

**Yukon Legislative Assembly  
Whitehorse, Yukon  
Monday, November 1, 2010 — 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

## DAILY ROUTINE

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

## TRIBUTES

### In recognition of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Project Red Ribbon

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** I rise today to pay tribute to the Mothers Against Drunk Driving initiative, Project Red Ribbon. Every year Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD, as they are called, launch the red ribbon initiative to remind us about the costs of impaired driving. They do so in the hopes of eradicating this dangerous and senseless act. Unfortunately, too many of us have, in some way, been affected by drunk driving.

The Yukon Liquor Corporation supports MADD Canada's mission and we're glad to participate yet again in this year's red ribbon campaign. Today, until January 4, red ribbons and donation boxes are available at all Yukon liquor stores across the Yukon and our head office on Quartz Road.

We tie the red ribbon to our vehicles to remind us of the thousands of victims of impaired driving, of how life can change in an instant because of somebody's tragic choice to drive while impaired — and that's driving any kind of vehicle. It reminds us as drivers to make a better decision.

It is the mandate of the Yukon Liquor Corporation to encourage social responsibility in the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the territory and we take this role seriously, with increased fines for violations, training for bar staff and ongoing communication with our licensees.

Drinking responsibly means knowing when to draw the line and, among other things, when not to drive. It means not letting other people drink and drive either. Alcohol doesn't mix with driving. We stand with MADD, the RCMP and other organizations that say, "That's enough." Drinking and driving is dangerous and we refuse to tolerate it.

I encourage you to look for and support local MADD volunteers at check-stops this holiday season. They will be distributing bright green Yukon Liquor Corporation ice scrapers, with the "drive safe, drive sober" message in English and French. Don't hesitate to report a potential drunk driver; you could be saving a life.

I take this opportunity to urge members of this House and all Yukoners to please pick up a red ribbon and tie it to their vehicles. It is suggested that, in this climate, they tend to blow off, so we are encouraging people this year to tie it on their set of keys so that every time you start your motor vehicle, it's a reminder.

Display it to demonstrate your commitment to driving safe and sober. I took the liberty of bringing a red ribbon for every member of the Legislature, so I would ask the pages to pass those out. Thank you.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I rise on behalf of both opposition parties to pay tribute to the Mothers Against Drunk Driving red ribbon campaign. The red ribbon is a sign of respect for thousands of Canadians who have lost their lives or who have been injured as a result of an impaired driver. By displaying the red ribbon, it is also a commitment by Canadians to drive safe and sober. Driving any motorized vehicle — boat, car, truck, ATV or snowmobile — while under the influence of alcohol or drugs can have a tragic consequence. The adverse effects of alcohol on a person's judgement often give people a false sense of confidence, resulting in their taking risks that they would otherwise avoid. We must always remember that driving is not a right, it is a privilege. Individuals who drink and drive endanger themselves, their passengers, and all other users of our roadways, waterways and trails. The deaths and injuries resulting from impaired driving are needless tragedies and are totally preventable.

Despite the progress that has been made, impaired driving remains by far Canada's leading cause of death and one of the country's leading criminal causes of injury.

According to MADD Canada, about 1,500 people are killed in impaired driving accidents each year in Canada. The toll that impaired driving is taking on human life and on the families of those who are killed and injured is tragic. We must all make a commitment to support MADD in their efforts to reinforce the message to drive sober and safe and help reduce the incidence of impaired driving deaths and injuries.

We congratulate and thank the Whitehorse chapter of MADD and all those responsible for the commitment to make our roads safer and to provide a voice for victims of impaired driving.

Life is a precious gift. Help save one today.

**Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to pay tribute to Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the launch of their annual project, the red ribbon campaign.

Members of Mothers Against Drunk Driving are trying to put an end to impaired driving and assist the victims of this crime.

Project Red Ribbon is a community public awareness program that depends on volunteer participation to promote the message that deaths and injuries resulting from impaired driving are totally preventable. There are options and there is no excuse for impaired driving. This applies not only to motor vehicles, such as cars and trucks, but also recreational vehicles, like snow machines and other off-road vehicles. We can take a cab, arrange for a sober driver, stay overnight or book a hotel room.

The red ribbon serves as a reminder, both of the dangers of impaired driving and an acknowledgment of those who have been killed or injured in alcohol- or drug-impaired crashes, and

by tying a red ribbon on our vehicles, we support the goal of keeping drunk drivers off our roads.

The Whitehorse chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving is raising awareness in helping to make a difference in the Yukon. Drinking responsibly means knowing when to draw the line and, among other things, when not to drive. It means not letting other people drink and drive either.

The stories of people whose lives were lost or changed forever by a drunk driver are displayed on the MADD website and are a reminder of the importance of driving safe and driving sober. I encourage people to check out some of these stories and to think before they get behind the wheel or let friends get behind the wheel. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you. Are there any further tributes?  
Introduction of visitors.  
Returns or documents for tabling.

## TABLING RETURNS AND DOCUMENTS

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, I have for tabling Resolution 10-02-A, entitled *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in the Criminal Justice System*. It's a resolution that was passed by the Canadian Bar Association at their annual general meeting in Niagara, Ontario on August 14 and 15 of this year.

**Speaker:** Are there any further documents for tabling?  
Reports of committees.  
Petitions.  
Are there any bills to be introduced?  
Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Hon. Mr. Edzerza:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT the terms of reference of the Select Committee on the Safe Operation and Use of Off-road Vehicles, as established by Motion No. 834 of the First Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly, be amended by changing the date of its reporting to the House from the 2010 fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly to the 2011 spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to support the Canadian Bar Association resolution calling on the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada to develop policies designed to assist and enhance the lives of those people born with a permanent organic brain injury which results in a cognitive disorder known as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, by:

(1) allocating additional resources for alternatives to the current practice of criminalizing individuals with FASD, and directing Yukon's Minister of Justice to urge her federal, provincial and territorial counterparts to persuade their respective governments to do the same, and;

(2) urging the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of justice to engage in a dialogue with the Canadian Bar Association regarding amending criminal sentencing laws to accommodate the disability of those with FASD.

I also give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to convene a mining best practices summit to bring together industry, other levels of government and the general public to develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to the increased mining activity in the territory in order that Yukon can take a planned approach to:

(1) maximizing socio-economic benefits through modernized royalty and tax regimes and enhanced local employment and training opportunities;

(2) strengthening our regulatory regimes, including water quality standards, reclamation policies and other related land-management issues;

(3) minimizing environmental liabilities by supporting best practices approaches to modern mining technologies;

(4) reducing rates of injury and death through strengthening our occupational health and safety regime, as well as increasing our mine rescue preparedness capacity; and

THAT this summit be held before the 2011 fall sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House recognizes that the antiquated free-entry system allows for mineral staking to happen virtually anywhere;

THAT there are hundreds of active claims within the City of Whitehorse, covering about one-third of the city, including residential neighbourhoods and recreational areas, like Whitehorse's world-class cross-country ski trails; and

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to listen to the City of Whitehorse's call for a temporary mineral-staking ban within the city limits while the city and its citizens determine which areas are appropriate for mining.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?  
Is there a statement by a minister?  
This then brings us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Fiscal management

**Mr. Mitchell:** Last Thursday, the Minister of Finance tabled the public accounts for the fiscal year that ended in March 2010. The Public Accounts Committee closed the books on last year and outlined in great detail the spending habits of this government. Those accounts, overseen by the Auditor General of Canada, confirm that last year's budget is a deficit budget.

This has been known for some time; however, the Premier has repeatedly told Yukoners to wait until the Auditor General has delivered her final numbers before he would comment.

Will the minister now confirm last year's budget has ended as a deficit budget?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Actually, the public accounts as tabled Thursday, duly audited by the Auditor General, confirm exactly what the government has tabled in this House by way

of estimates and supplementaries. They also confirm what the government has been saying all along.

I know the Liberal leader has a different view of the financial position of the Yukon, but the Yukon Party government's view of our financial position and opinion is now confirmed by the Auditor General.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Last spring, the Premier put out a news release the day the budget was released — that's the spring of 2009. It said that this year will be the seventh consecutive year-end with a budget surplus. That promise rings hollow today. Nobody trusts this government and this is another reason why. The Auditor General's report, a document the Premier made public last Thursday, confirms the deficit for 2009-10 at more than \$25 million. We know the Premier is reluctant to put the number on the record; it doesn't fit with the image this government is trying to project as good fiscal managers. What was last year's final year-end deficit of the unconsolidated statement from the Government of Yukon?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, once again, what the Auditor General has confirmed is exactly what the government has stated here in the House on many occasions: the variance as reported — \$21 million of that — was due to an accounting policy change with respect to the Building Canada fund. If the member can somehow construe that that is an expenditure of money, I'll leave that to the Liberal leader.

Secondly, it also confirmed what the government has been saying — that another large portion of the variance is due to health care costs. If the Liberal leader takes issue with delivering health care to Yukoners — and we know the Liberals' view of providing an increased and enhanced level of health care in rural Yukon; we know the Liberals are totally against that — I would then assume that the Liberal leader is against ensuring that we live up to our commitment to Yukoners so that they have comparable access to health care.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, we take no issue with delivering health care. The issue we take is with not planning to deliver health care. We know that it pains the government to admit that it got it wrong, but that is certainly what happened here. As far as the government being consistent all along, I'll send a copy of the Premier's news release over to him, so optimistic 18 months ago.

The top auditor in the land has confirmed last year's deficit. The only ones who won't admit that things have changed are the Premier and his Yukon Party colleagues. No wonder they find it so difficult to find a candidate to run downtown.

Yukoners know what the Premier thought of the Auditor General when she criticized his ABCP investment. He mocked her and said it was "just her opinion". Now we hear the Premier saying it's the auditor's fault; she changed the rules. Yukoners, however, are very interested in what the Auditor General has to say. They value her opinion, even if the Premier doesn't.

Will the Premier admit that last year's budget ended in deficit and will he confirm just how much over \$25 million it was?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** The Liberal leader now has an issue about planning for health care, so I would assume then the Liberal leader would have known at the outset, when tabling esti-

mates, that out-of-territory medical costs, physician claims and other health care expenses in hospitals were to be planned? Does the member know when Yukoners have heart attacks or are diagnosed with other diseases that need medical attention? That's an interesting observation, considering the member's accusation of mocking someone.

Now, here's what the Auditor General has confirmed: that the Yukon government has a net financial resource position, which means that we have the ability in this territory — one of only two jurisdictions — to ensure that we have the financial assets that will be readily available for financing future government operations — one of only two jurisdictions.

That's what the Auditor General has confirmed. We have the financial assets available to finance future government operations, unlike the Liberal financial basket case handed to us where we were paying interest fees on overdraft needs for programs and wages.

#### **Question re: Public sector pensions**

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Speaker, a recent decision by the federal Conservative government has centralized certain pension functions would directly impact how the Government of Yukon serves its employees.

Changes that have been brought forward by the pension centre's mobilization project will affect a number of areas of employees' pension services. Anticipated effects include longer wait times to start pension deductions, delays in retirement time for receiving an employee's pension, and Government of Yukon's ability to access severance pay qualification.

Was the minister consulted before her federal colleagues made these changes?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** What I can say is that maintaining the integrity of public sector pensions is of the utmost importance to the Government of Yukon and certainly to me, as the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission.

We will continue to make those overtures to the Government of Canada, which is responsible for the superannuation fund that oversees all of the public service pensions for Government of Yukon employees, and we will ensure that we do adhere to the policies that are intact, and we will ensure that we continue to have full pension value, and we will continue to go to bat when it comes to ensuring solvency of pensions for our Yukon Hospital Corporation, for example, and Yukon College, as we have in the past.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister didn't confirm whether she was consulted on this matter by the federal government.

With the federal Conservatives' changes, the Government of Yukon will no longer be in control of these services. The Government of Yukon will not be able to control the negative effects to government employees. These changes mean the Government of Yukon will be unable to access pension information to assist employees in a calculation of pension estimates. The government will soon not be able to access the federal system, which allows them to update salaries, leave-without-pay periods and ensure correct services are credited for pensionable services.

Can the minister inform us what actions are being taken to ensure that there are not going to be delays in employee service delivery?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, I will put on the public record that we are committed to ensuring the integrity of the public sector pensions is intact, as we have been in the last several years under this government's watch. I will just remind the members opposite that our commitment to maintaining public sector pensions is solid and that which has been demonstrated by investing some \$11 million-plus to ensure the solvency of pensions for Yukon College, for example, and an additional several million dollars to address the solvency of pensions belonging to the Whitehorse General Hospital employees.

So, again, we do continue to dialogue and to work with the Government of Canada to ensure that that position is maintained. The issue of repatriation, of course, was an issue that did come up several years ago; however, that issue was never taken up due to the lack of input or lack of uptake from our partners across the way. So, again, maintaining the integrity of our public sector pensions is of the utmost importance.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I have for filing a letter from the Public Service Commission Staff Relations branch. This centralization of the Public Service Commission's superannuation service will have a direct effect on Yukoners. The effects will definitely be negative. Employees can expect delays in the commencement of pension deductions, receiving pension at retirement, and the determination of whether an employee is eligible for severance pay. Currently Government of Yukon employees are able to access information and make a determination immediately upon termination. This will all change, Mr. Speaker. Without access to the federal pension support system, the Government of Yukon will also not be able to determine and commence deductions for those employees electing to buy back previous service when retired.

Is the minister now lobbying her federal colleagues for changes to ensure the protection of pension service delivery in the Yukon?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I hate to sound redundant for the member opposite, but we do continue to ensure that we do work with the Government of Canada — all our colleagues across this good country.

