

# Nahanni clears road to past and future

*Trail to Prairie Creek being blazed across a path dating back to 1990s*

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75 CENTS



**Drum-makers share their trade**

**Hay River and Simpson join forces on ice**



**Young people explore world of politics**



**Soccer players raise money for trip to Spain**



photo courtesy of Thorsten Gohl



## Did we get it wrong?

*Deh Cho Drum* is committed to getting facts and names right. With that goes a commitment to acknowledge mistakes and run corrections. If you spot an error in *Deh Cho Drum*, call the editor at (867) 695-3786, or e-mail [dehcho drum@nns.com](mailto:dehcho drum@nns.com). We'll get a correction or clarification in as soon as we can.

## NEWS Briefs

### Sudden death in Fort Liard investigated

Fort Liard RCMP announced on Feb. 27 they are investigating a sudden death in the community.

According to a news release, RCMP received a report just before noon on Feb. 26 of a person found deceased on a trail near the community hall.

RCMP have not released any information surrounding the circumstances of the death, but have said members of the Northwest Territories RCMP Major Crimes Unit and Forensic Identification Services have travelled to the hamlet in order to assist in the investigation.

### Food security spotlighted

Nahendeh MLA Shane Thompson has elicited a commitment from Education, Culture and Employment Minister Alfred Moses to review the food security situation for two communities in his riding.

In a Feb. 17 member's statement to the legislative assembly, Thompson addressed the GNWT's income assistance program, which he said offers fixed food rates for each community.

Thompson brought up the example of Jean Marie River, whose residents must travel to Fort Simpson or Hay River to get their food, depending on the time of year, suggesting the GNWT provide a subsidy to communities without stores.

Moses agreed to review the "unique" situation of communities like Nahanni Butte.

### Festival royalty switches it up

As residents in the Deh Cho region look forward to the kick-off of the Beavertail Jamboree on March 5, the jamboree committee has announced a fresh new take on its contest for King and Queen.

Winners will be crowned on March 12 based on participation in specific activities throughout the week. The person with the most points at the end of the week will be declared the winner.

Winners of the Prince and Princess contests will be determined based upon ticket sales.

### Enbridge pipeline update

Representatives of Enbridge Pipelines held an open house at Fort Simpson's recreation centre on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.

The open house, which included a presentation, was intended to inform community members about a proposed plan to replace part of Line 21, which was shut down in November due to erosion on the bank of the Mackenzie River.

The plan is to use horizontal directional drilling technology to replace the affected pipeline segment.



**Women from across the Northwest Territories convened in Yellowknife on Feb. 12 for the Daughters of the Vote workshop.** In the front, from left, are Chukita Gruben, Jacq Brasseur, Alyssa Ross, Laney Beaulieu, Coana Paulette, Nhy Ly, Range Lake MLA Caroline Cochrane, Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green, Yellowknife city councillor Shauna Morgan and Fort Simpson's Reanna Cli. In the second row, from left, are Emily Smith, Jaylene Delorme-Buggins, Olivia Villebrun, Yellowknife city councillor Linda Bussey, Janelle Nitsiza and former MLA Jane Groenewegen. In the back, from left, are Raven Firth, Kiera Boulanger-Rowe, Yellowknife city councillor Rebecca Alty, Yellowknife Catholic school board vice-chair Erin Currie and former MLA Sandy Lee.

# Women in politics speak

*Daughters of the Vote participant says more women needed in government*

by April Hudson  
Northern News Services  
Somba K'e/Yellowknife

Fifteen women from across the Northwest Territories convened in Yellowknife on Feb. 12 for an initiative aimed at getting more women into politics.

Titled Daughters of the Vote, the initiative brought women together to participate in workshops with current and former female politicians.

The initiative is run by Equal Voice, an organization that operates with the objective of electing more women to all political levels of government.

Women came from nine communities to take part, including Fort Simpson's Reanna Cli.

Cli said she has always had an interest in politics, ever since her days participating in student politics. But although she follows

federal politics, she says she didn't know much about territorial politics until recently.

"I really wanted to learn more about that and how it works," she said.

"It was definitely an amazing experience. I learned more than I expected. I kind of went in without knowing what to expect."

Cli said many of the workshops she participated in focused on self-development and the barriers women face when deciding to enter politics.

