

Summer Highway Rehabilitation

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is following through on its mandate commitment to strengthen connections with public and private sector partners and work to secure funding to advance planning and construction of transportation projects and invest in strategic transportation infrastructure across the Northwest Territories. These partnerships have resulted in investments to improve the quality of the NWT highway system, which increases public safety and ensures efficient delivery of essential goods and services for communities.

This summer, the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Department of Infrastructure will oversee the delivery of a total of \$46.4 million in rehabilitation of transportation related projects across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide a brief summary of these ongoing improvements, starting with Highway No. 1, a section of which will undergo embankment rehabilitation and drainage improvements. In addition, 76 kilometres of this highway will be chipsealed including the Fort Simpson and Kakisa Access Roads.

Sections of Highway No. 3 will also receive rehabilitation and 84 kilometres of that highway will receive chipseal resurfacing. Additionally, a number of culverts are being replaced in an effort to address drainage issues. The Deh Cho Bridge embankment remediation work will also be completed by the fall.

Highway No. 4, better known as the Ingraham Trail, will see embankment reconstruction and culvert installations, as well as additional improvements to drainage and guardrail installations where appropriate over the summer.

Fort Resolution Highway No. 6 will undergo similar embankment reconstruction and drainage improvements, in addition to chipseal resurfacing at various kilometers, which will result in a fully chipsealed surface for this highway by fall 2018. Highway No. 7 will undergo resurfacing, repairs and drainage improvements to mitigate impacts on the highway's water-susceptible soil.

Work will also be done on the Dempster Highway over the summer and will include gravel hauling, crushing and stockpiling, and the replacement of steel pipe culverts. In addition, Inuvik Airport Access Road will receive highway rehabilitation work.

Mr. Speaker, the Department is also making ongoing improvements to our inventory of bridges across the highway system. Work this summer includes the rehabilitation of two truss bridges on Highway No. 5 that have reached or surpassed their 50-year mark. Rehabilitation of the Buffalo River Bridge is scheduled for completion this year, while work on the Hay River to Pine Point Bridge will be tendered this summer in time for construction work to commence in October, 2018.

Pre-engineering work in support of moving the existing Oscar Creek Bridge located along the Mackenzie Valley Winter Road onto the future alignment of the all-weather Mackenzie Valley Highway will also take place. This work will also include geotechnical investigations, and hydrotechnical, wildlife, and fish studies. Construction will commence in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

In addition to rehabilitation work on our major highways, construction will continue on the Canyon Creek All Season Road south of Norman Wells, and is expected to be complete by fall 2018.

Mr. Speaker, highway construction and rehabilitation of Northwest Territories highways are made possible through federal funding provided through the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component of the New Building Canada Plan for the Government of the Northwest Territories' first two bundles of highway capacity improvement projects.

As announced in Behchoko in January, the federal government has approved a third bundle of projects, which will build upon the improvements of bundles 1 and 2 and

support job creation and economic growth across the territory. This bundle will provide \$95.5 million for additional improvements to the NWT highway system starting in 2019-2020. That includes 75 percent of costs from the federal government with the GNWT contributing the remaining 25 percent. Mr. Speaker, all of this work is providing important economic and employment opportunities for local and northern businesses.

Mr. Speaker, highway rehabilitation safeguards these important infrastructure assets, which provide critical connections for people and communities. This government is committed to continuing to enhance the quality of our highways and to increase our resiliency to the unique challenges of our climate so that our residents and visitors of the Northwest Territories feel secure in the reliability of the transportation system. As always, I am pleased to see these improvements continue and look forward to the progress of work we will see throughout the territory this summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.