I should add that the federal government is the sole sponsor of the public service pension plan for the Government of Yukon employees. We are committed to the integrity of public sector pensions. I just pointed out a couple of examples of how much commitment we have when it comes to ensuring the solvency of pensions for both Yukon College and the Whitehorse General Hospital employees — two examples. It is also this government that has fully booked leave liability for all Government of Yukon employees — something the members opposite failed to do under their respective mandate.

We will continue to work with the Government of Canada to ensure that we do have public sector pensions, that we are able to continue to work with the Government of Canada to ensure that all policies and regulatory forums are adhered to.

### Question re: Lobbying legislation

**Mr. Cardiff:** The Prime Minister and his Cabinet ministers met with registered lobbyists almost 600 times this year, according to *The Hill Times* newspaper. Industry Minister Tony Clement topped the list as the most lobbied minister, with 62 meetings with registered lobbyists. We only know this because Canada has a lobbying act and the Prime Minister and his ministers are required to publicly disclose their meetings with paid lobbyists.

Can the Premier tell us how many paid lobbyists he and his ministers met with this year?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** It is the case that the federal government is very conscious about lobbying in Ottawa. One only has to refer to even recent news reports about what all that means.

Now as far as lobbyists — and I would assume the member means those who are certified or have the credentials that define them as lobbyists — I can tell you that I am not aware of any such lobbyists with whom I have ever met. I certainly can't speak for other ministers. We do meet with all kinds of Yukoners. We meet with members of the corporate community. That is our job, but if there are some insinuations here, I can only caution the member for the Third Party: be careful.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, in the preamble of the federal lobbying legislation, it says that "free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest." It also says that "it is desirable that public office holders and the public be able to know who is engaged in lobbying activities."

Many jurisdictions have a registry of lobbyists, as well as a code of conduct for lobbyists to ensure that contact between lobbyists and politicians is conducted in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty.

Currently, lobby legislation exists in many Canadian provinces, as lobbying now touches nearly every aspect of public policy. Does the Premier agree that having lobbying legislation would ensure lobbying activities are carried out ethically, honestly and transparently?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** First off, I find it interesting that — as the member proceeds with his question, I'm just wondering out loud whether or not the member includes NGOs in that. Does the member include NGOs like Kaushee's Place, like the northern housing society, like many other front-line workers and groups in Yukon who do a great service for Yukon, who meet with government on a regular basis, who bring forward proposals? I'm just wondering if the member also considers them to be lobbyists.

Now, further to that, the member knows full well that we are guided by the Conflicts Commissioner on matters that pertain to perceived or real conflict. So, if we have questions — I'm talking about the government ministers, we will refer those to the Conflicts Commissioner.

By the way, all Cabinet members are required to meet with the Conflicts Commissioner immediately upon being appointed to the Executive Council. Whether or not lobbying legislation can help clearly define in a better way how that interaction between government and lobbyists occurs, I don't dispute that,

but I think right now in the Yukon we have a very clear process that determines exactly that.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well it's interesting that the Premier brings up the Conflicts Commissioner and the Conflicts Commission. Maybe that's a report they didn't read either because the Yukon's Conflicts Commissioner says in his latest annual report that our laws and rules on conflict of interest lag behind what's happening in other jurisdictions. Among other things, he says in his report that the time has come to create a system for registering lobbyists to reduce the potential for real and perceived conflicts of interest. Because there are no rules in place here, we have no way of knowing which paid lobbyists the Premier and his ministers are meeting with, but we should.

When will the Premier take the advice of our Conflicts Commissioner and table legislation creating a system for registering paid lobbyists?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** As I've stated already, Mr. Speaker, of course we readily accept what the Conflicts Commissioner is providing in terms of advice and other matters and will continue to do so.

At the very moment, are we preparing to develop legislation in this particular area? No, but we will take the time to review what the Conflicts Commissioner is suggesting, as we always do, and then go from there. That may even include discussions, or further discussions, with the Conflicts Commissioner. I would hope that the member is not suggesting that, given the circumstances in the Yukon and the policies and regulatory framework within which government works, there are issues that the member maybe knows about and we don't that he believes are inappropriate. The government is very careful about these matters, and I think the Liberals have learned that lesson time and time again in the inferences that they make. When you look at the evidence and the facts, the Liberals were simply completely off base and I would hope the Third Party is not in a similar situation.

#### **Question re: Takhini Hot Springs Ltd. zoning regulations**

**Mr. Cathers:** I am going to continue trying to help the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources understand why government should reject Takhini Hot Springs Ltd.'s application to rewrite zoning regulations. The minister began with an attitude that people of the area just didn't understand this file when in fact, as I pointed out, the minister had his facts wrong.

My constituents who have been involved in area planning for more than a decade understand this issue quite well. I think the minister may be starting to realize that he was wrong and I appreciate that he did finally agree to release Land Planning branch's minutes from the two meetings and he sent those to me last week.

I'd like to help him by pointing out some problems with those minutes but, before I start, does the alternate minister know if the minister has actually read those minutes?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I would say, yes, I imagine he did read the minutes.

**Mr. Cathers:** There are serious flaws and omissions in Land Planning branch's minutes of the two public consultation meetings regarding Takhini Hot Springs Ltd.'s application.

There is no mention of who made comments or how many people agreed with the comments. People who sat on planning and zoning committees had direct knowledge of what went on during that process, but neither names nor positions of people who served are mentioned in the minutes.

The most important omission from the minutes is this: most of the people at both meetings felt that government was biased toward the applicant and that the public consultation was just for show. That was said many times, with most people there showing their agreement. Can the alternate minister explain why the minutes don't mention the fact that most of the people at the meetings felt government was biased toward the applicant?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I would recommend that the member opposite asks that question when the minister's back. That's a pretty detailed question for me to answer.

**Mr. Cathers:** I appreciate that the alternate minister will have to no doubt raise some of this with the minister later. Government processes need to be fair and people need to be able to trust that those processes are fair. If government is biased, that's a problem. If government appears to be biased, that's a problem, too. The most common theme in comments at the public meetings regarding Takhini Hot Springs Ltd.'s application was that people felt government was biased toward the applicant and that consultation was just for show. That's not mentioned in the meeting minutes. The question is why. What does it say when most of the people think the land-planning consultation was a sham and the government was biased toward the applicant? What does it say when local residents who were involved in developing the plan on regulations all believe that there is something wrong with YTG's handling of this file? I know that the alternate minister probably can't answer that, but I'd ask him to raise it with the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Is that a question or a statement? The member opposite has accused the government, the individuals who work in Energy, Mines and Resources, of doing inappropriate things when it comes to land use planning.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### **Point of order**

**Speaker:** Member for Lake Laberge, on a point of order.

**Mr. Cathers:** The alternate minister is imputing unavowed motive to me. That was not my intention with that statement. I was asking a question.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Maybe I heard something different, Mr. Speaker. The people in the Department of EMR and with —

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

#### **Speaker's ruling**

**Speaker:** The purpose of the point of order is — sit down, please — simply to advise the Speaker on where the point of order has gone wrong. I presume that the minister doesn't have anything to add to that point of order, so I'll rule on that first. It is simply a dispute among members.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Again, I will repeat, Mr. Speaker, that maybe I heard something different from the member opposite, but I will repeat a couple of words the member opposite used, which were “sham” and “biased”, on behalf of the competent staff in EMR. I’m a bit shocked with the words used by the member opposite.

**Question re: Whitehorse Centre by-election**

**Mr. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, we’re almost at the end of the sitting and the seat for Whitehorse Centre remains vacant. The Premier had the opportunity to call a by-election before this sitting began to allow Whitehorse Centre residents to be represented by an MLA of their own choosing. The Premier failed to act and, in doing so, ignored the wishes of downtown residents. Now the Yukon Party has announced they won’t be holding their candidate nomination meeting until November 10, the day after the end of the current sitting.

Does this Premier think it’s acceptable to withhold the democratic rights of the residents of Whitehorse Centre to elect their own representative for a sitting, just because he can’t find a Yukon Party candidate?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, I’ll ignore 99.9 percent of the member’s inferences. For the Leader of the Liberal Party to suggest that someone would negate access to the due democratic process, this is almost laughable, considering some of the accusations that come from the Liberal leader and his colleagues — talk about a compromise of individual and citizens’ rights to democratic process. How about Googling people who exercise their rights to freedom of speech? Let’s start there, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Mitchell:** In ignoring 99.9 percent, the Premier ignored answering the question. Regarding the by-election, the Premier said that this Yukon Party government has, and I quote: “a responsibility to represent the public interest.” Yet only the Premier seems to think it’s in the public interest to leave part of the public unrepresented.

The Premier claimed that Whitehorse Centre residents are being represented by this Yukon Party government. Let’s be clear. Whitehorse Centre voters did not choose to be represented by the Yukon Party. This kind of representation was forced upon them. Does the Premier think that Yukoners shouldn’t get to choose who represents them?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Of course the very simple answer is no. Nobody in their right mind would have that view or opinion. That’s the point. But the government — the elected government, the government in office — has a responsibility for the public interest — not just for some people, but all people in the Yukon. That means every single citizen.

By way of example, let’s look at how that representation has unfolded in Whitehorse Centre. Let’s start with Habitat for Humanity: the Liberals opposed those expenditures. Let’s look at the revitalization of the downtown core and the tremendous investment into the waterfront: the Liberals opposed those. Let’s look at the replacement of Alexander Street apartments: the Liberals opposed those. Let’s look at the expenditure to carry out SCAN, the safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation. We’ve invested in that; it was a top issue and priority for people in the downtown area: the Liberals opposed it.

What about the eight-member street crime unit? It cost money to establish that street crime unit: the Liberals opposed it. The Yukon Party government will stack up its representation of not only the citizens of Whitehorse Centre, but all Yukoners against the Liberals any day.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Premier is wrong when he says we oppose these things for downtown Whitehorse, and he is wrong when he feels that they shouldn’t have the right to elect their own representative. Now, clearly they’re having a hard time finding a candidate; this should come as no surprise. After all, this current government has mismanaged finances, ignored their democratic rights to have their own representative, and lost the trust of Yukoners. After eight years of not listening to Yukoners, it would be a difficult task to ask Whitehorse Centre residents to listen to what the Yukon Party is selling. Now, the Premier is leaving Whitehorse Centre residents with an unnecessary burden of a winter election. Does the Premier think that 40 below is a preferable time to ask voters to open their doors to by-election candidates?

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Well, now I get the picture. It looks like the real issue is with the Liberal leader and the Liberals in this territory who are somehow concerned about what the temperature might be when people exercise their democratic rights. What a sham. Furthermore, the member is wrong on all counts. Let’s do some comparisons about finances: the Yukon government, today, sits, on a consolidated basis, with \$217 million in a savings account. Let’s compare that with Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan has \$3.6 billion in debt; New Brunswick: \$8.3 billion in debt; B.C.: \$28 million; Nova Scotia, \$13 billion in debt; Ontario, \$193 billion in debt; Canada as a nation, \$525 billion in debt; Yukon, Alberta, net financial resource position, a savings account. We’ll stack up our financial management and our representation of Yukoners any day against the Liberals.

**Question re: Yukon Housing Corporation financial statements**

**Mr. McRobb:** I would also like to draw the attention of the House to the public accounts report tabled last Thursday. I’m sure that most of the attention will be on the bottom line — the \$26-million deficit the Premier still has trouble admitting to. Yukoners should also be concerned about what’s found on page 259 of the public accounts. That page reads, “Yukon Housing Corporation financial statements, March 31, 2010, not available at press time.”

This isn’t the first time that corporation’s financial statements have been unavailable. It happened last year. Moreover, the minister should have seen that all those problems had been fixed. So why has this minister again failed to produce these financial statements on time?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** As the member opposite knows full well, there was a discrepancy in the type of accounting procedure necessary several years ago. In order to continue to proceed, our finance section basically made a decision as to which one would be the most likely. Unfortunately, that wasn’t the one selected, which set them back a little bit. Also, in disbanding the shared services with Community Services and re-establishing the finance people within the Yukon Housing Cor-

poration, there has been a delay. I can assure the member opposite that all accounts are in the Auditor General's hands. They are under discussion. They are approved. If the member recalls, the Auditor General herself sat in this very room and said that she had no concerns whatsoever. It was simply a timing issue. Maybe the member opposite should read something from that Public Accounts Committee meeting.

**Mr. McRobb:** We're getting used to reading "this page missing" from the public accounts report. Last year when the books came out, the Housing Corporation's numbers were also missing. The Auditor General couldn't sign off on the government's books until months after the deadline, because the corporation's books were in disarray. The Auditor General said it was a highly unusual situation.

It appears it wasn't a highly unusual delay at all, because now we have another year. Why, for a second year in a row, has this highly unusual situation recurred? Is highly unusual now this minister's new normal?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** The member opposite might remember that the 2007-08 and 2008-09 accounts were the ones in question. Those have been completed and tabled in the House. Perhaps the member opposite is aware of the fact that, when you count seven, eight, nine, 10, you have to get the first ones in order before the last one can be. All 2009-10 accounts are in the hands of the Auditor General — have been for weeks — and will be completed very shortly. They simply weren't in time to publish this, which I thought the member opposite had an interest in looking at. Rather than hold them up, we decided we would release them that way.

To comment in this House that the books are in disarray casts terrible accusations at the good members of the Yukon Housing Corporation and their finance people. We have confidence in them; obviously, the Liberals don't.

**Mr. McRobb:** It's this minister we don't have any confidence in. A lot of resources were poured into getting the Housing Corporation's finances sorted out last year. This minister called in officials from the Finance department to restore order.