Participants were involved in panels with current and former MLAs and heard first-hand accounts of those struggles.

"It was really inspiring to hear about women who were mothers and were really busy, and they weren't really getting what they wanted out of their government so they just decided to go for it them-

selves," Cli said.

"It was really cool to hear those first-hand stories and be able to ask them questions about it."

Having the opportunity to meet other women from across the territory with similar interests was a highlight, she said, and gave her the chance to hear different opinions on the various issues facing communities in the North.

She was also surprised to learn there are only two women currently sitting as MLAs in the 19-seat legislative assembly.

"I kind of thought there would be more. I think it's definitely important to get more women in all levels of politics," she said, pointing to the example of Fort Simpson, which elected a female mayor and three female councillors during its 2015 municipal election.

"That's really great to see, to show other young women in the

communities that's possible," she said.

"That equality (in government) is something I've always thought is very important."

Looking toward the future, Cli said the experience re-ignited a desire to participate in politics, as she once did on the student level.

She said her interest currently lies in territorial politics due to the wider range of issues that need to be looked at.

But she acknowledges territorial politics are more intimidating than community or school governance.

"Especially if you see you're not even really running against other women, and if you do have a family or other things you have to take care of, you look at your day and think, 'Do I even have time for that?'" she said.

"That's probably one of the biggest barriers."

# Power corp explores energy options

*NTPC aims to examine power supply at mine*

by April Hudson  
Northern News Services  
Thenaago/Nahanni Butte

The Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC) is looking into the possibility of supplying the Prairie Creek mine site with liquid natural gas as a possible energy source.

In mid-February, the power corporation signed a memorandum of understanding with Canadian Zinc Corporation. That memorandum means the power corporation will look at how it can supply the mine with a primary electrical energy source, according to a Feb. 14 news release from Canadian Zinc.

The power corporation will also take a look at the possibility of installing generating facilities and other necessary infrastructure.

In an e-mail, power corp. spokesperson Pam Coulter said the power corporation will first be coming up with a business plan.

"In order to generate and supply power to any new large customer, NTPC determines the cost of providing that power by developing a business plan," she stated. "(That) will determine whether (we) proceed to a study."

In an interview with the *Deh Cho Drum*, Tay-

lor said Canadian Zinc and NTPC will also be taking a look at gas fields near Fort Liard.

"It would be a shame to drive diesel trucks past wellheads that are capped and have gas in them," he said.

"One of the things we're working on with NTPC as well is to see if we can take advantage of that gas field and develop it for the Northwest Territories."

The power corporation is in the midst of producing a business case analysis for a possible liquid natural gas plant in Fort Simpson. According to the Feb. 14 news release, liquid natural gas would be delivered to Prairie Creek Mine along the same route as would be used to supply Fort Simpson and surrounding communities.

Alan Taylor, the chief operating officer for Canadian Zinc, stated in the news release that using liquid natural gas as an alternative energy source would reduce the mine's dependency on diesel fuel, which could lower the cost of powering the mine.

Prairie Creek Mine, in the words of Canadian Zinc chairman and chief executive officer John Kearney, is "on the cusp of development."

Canadian Zinc is in the midst of wrapping up a

definitive feasibility study on the mine. The study is expected to be complete by mid-2017.

The study follows a prefeasibility report that was completed in 2016. That report provided Canadian Zinc with recommendations for further study. It also showed that an engineering and design phase could be used to obtain fixed pricing from construction contractors, according to information released by Canadian Zinc on Jan. 24.

Canadian Zinc has also hired a company to undertake project development plans for the mine site, and has appointed financial advisers to arrange debt financing for the mine.

Taylor said the feasibility study aims to provide so much detail and accuracy that Canadian Zinc can use it to potentially raise financing to get Prairie Creek Mine into production.

Aside from the study, the company is still waiting on approval for an all-season road into the mine.

"On the backs of that, hopefully you raise the financing that can support construction of the mine site, but even when you secure financing, you don't go into production overnight," he explained.

"It's going to take a couple of years still."

# Roadwork opens old trail

*Nahanni chief says 'commotion in motion' creating jobs, future for youth*

by April Hudson

Northern News Services

Tthenaago/Nahanni Butte

Nahanni Butte elder Leon Konisenta remembers when a logging road a few kilometres outside the community first opened.

