

Northwest Territories Parks and Tourism 2009

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment are committed to growing the tourism industry in the Northwest Territories.

The Department continues to work closely with partners and stakeholders in the Northwest Territories, including industry members and tourism operators, the Destination Marketing Organization - Northwest Territories Tourism, the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee, as well as communities, bands and Aboriginal organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people in the Northwest Territories tourism industry for their dedication, and for providing exceptional service to visitors throughout the year. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the Chair, fellow board members and staff of the Northwest Territories Tourism Association, as well as recognize the contribution of the Co-Chair and members of the Tourism Marketing Advisory Committee.

In 2009-10, the Department's *Product Diversification and Marketing Program* supported 18 businesses and organizations in all five regions of the Northwest Territories, with almost \$1.5 million in funding.

2009-10 is the Department's fourth year of the 5 year Tourism 2010 action plan to support the Northwest Territories' tourism industry. \$1 million dollars is spent annually on infrastructure, product development, research, marketing and training.

This year also saw several infrastructure investments under the federal government's *Economic Action Plan*. Industry, Tourism and Investment received \$481,000 in matching federal funding for 2009-10 projects including trail development, park improvements and building renovations.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of capital projects underway this year. These include the development of a new visitor centre at the 60th Parallel, completion of a kitchen shelter in Sambaa Deh Territorial Park and a third loop in Reid Lake Territorial Park.

The 2009 operating season also saw the continuation of cultural programming in parks. Live programs were delivered in Twin Falls, Fred Henne and Hay River Territorial Parks.

Visitors from all corners of the globe continue to visit our parks. In 2008 more than 35,000 people camped, picnicked or simply enjoyed quality family time in our many campgrounds and day-use areas.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate parks staff, campground operators and other park service providers in the Northwest Territories for their dedication to this vital industry, and to thank them for a job well done.

Thanks to the efforts of our parks contractors and staff, and the Northwest Territories tourism industry, visitors learn what those of us who live here already know. The Northwest Territories is a spectacular place to visit. Spread the word.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.