



Northern Alberta Development Council



2019-20
Annual Report

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October 2020

ISBN 978-1-4601-4849-5

ISSN 2368-4178

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MESSAGE FROM THE NADC CHAIR



On behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC), I am pleased to present the 2019–20 Annual Report highlighting Council's activities and accomplishments from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020.

I continue to be impressed by the diversity of work undertaken by the NADC to support the north. In the upcoming fiscal year, Council will focus on northern promotion and investments in infrastructure needed to grow our region.

Recognizing the importance of raising awareness of the innovations happening across the northern region, NADC undertook the Northern Trailblazers project identifying organizations, initiatives and best practices across sectors.

The need to grow and develop talent in the information technology sector was the driving force behind the Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN) research to examine [Information Technology Related Skills and Training Needs in Northern Alberta](#). This report identifies northern Alberta's evolving information technology (IT) sector and related skills and training required to strengthen post-secondary institutions' ability to prepare for future needs. NADC will continue to work with post-secondary partners and students to develop a skilled and educated local workforce.

To further understand employment trends in the region, the 2020 Northern Workforce Survey was conducted to identify the in-demand and hard-to-recruit-to occupations in the NADC region, and to learn about recruitment and retention challenges facing employers. The survey results will be used to support allocation of funding through NADC's bursary programs.

Engagement is, and will continue to be, a vital component of NADC's role as an advisory agency to government. NADC supported several regional initiatives, bringing leaders, expert speakers and government partners together to address issues facing multiple northern communities. NADC has helped provide the foundational governance supports for Water North Coalition and Northern Alberta Elected Leaders and continues to engage with these groups to understand local issues and communicate the needs of the north to the Government of Alberta.

I look forward to working with our members, government and local leaders to develop strategies that will build a strong Alberta through a strong north.

Tracy Allard, MLA

Chair, NADC

MEET THE COUNCIL



Tracy Allard
Chair, MLA for
Grande Prairie



Ken Noskey
Vice Chair
Peavine



Cody Beirsto
Grande Prairie



Karla Buffalo
Fort McMurray



Peter Cardinal
Kikino



Jeannette Danks
Peace River



Paula Evans
Athabasca



Jason Schulz
Fort McMurray

Name	Location	Appointment Date	Appointment Expiration Date
Tracy Allard, MLA (Chair)	Grande Prairie	November 5, 2019	November 4, 2021
Ken Noskey (Vice Chair from October 2017)	Peavine	March 8, 2012	March 31, 2021
Cody Beirsto	Grande Prairie	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Karla Buffalo	Fort McMurray	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2019
Peter Cardinal	Kikino	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Jeannette Danks	Peace River	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2020
Paula Evans	Athabasca	September 14, 2017	September 13, 2019
Jason Schulz	Fort McMurray	May 7, 2014	September 13, 2020