The minister promised that they would make things right. In the past year and a half, this minister spent \$150,000 on Outside consultants to help sort out the corporation's books. These consultants were hired to review financial data for year-end prep, to draft those late financial statements and prepare for the Auditor General's review. Sadly, the result is the same again this year. The public accounts report has been tabled without the Housing Corporation's financial statements.

Why couldn't the minister fix this problem, even after hiring Outside consultants to deal with it?

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Again, the member opposite says that the minister called those resources in. I would remind him that the Yukon Housing Corporation did. This minister and this government do not interfere with the Housing Corporation as, clearly, the Liberals always have. The documents for board of directors meetings and the minutes — I took his advice. I went back and read them from the Liberal years. The Liberal minister appeared at many of the meetings. The Liberal minister gave specific directions on how he wanted to see the corpora-

tion act. I had lunch with them one day to meet them. I've never been back since.

The member opposite, again, as he claimed in this House — and it's recorded in *Hansard* and I quote: "I have seen where the Deputy Minister of Executive Council Office comes into the executive offices with an ATIPP request and asks for political guidance..."

This government does not interfere with those processes. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member has admitted in this House many times that he would and the Liberals would interfere with corporations, with boards and committees, and they would keep their fingers stirring that little pot; we don't.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair (Mr. Nordick):** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 22, *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. Committee of the Whole will now proceed with Vote 54, the Department of Tourism and Culture. Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### Bill No. 22 — *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11* — continued

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 22, *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now proceed with general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

#### Department of Tourism and Culture

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Chair, it's my pleasure to introduce the *Supplementary Estimates No. 1* for the Department of Tourism and Culture for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The department is seeking a total of approximately \$2.644 million with just over \$1.5 million attributed for the operations and maintenance, as well as \$1.143 million for the capital component of our budget.

I did want to say a few opening remarks about tourism, just reflecting upon the past season that Yukon has experienced. I wish to just say a few words.

Not unlike previous years, 2010 for the tourism sector saw a number of challenges, as well as opportunities. One only has to reflect on the extreme weather patterns that Yukon experienced — whether it was flooding in central Yukon or forest fire activity in northern British Columbia. We also experienced the continuation of the global economic downturn and the return of a strong Canadian dollar.

Despite all of this, Yukon has fared relatively well. Our year-to-date figures for border crossings show an increase of 12 percent, marking 10 consecutive months of growth in border crossings into Yukon. Compared to other jurisdictions across the country, Yukon continues to do very well when it comes to visitation.

2010 has marked the opening of the expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport terminal building, a project that was both on time and on budget.

The expansion ensures that Yukon can continue to receive direct international flights, such as Condor Airlines, as well as attract additional international air carriers such as Edelweiss Air, who are working to initiate a new direct service to Whitehorse from Zurich, Switzerland, beginning next summer. The new flights will complement the service provided by Condor Airlines — service from Frankfurt to Whitehorse, which makes us one of the smallest communities in North America that will receive direct air service from more than one gateway in mainland Europe.

Since 2005, traffic flow through the airport has seen an increase of some 21 percent. Year-to-date figures for arrivals and departures at the international airport also show an increase of about eight percent — again marking the importance of air access to the growth of tourism in the territory.

The upgrades provide a welcome environment for both international and national air carriers, such as Yukon's own regional airline, Air North, in servicing Yukon today, while positioning the territory for future growth in arrivals and departures.

2010 also marked a significant turn for the Alaska cruise ship industry with the welcome announcement by Governor Parnell of a reduction in the cruise passenger head tax.

It also marked the beginning of a new chapter for tourism in Canada with the recent signing of Approved Destination Status by China, which opens the door for Chinese tour groups to visit Canada.

This week, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada will be hosting its national summit. Among the finalists for the 2010 National Awards for Tourism Excellence is that of the Pan North Marketing Consortium representing Canada's three northern territories, which was nominated for the marketing campaign of the year award.

This marketing initiative generated more than 40 million impressions through paid advertising and more than 27 million impressions through earned media with a value of approximately \$147 million. It also generated over 215,000 visitors to

Canada's Northern House during the Olympic period and over 15,000 contest entries as well.

I would just like to take the opportunity to offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of our partners, to our sister territories, and to all involved who did an outstanding job of implementing the multi-faceted marketing campaign.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to the 2010 interdepartmental committee, comprising the Yukon government departments of Community Services, Economic Development, Executive Council Office, and Tourism and Culture on receiving the Premier's award of excellence back in September.

The team not only promoted interdepartmental cooperation, but helped Yukon achieve a much-deserved, high profile throughout the Olympic period. I commend, in particular, our own department staff who really took a lead in terms of promoting the interdepartmental collaboration and did an outstanding job working with the Yukon First Nations 2010 initiative, the Government of Canada, and many other entities throughout the Olympic period.

Another noteworthy achievement was that of the recent announcement by Go RVing Canada, in partnership with the Recreational Vehicle Dealers Association of Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission, which designated Klane Lake, as well as Tatchun Lake, as two of the top contenders in the top 100 spots to go RVing in Canada. This too is very good news indeed. It is acknowledgements such as these that show that Yukon remains a strong contender for offering diverse tourism experiences to audiences from around the world.

Yukon's ability to adjust to change across the tourism sector, whether it's at the local, national or international levels, speaks to the tenacity and resilience of those committed to safeguarding tourism as an important economic generator, especially during these past few years, which have been marked by a global economic downturn.

As a government, we remain committed to working in collaboration with our industry partners to continue to grow tourism, whether it's working with our sister territories on pan-northern marketing initiatives here in Canada or working with the State of Alaska on joint marketing initiatives in the Lower 48, or working with the Canadian Tourism Commission, Government of Canada, on leveraging our reach to key markets here in Canada, as well as overseas.

We also remain committed to working in collaboration with the tourism industry, which has and will continue to play an integral role in how we go about increasing the number of visitors to the territory, as well as revenue. It is partnerships such as these that have contributed to Yukon's success as a tourism destination, despite the challenges that have faced and continue to face the tourism industry.

On the cultural side, of course, when we talk about heritage — also a very important economic generator for the territory — I'm pleased to say that 2010 is also proving to be a very busy and exciting year for the heritage sector. Earlier this year we were able to see the *A.J. Goddard* and Fort Selkirk designated as official Yukon historic sites. Recovery work on the *A.J. Goddard* was carried out this past summer with ongoing conservation work taking place throughout the fall and winter.



Congratulations to Doug Davidge and his team for the exceptional work on this amazing maritime find.

Fort Selkirk was also designated a Yukon historic site earlier this year. The Yukon government and Selkirk First Nation have been working together to preserve and maintain this site since 1982. It's very rewarding to see the official designation realized and to all those who have worked hard over the years to safeguard Fort Selkirk, I thank you.

The Yukon government's museum special projects assistance program — we were very pleased to support 13 museums and First Nation cultural heritage centres with \$300,000 for a variety of projects.

Since 2006, the program has provided more than \$1.5 million for exhibit planning, small capital acquisitions, collections, conservation, cooperative marketing and revenue-generation projects. Support was also provided to nine projects through the Yukon's historic properties assistance fund, aimed at helping to preserve Yukon's important, privately owned historic places. Since that fund's inception, more than 180 projects throughout the territory have received well over \$1 million in assistance.

The first-ever heritage and culture certificate program is also underway at Yukon College, which is reflected in this year's supplementary. This important program is supported through the northern strategy trust and its partners, Yukon government, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, Yukon College and the Yukon First Nations heritage group. The shared partnership has developed a culturally relevant and accessible curriculum focused on northern heritage and culture, aimed at students interested in these exciting studies.

Yukon has also been able to leverage support from Canada on other important projects. Recently, CanNor's community adjustment fund, for example, announced its support for restoration work to the Pacific Steam Whaling Co. community house, situated on Herschel Island.

This landmark building was constructed in 1893 and is now used as an accommodation centre for scientists and park interpreters. The fund is also supporting ongoing work at Forty Mile, which includes improved road access and site development work.

In July, Yukon government's archeology program partnered with Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council heritage offices on an archeological dig at McIntyre Creek. Yukon archeologists, with the assistance of five First Nation students, worked at four excavation sites searching for evidence of microblade technology prevalent about 10,000 years ago. This project has helped add important information to Yukon's archeological record, and we were very pleased to be able to help support this very important initiative.

The heritage resources unit published *Donuts and Silver Dollars: The Life of Captain Frank Slim* by Donna Marie Dillman in its Hude Hudan occasional papers in history series. The work by the local First Nation anthropologist formed the basis for the thesis at Simon Fraser University back in 2008.

Of course, as we all know, Frank Slim was a significant First Nation river pilot and captain during the sternwheeler era.

The 2010 Yukon gold explorers passport contest also closed at the end of August, with more than 2,500 people visit-

ing at least 10 attractions listed in the blue passport booklet. Prizes of gold were awarded in September, along with 10 random participation prizes. On-site draws occurred throughout the Yukon at various Yukon museums. I would like to also thank all participating sites for promoting the variety of heritage attractions in the Yukon.

In terms of the budget itself, I just wanted to speak to a number of the specifics enclosed within the department's supplementary budget, which is helping to continue with the safeguarding of Yukon's heritage and history, as well as continuing to ensure that we do have a very flourishing arts community within the territory and also is contributing to a vibrant tourism industry as well.

In starting with the operation and maintenance expenditures for the Corporate Services branch, we are looking for a supplementary increase for \$45,000 to cover collective agreement impacts. For the Cultural Services branch, revotes and supplementary funding also contains \$35,000 for on-Yukon-time programming committed for the printing of walking tour brochures; \$101,000 for Yukon at 2010 to complete projects that were related to facilitating Yukon's participation during the Olympic and Paralympic winter games in Vancouver this past February.

There are dollars allotted for Council of Yukon First Nations' First Nations at the 2010 component, including shipping costs for returning artwork to Yukon from Canada's Northern House on display during the games, as well as expenses related to Yukon's presence and participation in the Northern House and dollars for expenses related to the artists legacy project.

There is also an increase of just under \$100,000 requested due to the collective agreement. Under Heritage Resources, there is approximately \$16,000 for archaeology ice-patch research protection to complete a popular booklet summarizing the results of 13 years of joint research from among the six southern First Nations and it is being prepared in cooperation with the Yukon First Nations ice-patch working group.

There are also dollars for heritage studies. In particular, there is a financial contribution toward publication costs of the new book on the cultural, natural history of Herschel Island Territorial Park.

Under Historic Sites there is \$25,000 for work on the heritage attraction site, support at Forty Mile; \$33,000 for historic properties assistance; and under Museums, approximately \$23,000 for general care and maintenance at Klwane Museum of Natural History, as well as dollars for Big Jonathan House for upgrades to the building itself and outdoor exhibits. There was \$47,000 for northern strategy trust funding related to the heritage and culture certificate program offered at Yukon College that I referred to just earlier. There is approximately an additional \$81,000 for the community development trust fund, again relating to the heritage and culture department essential skills training program, also delivered through Yukon College.

Under Arts Operations, there is \$301,000 for the arts fund, touring artist fund projects that were underway or are in the early planning stages; and \$13,000 for professional development workshops, administered through the Yukon Arts Society.

Under the Tourism branch, there are dollars allotted through the product development resource area for Larger than Life banner installation in Yukon communities. There is also \$346,000 for Destination: Yukon, which is, in part, funded through the community adjustment fund delivered by CanNor. There's \$157,000 for the tourism cooperative marketing fund for the ongoing intake of applications, and an increase of \$82,000 requested due to collective agreements.

Under Capital Expenditures, there's \$76,000 for exterior painting of our Tourism and Culture business centre; upgrades to IT requirements. There's also money allotted for the historic sites maintenance, as well as Forty Mile, as I referenced earlier, through northern strategy funding and Canada's community adjustment fund. There are capital dollars allotted for heritage trails — for example, Kluane First Nation, to complete the heritage trail access project; museums assistance — again, \$7,000 to complete repairs; upgrades to Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre; \$79,000 for work on the security system and upgrades to the public parking lot.

There are also dollars allotted for Yukon Archives, including electrical work in the archives' laboratories. I should also refer to ongoing capital work at a number of the Visitor Information Centres, as well as monies for marketing for the interactive website with upgrades to our [www.travel yukon.com](http://www.travel yukon.com), and also monies allotted for the scenic drives website with image enhancement through video and photo upgrades.

So I would like to thank the Department of Tourism and Culture for their ongoing hard work and for their expertise in guiding the Government of Yukon and working in collaboration with the many partners that we have in ensuring tourism and culture is in fact a vibrant industry throughout the Yukon. Thank you.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for her opening remarks and the Department of Tourism and Culture. I would also like to thank the staff and officials for providing the briefing to the opposition parties in this department.

Much of what the minister said in her opening comments was relayed to us through the officials, breaking down the expenditures in O&M and capital. The minister did say a lot, and I hope I don't ask a question too many times, where she has perhaps already given an answer.

I do have a few questions in this department. The minister gave us a breakdown of the O&M, the cost of the collective agreements in Destination: Yukon and the arts funds and so on. We know that we perhaps could have had a little better tourist season. I've heard some businesses complain, for example, about the Top of the World Highway. I also would like to ask a question — although I've asked it of the minister in this House before — about Great River Journey.

The minister was excited about this project when it was first announced. Now it is bankrupt and the assets are in the hands of the bank.

I'd like to perhaps ask a couple of questions on this. But first of all, I'll just ask the minister if she can give us a breakdown, for the record, of all tourism expenditures related to this project.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** There has been a lot of debate on the floor of the Legislature when it comes to Great River Journey. I'll reiterate just for members opposite that, again, it's really important to articulate that the support provided to Great River Journey through our Department of Tourism and Culture and through the Department of Economic Development was by way of existing programs and services, such as the tourism cooperative marketing fund. Historic properties assistance — I just spoke at great length about that fund — and support with media familiarization tours — all of which, I might add, are not only highly subscribed to by industry but have also continued to receive the full support of Yukon's tourism industry.

