

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY WEBSITE

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories takes its obligation to account for its decisions and actions seriously. We recognize that the people of the Northwest Territories have a right to know what their government is doing for them and how it is expending public funds. There are many different ways in which the GNWT can account for its actions, ranging from exchanges between Ministers and Regular Members here on the floor of this House to the routine publication of information and reports about government activities.

Recently, the Departments of Finance and Executive have collaborated on the development of a public accountability website intended to improve how the GNWT provides information on its activity to Members and to the public. This site had its origin in a request from Members for an easier way to access more up-to-date information about how the GNWT is spending its money in support of the goals of this Assembly.

Today we are responding to that request.

The new site is intended to provide a single window through which NWT residents can learn about our commitments and how we are acting to fulfill them in every Department of government.

Rather than having to search individual Departmental websites for basic information on how the GNWT is pursuing its plans, Northerners will now be able to visit one site to learn about what their government is doing for them. The site provides links to our budget and the business plans for every Department, so Northerners can know what the GNWT has committed itself to do. News and announcements about how we are pursuing those commitments will be regularly posted to the site and status reports on more than 100 projects linked to our Strategic Plan will be available.

The core feature of the public accountability website is a searchable database of projects undertaken by the GNWT in support of its Strategic Plan. Each entry in the database includes a brief description of a project currently underway, an update on its status and an indication of the budget allocated to the project in both 2008/09 and 2009/10. Users can search the database using a number of criteria, including the goals of the Legislative Assembly, Strategic Initiatives and Actions and by Department. Using this database, users will be able to get a comprehensive view of how each Department is working towards the vision of the 16th Assembly and of how that work is being coordinated across government. Information in the database will be updated quarterly to provide residents of the NWT with ongoing reports on GNWT activities.

The site also includes a searchable database of capital projects. Users will be able to sort the capital projects by Department and by community to get a better picture of how and where the GNWT is carrying out its capital infrastructure program.

In keeping with our new approach to infrastructure, however, the database does not provide specific budget figures for individual capital projects.

Mr. Speaker, the public accountability website is another step in our continuing efforts to find ways to better communicate with the people of the Northwest Territories about what the GNWT does. The focus of this site is on presenting information about our Strategic Initiatives and our infrastructure plan. We will continue to develop the site as a tool for providing up-to-date progress and spending reports in the coming months, including ways to report on our results and on our core business.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to informing Northerners about its decisions and activities and making sure that they have an opportunity to have input into our plans. The new public accountability website is one of the ways that we hope to deliver on that commitment. I invite MLAs and members of the public to visit the site at workingtogether.gov.nt.ca to find out more about how the GNWT is working to advance the vision and goals of this Assembly.

Thank you.