2019-20 YEAR AT A GLANCE

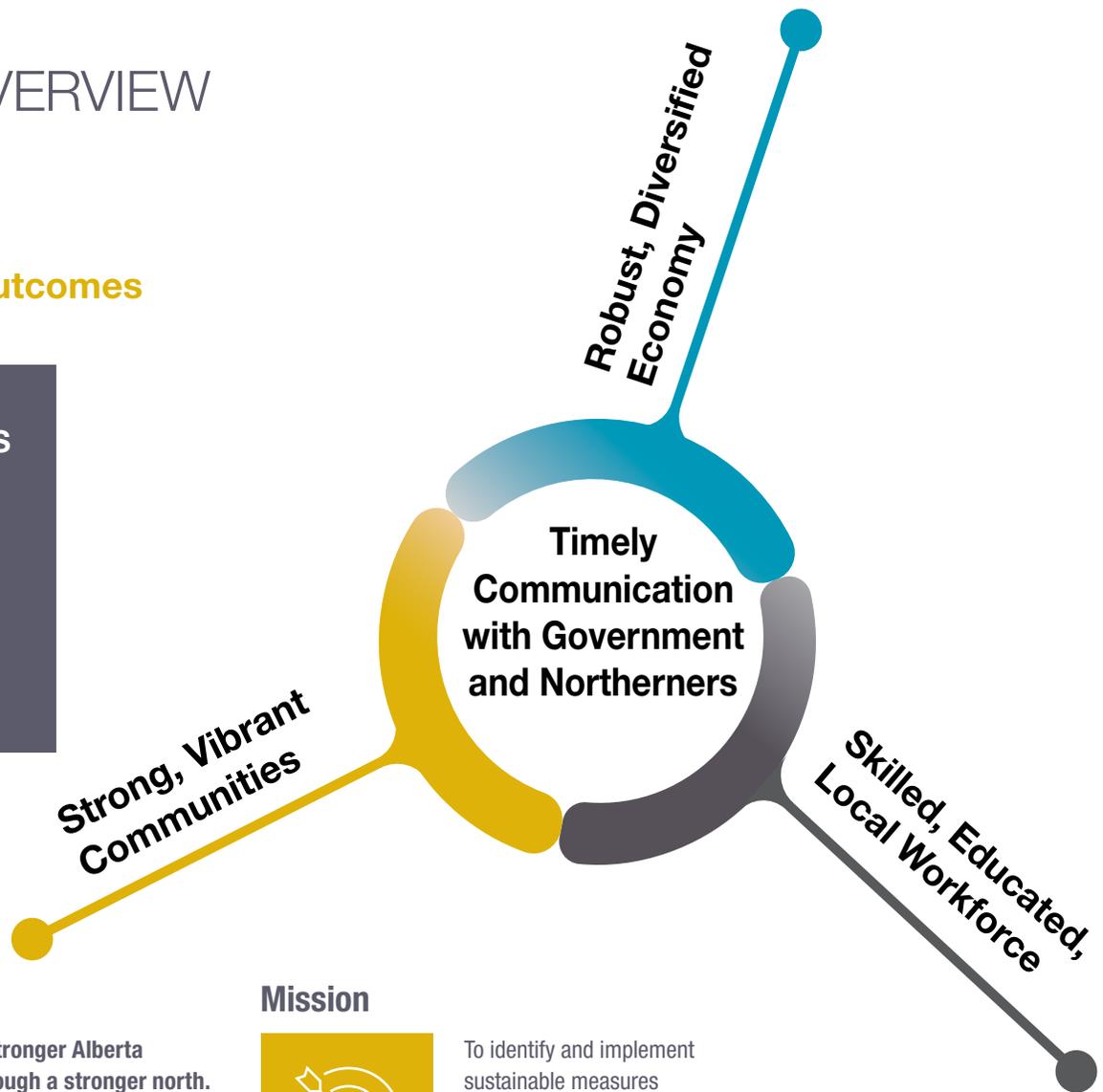


NADC OVERVIEW

Goals and Outcomes

CORE APPROACHES

1. Engage
2. Research
3. Partner
4. Promote
5. Advise



Vision



A stronger Alberta through a stronger north.

Mission



To identify and implement sustainable measures that will **advance northern development, and to advise government** on opportunities and issues for the benefit of Albertans.

Key Strategies



Build partnerships among key stakeholders to establish priorities and pursue northern opportunities.



Foster economic strength and diversity by supporting development in transportation, value-added agriculture, tourism, health, and other areas.



Support initiatives to **increase northern skill levels**, in partnership with northern communities, business, industry, learning providers and students.



Increase awareness about northern Alberta's employment and lifestyle opportunities.

THE NADC REGION

Population



+1.17%
population growth
from 2018 to 2019.
Projected annual
growth rate of 1.1%
from 2019-2046

The population of northern Alberta (defined by the NADC region boundary) grew from 367,486 in 2018 to 371,777 in 2019. At the projected 1.1 per cent average annual growth rate, it will place the NADC region population at 500,109 by 2046. Alberta's provincial average annual growth rate is projected to be 1.4 per cent during the same period.^{5&6}

DID YOU KNOW

Between two densely populated areas in the north, Grande Prairie (Census Division 19) is projected to see an average annual 1.52 per cent population growth while Wood Buffalo (Census Division 16) is projected to see 0.97 per cent growth between 2019 and 2046. Grande Prairie's growth will be third highest, behind only Calgary and Edmonton (Census Divisions 6 and 11) in the province for the same period.⁵