The programs are available to all tourism entities — again, provided they meet the eligibility criteria set out by the department. What we have found over the years is that programs such as these — tourism cooperative marketing fund, for example — are very effective tools for increasing awareness. When it comes to the tourism cooperative marketing fund, provided the enterprise meets the eligibility criteria, by putting forward \$1, we will match that dollar. There are thresholds — and again that's outlined within the criteria through the fund — but again, it has served to be a very effective tool for leveraging the marketing reach throughout the Yukon, throughout the country and internationally as well, promoting the Yukon as a destination as well as a business itself within our identified key target markets.

The tourism cooperative marketing fund, the member opposite may recall, was actually through the senior marketing committee, which is a part of the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon. They requested an additional \$200,000 to the fund, so we were able to not only introduce the fund — I think it was back in 2004 — but because it continues to be very highly subscribed to, last year alone — 2009-10 — I think 100 plus individual businesses received assistance through TCMF, which is the acronym. Because it has been highly subscribed, they had requested an increase to the fund from \$500,000 to \$700,000, which we were able to deliver. We were able to include it in this year's fiscal budget, as was announced earlier this spring.

When it comes to media and trade familiarization tours, this is another area — investments in media relations, for example — where the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon had also requested an increase, because it's an effective means of increasing awareness and the knowledge of the various tourism products and experiences available in the Yukon, as well as a destination itself within our key target markets.

Last year, the department hosted almost 140 media/journalists from our key target markets, which, in turn, generated media advertising value of over \$26 million — very substantive identified awareness, whether through articles written, or print, television or film and so forth. There are a number of different vehicles. We have in place protocols for subscribing to fam trade assistance through the media relations program. I believe there was a workshop delivered during the recent TIA roundup at their fall meeting, just on Friday, speaking to the importance of this and how additional operators can subscribe to the program.

Through historic properties assistance, as I mentioned earlier, there has been well over \$1 million over the last number of years, of which there has been almost 200 proponents who received assistance in preserving and restoring their heritage properties. There are criteria set out for proponents, in order to receive assistance such as this.

But again, that's a program that we were able to increase from \$25,000 when we first took office to approximately \$100,000, which is where it sits today. It has been very well-received and it helps leverage additional funding, whether it's through Canada or through the private sector, through Yukon First Nations, and so forth. So it's another very good fund.

All told, I believe that the Minister of Economic Development outlined there was \$118,000 through these respective, specific funds over the last four years that was provided to Great River Journey through existing programs.

It does recognize the importance of the tourism sector and that is why we continue to work very closely with the tourism sector to ensure that we do continue to make resources available, whether for tourism marketing, product development, research or important infrastructure. We have already talked about the recent expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport, airports such as Old Crow, for example, and improvements to the runways in Dawson City and in Old Crow.

It also speaks to the importance of investments in our network of highways throughout the Yukon and our communications, energy, cultural venues. There has been a lot of talk about the Whitehorse waterfront, for example, and sitting along the Whitehorse waterfront is very important as a cultural venue. The Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre is a very good collaboration between the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the Government of Canada, and the Government of Yukon and will combine a new public library for the Yukon, alongside the First Nation cultural centre.

We're similarly very pleased to be able to also enter into an agreement with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations on the development of their cultural centre with inclusion of a new visitor information centre. I know that Parks Canada is also incorporating their visitor centre along with offices.

So again, it speaks to the very importance of ongoing collaborations and the ongoing importance of infrastructure such as cultural centres, but not only cultural centres — as I mentioned, Yukon museums, community interpretive centres. In fact, our government's direct support of Yukon museums has really grown from approximately — I think it was \$400,000 or \$500,000 when we took office to almost \$1.5 million in direct annual support for each of these heritage institutions. They not only serve as an attraction for visitors and Yukon residents alike, but they also provide very important community gathering places for showcasing our stories, for showcasing Yukon's history and serving as a place for collecting artifacts that are sitting elsewhere. In fact, there was a reference to the Old Crow research facility that is currently underway in Old Crow — a very significant structure thanks to funding from the Government of Canada. It will help them return a lot of artifacts that have been sitting in places other than Old Crow itself.

These serve as a very important component to furthering tourism as well as culture. Again, we're very pleased to make available programs such as this. Likewise, the investments in tourism brand strategy, which has been underway for a number of years. The new Travel Yukon website, which we continue to invest in, continue to tweak and continue to improve, continue to work in collaboration with industry. As I mentioned, we continue to place great attention to our media relations program and product development. Again, all examples of how the government has been working with industry to position Yukon as a destination of choice.

I should also mention that at the recent roundup of the Tourism Industry Association there was some discussion about Great River Journey and I know that the chair spoke very eloquently about their board's position in terms of dollars allotted to Great River Journey by public governments, such as the Yukon government through programs and services that I've already set out.

It was the TIA Yukon's position that this is in fact not wasted dollars; this was an investment for the future. In fact, they regarded those expenditures and the decisions made by the Government of Yukon as prudent.

So I'll just leave it at that, Mr. Chair. I thank the member opposite for allotting me some additional time to provide clarity on this important matter.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister says it was a success, but this particular business is in bankruptcy, Mr. Chair. I asked the minister if she could provide, for the record, a breakdown of all tourism expenditures related to this project. What I have heard is a number that she used before of \$118,000. Well, there's a lot more to it than that and I think the minister should be able to provide that information.

This is a big issue in the territory; I want to let the minister know that. It has been brought to my attention many times very recently because of the bankruptcy and there are some concerns about how this all unfolded.

The minister knows it hasn't had the buy-in of all First Nations and now assets are being sold off through the bankruptcy process. The minister's own colleague told this House that money was advanced when it shouldn't have been advanced. That message was very clear from the Economic Development minister, and I think this needs to be cleared up. I hope the Minister of Tourism can shed some light on this and perhaps give some reading material for the Minister of Economic Development to read and information for him through the Tourism department so he can be updated on this project or shed some light on it — whether or not he was correct. He said that Tourism and Culture was involved with this project and he said: "...I believe, an additional, roughly, \$100,000 to support Great River Journey's restructuring, marketing, and sales efforts." The commitment was conditional on Great River Journey receiving private-sector debt refinancing or an additional investment, neither of which has materialized, so that matter is still debatable.

But the matter is now in the courts. The company has filed for bankruptcy. He said this matter is still debatable and that there were conditions put on this.

The minister has recently clarified the amount for the Economic Development minister — that it was \$118,000. I'd like to ask this pretty serious question and ask the minister to give it some seriousness too. Can the Tourism minister clarify that Tourism money was advanced inappropriately, or is her colleague in error?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** The dollars were not issued inappropriately. I've tried to elaborate or clarify what the member opposite continues to state on the floor of the Legislature.

Again, I just want to say that I have the utmost confidence in our Department of Tourism and Culture. I think I've just tried, but I'll try again and I'll try all day and I'll take the weeks to come, if that's what it takes for the member opposite to really understand the very importance of tourism marketing and the very importance of tourism programs and services available from the Department of Tourism and Culture.

I'll just take it back a few years — back to when we first took office. At that time, there actually wasn't even a Department of Tourism and Culture. That was one of the first things that we did do — we went to work to re-establish a stand-alone entity called the Department of Tourism and Culture because it was very important — it is very important to the Government of Yukon. Tourism and culture is a big economic generator. It employs many people. It creates much revenue in the territory. It's not only good for the economic but also the social health of the territory. I've just tried to elaborate whether it's through tourism, whether it's through the cultural sector, through heritage or the arts.

There are a multitude of individuals and organizations throughout the territory who have been working very hard over the years to advance all of these respective sectors. What I have done over the last number of years, with the support of my colleagues, is to go to work with Yukon's tourism sector to really solidify the relationship that we have — for example, through the Senior Marketing Committee, which provides recommendations; strategic direction as to where we need to allot dollars; how we're spending those dollars and whether we're getting the return on investment and, if not, where we need to redirect those dollars or pull dollars, looking at the market trends.

You know, since 9/11, Mr. Chair, there has been a whole host of challenges that have hit not only the tourism industry in the territory, but worldwide. There have been fluctuations in the dollar; there has been the fluctuation of the price of fuel; there has been the SARS outbreak; there have been forest fires; there has been flooding; there has been a global economic downturn. All of these impact the tourism sector, but what it does is encourage us to be more strategic, more integrated, and more focused on how we invest tourism marketing dollars and where we invest those dollars.

For example, there has been a greater emphasis — there has always been a very importance emphasis — on North American marketing and marketing in Canada, but we have built upon the strengths that we have seen, the opportunities over the years and, as such, we have been able to actually bring a substantive increase, I might add, to domestic marketing.

Looking to Destination: Yukon, this year's budget reflects an additional half a million dollars to the ongoing dollars — I

think it's up to \$300,000 for ongoing dollars — to be invested primarily in our gateway cities: Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. We have also been able to invest in funds such as the tourism marketing fund, for example.

These are funds that, I think, we spoke at great length about. Companies such as Air North have seen the importance of the tourism marketing fund over the years and there has been a huge uptake by Air North over the last number of years, among a number of others. So these funds are available to help maximize and leverage that reach — that marketing reach — whether it's in our national, our own local boundaries, or the international front. Yukon is doing relatively well; we're up 12 percent year-to-date, and that's a substantive increase.

We have seen a big increase in air access and we continue to see that increase: a 21-percent increase in air arrivals and departures over the last five years. Year-to-date, we have seen an eight-percent increase in those air arrivals and departures and, because of that, it is part and parcel as to why we went ahead and expanded the airport. I know that's something that the opposition has taken issue with and that's unfortunate, because air access is absolutely integral to the growth of the territory.

Likewise, it's very important to carriers such as Air North, to our international carriers. It enables us to ensure that we continue to receive both national and international direct flights from Europe, for example. In order to facilitate the growth that we have seen in the air arrivals and departures, again, the added growth or the added capacity of the airport is absolutely critical. Likewise, the investments we've made in Old Crow — the runways at Dawson City, Old Crow, as I mentioned earlier — they too are very important.

Again, when it's expenditures on programs like the tourism cooperative marketing fund, through fam tours, with the travel trade, the media — these too are also very important tools that every other jurisdiction in this country — these are available to each and every tourism entity, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria. I've spoken at great length of how there are criteria. There are protocols in place for these very initiatives.

That has recently been shared with industry as late as Friday, or example, at the TIA Yukon roundup. I will repeat: last year alone, we were able to generate some \$26 million just through value by utilizing these familiarization tours for trade and media, partnering with tourism operators here in the Yukon. They are a great tool for increasing awareness, knowledge of a destination for key target markets. They are cost effective in that they can cost a fraction of what it would be to purchase an equivalent-sized advertisement in a similar publication. Of course, I mentioned the power of third party endorsements as a destination. Those are also very important. They are a great tool for the travel trade to get to know, first-hand, our tourism experiences, our product here in the Yukon. Again, they are a great tool for introducing the various products that we have available.

But again, we do have criteria outlined and available, depending on whether or not a business is business-ready, market-ready, and trade-ready. There are different criteria and dif-

ferent thresholds that have been worked with in collaboration with Yukon's tourism industry. I'll reiterate for the member opposite that he should be very aware that Yukon's tourism industry believes very much in these funding programs and the value of these programs such as what I have just outlined. In fact, they have advocated for increases to all of these respective areas, all of which we have been able to deliver. We have allotted, through the existing programs and services, all applicant-driven — there has been a total allotment of approximately \$118,000 through the three respective funds over the last four years provided to Great River Journey.

I would also caution that, in terms of the assets, I can't speak at length, but this is still before a process. The outcome of the assets of this particular initiative is yet to be determined. There are incredible benefits that Great River Journey has left the Yukon in terms of added awareness, in terms of a showcase of a partnership between four self-governing First Nations, I might add, and the investments that they were able to leverage through other funding mechanisms.

Through the Department of Tourism and Culture, we allotted through applicant-driven programs — I just mentioned historic properties assistance, through tourism cooperative marketing fund and through the travel trade media familiarization assistance under the banner media relations program — all of which have been around for some time and all of which are not only highly subscribed to, but continue to receive the highest support of the Yukon's tourism industry. That was reiterated at the recent fall TIA roundup.

I'm not sure what more I can add to this debate other than that I have great confidence in our Department of Tourism and Culture. Their good work and the expertise that they have shown over the years have led us to what we are experiencing now in the Yukon. I just want to extend my thanks. To their credit, they are leaders in the country. That is in fact why this week, at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada annual summit, the Yukon, alongside Northwest Territories and Nunavut, are up for a national award for the National Marketing Award of the Year. Win or lose, the recognition garnered by simply being nominated — one of three nominees — is significant. It means that Yukon really stands with the biggest and the brightest. It's to the credit of those individuals in the Tourism branch, working alongside the Cultural Services branch, showcasing all that we have to offer in Canada's north.

You know, it started with the 2007 Look Up North campaign. That was really the first of its kind — the pan-north approach — when it came to tourism marketing. This government saw the strength of the proposal put forward and went to bat. We supported it. It was a monumental success. That year alone, 2007, we saw a 13-percent increase in Canadian traffic. Whether or not an individual actually came to visit that year, the actual momentum, the awareness of the Yukon — not only as a travel destination but also as a good place to do business and a good place to live, to raise a family — was generated.

Then it went to the Olympics. That partnership carried forward. The 2010 Olympics was an unprecedented success. It was a great partnership among Yukon First Nations, the Government of Canada, the Yukon government, the N.W.T. gov-

ernment, Nunavut, the Canadian Tourism Commission, and many, many others who contributed to a successful display, a proud display, of who we are and all that we represent.

