

Progress Statement – Education and Training

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work that the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs has done as part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' commitment to education, training and youth development. Today, I would like to provide an update on the progress the Department is making in the area of governance capacity building and support for community governments in the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of attending or delivering training in the Northwest Territories has always been high and can be challenging for community governments to work into their budgets, and for staff to accommodate in their busy work schedules. The Municipal and Community Affairs' School of Community Government has taken steps to improve accessibility and reduce the cost of training in the North through the use of digital and online technology. This will allow community government staff and elected officials to receive training online, or via videoconference without leaving their home community.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016, Municipal and Community Affairs signed a \$248 thousand dollar funding agreement with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to support the development and implementation of an online platform for the delivery of self-directed and self-paced governance workshops to both municipal government elected officials and aboriginal community governments with municipal-like responsibilities.

This new online platform has many potential applications. The Department has recently partnered with the Local Government Administrators of the Northwest Territories to

develop the Local Government Administrators Essentials program in an online format. By increasing the accessibility of this type of programming, Municipal and Community Affairs aims to support enhanced capacity among Senior Administrative Officers in communities across the North as well as allowing the program to be delivered more often to accommodate staff turnover.

Mr. Speaker, the Department has also been busy working to modify several existing courses so they can be delivered through the School's new online platform, including courses related to bylaw development and recreation planning. Several of these courses are currently in a pilot delivery phase, designed to ensure that the new approach to delivery is effective and provides results.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that Municipal and Community Affairs has also recently completed the development of a state-of-the-art training room, which provides all regional offices, and soon all community governments in the Northwest Territories, with the ability to participate in distance training. This new online training capacity has the potential to save community governments money, through alleviating travel costs. It also provides the opportunity for more frequent delivery of short course offerings, or webinars, on specific issues or concerns that are common across communities. Eventually, the School of Community Government will have the ability to deliver training to all communities in the Northwest Territories via this new system. The first course to be delivered in this manner will be the Municipal Contracts course next month, with 16 people from seven communities participating in a combination of face-to-face and teleconference delivery approaches.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made a commitment in its mandate to provide capacity development to community governments across the Northwest Territories. The new platform, technologies and facilities developed by Municipal and Community Affairs, as well as the work to adapt and update existing curricula, underscore the Department's commitment to ensuring that community government staff and officials throughout the Northwest Territories have access to appropriate, relevant and high quality training as they need it. This will ultimately allow Municipal and Community Affairs to support improvements for community governments and subsequently, the quality of life of the residents in those communities.

I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues will join me at the launch of our Distance Training Facility tomorrow, Thursday March 2nd at 11:30 on the 5th floor of the Northwestel Building to witness this progress first-hand.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.