¹ 2016 Census GeoSuite <https://geosuite.statcan.gc.ca/geosuite/en/index>

² Alberta Municipal Affairs <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-affairs.aspx>

³ Indigenous Services Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html>

⁴ Alberta Indigenous Relations <https://www.alberta.ca/indigenous-relations.aspx>

⁵ Population projections: Alberta and Census Divisions, 2020-2046. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/90a09f08-c52c-43bd-b48a-fda5187273b9/resource/bb7c6ef6-ade5-4def-ae55-ef1fd5d4e563/download/2020-2046-alberta-population-projections.pdf>

⁶ Data source: Alberta Regional Dashboard. Retrieved, 2020 from <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/#/>

Resources

The location quotients (LQ)⁷ of the NADC region for the following industries are higher, when compared to both the province of Alberta and Canada as a whole.

Industries	NADC LQ (relative to Alberta)	NADC LQ (relative to Canada)
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2.63	10.76
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2.37	2.91
Public administration	1.50	1.24
Real estate, rental and leasing	1.06	1.00



Oil production in the NADC region went **up by 4 per cent** in 2018 to 100, 136,102.6 m³.⁶



The **natural gas** production of the NADC region went **up by 7 per cent** in 2018 to 58,907,169,300 m³.⁶



The value of major projects in the NADC region went **down by 7 per cent** in 2019 to \$60,387,242,870.⁶

Resources

- Oil sands lie beneath 142,200 square km of land in Athabasca, Cold Lake, and Peace River. Alberta's oil sands are the third largest oil reserves in the world (165.4 billion bbl), after Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.⁸
- In 2019-20, 18.1 per cent of Alberta's farms were located in the NADC region (declined from 19.3% in 2017-18).⁹
- The largest Forest Management Agreement (FMA) is 58,120 square km located in northeastern Alberta.¹⁰

⁶ Data source: Alberta Regional Dashboard. Retrieved, 2020 from <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/#/>

⁷ Location quotients (LQ) are ratios that allow an area's distribution of employment by industry, ownership, and size class to be compared to a reference area's distribution. Canada or Alberta is used as the reference area for the LQs here. The reference industry is always the all-industry, all-ownerships total for the local area, and for the nation. If an LQ is equal to 1, then the industry has the same share of its area employment as it does in the nation. An LQ greater than 1 indicates an industry with a greater share of the local area employment than is the case nationwide. LQs are calculated by first dividing local industry employment by the all-industry, all-ownerships total of local employment. Second, national industry employment is divided by the all industry, all ownerships total for the nation. Finally, the local ratio is divided by the national ratio. All decimal values of LQ are presented in round figures. Data source: Alberta Regional Dashboard. Retrieved, 2020 from <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/#/>

⁸ Alberta Energy <https://www.alberta.ca/oil-sands-facts-and-statistics.aspx>

⁹ Alberta Agriculture Statistics Yearbook, 2017 (excludes farms in areas within Smoky Lake that is part of the NADC area) <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/da3573a5-465c-4dc1-8793-36e9dc02b775/resource/13883472-6b75-4e9f-8ee4-1a5ffa12803a/download/agriculture-statistics-yearbook-2017.pdf>

¹⁰ Alberta Agriculture and Forestry <https://www.alberta.ca/forest-management-agreements.aspx>

COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND NORTHERNERS

Meeting with Ministers to advise on the north:

NADC members met with Tanya Fir, Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism in August to discuss northern challenges and Council priorities with the pending appointment of a new Chair.

A new Chair was appointed in fall 2019, with a mandate to identify and support red tape reduction and investment opportunities in the north, and work with stakeholders to

focus the attention of the Council to that of being an advisory agency to government on the north's needs.

NADC members met again with Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, as well as Travis Toews, Minister of Treasury Board and Finance in February 2020, to discuss strategic priorities, including, northern infrastructure, corridors and the importance of having a skilled workforce to support development initiatives. NADC members provided updates on LEARN and the NADC

Bursary program, two key initiatives supporting workforce development in northern Alberta. Additionally, updates on several key regional initiatives advancing northern cooperation and collaboration, Water North Coalition and Northern Alberta Elected Leaders, were discussed.

