators, ENERGYSTAR® windows and doors, and renewable energy systems. 447 applications have been received by the program, which has issued \$963,197 in incentives, and conserved 145 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Good Energy Incentive Program

This program provides incentives for the purchase of high-efficiency home heating systems and appliances. Over the last three years the program has averaged 1,744 applications and \$217,380 in payouts. Since 2007, it has successfully delivered 12,000 rebates to Yukon residents, displacing 1,983 tonnes of GHG emissions and saving 1,477,000 kWh of energy annually.

Home repair loans

The Yukon Housing Corporation's home repair loan program provides loans up to \$35,000 at a low interest rate that can be used to improve energy efficiency through improved insulation, upgraded windows and doors, repairing or replacing deficient roofs and heating system upgrades and repairs.

Air quality

The Government of Yukon recently partnered with Health Canada and the City of Whitehorse to implement a Whitehorse Air Quality Monitoring study. The year-long study is measuring fine particulates in nine neighbourhoods within Whitehorse from a variety of sources including residential wood burning, dust, motor vehicles emissions and wildfires. The data will be used to obtain a better understanding of local air quality and to consequently determine potential associated health impacts. Aside from implementing an education outreach component once the study is complete, the data will also be used to inform an expansion of the proposed Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) in Whitehorse beyond the downtown area. The planned launch date for the AQHI is spring 2016.

Recycling

The Yukon government committed up to \$573,000 in 2015 to local recycling processors, based on the type and tonnage of recyclable material they process, to establish a more sustainable system of waste diversion and recycling for Yukon.

Water quality and monitoring

The Government of Yukon is working with the University of Calgary on a project to develop water monitoring techniques to assess the potential impacts of oil and gas extraction on groundwater and surface water.

We implemented three surface water quality and four ground water monitoring sites in the Kotanleelee region since 2014.

In the Eagle Plains area we operate two hydrometric, three snow survey, 17 surface water quality and four ground water sites.

Yukon Wildlife Preserve

Signed a \$668,000 contribution agreement with the Yukon Wildlife Preserve for 2015/16. The preserve is working with Yukon College to promote and enable research opportunities in order to study the impacts of climate change on Yukon wildlife.

Adaptation

The three territories collaborated to produce the *Pan-Territorial Adaptation Strategy*, released in 2011. The strategy identifies a number of actions to help territories share information for their common challenge of adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Adaptation is identified as a goal in the 2009 *Climate Change Action Plan*.

Actions

- Co-led Canadian action on the Arctic Adaptation Exchange, an online portal that shares climate change adaptation information across the Arctic.
- Co-hosted the National Adaptation Platform with the territories and Natural Resources Canada in October 2015, where leaders discussed adaptation priorities.
- Identifying areas of the North Alaska Highway that are vulnerable to thawing permafrost underlying the highway in order to develop effective policies and engineering designs to maintain the highway.
- Acquiring digital elevation data for 13 Yukon community areas to help them determine current and future flood risks and plan accordingly.
- Completed a Yukon infrastructure risk and vulnerability assessment.
- Developed an inventory of permafrost information for use in decision making.
- Completed a Yukon water resources risk and vulnerability assessment.
- Created a tool to facilitate the collection and distribution of water quantity and quality data.
- Conducted a Yukon forest health risk assessment.
- Reduced forest fuel loads to protect communities.
- Conducted a Yukon forest tree species and vulnerability assessment.

New actions identified in the 2015 Progress Report:

- Use road construction methods designed to preserve permafrost on Yukon highways.
- Explore the development of publicly accessible flood-hazard maps to enable a better understanding of possible flood risks.
- Explore development of a standardized approach for researchers modelling climate changes to enable easier comparison of trends and projections.
- Develop guidelines for mine sites to include projected effects of climate change on retaining infrastructure, including tailings storage facilities, for the 50 years following a mine's closure.
- Release a summary report of the Interdepartmental Food Security Working Group's findings on enhancing food security in the territory.
- Implement a climate change survey of Government of Yukon employees to identify key issues, barriers, and opportunities for enhanced government action.
- Complete a climate change adaptation project gap analysis to inform possible future study areas and action.

Mitigation

- Completing a study of Yukon's transportation sector and developing a partnership to launch a Ride Share program in 2016.
- Carrying out detailed energy audits of seven identified high-consumption buildings.
- Supporting Yukon homeowners with the Good Energy Residential Incentives Program, where Yukoners are provided an incentive to purchase high-efficiency wood stoves, boilers and pellet stoves.
- Reported on Government of Yukon operations through the Climate Registry since 2010.
- Incorporated environmental performance considerations in the government's procurement decisions.
- Improved energy efficiency and reduced the greenhouse gas emission intensity of the government's light vehicle fleet.
- Implemented an Environmental Stewardship Initiative for the Department of Education and Yukon schools.
- Established "green action committees" in all departments.
- Conducted an energy analysis of seven Yukon government buildings and completed energy saving retrofits.
- Undertook an extensive study of the transportation sector and recommended options to reduce emissions.
- Developed wood energy opportunities for residential and institutional heating.

New actions identified in the 2015 Progress Report:

- Accelerate the replacement of old vehicles with more fuel efficient vehicles.
- Install Fleet Management Information Systems in select heavy and medium-duty Government of Yukon equipment as a pilot project to identify efficiencies to reduce costs and GHG emissions.
- Develop an information campaign targeting Government of Yukon staff to increase energy literacy and reduce energy use in government buildings.
- Transfer budgets and billing for utility payments to departments and agencies as an incentive to reduce energy consumption.
- Install energy efficient lighting in schools that have not yet replaced their inefficient T12 fluorescent tubes.

- Develop a building construction best practices manual of Yukon appropriate energy efficient measures for government buildings.
- Re-introduce the Secondary Sales program in several government buildings to optimize the use of hydro generation during low-use periods.
- Undertake a formal process to solicit market interest in supplying biomass heat to select Government of Yukon buildings.
- Replace old boilers in schools with more efficient models as required, using renewable fuel sources where appropriate.
- Implement a waste diversion program in all of Yukon's 28 schools by the end of 2017.
- Deliver an employee survey and toolkit options to Government of Yukon and City of Whitehorse staff to examine options for alternative transportation action within government staff.
- Design regulatory directions for flaring, venting and leaks to minimize GHG emissions in the oil and gas sector.
- Develop Best Management Practices for resource development projects that deal with reducing the environmental impact of exploration and development.

News Release #16-066



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