I think that also is a good investment, just as we are working — we're continuing to work with — our northern counterparts, our sister territories, on the continuation of a pan-north marketing initiative alongside the Government of Canada. It's another means of leveraging and harnessing the awareness that was generated during the Olympics and during the Canada Winter Games held here in Whitehorse. This was also presented as a strategic direction by the tourism industry here in the Yukon.

It's very good in terms of raising awareness. Tourism is ultimately — yes, it's about numbers, it's about revenues generated, money in the tills, but it's also about breaking down the myths about the north and what we don't have to offer, what we do have to offer; it's about raising awareness of the Yukon and the north as a destination.

That's why we partner with Nunavut and Northwest Territories. I commend our marketing officials for doing great work in collaboration with our two northern counterparts. I sincerely hope that they do win the particular award that we're up for at the TIAC annual summit. But again, win or lose, just the awareness generated from being nominated is an accolade.

In terms of raising awareness, I just referred to Great River Journey. At one time, when the product was first launched, I believe that the Canadian Tourism Commission also recognized Great River Journey as one of the top aboriginal tourism experiences and products to be delivered in this country. There was great promise. There was great risk, but there was great promise. They went to work in collaboration with many partners.

Through our applicant-driven programs that we offer, all of which continue to be subscribed to by hundreds of tourism entities and also continue to be highly supported by the tourism industry — as recently as Friday in the public domain, it is unfortunate the member opposite wasn't there to hear those words. But, again, thanks to the Department of Tourism and Culture working in collaboration with industry we have made available these funding mechanisms to initiatives such as these, not unlike what we provide to other businesses in the territory.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I take it that was the long answer that we got from the minister, and halfway through her answer she said, "I don't know what more I can add," but then added a lot more. What she did do was confirm on the floor here that her colleague was in error about what he said. I mean, the comments that the Minister of Economic Development made in this House were major, and he said things like the commitment with Great River Journey was conditional on receiving private-sector debt refinancing and additional investment, neither of which has materialized. That's what the Minister of Economic Development said.

And the Tourism minister said no, that monies were advanced in a good manner and that her colleague was in error. I do not know why her colleague, the Minister of Economic Development, would say that other than to draw attention to it. So we asked the question.

I have no doubt that the Department of Tourism and Culture is doing great work in doing some marketing. Some of it, though, in the past I have questioned. I had a constituent living in Calgary who sent me a postcard that was in the *Calgary Sun*. It didn't look all that appealing to come to the Yukon. If the minister would like, I can forward her that postcard. I'm hoping that we've done some massive improvements since then and show what Yukon has — its natural beauty and so on.

I'm going to leave the Great River Journey issue alone here. The minister added a lot to it, so I'll just leave it and move on. The minister did say a few things about additional people coming to the territory through the Swiss charter airline that will be doing business here.

I think this is of interest to a lot of people out there. It has the potential to grow, in other words. If we were to be asking and looking around — because this, I believe, just came forward in a very short period of time after Condor announced they would be cutting flights back from twice a week to once a week. A couple of questions on this: in regard to Condor cutting back, I would just like to know when the minister became aware of this change — and I'll leave it at that. Well, I know she's going to answer more, so I'll ask the next one too: what is the status of the Swiss Air charter here to the territory? I know she gave us some outline, but things have changed and improvements could have been announced that we haven't seen.

The Tourism department could be working on marketing at this time. I just want to know what the changes are and what the status of it is now. When did the minister become aware of the changes, of Condor making their cutbacks? Those are two questions: one is on Swiss Air and one is on Condor.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister asks, "What are the questions?" I asked about Condor cutting back their flights from twice per week to once per week. I just wanted to know when the minister became aware of that; also the status of the Swiss air charter, much of which the minister has already outlined. But what else is the department doing with regard to marketing and letting the world know that this is really taking place here?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I just want to go back to the member's reference to the postcard. I think that was actually a question that he raised about two years ago, so things have really advanced since then. Yes, I just want to say that we're responsible for approving or for going over all of our creative advertisements and tactics associated with marketing campaigns. We're always, of course, sharing that with the Senior Marketing Committee, as I have articulated many times, which provides strategic advice when it comes to departments marketing in terms of the evaluation and development of our campaigns.

We're always fine-tuning the advertisements or the campaign creativity. I certainly don't get involved in that. I'm not a marketing expert. That's just not what I do. I certainly hope that the member opposite isn't advocating that we start tinkering with the marketing department as well.

What we do though is, at the end of every campaign, we continue to evaluate those campaigns to ensure that we have a good return on investment. Quite clearly we're doing a pretty

good job because of what we have found over the years in terms of our numbers. As I mentioned, we're up about 12 per cent year-to-date, which is substantive. In fact, that's attributed to almost 28,000 more visitors entering the territory than a year ago — that's year-to-date.

Of course, we always look to deriving the results of those campaigns in collaboration with industry. We present an overview of all of our achievements once a year. I'm very pleased to report that, through all of our departments' core marketing programs and our key target markets, as well as through our cooperative marketing initiatives with partners like CTC, Alaska, travel trade partners and tour operators, we have been able to exceed all of our targets in terms of generating impressions through on-line marketing activities, implementing cooperative marketing initiatives with consumer-reach. Again, we've been able to exceed these targets significantly year-to-date. I referenced just the targets that we've been able to exceed in terms of meeting outcomes associated with hosting media trade-related fairs over the years. I just referenced that we were able to generate a media advertising equivalent value of over \$26 million last year alone.

Whether it was through articles written or through film, different media, et cetera, these are all very good results. Yukon at the Olympics, as I referenced — all very significant outcomes. I just mentioned 40 million impressions for paid advertising; 27 million impressions through earned media, with a value of over \$147 million; over 200,000 visitors to Canada's Northern House, a huge return; over 15,000 contest entries — and of course this doesn't even include the fair that the department hosted on Yukon Day, February 20, during the Olympic period.

So in terms of success I would say that the Yukon is doing very well and that is why we were able to come through with an additional half a million dollars toward the Destination: Yukon marketing campaign, which is dedicated to drive more individuals to come to the Yukon from key areas within this country, and why we have seen a big return on our investment, primarily from communities such as Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Greater Toronto and the Ottawa area.

Mr. Chair, the member opposite raises a really interesting topic and that is air access. I will just say that this government supports air access, and that is why we went to work and invested more than \$16 million toward the expansion of the Whitehorse International Airport. I know the members opposite aren't very supportive — aren't supportive, period — of that expenditure, because they voted against it, and they also spoke out against it. I just want to put on the public record that this government supports air access. We support our air carriers here in the Yukon — Air North — our national carriers and international carriers. In fact, the reason to move forward with the international expansion of the Whitehorse airport was to secure and continue to receive those direct international flights.

To this day, we are very pleased that airlines such as Condor continue to come to the Yukon. We have generated a very strong working relationship and partnership with the German travel trade overseas, representing wholesalers and tour operators, as well as working with Yukon's tourism industry —

Yukon tour operators. Thanks to that very strong rapport with the tourism sector and the Government of Yukon, as well as the Canadian Tourism Commission, we've been able to also see substantive increases in visitation from overseas. I think year-to-date, we are up, again, in terms of overseas visitation. In fact, I think I have that number somewhere here; it's up 16 percent, which is pretty substantive. I just referenced year-to-date air — arrivals and departures from that particular airport are up eight percent — up about 21 percent since 2005. It's attributed to an increase in not only international but national increases to our visitation to the Yukon — very substantive indeed.

Condor Airlines — I believe we were notified I think it was mid-July, if I'm not mistaken, immediately — I think it was within a few days, within a week at best. We were able to go to work with industry on how to address not only the challenges but the opportunities associated with the change. Even though the flights may be reduced, the capacity still remains the same as what we currently enjoy in terms of visitation experience year in and year out. Again, I continue to do my utmost to try and correct the record for the members opposite. We are very pleased that Condor continues to show confidence in the Yukon market with direct flights to the Yukon. It does open up opportunities for the Yukon. It also presents challenges. Instead of receiving passengers over a two-day span during the week, we will now be receiving those passengers all in one day.

That is in fact why Yukon's tourism sector has been working to meet those challenges, but the good news is that we will be ready. Yukon's tourism sector looks forward to next year. Likewise, we were also informed of Edelweiss Air. I think it was in early September. Edelweiss is looking, as I mentioned earlier, to initiate service from Zurich, Switzerland to the Yukon. They're looking at doing that from, I believe, the end of May until mid-September, if I'm not mistaken. So we look forward to also hearing more news about receiving those flights coming next year.

But, again, it does speak to the importance of the airport as a destination, but it also speaks to the capacity of the airport. Had that airport not been expanded, we would not be able to continue to receive the international flights from countries such as Europe; nor would we be able to continue to entertain double-drop flights going on to Alaska, such as what Edelweiss is looking to initiate — coming from Zurich over to Whitehorse and then over to Anchorage.

So I can't speak quite enough about the importance of that, other than we have been working very hard. I should mention that the Department of Tourism and Culture has been working very diligently over the last number of years to grow international traffic. I know it's really important to continue to diversify the tourism market and that's in fact why we continue to invest in meetings and conventions and incentive travel and continue to invest in international markets by raising awareness of the destination of choice.

I know members opposite don't really appreciate all that we have to say on this side of the Legislature, but all I can say is that we're very proud of the work that they have done to date, and we're very supportive of the partnership that we have

been able to generate with industry over the years here in the Yukon, as well as the overseas wholesalers and tour operators, when it comes to the German travel trade.

Likewise, with the possibility of entertaining new flights, courtesy of Edelweiss Air, there are new opportunities to be garnered there by looking to receive additional visitors from other countries. So we're very pleased with the progress to date and remain very committed to working with our partners to ensure a successful transition and to ensure that we continue to grow the market.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I'm going to ask the minister about working with her partners here in a second. She says she does her utmost to explain things on the floor of this House. It would have been nice if she had a meeting with the Minister of Economic Development and explained things about Great River Journey and Tourism's commitment to this project, because that minister said that the commitment was conditional on receiving private-sector debt refinancing and additional investment.

He also said neither of those materialized. That's what that minister said, and he said it for a reason. So I'm hoping the minister could sit down and meet with the Economic Development minister and perhaps provide him with some reading material. He may not read it, but provide it anyway — put it in front of his desk — because he's one that just doesn't like to do much reading when it comes to departments he's responsible for, but I think he should know what his own government is doing.

I'll leave it at that. I thank the minister for her answers on the status of the Swiss air charter that will be doing business here in the territory. In the supplementary budget, there's an additional \$96,000 for Destination: Yukon, and it takes the total from \$85,000 to \$181,000. This is a supplementary budget with, I would say, some renewed marketing of Destination: Yukon, one that perhaps the minister would have advertised several times with this type of increase.

Perhaps the minister could tell us exactly what the increase is for. What will it be doing? What will it go toward and was it very necessary to have that increase?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Chair, it's truly unfortunate that the Liberals continue to take this approach when it comes to tourism marketing and making funding available. I say that because it's almost like the members opposite continue to demonstrate their lack of understanding about how tourism marketing works. These are programs. I know the member opposite has already stated that the investments in Great River Journey were a waste of time and money and I'll just leave it at that. I am going to ensure, though, that his comments and the comments by the members opposite are referred to the Tourism Industry Association of the Yukon so that they are up to speed with what the Liberal position is when it comes to the Department of Tourism and Culture. So, I'll just leave it at that.

I'll stand on the public record that the Government of Yukon is very pleased to make available tourism marketing programs. The tourism cooperative marketing fund — again, I take it that if the Liberal Party were elected to form govern-

ment, there would be no longer the tourism cooperative marketing fund.

There would no longer be increases to tourism marketing dollars because we've even heard it from the Member for Porter Creek South how that was just nothing but a waste of time and money. A 12-percent increase, Mr. Chair — I'll just leave it for the tourism sector to decide where in fact the strength lies when it comes to delivering tourism and working with the tourism sector.

Now in terms of Destination: Yukon, we talk about additional dollars for tourism marketing. This is something we have gone to work on over the years. It has evolved significantly. I mentioned that back in the days of the Liberal regime, I think there was a whole \$200,000 for Destination: Yukon. Today, there is over \$800,000, plus we're working on more. We're working on national campaigns with our counterparts, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Back in the days of the Liberal regime, there was an initiative called gateway cities, really leveraging the traffic through the "gateway cities" of Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. You know, to their credit, that program actually worked very well and we have seen the program work very well. In fact, we have increased it significantly.

But it wasn't this government that dismantled the Department of Tourism and Culture. Just to be clear: not only did we reestablish that — recognizing the significance of tourism and culture to the economic and social well-being of the territory — but we also made significant enhancements. We have evolved initiatives such as those just referenced. We have gone to work with our territorial partners, Nunavut and N.W.T.

2007 was really the first time in Yukon's history that we actually went to work and submitted and showcased the pan-northern marketing campaign — Look up North campaign — complete with television advertisements, radio, print, web advertisements, and many more. That was an incredible success, and it really showed to the rest of the country that Canada's north stands neck and neck with every other jurisdiction as a destination of choice.

In fact, Canada's north stands apart from the rest of the country and the rest of the world in the products and the tourism experiences that we are able to deliver and provide to visitors.

From the Look Up North campaign, we then carried forward with a memorandum of understanding on a number of initiatives, working with the Canadian Tourism Commission in making available more affordable access to CTC programs. So by working together, we were able to subscribe to a greater number of programs and services delivered by CTC, whereas before we were having a difficult time because it was cost-prohibitive.

