

Completion of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to advise the House that the Government of the Northwest Territories has fulfilled its mandate commitment to complete the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link – a project that will help modernize the economy and enable growth in all economic sectors.

The Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link is an important part of the 18th Legislative Assembly's commitment to strategic investment, diversification and modernization towards a high-tech future.

The completion of the nearly 1200 kilometre Fibre Link brings affordable, high-speed, telecommunications to six communities along the Mackenzie Valley, including Inuvik. An additional five remote communities will also have the ability to benefit in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Mackenzie Fibre Link enables our government to offer improved delivery of social services, supporting health care, education and social support programs and facilitates economic development and diversification.

Our government is working to spark economic growth across all sectors, and to foster an environment in which companies and individuals feel confident investing in Northern opportunities and jobs.

When residents drive in from the Inuvik Airport now, they may notice the cluster of remote satellite stations poking through the trees. As a result of the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link, Inuvik is now positioned to be one of the leading sites for tracking and receiving real-time

data from polar-orbiting satellites used for scientific mapping, weather surveillance, and more.

The Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link will further enable growth of the remote-sensing and commercial satellite industry in Inuvik. Since construction commenced, we have experienced considerable interest, nationally and internationally, in the growth of the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility. The potential impact of an expanded satellite ground station in Inuvik on the Aurora Research Centre is significant and could make this facility one of the “the places to be” to conduct space-based Arctic research.

Mr. Speaker, the potential of growing Inuvik through national and international customers is very positive for our territory’s future. Current federal licensing processes for satellite telecommunications are out-dated, Mr. Speaker, but our government will work with Canada to encourage them to modernize their regulatory regime and better support these opportunities for Inuvik.

I would like to congratulate all the parties involved in this project and thank the sustained efforts and support from our residents, businesses and community leadership throughout the Northwest Territories to ensure the successful completion of this project.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.