The road, which became operational in the 1990s, was only open for a couple years before it was decommissioned, he recalls. In the decades since, the willows and trees have grown over it.

Now, it is being repurposed by the community in order to eventually build an all-season road into Prairie Creek Mine.

On Feb. 23, Konisenta and his son Mike Matou joined a group of workers along the road.

Some of them worked a kilometre or two ahead, slashing the trail open and removing deadfall from the roadway, while others used an Alaskan mill chainsaw to make lumber.

The roadwork has created jobs in the community, with around 12 workers out every day.

Matou, who is the former chief of the Nahanni Butte Dene Band, says the work on opening the logging road has been going smoothly. Cold weather hasn't fazed the workers, who often choose to eat their lunch outside rather than return to the community to eat.

"It's been good working with the youth," he said, adding he and the elders have been showing some of them how to run the Alaskan mill chainsaw. That chainsaw cuts logs lengthwise.

"They had a few practice runs today. I just started a few days ago, learning it myself. The first few cuts were rough but by today it's a lot smoother," he said.

The band originally started taking down standing dead trees for elders, who recently ran out of firewood.

Band manager Mark Pocklington said that prompted Nahanni Butte to declare an emergency, which allowed the band to bypass the need for permits and use a bulldozer to initially open the road so the dead trees could be accessed.

Although Pocklington describes the situation as a "true emergency," he admits it couldn't have come at a better time.

Opening the road entrance with a bulldozer allowed them access to the road with trucks so work could begin in earnest on clearing deadfall and slashing the trail.

He added it should take workers a couple weeks to



photo courtesy of Nahanni Butte Dene Band

**Workers haul the youth camp across the ice bridge with a bulldozer.**

reach the end of the logging road.

"The advantage is, we have crews out there who now have access, they're on the ground, they can see what we're up against. It's a whole lot better than just talking and relying on satellite maps," he said.

It also allowed them to open the road without fear of being slapped with a cease work order, since permits are often required when heavy machinery is used.

**"We're creating hope for the future."**

Peter Marcellais

"When you're putting wood straight into your woodstove, you need standing dead trees. This is a road with a number of standing

dead trees along it," Pocklington said.

By mid-afternoon on Feb. 23, the workers had cut 30 two-by-eight pieces of lumber, with the plan to refine them further into two-by-fours.

### 'Commotion in motion'

The lumber will be used in part to build cabins along the road, according to Nahanni Butte Chief Peter Marcellais.

Marcellais says the plan is to cut a line around the boundary of the band's Indian Affairs Branch lands.

When asked about the band's decision to open the logging road and start work prior to the mine's all-season road receiving approval from the Mackenzie Valley Review Board, Marcellais describes it as "commotion in motion."

The roadwork has stirred up excitement at home as well, he added.

The project is especially important for the community's youth, who are learning the right way to slash trails and will be learning how to conduct GPS surveys, he said.

"We want to make sure

we do everything right so it doesn't come back on us," he said.

Aside from the experience the roadwork is giving youth, Marcellais said it also serves to broaden their horizons and teach them to make healthy choices.

"It's a big world out there," he said.