Then from there, we were able to also partner on a number of trade-related initiatives, whether it was at ITB, for example, in Berlin — every year the greatest travel trade show that there is — or by partnering and having Canada's north banner heightening awareness of the Yukon and its sister territories. From there, we were then able to work toward showcasing the north and all that we had to provide during the Winter Olympics in 2010, earlier this year.

At that time, we dedicated \$3 million toward the Olympic initiative on all fronts, whether it was tourism, culture, First Nation, working on traditional sport, business experiences and promoting the Yukon as a destination in which to live and raise your family. I think we succeeded on all fronts and, through all the collaborative efforts of all our partners, we heightened the awareness, and that has resulted in this pan-north marketing consortium initiative which has been nominated to be one of the three national campaigns of the year.

I would say that, all in all, we have done very well. I won't go over the statistics that evolved from the campaign during the Olympics, but we do know that the awareness that was raised — that was heightened — as a result of having Canada's Northern House and as a result of having the pan-north marketing initiatives — the use of social media was incredible.

I give great kudos to our lead marketing agency, Outside the Cube, for doing an outstanding job in helping deliver those results, in utilizing non-traditional uses of marketing tools, such as social media. Again, it was a wonderful initiative. Yukoners can all be very proud of what was accomplished during the Olympics.

Of course, the Destination: Yukon funding, which we refer to, is funding that will continue to leverage that awareness that was generated during the Olympics, generated all throughout these years, dating back to 2007 — the Look Up North campaign. Now, as I mentioned, we're working with Canada and our two sister territories to further that national marketing campaign, and working with the Canadian Tourism Commission, leveraging the reach the Canadian Tourism Commission campaign also made available through their spending of economic stimulus dollars — I think it was \$10 million — on the domestic front, and ensuring that we are able to dovetail those expenditures with that.

Destination: Yukon — the funding that the member opposite just referenced earlier — is through the community adjustment fund. It was an application to a fund that the Department of Tourism and Culture was successful in garnering dollars for — I believe it was just under \$500,000. Part of the dollars were used during 2009-10 and part of the dollars were also used during this fiscal year with the way we roll out our marketing campaigns to successfully harness traffic, whether it's through the winter or the summer season. These dollars continue to capitalize on the findings and the success of the national marketing campaign, as well as the photography and the video assets existing and being developed.

It capitalizes on new and enhanced website capabilities. We all know the very importance of the web capacity and how more and more visitors are going on-line for their tourism information on a destination.

It capitalizes on the ease of our gateway access through our gateway cities and our stay-at-home advantage. It also capitalizes on the existing awareness and in-market industry member participation. I made reference to Air North, for example. The plan capitalizes on strategic and targeted cooperative marketing promotions with Air North. It serves to also address losses that Yukon and the rest of the country have seen from the United States by attracting Canadians to visit Yukon,



whether it is long-haul, rubber-tire traffic, cruise group tour visitors or gateway air travellers, as I just referenced. The plan includes targeted on-line advertising and tactics, increasing the use of the Internet for travel planning and buying significant portions — or, I should say, leveraging resources.

All advertising links direct the consumer to our [www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com) website — the enhanced website, in which this government invested as a result of the strategic direction from our Senior Marketing Committee. By enabling those inquiries to the website, we are able to quickly and easily review the results while advancing potential visitors through the purchase cycle.

Of course, some of these dollars are also going toward mass media, including newspapers, magazines, experiential marketing, social media — I just made reference to that — sponsorships — out-of-home, billboard, broadcast, television, radio. Again, this capitalized on the image, the video and other assets developed by the national marketing committee as well as those images that were also developed during the Olympic period.

Investments have gone toward trade and consumer shows and other partnerships. We've also heard from industry that we need to focus more on consumer shows and that's exactly what this government has done. Earlier this year we had a great presence in both Vancouver and I think it was at the Home and Garden Show in Edmonton — two examples where we had not only trade presence, but we also had the Yukon government Department of Tourism and Culture representatives available. Of course, through this program we are also making funds available for media relations — again, engaging industry members and ensuring that our landscapes, our products, are profiled to reinforce all that we have to offer as a distinct destination of choice.

The campaign focuses on Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and other areas as well. I know that every week when the campaigns are fully underway that the department does track all of the results and very much nets those results to industry. As I mentioned earlier, the campaign includes promotion of both winter and summer tourism and is of great benefit to the Yukon. It is a great tool for raising awareness of the Yukon as a destination of choice and driving business to individual sites through the [www.travelyukon.com](http://www.travelyukon.com) website.

We have been very pleased to partner with Canada on this particular initiative. This initiative will only bode well for not only the Destination: Yukon funding, which this is really all about — however, it's coming from a separate pot of dollars. These dollars came forward prior to us increasing the funding by \$500,000 each year. Of course, this initiative will not only further grow awareness built from this campaign but also from future campaigns that we continue to work on with our partners.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I am thankful for the rules of this House sometimes, that the minister only has 20 minutes to answer a question. She is making full use of that — another long answer from the minister. I think she could have summed that up quite nicely. She did say a couple of things. I just wanted to bring that back to the minister's attention about a previous gov-

ernment's commitment that she liked with the gateway cities. Well, all of the Yukon Party voted against that. We probably can cite thousands and thousands of things that the Yukon Party voted against, that this Yukon Party now is praising — interesting.

Department people can see through that and they bring it to our attention. I don't know why the minister is going there. Is this going to get them additional votes in the next election? I don't know; I think not.

If the minister would like, we can definitely list a whole pile of those. The minister said she works with her partners in the Department of Tourism and Culture. We feel that this government has failed consistently with Yukoners in what the department intends to do in the Peel. Now, the minister is supposed to advocate for the tourism industry and in Question Period last spring, she said that, "Everything we do in the Department of Tourism and Culture is in collaboration with the tourism industry". She also said, "We will continue to work with our tourism partners closer than ever; that is, all of our tourism associations, industry partners and individual operators." We've asked questions in this House in regard to the Peel and the minister hasn't answered at all.

How is she advocating for the tourism interests in the Peel?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Mr. Chair, as members opposite full well know, there is a process underway. It is called "land use planning". That process is still underway. It is led by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the departments of Tourism and Culture and Economic Development. Other departments may contribute to that. I know that the Department of Tourism and Culture has been part of the consultation meetings that were held recently, just as we contribute through the YESAA process and many other processes when it comes to land allocations and land use in the territory.

We are, through the Government of Yukon, working in collaboration with First Nations — I believe it's the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Na Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, and the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation — on this particular land use plan and we are following the letter of chapter 11, land use planning, of the First Nation final agreements.

We are obligated to consult with the parties of the plan and the affected communities. That work has been taken and we are obligated to review and consider the input received by all the respective parties, by all respective Yukoners. In terms of the timelines and the milestones, they are set out in a letter of understanding that was signed earlier this year — I think it was in January, if I'm not mistaken. We look forward to the process as it unfolds. Yukon government continues to contribute to that, including the Department of Tourism and Culture. Until that time, though, I'm not going to preempt the outcome of the plan because that work is still a work in progress.

**Mr. Fairclough:** That's not what we're asking, but the minister said that she's working closer than ever with her partners in the tourism industry and individual operators. But on the question about whether she's advocating for the tourism interests in the Peel, the minister pushes it off to the Minister of

Energy, Mines and Resources again. We have seen the Minister of Environment do the same thing and the Minister of Tourism do the same thing, but she's quick to say that she'll work closer than ever with her partners in the tourism industry.

This is a pretty important issue, even for the minister; I am sure that if there were direction coming out of government in regard to the Peel and tourism interests, the minister would be bringing it out and bragging about it too. Has she met with the Tourism Industry Association? Has she met with the Wilderness Tourism Association of Yukon on interests in the Peel? Has she done that, or is she going to refer back to what her government is doing and not what the department and what she as a minister have been doing, whether or not she has been working with her partners?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Well, Mr. Chair, it's very unfortunate the members opposite have a lack of understanding as to how land use planning evolves. We are committed to the land use planning process as marked under chapter 11 of the First Nation final agreements. We have obligations to adhere to and work is underway. There will be a plan, I'm hoping, in the not-so-distant future. But until then, we are very much committed to working in collaboration with Yukon First Nations and other partners as set out in the letter of understanding. It includes the timelines and milestones. It includes the identified consultation to be undertaken.

I know the member opposite would very much like us to throw that process out. I'm sure that if the member opposite were in office, I guess what I'm hearing is, "Forget what Yukoners have to say. Forget what anyone really has to contribute. This is my way or the highway."

That is truly unfortunate because governance requires adhering to the process itself. I know the member opposite probably won't enjoy hearing that response. He hasn't enjoyed hearing that response over the years. I suppose we'll agree to disagree on this particular matter. I know the member opposite has made up his mind, and that's his prerogative. But there is still a significant level of work to be undertaken by not only the Government of Yukon but all parties privy to the final agreements. There is a process underway. We're committed to that process. There was a process associated with the north Yukon land use plan, for example — the first-ever land use plan to be undertaken by the Government of Yukon. In fact, we're very proud of that plan. I know that the Department of Tourism and Culture contributed to that process, as did Economic Development, Energy, Mines and Resources. As the lead agency, they contributed through their own respective expertise.

They contributed through their own respective expertise. Other departments contributed, I'm sure, through Executive Council Office. We recognize the importance of land use planning, and that's in fact why we have embarked upon a number of planning processes when it comes to protected areas in the territory and special management areas, for example. I know over the last eight years the government has been focusing on meeting our legal obligations for a whole host of special management areas — special management areas — as identified in chapter 10 of the Yukon final agreements.

We've been working to complete management plans for new parks and implementing existing management plans for established parks and protected areas. In fact, I believe the Minister of Environment was just in the member opposite's riding on the weekend, or on Friday, signing off, I think it was, the Nordenskiöld management plan.

That work was well underway for a number of years, and we are very pleased to be able to sign that off with Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. Old Crow Flats — the Lhutsaw wetland habitat protection area — very significant areas indeed. We know that there is also significant work underway when it comes to developing management plans for the wetlands in the Lewes Marsh, Tagish River, Stewart River, the Ddhaw Ghro, and so forth. There are other park planning processes underway for Kusawa, Agay Mene, Asi Keyi parks. They're also being developed, and the member opposite should know that.

I believe that we have been meeting our obligations in implementing these respective agreements and that is making a significant contribution to the territory in terms of promoting the Yukon as a travel destination, but also to Yukoners' well-being as well.

I know that that response probably won't be good enough for the member opposite, but I'll continue to deliver it.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Of course, Mr. Chair — what else does the minister have other than having a response like that? Why didn't she answer the question? She failed to do that. The Tourism Industry Association, the Wilderness Tourism Association, are concerned also that their views are not passed through the minister. The minister should know that. She says that we don't respect the processes of the final agreement. Of course we do. The minister is going to say otherwise over and over again, like she's trying to convince the general public that we don't. Well, you know, the general public doesn't believe this government any more. They have lost trust in this government and the minister, and it will show. The minister knows that. They've lost trust. They've lost faith. They've broken that trust with this government a long time ago.

She says we on this side of the House don't understand those processes in the final agreement. Well, I was part of the negotiating team for the First Nation final agreement, which put in place processes like this. So the minister is wrong. Every time she gets up and speaks about that, she will know that she is wrong. The department will know she is wrong; the general public knows she's wrong; and the department people across the government know she's wrong on that matter.

Whatever message and image this minister is trying to paint of us on this side of the House — the Liberal Party — the public will not believe. I know the minister doesn't want to hear those words spoken to her over and over again. Instead, she wants to lecture us on the process that some of us in the Liberal Party have been involved in creating through a final agreement.

I know that people up there in the departments across the government know that we've been involved with those and we would respect those processes.

It's about the minister's commitment to the Tourism Industry Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association to have their views heard.

What the minister doesn't like is the fact that she's silent on these matters and has let the Energy, Mines and Resources minister take over and lead this issue. Well, who's running the show, Mr. Chair? The Yukon public knows what they will be getting if they re-elect a Yukon Party government. They have lost faith in this government. The minister knows that, and they are trying whatever tactic they can to try to paint a different picture out there. Well, it's their choice to use that tack. I believe that they feel that that's one that will get them a long ways in the polls.

I asked the minister whether she met with the Tourism Industry Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association of the Yukon. What would the minister say? Yes, she did? Will she be talking to the general public when this is already out there in the media and the public that that information just isn't passed on through the minister?

Are we going to get anywhere with this minister at all on these issues? We're going to get a lecture for 20 minutes on her view of what the Liberals will do when we're in government — when we're in government, which is not very far away. Maybe the minister does not like the direction that's set out by the Premier. Maybe she doesn't like the direction of the caucus and how her voice is not heard when it comes to advancing the interest of the Tourism Industry Association, the Wilderness Tourism Association and others, operators and so on. Maybe she's not happy with that.

Yes, you know, the department does a lot of good things, but what I'm asking is really about the commitment of the minister and the Yukon Party government. The department knows that and it's what they do. To try to put out there that we in the Official Opposition don't respect those processes laid out in the final agreements is totally wrong.

The minister might not like to hear this or she could stick to their message box and try to paint this picture which we hear over and over from the members on the government side of the House. That's unfortunate.

I've asked the minister a number of questions. I know she was a bit on edge on some of them, particularly when it comes to her colleague's comments about the Great River Journey and how there were conditions met on it, none of which has materialized, in his view. I think those needed to be cleared up. I don't think the minister needed to go down the road that she was going. Perhaps we might see improvement when she gets up and answers or feels like she needs to provide clarity to something that she has said.

I asked her whether or not she has talked with the Tourism Industry Association and the Wilderness Tourism Association to advance their interests in regard to the Peel and what she said is that she's leaving it up to the Energy, Mines and Resources minister.

