

**Northwest Territories Association of Communities' Annual General Meeting**

Mr. Speaker, the NWT Association of Communities, or NWTAC, represents all 33 of the NWT's incorporated communities. The NWTAC promotes the exchange of information among community governments, working together to reach collective goals for our communities across the NWT. Together they are an effective and passionate voice for community governments.

This year, due to the pandemic, the 2021 Annual General Meeting will be carried out virtually from February 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. If ever we had any question about the importance of building strong relationships with community governments, this past year has clearly demonstrated how inter-reliant we are on each other. There has been a tremendous effort to work collaboratively and creatively to protect our residents, and their communities, against the effects of the COVID Pandemic. These partnerships we have built are stronger because of the development of these relationships with our community governments. This year's AGM is another opportunity to further continuing to strengthen those relationships.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time of complex changes in the world, especially with the effects of the COVID pandemic that we are all experiencing. This meeting remains an excellent conduit for networking, information-sharing and collaboration to achieve our mutual goals and provides community governments with a unified platform to focus on common issues as well as to provide feedback on Government of the Northwest Territories programs and services. I want to congratulate the NWTAC on their ability to continue with the AGM, ensuring that information continues to be shared and the work toward common goals continues to be a priority, while doing so in a manner that keeps everyone safe.

The virtual agenda for this years NWTAC AGM is set to include many interactive sessions, as well as conducting their organization's core business, such as approval of financial statements and budget, as well as the election of new directors. In addition, members will have an opportunity to approve their 2021 resolutions as well as reaffirming resolutions from previous years.

One of the highlights of every NWTAC AGM is the ever-popular open discussions with the Premier and Cabinet. I know I am looking forward to these discussions and I am sure my colleagues are as well. It is an excellent opportunity to hear directly from the leadership of our communities on their priorities and their concerns. This better enables this government to make informed decisions that reflect on-the-ground realities in our communities.

On behalf of the Cabinet, I wish the NWT Association of Communities well with their upcoming AGM. I look forward to being part of the discussions and hearing from communities to better understand their priorities and concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.