



## Government of Yukon

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FOR RELEASE #10-222

December 9, 2010

### Aboriginal employees receive Award of Honour

WHITEHORSE – Three Yukon government employees received the 2010 Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour last Friday at the Aboriginal Employees Forum (AEF) year-end gathering in Whitehorse.

This year's recipients are:

- Larry Bill - Environment
- Fran Etzel - Education
- Sharon Kerr - Justice

"The Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour pays tribute to the significant accomplishments of Yukon government aboriginal employees," Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission Elaine Taylor said. "Each nomination clearly demonstrates the dedication and personal commitment of aboriginal employees in the Yukon public service. I was honoured to have the opportunity to present this year's awards and congratulate everyone who was nominated."

The Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour was established in 2009 under the direction of the Aboriginal Employees Forum (AEF) Steering Committee. The award initiative supports the Corporate Representative Public Service Plan which speaks to fostering appreciation of all cultures including the celebration and promotion of First Nations culture.

Award recipients were selected by the Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour selection committee.

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See backgrounder below.

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### Backgrounder:

## **Government of Yukon 2010 Aboriginal Employees Award of Honour Recipients**

### **Larry Bill**

Larry is described as the "go to" person for hands-on, field-based knowledge of the Southern Lakes trail systems where he patrols the backcountry monitoring caribou herds.

Larry mentors new conservation officers and shares his knowledge and appreciation of First Nation culture and traditions. Among his accomplishments, Larry is a role model for students at school career days advocating the value of education and strong work ethics.

### **Fran Etzel**

Fran is a graduate of the Yukon Native Teachers' Education Program and teaches school in Ross River. She has also worked as the vice-principal focusing on First Nation programming and partnerships.

Fran is described as a devoted teacher who gives her whole heart to the children and people of Ross River. She works with Elders to promote traditional teachings on the land such as trapping, snaring and fishing.

Within the broader community, Fran has been part of efforts to resurrect the Ross River Recreation Society. As a board member, she has been instrumental in securing funding for upgrading the sport facilities, and for building a paintball park and a multi-purpose sport court. Her strong organizational skills help her run the summer youth leadership camps and town beautification programs. Fran also raises money for children's summer trips to music festivals, both in and out of Yukon.

### **Sharon Kerr**

Sharon works in the Department of Justice as a senior court clerk who is described by her nominators as someone who keeps her focus even in the most stressful situation. She is responsible for training new clerks in Dawson City, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. She has been instrumental in developing a highly competent and efficient workforce in the court system.

Sharon brought her experience as an RCMP officer into the Yukon government 20 years ago. Her attention to detail and extensive knowledge of criminal and civil procedures combine to make her an exemplary public servant.

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