He takes all the environment issues forward on their behalf. I think they wanted to hear a voice through their minister. It's a political decision that had to be made — nothing to do

with the department; it was a political decision by the minister and the Yukon Party government.

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 22, *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We will now continue with general debate on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Is there any further general debate?

Seeing none, we will proceed line by line on Vote 54, Department of Tourism and Culture.

***On Operation and Maintenance Expenditures***

***On Corporate Services***

***Corporate Services in the amount of \$45,000 agreed to***

***On Cultural Services***

***Cultural Services in the amount of \$847,000 agreed to***

***On Tourism***

***Tourism in the amount of \$609,000 agreed to***

***Total Operation and Maintenance Expenditures in the amount of \$1,501,000 agreed to***

***On Capital Expenditures***

***On Corporate Services***

***On Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space***

***Office Furniture, Equipment, Systems and Space in the amount of \$76,000 agreed to***

***On Cultural Services***

***On Historic Sites***

***On Historic Sites Maintenance***

***Historic Sites Maintenance in the amount of \$22,000 agreed to***

***On Forty Mile***

***Forty Mile in the amount of \$597,000 agreed to***

***On Heritage Trails***

**Mr. Fairclough:** Can the minister just give us a breakdown on the Heritage Trails? Is that \$44,000 now — just to be clear.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I don't have a breakdown for the entire \$44,000. The member opposite may want to reflect upon my comments earlier this spring on this line.

However, the \$14,000 increase can be attributed to Klwane First Nation Heritage Trails.

***Heritage Trails in the amount of \$14,000 agreed to***

***On Museums***

***On Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre***

***Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre in the amount of \$86,000 agreed to***

***On Archives***

***On Archives Preservation Projects***

***Archives Preservation Projects in the amount of \$17,000 agreed to***

***On Tourism***

***On Visitor Information Centres***

***On Capital Maintenance and Upgrades***

*Capital Maintenance and Upgrades in the amount of \$79,000 agreed to*

*On Marketing North America*

*On Interactive Website*

*Interactive Website in the amount of \$117,000 agreed to*

*On Special Initiatives*

*On Scenic Drives Initiatives*

**Mr. Fairclough:** I asked the minister to give a breakdown of the \$135,000. She may have mentioned it in the briefing that this line item included digital photography. Is this the line that it's under, or did I just miss it by one? Can the minister provide some additional information on that?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** This is the Scenic Drives Initiative. This is actually an initiative that our government introduced — I think it was back in 2004 or 2005. This is really an initiative that has worked well over the years. It's to promote all of our scenic drives throughout the Yukon, which include, of course, the Klondike, the Alaska Highway, and the Dempster Highway — there are many others. There are several of them. Of course, much of this is to drive visitors — those who want to experience all our scenic beauty among our respective drives come to the Yukon. So much of it is driven to the [www.travel yukon.com](http://www.travel yukon.com) website. So this expenditure reflects a compilation of videos and photos for the web portion of the scenic drives project. There are also additional monies that were incorporated within the Olympic file and also national marketing campaign.

The member opposite should be able to appreciate we're always looking to update the videos and photos within our library, whether it is on the web or to use in footage for trade fairs or through print advertising and so forth. It's a very important component and I think it has worked very well in terms of driving people, rubber-tire traffic or so forth.

*Scenic Drives Initiative in the amount of \$135,000 agreed to*

*On Total of Other Capital Expenditures*

*Total of Other Capital Expenditures in the amount of nil cleared*

**Total Capital Expenditures in the amount of \$1,143,000 agreed to**

*On Recoveries*

*Recoveries cleared*

**Department of Tourism and Culture agreed to**

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will now proceed with Vote 51, Department of Community Services. Do members wish a brief recess?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 10 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order. The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 22, *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*. We'll now proceed with Vote 51, Department of Community Services.

## **Department of Community Services**

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** Members will see that Community Services' total capital expenditure is requested to increase by \$7.038 million, bringing our total capital budget for 2010-11 to \$84.043 million.

The department's total operation and maintenance expenditure is requested to increase by \$1.698 million, bringing our total O&M budget for 2010-11 to \$67.461 million.

Since the spring session only a short time ago, Community Services has accomplished several important initiatives, thanks to the hard work of our employees and the many volunteers throughout the territory. Here are a few of the highlights. We continue to focus on infrastructure improvements, as set out in the territory-wide Yukon infrastructure plan under the Building Canada fund.

In August, for example, I was on hand to officially open the Building Canada-funded community water supply and treatment plant at Marsh Lake. This new state-of-the-art facility will provide local residents with water that equals or exceeds the highest water quality standards. Ensuring that Yukoners have access to safe drinking water supplies remains a priority of this government.

Community Services has made strides this year to develop and supply residential, commercial, and industrial lots in Yukon communities. On September 21, I was joined by MLA Elaine Taylor and Mayor Bev Buckway to officially open the new Ingram subdivision. The lottery, which opened September 17, makes available a wide range of single-family, multi-family, duplex, and townhouse lots to meet diverse needs in the City of Whitehorse. Clearing, grubbing, and roadwork have also begun on the Whistle Bend subdivision. Phases 1 and 2 of this major development will bring more than 190 lots on-line, with a view to having the first lots available by 2012.

We have listened to Yukoners and are implementing the *Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan*. The Solid Waste Advisory Committee, whose role is to help set priorities for improving solid waste and recycling programs in Yukon, was appointed this summer. Recycling programs have been transferred to Community Services from the Department of Environment.

Transfer stations and recycling programs are operating in the Whitehorse periphery. Discussions to establish other regional landfill sites are ongoing. Our objective is to modernize solid-waste management in our territory. We continue to build capacity for local community governments that are open, accountable and fiscally responsible. We have begun the municipal fiscal framework review. The Our Towns, Our Future consultation will get underway this fall.

Community Services continues to work with Yukon communities to increase emergency preparedness and to respond to emergency events. Just this August, our Protective Services team successfully managed an integrated response to a serious wildland fire threat in the Junction 37 and Watson Lake areas. The fire marshal's office, Wildland Fire Management, and Emergency Measures Organization did exceptional work with the communities to ensure evacuation plans were in order. Lo-

cal responders were engaged and overall, they demonstrated sound planning and successful response.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Protective Services team and the countless number of community volunteers for continuing to show great professionalism and efforts in safeguarding our Yukon communities.

We are working with modernizing business legislation and services, and have brought forward five business-related bills in this legislative sitting. This initiative, called the business legislation reform project, began over two years ago when we introduced Yukon's new security act. At that time, we recognized that our business legislation was outdated and that we needed to make changes to ensure we had not fallen behind the rest of Canada. The goals of the business legislation reform project are to modernize Yukon's business-related legislation, adjust for modern business practices and simplify procedures to reduce the administrative burden for existing and new corporations. This is a large undertaking and a big accomplishment for our department.

Our vision is for vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities and we are working toward this end. Community Services continues to invest in Yukon communities and Yukon people. This supplementary budget reinforces our commitment. I noted a few of our significant accomplishments since the 2010 spring legislative session. I would like to take a moment to highlight a few more of our successes.

In May, the Employment Standards branch successfully launched their student and parent guide called *You need more than a job to start work*. This is a very informative publication that provides students with information they need to know when entering the workforce.

This summer, Community Services awarded Yukon sports and recreation groups more than \$935,000 in grants for the 2010-11 year under the Yukon Recreation Advisory Council fund. In addition, \$423,000 in Yukon sports for life and elite athlete funding for 2010-11 was also awarded. This summer the new regulations for licensed practical nurses enabled the professionals to perform the full range of nursing tasks and promote labour mobility with the rest of Canada.

In August, we delivered a \$306,000 state-of-the-art pumper truck to the Ross River volunteer fire department. On October 5, during Fire Prevention Week, I was on hand at the Marsh Lake volunteer fire department to celebrate our firefighters and thank them for the great job they do to safeguard Yukoners. I also handed over the keys to a new fire truck for the Marsh Lake volunteer fire department.

Community Services supported the participation of the 112-member Team Yukon in the 2010 Canada 55+ Games. The team, consisting of participants from eight Yukon communities, travelled to Brockville, Ontario in August and represented our territory in 13 events.

A hot, dry start to the 2010 fire season triggered a number of fires that challenged Wildland Fire Management personnel. Crews were successful in protecting Yukoners from wildfire without serious injury or the loss of homes or infrastructure. \$819,300 in FireSmart funding was also provided across

Yukon to reduce the threat of wildland fire in and around communities and all our neighbourhoods.

Carcross waterfront projects continued to move forward this summer. We opened the new community boat launch, with dignitaries from the Carcross-Tagish First Nation and the South Klondike Local Advisory Council.

Whitehorse waterfront projects are also underway. Not only as Minister of Community Services, but also as a lifetime Yukoner, it gives me great pleasure to witness the revitalization of Whitehorse's waterfront. Under the Canadian strategic infrastructure fund, the Yukon government, in partnership with Canada, the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, the City of Whitehorse and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Council, more than \$33 million is being invested in waterfront projects that will enhance business, tourism and cultural opportunities.

The Kwanlin Dun First Nation cultural centre and new Whitehorse Public Library, now under construction, is expected to be completed by 2012. The Whitehorse waterfront wharf project will also be under construction in 2011. Both of these important projects are sure to become main attractions for our capital city.

This summer Community Services signed a memorandum of understanding with rural EMS providers to address their needs, including honoraria and training.

Work is proceeding with the design for an integrated emergency response facility in Whitehorse to, among other things, enhance EMS response time across the city. In the interim, we launched the EMS mobile deployment initiative. A mobile unit is operating out of the Protective Services building at the top of the Two Mile Hill and, later this fall, will operate 24/7 from the Protective Services complex.

The new secure driver's licence and general identification cards are in the midst of implementation and will be available later this fall; I expect the roll-out to take place in the first week of November. That has already been done as of today. The new secure forms of government-issued identification will not only make it more convenient for Yukoners when travelling, but it will also guard against identity theft and prevent tampering of photos and date of birth.

I wish to again acknowledge and extend my thanks to the dedicated, hard-working people in the Department of Community Services, who turn ideas into well-planned projects and real accomplishments. Through partnerships in our communities, with municipal governments, local advisory councils and First Nation governments, we continue to work together to engage citizens and foster productive relationships. Yukon government is investing in Yukoners and their communities.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I thank the minister for his opening remarks. There's a lot in this department, as there is every time we debate it. I've noticed there are some decreases in the capital expenditures — some of them fairly large — and also some increases. I would like to ask the minister about them, but first of all I have a question in regard to the new driver's licence.

The minister said they would be available this fall, at the beginning of November. There was a lineup today and people have been getting them. My colleague from Porter Creek South got his this morning. They're a vast improvement over what we

have today. That piece of ID has been rejected across the country. People just couldn't believe we had such a poor piece of ID for a driver's licence. It's not accepted as a piece of ID.

We brought this issue up many times with the minister. I understand the government has been working on this for awhile.

Yukoners can get, like the minister said, a secure driver's licence, that would be really used as a piece of identification rather than how it was before. I think we could only have used it here in the territory. The minister, though, did get a lot of mileage out of announcing this. He had a lot of mileage announcing the new cards.

In October of last year, the minister put out a news release promising the new licences by this past summer. In March, he said the department was closer to issuing the new secure driver's licence. He said that Yukoners should have it in hand by the summer. Then in September he announced that the new licence would be available later this fall. In September again, the minister re-announced the new cards. In October, we were told that they would be here in November. Well, they are here as of today. People are lining up to get these new, secure drivers' licences and paying for them.

But what is on people's minds is the extensive delays getting to this. I was wondering why. So the question to the minister is: can he explain these delays? I know we're trying to get it right and we need to get it right. What was the major delay in bringing this forward?

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** When we first started replacing our driver's licence — that was about six or seven years ago — the first thing we did was try to get a partnership with our fellow province of B.C. and the northern states — Washington and Idaho and the other states — to get some kind of secure driver's licence that we could use at the border. Of course, that would be the ultimate secure driver's licence — so Homeland Security would accept our identification at the border for Canadian citizens to cross into the United States.

There was an ongoing discussion for probably two or three years on how that would be done. We never did come to an arrangement that was agreeable to Homeland Security, so at that time we made the decision to move forward with our own secure driver's licence in the territory. That triggered the work we've done to bring the licence to where it is today and certainly that all took time.

It is a complicated system; it is a secure driver's licence. We are working to get them into the communities so that individuals in the communities will have access to the same kind of service we get here in Whitehorse. Of course the licence won't be made in the communities. The licence will be made here in our secure location and it will be sent out by post for the individuals. They will get a temporary licence when they come in and apply and that temporary licence will cover until such a time as they have their renewed licence.

Today was the opening day in Whitehorse. We had 65 applications, or 65 drivers' licences issued. We had two identification cards. That's how it went today.

It's not the rush of people that I imagined but, over the next week or so, I imagine it will grow as people become more interested in it.

We have sent out the flyers to the communities to make sure people are aware when it will be available for them to get their new driver's licence. We have November 1 to 3, Whitehorse, new applications and renewals; November 2, Dawson City will roll out and Watson Lake. Those are two of our bigger centres. November 4, Whitehorse, all applicants; Teslin and Mayo will roll out; November 8 to 10, Haines Junction, Carcross, Carmacks and Faro. We're certainly working with those communities to make sure we do it in such a way as to make a smooth transition.

I would like to thank the department. It has been very stressful and tedious to get this to where it is today. This is a complicated system and there's a cost to it, too. As the member opposite commented, it was long overdue to have our licences replaced. This is not as secure a driver's licence as we would see if we were to go one or two steps further and really secure our driver's licences, if, in fact, down the road that would become an option for us. This certainly is an improvement over our old driver's licence and it's timely.

