

Summer Highway Construction Season

Mr. Speaker, our government is following through on its mandate commitment to strengthen connections with our public and private sector partners to secure funding for strategic infrastructure projects across the Northwest Territories.

Investments in our public highway systems helps to connect communities, improve public safety, ensure the efficient delivery of essential goods and services, support tourism, increase our resiliency to climate change, reduce the cost of living, and create training and employment opportunities. Investments also help attract interest from industry in the exploration and development of natural resources and pave the way for further economic opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, residents and visitors can expect another busy highway construction season this summer. In fact, a total of 75 million dollars in improvements will be made to eight highways, two bridges, and five access roads.

In the South Slave Region, a number of improvements are planned for Highway No.1. A section of the highway will be reconstructed, which includes crushing and stockpiling material, hauling gravel, widening the highway embankment, replacing culverts, and clearing bushes and trees from the right of way. This will be a multi-year project, with work expected to be completed by July 2020.

Between Hay River and Fort Smith, two sections of Highway No. 5 will be chipsealed, which will mean a much smoother drive for motorists.

On Highway No. 6, also known as the Fort Resolution Highway, chipsealing will be carried out in two sections.

Mr. Speaker, in the North Slave Region, improvements will also be carried out on 12 kilometres of Highway No. 3. This project will include leveling and compacting the existing road surface, crushing and stockpiling material, hauling gravel, and replacing culverts. A section of the highway will also be chipsealed. Work is expected to carry over into next year and be completed by August 2020.

Further north on Highway No. 4, also known as the Ingraham Trail, roughly four kilometres will be reconstructed. We will also be crushing and stockpiling material, hauling gravel, widening the highway embankment, and replacing culverts.

In the Dehcho Region, reconstruction work will take place this summer and fall on Highway No. 7, also known as the Liard Highway. This project is currently in the permitting phase but we expect a section of the highway will be reconstructed. Work is expected to include crushing and stockpiling material, gravel hauling, embankment widening, and culvert replacements.

In the Beaufort Delta region, some construction work will be taking place on Highway No. 8, better known as the Dempster Highway. Reconstruction will take place along two kilometres of the highway. Two culverts will also be replaced. And on Highway No. 10, the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway, one culvert will be replaced.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to highway improvements, we will also be undertaking improvements to five access roads, which ensure we can connect communities to our main highway system. Overall we will be improving approximately 26 kilometres of access roads.

In the Beaufort Delta, a section of the Inuvik Airport Access Road and Hospital Hill Drive will be reconstructed. In the South Slave, the Hay River Reserve Access Road will be repaired and chipsealed. In the North Slave, the Rae Access Road will be upgraded. In the Dehcho Region, a section of the Jean Marie River access road will be resurfaced.

Mr. Speaker, we have two major bridge projects scheduled for this year. The Hay River to Pine Point Bridge is currently undergoing rehabilitation. This project is expected to conclude in October 2019 and will bring a number of benefits for commercial drivers, such as no overhead restrictions. On the Mackenzie Valley Winter road, the approaches to Blackwater Bridge will be improved, improving the effectiveness of the winter road.

As the construction season begins, I would like to thank the dedicated workers who put in long hours to maintain and improve our highway system. Your work is essential to the North. I would also like to remind drivers to watch for highway crews and slowdown in all construction zones, and obey the signs and flag persons along the highway.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to work closely with all of our public and private sector partners so we can continue to build a transportation network that meets the current needs of our citizens and the needs of generations to come.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.