Members discussed plans for a Northern Strategy to advance key sectors and identify infrastructure needs for the region, in particular the importance of broadband and transportation infrastructure.



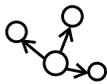
NADC Communications

Social Media Highlights 2019-20

Facebook



Posts
76



Reach
15,847



Impressions
18,329



Engaged Users
943



Likes
457

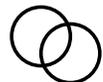
Twitter



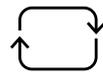
Posts
87



Impressions
72,772



Engagements
421



Retweets
49



Likes
82



Newsletters:

NADC newsletters were released in June and December 2019 and were sent to **more than 1,000 northern partners and stakeholders**. Additional updates on the new NADC Chair, Northern Trailblazers and Workforce Survey were shared.



NADC Website:

The NADC website had **more than 71K views** during 2019-20 fiscal year. Top page views included the NADC and **bursary** home pages, followed by **NADC initiatives, updates and reports**.

The NADC uses several methods to inform, engage, and cultivate relationships with northern stakeholders. Face-to-face meetings, roundtables and events keep Council and staff aware of both challenges and opportunities that exist throughout the region. Newsletters, videos, the NADC website, and the NADC social media accounts inform stakeholders of the latest research, partnerships, initiatives, and events.

Northern Development Integrated Map:

The Northern Development [Integrated Map](#) provides practical information to enable and develop local and regional joint projects within the NADC region. This map not only provides a visual perspective of themes and statistics, but also allows customized and interactive views. The NADC continues to explore ways to showcase the information and maximize the value of this product for northern communities.

NADC INITIATIVES



Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN) Partnership

Labour Education Applied Research North (LEARN) is a partnership with the NADC and four northern colleges addressing northern workforce development by:

- facilitating information sharing;
- identifying workforce trends, and;
- conducting research to inform the modification or creation of new college programming to address the region's skills gap.

LEARN reports investigate industry trends, specific occupations and training opportunities, as well as other related topics such as demographic trends and community needs. In 2019, LEARN commissioned the research project **Information Technology Related Skills and Training Needs in Northern Alberta** to have a fresh look at the region's IT-related skills and training needs, thereby strengthening the ability of northern post-secondary institutions to prepare for the future needs of students, communities, and industries.



Key findings:

- Technology is disrupting key sectors in northern Alberta, increasing the need for IT skills across nearly all industries.
- There is a high demand for digital literacy across industries. Employers expect basic technology skills among workers at all levels in order to function day-to-day.
- The highest demand is for skills related to cloud technologies, cyber-security, and data analytics. Cyber-security was listed among the top five in-demand digital skills in 2019, and cyber-security analysts were one of the key IT roles within the oil and gas sector.
- Data analytics was the top in-demand digital skill in IT in Alberta in 2019, and data management was among the top in-demand five skills.

Recommendations:

- Collaborate with industry in real-time to ensure programming meets employer needs.
- Plan for emergent occupations, not just current occupations.
- Provide micro-credentials, modularized training, or short-term learning opportunities.
- Make updates to current programs to include both broad digital literacy skills as well as specific technologies used by key industries.
- Incorporate more technology into the learning process.
- Draw on existing training resources to keep up in the fast-paced technological environment.
- Conduct further research into industry needs and explore demand for modular or short-term training.

Based on these recommendations, LEARN will commence work on its next research project, which focuses on micro-credential programming in northern Alberta. The new research project will support an understanding of micro-credentialing, benefits for the north and key sectors where this type of training can be applied to train northern Alberta's changing workforce.



NADC Bursary Programs

NADC bursaries help to attract and retain the skilled professionals in demand by businesses and communities. Since 2010, the NADC has awarded 1,905 bursaries, with the program maintaining a high return-service rate of 75 per cent. Demand for the bursary program continues to exceed available funding.