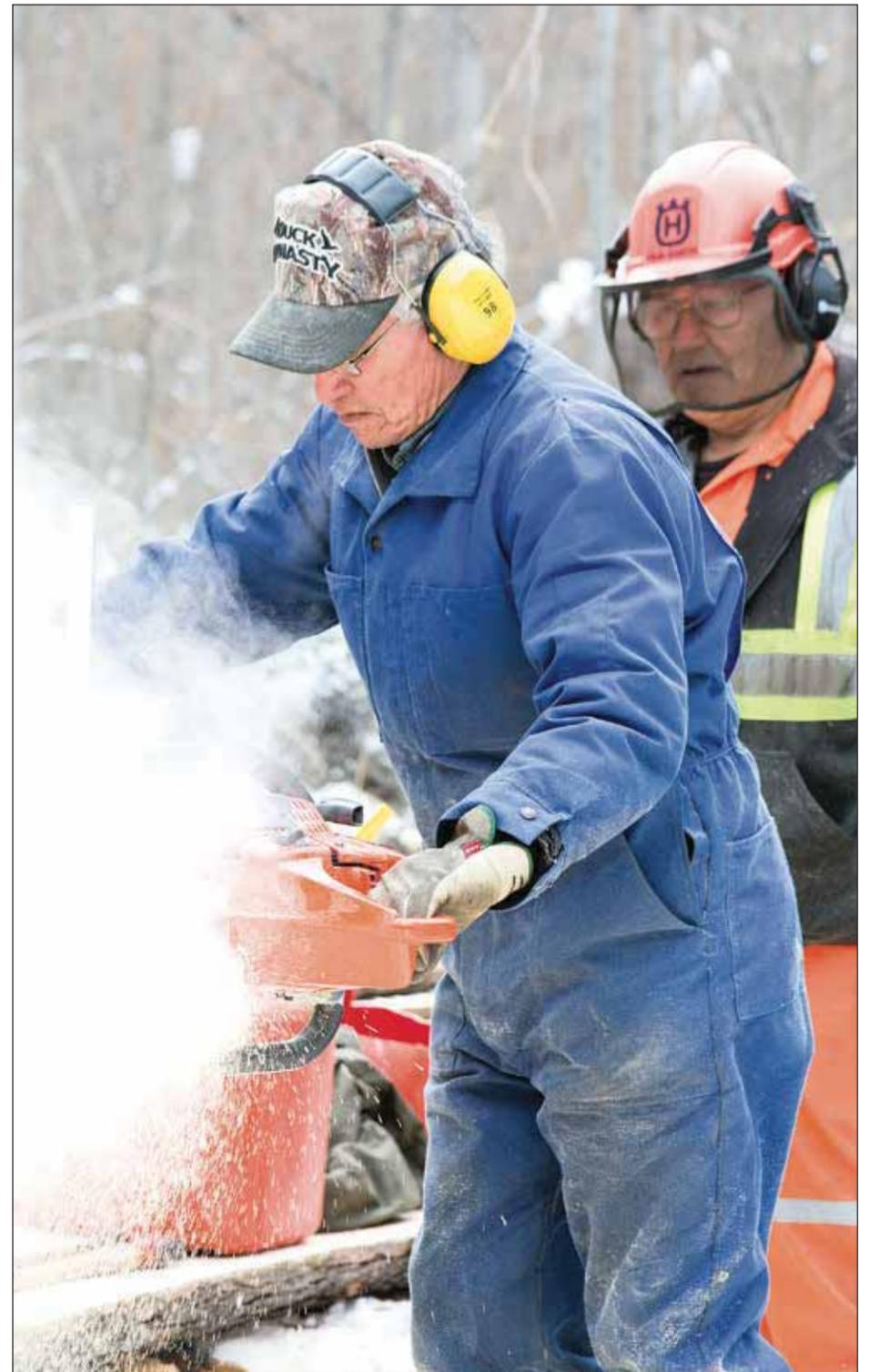
"We're creating hope for the future."

### Pushback from feds

Indian Affairs Branch lands are managed by bands in conjunction with the federal government.

On Feb. 21, the Mackenzie Valley Review Board posted a letter from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to Nahanni Butte which states the department "retains the role of final approval of projects and dispositions issued on (Indian Affairs Branch) lands in close consultation with the band."

That letter, dated Jan. 27 and signed by senior program manager Mike Roesch, states the federal government requires a licence of occupation from Canadian Zinc Corporation for the portion



April Hudson/NNSL photo

**Raymond Vital and Leon Konisenta run the Alaskan mill chainsaw through a log.**

of the road on Indian Affairs Branch lands as well as a surface lease.

In order for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to issue the licence and lease, Roesch states, the Nahanni Butte Dene Band "must first relinquish their interest in

these lands through a band council resolution."

A second letter from the department, dated Feb. 14, affirms the department's "full confidence" in the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board process.

That prompted Marcellais

to respond. In a Feb. 27 letter to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Marcellais writes that if the federal government does not expedite the permitting process for the road, the band has "little choice but to continue the first phase of road construction."



April Hudson/NNSL photo

**Workers spent their day on Feb. 23 – one of many – in the bush working to cut lumber and slash a trail. Nathan Betsaka, left, stands with Mike Matou, Qualin Matou, Leon Konisenta and Raymond Vital.**