

**THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE COCHRANE
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND EMPLOYMENT**

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Celebrating 40 Years and National Recognition

Mr. Speaker, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre has acted as the territory's museum for the past 40 years. The institution cares for a large collection of objects representing the peoples, cultures, history and land of the Northwest Territories on behalf of all the people who live here.

Yet the Heritage Centre is more than a museum. For 40 years, it has produced exhibitions; housed the NWT Archives; undertaken archaeological expeditions and place names research and administration; and provided technical, logistic and financial support to individuals and organizations involved in cultural activities and the arts.

The Heritage Centre works with communities and groups across the territory to care for, research and celebrate our rich cultures, history and languages. The Centre supports community members to tell their own stories, highlighting northern culture and heritage to more than 60,000 visitors each year with innovative projects that have been celebrated on the national stage.

Mr. Speaker, in April, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre received a Canadian Museums Association Award for Outstanding Achievement in Exhibition for one such project, *We Took Care of Them: Special Constables in the NWT*.

This nationally significant exhibit honours Indigenous northerners who worked as Special Constables and as seamstresses, guides and interpreters. By sharing the skills needed to live and work in the north, local people often made the difference between life and death to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The *We Took Care of Them* website is the first online museum exhibit to be available in all 11 NWT official languages. The Heritage Centre staff also created six travelling exhibits that members of the RCMP are circulating to communities across the north.

Developing these outreach products along with the main museum exhibit ensures that northerners' stories are made available beyond the walls of the physical building, to people across the territory and around the world.

The *We Took Care of Them* project was developed collaboratively by the Government of the NWT, the RCMP and the people of the NWT who contributed their stories. I would like to extend my congratulations to everyone involved.

Mr. Speaker, while it is heartening to look back on and celebrate the achievements of the past 40 years, it is also important to build on these successes, explore new possibilities and look to the future.

I am proud to say that the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre has developed a national reputation for excellence in exhibits, conservation, archival management and archaeological research. To continue this work and ensure that our building accommodates current and future programming, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is undertaking a study of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre to address building deficiencies and explore a mid-life systems retrofit.

Mr. Speaker, on June 15th, we will host a birthday party to celebrate 40 years of operation for the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. This free public event will feature culture and heritage-related activities including storytelling, talks by museum and community experts, traditional games and music to highlight and celebrate the work of the Heritage Centre. I encourage everyone to come out to the party, have some fun and learn more about how the activities and work that occur in this building serve and represent all of the people of the Northwest Territories.

Masi, Mr. Speaker.