The NADC offered 238 return-service bursaries to Alberta students in the 2019-20 academic year. This includes the NADC Bursaries, Specialty Bursaries, Bursary Partnerships, the First Nation (status or non-status), Métis and Inuit Bursary provided in collaboration with Alberta Advanced Education and the Northern Student Teacher Bursary, which is funded and offered in collaboration with Alberta Education.

2019 at a Glance

 **62**
NADC
Bursaries

 **8**
Medical
Bursaries

 **4**
Pharmacy
Bursaries

 **3**
Nurse
Practitioner

 **1**
Veterinary
Bursary

 **71**
Bursary
Partnerships

 **26**
Teacher
Bursaries
(NSTB)

 **63**
First Nations,
Métis, Inuit
Bursaries

NADC Bursary

The NADC Bursary focuses on students training in professions determined to be in demand by northern employers. In the 2019-20 academic year, 378 Alberta students applied and 62 received the general NADC Bursary:

- 58 students were awarded \$6,000
- Four students were awarded \$3,000

Recipients were enrolled in a wide variety and types of education: three certificate programs, 24 diploma programs, 28 degree programs, six masters programs and one PhD program.

NADC Bursaries for Specialty Programs

Select in-demand occupations are eligible to receive a Specialty Bursary:

- Eight students were awarded a \$12,000 **Medical and Dentistry Bursary** – four in Medicine and four in Dentistry
- Three students were awarded a \$9,000 **Nurse Practitioner Bursary**
- Four students were awarded a \$6,000 **Pharmacy Bursary**
- One student was awarded a \$6,000 **Veterinary Bursary**

DID YOU KNOW

The Bursary pages on the NADC website had more than 39K views during the 2019-20 fiscal year.

2019 NADC Bursaries



23
Health
Care



8
Education



18
Social
Services



4
Engineering/
Technical



3
Business
Administration



4
Agriculture/
Environment

Educational Levels



3
Certificate
Programs



24
Diploma
Programs



28
Degree
Programs



6
Masters



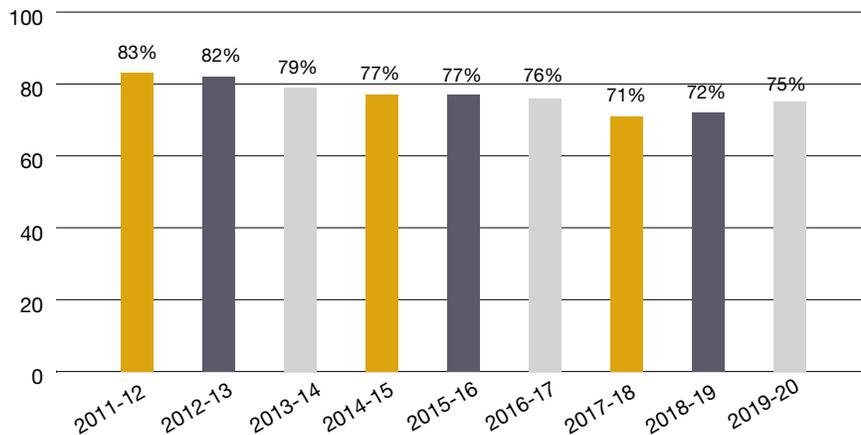
1
PhD

NADC bursary partnerships support 71 students

Bursary partnerships are an excellent opportunity for businesses and community organizations to bring in the skilled professionals that fit their organizational needs. Approved sponsors provide selected students with between \$1,000 and \$3,000, and request matching contributions from the NADC. Specialty bursaries allow for higher matching funds, ranging from \$6,000 to \$12,000. Recipients are obligated to provide return service within the NADC region, based on one month of full-time employment for every \$500 of total bursary support received.

In 2019-20, 71 partnership bursaries totalling \$238,200 were awarded, with \$118,350 provided through NADC. Included in this year's ongoing sponsors is one employer that matched funds of \$12,000 for one dentistry student. New sponsorships are accepted on an ongoing basis. Potential sponsors are encouraged to contact the NADC to discuss options.

NADC Bursary Return Service Rate



Recipients of the NADC Bursary enter into an agreement to live and work in northern Alberta when they complete their education - one year of full-time work for each year of bursary support. The NADC follows up with each recipient, and students who do not fulfill their return service obligations must repay the funding amount provided by the NADC.