I remind members opposite that there was a lot of time spent on this licence. When we talked about this six or seven years ago, we talked about a more secure licence than we have here today. We certainly worked with Homeland Security, the Province of B.C., Washington — I think Idaho or Oregon was involved — and those other states that were very concerned that this would impact their trade between the two countries, per se — in looking at the west coast of North America. Homeland Security was less than positive about this.

Over a period of time, the territory and B.C. took a different look at it and said, well, we're going to have to go independent of the big picture and improve our driver's licence but, in turn, make sure our secure driver's licence can be stepped up — if in fact, down the road, Homeland Security or some other idea would come forward in how we could use this as a more secure form of identification.

It doesn't replace the passport as far as Homeland Security is concerned, so I don't want anybody to think that this would be acceptable at a border crossing per se; it isn't. This is the question we had when we first opened the dialogue with our partners on the west coast: how could we get something in the hands of our citizens that would be a form of identification that they could use for cross-border transactions — in other words, moving between the two countries.

That is not the case with this driver's licence. As we move forward in the years to come, I'm not quite sure if Homeland Security will soften up on this. They are very, very strict on what they expect of the travelling public today. Our conversations, through our partnership, were not received in any positive light. It consumed a lot of our time and that's why we're sitting here today, six years later, with the driver's licence today unfolding on November 1.

As far as why, we did have some dates put in place. I guess it's a prime example of why you shouldn't give a date, but we were confident in the department that we could do those dates.

Again, the department did a stellar job with the hard work they did in the department, but we had to order equipment, we had to do physical work on the equipment to make sure it was installed, we had to put equipment in all of our outlying areas, and that all took us time.

I am very happy to say that we have a secure driver's licence in the Yukon today and we will have the opportunity for all Yukoners in the next three or four weeks to have an opportunity to get their secure driver's licence in their communities. I remind everybody that the secure driver's licence will be produced here in the city and they will be sent out by post to the applicants in our outlying areas, so that's important for people to understand.

The dates are very public in our other communities on how this is going to unfold. The department itself has added individuals to the staff to make sure that we can do this as smoothly as we possibly can.

I remind the member opposite, we did have 65 drivers' licences issued today, and we had two identification cards issued, so that was the first day. I'm not sure if that's a template of what we're going to see as we move through. If it is, then it's a very manageable number from the department's point of view.

The department has organized a concept of how people would line up or how people would wait in line — the number system. Also, a bit of a tent has been put up so people could get out of the weather if in fact it became congested. Another thing the department has done is to extend the hours in Whitehorse, so we have an opportunity on Thursday and Friday to 7:00 p.m. and we're open Saturday morning for people too. That gives people an opportunity to go after work and certainly take advantage of Saturday morning. So the department has done that to make the process of acquiring a new driver's licence easier on the general public.

The cost of a new driver's licence — the department hasn't looked at any increases. There is going to be a charge for individuals who come in and acquire a driver's licence before the due date, and that will be pro-rated on the life of the actual driver's licence. So, if you were to look at the fee structure, they stay the same. It's \$50 for a new licence. A new licence is issued for five years. It's \$25 for an identification card, and there's a \$15 charge for replacing the existing licence. So it's very reasonable for individuals to participate in this transfer from the old to the new licences. I hope that has been of some assistance to the member opposite.

I have to remind him that this is going to be a form of a secure driver's licence. There are going to be more obligations for the applicant to bring more identification to make sure that it is a form of secure identification as a licence. So there's going to be an obligation to produce: (1) a photo and signature, such as a Canadian driver's licence, passport, Customs and Immigration Canada document or secure Indian status card; (2) a date of birth, such as your birth certificate, CIC documents or secure Indian status card; (3) current legal name, such as your birth certificate, marriage certificate or legal name change document.

If you're under 18, your parents must accompany you to sign the application and both of you must provide proof of identity and Yukon residency. Check out the website for details. We have this on the government website.

There is an opportunity for individuals, for proof of residency, to bring a Yukon Electrical bill or something that points to your residency. That would be acceptable. There is going to be a bit of flexibility in the outlying areas, in our communities, from the point of view that, if somebody in a community knows somebody for 50 years, it's not going to be too hard on the individual when it comes to identification. We will have to request some identification and hopefully these individuals will have all we need. If in fact there is an issue, there will have to be calls made on the ground for individuals who have problems acquiring all of this.

There will be more information today in the post; it will start with today's post. This is a wide-ranging communication that the government is doing, the department is doing to make sure that everybody is comfortable with what they have to bring in and also the hours of what we are going to do in the city which will be the biggest pressure on the department, to get those licences and ID cards out.

If we can get cooperation with Yukoners to bring the requested paperwork, it is going to make it a lot easier for the staff. There are many documents that prove Yukon residency: you have your Yukon health card — everybody has one of those; a utility bill from Yukon Electrical — it points to where you live and it points out your name; bank or property tax statement — that's an important form of identification and certainly identifies your home address; and, of course, your tax returns can be accepted. There are many forms of identification, and I want to repeat this: this driver's licence is going to be a bit more secure and will be accepted right across the nation.

The department does a lot of work — never mind that we're putting out a whole new driver's licence/ID card process. In 2009-10, Motor Vehicles issued over 34,000 vehicle registrations in the Yukon and had over 25,000 active operator licences. So it is a large number. The department has to do this on a daily basis, plus manage and oversee this new secure driver's licence. Again, it is going to be a secure driver's licence.

If you were to look at the Motor Vehicles mandate, it is to issue operator licences and to register motor vehicles under the *Motor Vehicles Act*. That's the mandate of the branch.

Through the Yukon Liquor Corporation and Yukon Housing Corporation, we provide motor vehicle services in 10 Yukon communities outside of Whitehorse. So, again, a very large part of the Yukon is covered by the department. In addition to these primary functions, the unit administers the graduated driver's licence — the GDL program — and provides written and road tests for all classes of operating licences. Behind the scenes, we collect and record Yukon motor vehicle accident data for Transport Canada through the National Coalition Database.

Motor Vehicles branch works closely with the Yukon medical community to monitor and assess drivers who may be

medically at risk, or who may have age-related conditions that affect their ability to drive.

I hope that that covered the points the member opposite brought forward.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I do have a few questions in regard to this, and the minister explained as best he could the delays over the years. A couple of things the minister said are of interest. I know this is a good-news story to many Yukoners, and people are looking for improvements to our driver's licence. Our old driver's licence is so bad that it's not accepted as a piece of ID when getting your new licence.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Mr. Fairclough:** No, it isn't. This is what it looks like.

I know the minister might be shocked about it, but we've gone through this process already. We have someone who has gone out and got a new driver's licence. This is what it looks like.

I know improvements could be made here. The minister read out a list of identification that is needed. This could create some delays. People should know that they could bring these pieces of ID or an electrical bill or a phone bill with their address on it, but the Yukon driver's licence is not used as a piece of ID. I know it's weird — you're making an application to get the new one, and it cannot be used.

A couple of things the minister said are that the communities — he has the dates that licences will be available in the communities, but he said two things: that people in rural Yukon could get these licences, but they can't because the equipment isn't there. Then the minister said the equipment will be in the communities.

I guess with regard to the equipment being there — with the opening day, it's hard to say how we can make improvements here, but I know the identification you have to bring is a bit of an issue to some people, since a lot of their billing is done on-line, and so on. Some people just don't even have an electrical bill they can bring forward.

On the issue of communities, when can they get a secure licence made in their community? Will the equipment be there? I heard the minister say that it will, but I don't know if there's a delay because the minister also said they couldn't get their licence but it had to be done through Whitehorse but all the work and information could be processed in the communities. That's how I understood that. Maybe the minister could just clarify that.

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** I'd like to clarify the thing about the driver's licence being part of the identification package. Your driver's licence with your signature on it can be part of the identification package.

It says right here that the best set of documents would be your birth certificate, your current Canadian driver's licence, Yukon health card, and a utility bill. It can be used as identification; it has your signature on it, it has your picture on it, it would be used for identification when you apply for your new licence. I hope they're not telling individuals that because that's not factual. As far as the outlying communities, there is an investment in the communities for the cameras, the digital signature and all that which will be done. Again, I remind the

House and Yukon: this is a form of secure driver's licence. There are certain obligations when you do that on how it is produced. In our communities, when you go in and apply, you will go through the process, you will have your picture taken, your digital signature done, and you will be issued a temporary driver's licence, and it will come to the central Motor Vehicles branch here in Whitehorse. Within 10 days you should have a driver's licence in your possession. The temporary driver's licence is date-sensitive; there's a date on it, so you only have two weeks or whatever that date is, but the driver's licence should be in your possession within that period of time.

I remind everybody, this is a secure driver's licence. So, when we do this in the Motor Vehicles branch in Whitehorse, there are certain things we do inside the branch — and I'm not quite sure that is as the minister — but as they process this, there are certain steps that are taken to make sure that this secure driver's licence is as secure as we can make it. Now, it's not a secure driver's licence that we can cross the border with. I was telling the member opposite of the many years of work we did with our other partners — which would have been from the Yukon's perspective, if we could have firmed up our secure driver's licence and used it as a border tool so we could go to Skagway, we could go to Haines and utilize our driver's licence as a form of identification that would get us across that border — that is not factually what we can do today. This secure driver's licence is modern enough that we can take steps and upgrade that licence as we move through and get other agreements with our neighbours or with the Americans to do just that. The best set of documents would be a birth certificate, a current Canadian driver's licence, a Yukon health card — everybody has a Yukon health card — and a utility bill.

Those kinds of documents are available in most households and, if they aren't, then we would like to hear from them and see what we can do locally to make sure everybody can participate in getting a new driver's licence.

The security features include a digital photo and a signature, a two-dimensional bar code, holograms and other features activated by ultraviolet light. In other words, you can see that this is a very secure form of identification. This will be very hard to duplicate. If you've had anything to do with our existing driver's licence, they weren't very hard to duplicate and have outworn their time.

When I first got a driver's licence in the Yukon, it was a piece of paper and that was it. There was no picture, no identification on it at all. It just told me I could drive.

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Lang:** It was a long time ago.

I guess the question is, why are these cards secure? The card has many security features that make it tamper-resistant and prevent forgery. The application process is changing so that your identity, age and residency status are verified.

This application process makes the identification secure and reliable and means that Yukon's new driver's licence and general identification cards meet national standards and will be widely accepted across North America as a driver's licence. That is another thing we had to take into consideration — that our driver's licence and how we did this had to be secure



enough — we couldn't just say it was secure and not have it secure and expect the Province of Ontario to accept our licences. It has to be a secure driver's licence that is acceptable in jurisdictions across North America, and this is certainly an improvement over the existing one we have today.

The objective of the department is to protect public safety through driver and vehicle programs, to provide community educational opportunities through public library programs and to provide bilingual services.

Anyway, it certainly is an improvement. I was going to go down this morning to get my licence, but I was spending 24 hours with Air Canada and nobody wants to pass that up.

I really feel that the department has done a stellar job on this. The members opposite can talk about timelines, but today we're looking at a new driver's licence and an ID licence for Yukoners. I've talked to individuals and they're very excited about this. The work that the department has done — the information packages that have been sent out to our communities and to the City of Whitehorse — the work they've done inside the actual agencies in the outlying areas — more manpower in the City of Whitehorse and the extra hours. If there's a lineup, how do you manage that? All of these things have been addressed by the department. As we move forward with this program, like anything else that we do in the territory, there are going to be questions and there will be a few bumps in the road. But I think the department has done a stellar job of minimizing those kinds of things — ironed out before we get out to the general public. The website, by the way, is a very popular Facebook site.

We are getting some bang for our buck as we go out and do this. I hope the department is documenting what we're doing on this so that when we do other things like this we can use it as a template, because they certainly did a great job of this. I can see it on the buildup to this because any time you have lineups, especially in the territory, you get questions and also you get concern because people in the territory aren't used to lining up for many things in their daily lives.

I'm looking forward to this next month — and probably, I would say, the six weeks and I certainly look forward to getting the driver's licence myself and moving on. I think that this is a great improvement. It's timely. I look forward to getting this behind us and getting new driver's licences in the possession of all Yukoners who are eligible. Of course, we have ID cards for individuals who are either too young or they don't have a driver's licence.

Another thing in the messaging of this — this is an ongoing assessment; we're assessing this on a daily basis, whether or not we're going to have to extend the hours. We have been talking about putting a special students' night on where we'll do something before Christmas and invite students to come out and address the issue. That will be another thing that the department's going to do to try to have the demand minimized. I think that having the students come out and get their new licences is a great idea and it's certainly another way that we can minimize the lineups in the Motor Vehicles branch.

Another thing that has been brought to my attention — we did talk about it — is putting some special hours on for univer-

sity kids who come home for Christmas. This will be another thing that we can do to make sure that our university kids can take advantage of this too. We understand they're here for a very short period of time and certainly we will be catering to them too as a group. Hopefully, we can get them through before Christmas. They can go back in the new year with a new identification card or driver's licence, whatever they choose to get.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I was just reading through the newspaper here and it does say that a spokesperson said that the current driver's licence and some other documents wouldn't suffice to prove residency, and that's why we brought it forward. The minister's own MLA identification card is no good to use there. I wanted to bring that forward because I think perhaps a lot of people might run into some of these problems. Maybe we could have a better information campaign to ensure that does not take place down the road.

Mr. Chair, the time being close to 5:30 p.m., I move that you report progress.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Fairclough that Committee of the Whole report progress.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Ms. Taylor that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

#### **Chair's report**

**Mr. Nordick:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 22, *Second Appropriation Act, 2010-11*, and directed me to report progress on it.

**Speaker:** You've heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Speaker:** I declare the report carried.

The time being 5:30 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:30 p.m.*