First Nation (status or non-status), Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Bursary awarded to 63 students

This bursary was created in 2015 to assist in meeting the needs of Indigenous learners. Since its creation the FNMI Bursary has provided 294 bursaries to 219 students in collaboration with Alberta Student Aid. This bursary is also a return of service bursary, and is administered alongside all other bursaries provided by NADC. Since 2015, 46 students have completed their return service for a total of 540 months of employment. Another 41 students are working in the north to complete 750 months of return service. Other students are still in school or looking for employment within the NADC boundary.

The FNMI Bursary provides \$6,000 for students in a certificate or diploma studies and \$10,000 for students in a bachelor's, master's or doctoral program. Students in one term of studies are eligible for half of the bursary amount, depending on their program. The NADC completed two selection intakes, one in the summer and one in the winter. One student was awarded \$5,000 for one term, 14 students were awarded \$6,000 and 47 were awarded \$10,000 for a total of \$559,000.

Recipients were enrolled in a wide variety and types of education: one certificate program, 13 diploma programs, 40 degree programs, eight master's programs and one individual in a doctoral program.

Northern Student Teacher Bursary (NSTB) awarded to 26 recipients

Teacher attraction and retention in northern, rural and remote Alberta locations is a significant workforce challenge. Population projections for school-age children, as well as teacher retirements indicate that the demand for teachers will continue to increase.

Alberta Education collaborates with NADC to offer the NSTB, which requires a return-service obligation from recipients. In 2019-20, applicants in their second last or last year of schooling in a Bachelor of Education program were considered for the bursary. There were 126 applicants, and 26 bursaries awarded. Six of the recipients were entering their last year of schooling and were each awarded \$8,000, 20 were in their second-to-last year of schooling and were awarded \$16,000 each. The total expenditure for this program in 2019-20 was \$368,000.

Northern Health Care Practicum Funding helps 48 students

Alberta Health Services (AHS) North Zone provided \$50,000 in funding to the Health Care Practicum Funding Program, designed to increase the number of health care practicum students in the North Zone. The NADC and AHS work in collaboration to encourage individuals to complete their health care practicum at designated positions within AHS facilities. NADC jointly markets the program through its website, as part of a suite of programs and partnerships supporting workforce development in the north. Practicum students submit applicants directly to AHS. Overall, 82 applications were received by AHS for reimbursement of expenses, including travel and accommodations while they completed their practicum, and 48 applicants were awarded funding during the 2019-20 year.





Northern Alberta Elected Leaders (NAEL)

NAEL is a consortium of northwestern Alberta municipalities. NAEL is coordinated through secretariat support provided by NADC and offers a forum for northern elected officials to share information, collaborate on regional issues, and provide information to support the decisions of the other orders of government. This forum supports NADC members, who attend and participate in meetings, as they advise government on key northern challenges and emerging opportunities. Through expert presentations from industry and community partners and government officials who provide updates on topics of interest, elected officials give local input and insight into what is happening in their northern municipalities. These discussions continue to enhance awareness of the north and strengthen relationships between northern communities and the ministries delivering programs and policies in northern Alberta.

Issues of Interest

- Northern Awareness
- Shallow Gas Tax
- Wildfire Supports
- Health Services
- Municipal Funding
- Community Services
- Linear Assessments
- Assessment Year Modifiers
- Rural Crime and Policing
- Species at Risk
- MSI Funding
- Inter-municipal Collaboration Framework
- Emergency Services



39

Member municipalities



3

Non-voting partner organizations



2

General membership meetings



1

Organizational meetings



92

Engaged participants



8

Informative presentations

Chair: Jim Rennie,
Councillor for Woodlands County
Vice-Chair: Leanne Beaupre,
Reeve, County of Grande Prairie
No. 1



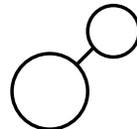
Water North Coalition (WNC)

Vibrant communities require sustainable and safe access to water and wastewater management. This partnership between northern Alberta municipalities and water/wastewater partners focuses on drawing attention to northern challenges in delivering safe water and wastewater management systems, and enables key partners to work collaboratively to deliver training to water and wastewater operators. Succession planning and shared services are an important areas where northern communities can collectively raise awareness of the need for a sustainable workforce to operate water treatment facilities in northern Alberta. NADC coordinates meetings and facilitates connections to key government and regional partners to advance the goals identified in the WNC’s Strategic Plan.



Main Committee

Chair: Bob Marshall, County of Grande Prairie No. 1
Vice-Chair: Richard Simard, Big Lakes County



Sub-Committees

- Advocacy
- Education & Awareness
- Recruitment, Training & Retention



4

Membership meetings hosted in MD of Opportunity/Birch Hills County/Grande Prairie/ Virtual



5

Informative presentations delivered to members



4

Tradeshows/conferences attended by WNC members



30

Voting member municipalities



15

Non-voting members

Northern Health Roundtable (June 2019)

The Northern Health Roundtable provides an opportunity for representatives from NADC, Alberta Health, and Alberta Health Services to collaborate and provide input on the health programs and services in the NADC region. Teleconferences and face-to-face meetings are held quarterly. The NADC coordinated and attended one meeting in June 2019.

Conversations during these roundtables create:

- shared understanding of northern issues and challenges;

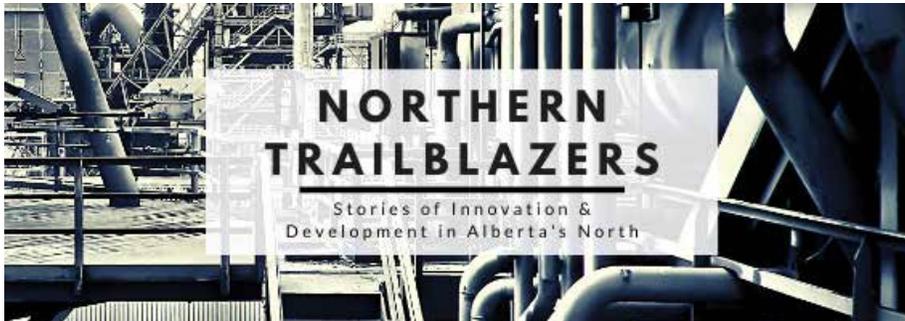
- open and ongoing communication mechanisms to achieve health system efficiency and accountability in northern communities; and
- opportunities to hear input from NADC on health services needed in the region.

Workforce Survey 2020

NADC has been conducting workforce scans since 1995. The purpose of the NADC workforce scan is to obtain insights into identifying in-demand and difficult-to-recruit occupations as well as recruitment and retention challenges

in Alberta's north. The results also inform NADC's determination of post-secondary program priorities for the NADC's bursary programs.

The Northern Workforce Survey was conducted from February 5 to February 26, 2020. The northern employers' inputs were collected through an online survey, which was sent to a sample of more than 7,000 employers across the north. The full report, including a summary of responses from more than 600 northern employers is forthcoming in fall 2020.



Did you know

Trailblazers storyboards were shared with more than 1,000 contacts across the north, and collected more than 11,000 combined Twitter and Facebook impressions between October 2019 and March 2020.

Northern Trailblazers

NADC's Northern Trailblazers project showcases northern innovations, learnings and best practices from sectors that are building and contributing to the advancement of the north.

Through an external call out to northern stakeholders to identify projects and initiatives, NADC received a number of responses highlighting innovations in program delivery, collaborative partnerships, and technology applications. Overall, 11 trailblazers were profiled. Projects included capacity building, investment attraction platforms, economic development and skills training initiatives, data, broadband, and advanced technologies supporting a robust innovation climate in the north. For full summaries, visit www.nadc.ca/our-actions/initiatives/northern-trailblazers/.

Key Outcomes:

- Capacity building of northern communities and organizations regarding innovative practices in key sectors.
- Increase knowledge sharing about key innovation activities happening in the north with internal/external stakeholders.
- Support attraction/retention in the north by promoting innovations.
- Increased social media capacity and outreach, and enhanced online presence and connections with northerners.



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ISBN 978-1-4601-4849-5 (PDF)

ISSN 2368-4178 (Online)