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## NEWS Briefs

### Metis assembly set

The Northwest Territory Metis Nation has set the dates and location for its annual general assembly this year.

The assembly will be held from Nov. 24 to 28 in Hay River.

This is an election year for the organization's executive consisting of president, vice-president and secretary-treasurer.

Current president Betty Villebrun plans to seek re-election.

— Paul Bickford

### Airport to hold exercise

The Hay River Airport will hold an emergency response exercise on Aug. 24. The exercise, based on an imaginary crisis, will test the response of airport employees and community responders such as the fire department, the RCMP detachment, the ambulance service, the hospital and other organizations.

Such a major exercise is held every four years as per Transport Canada regulations.

The airport is looking for volunteers to play various roles in the exercise, including casualties and concerned relatives.

— Paul Bickford

### Fibre cable cut again

Northwestel Internet and telephone services went down or were congested in the Beaufort Delta region last week because, the telecommunications company said, a construction crew in Alberta cut the service's fibre optic cable. Service wasn't fully restored in the Delta until after 11 p.m. Aug. 18. This incident was the third time in less than two weeks that construction crews damaged the cable, compromising communications across NWT, the Yukon and B.C. Northwestel stated in a release that it is investigating with the construction company to stop cable damage.

— Katie May

### PM touring Arctic region

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is on a five-day tour of the North's three territories this week, including stops in Inuvik on Wednesday evening and Tuktoyaktuk on Thursday morning.

The tour, which begins in Churchill, Man. Monday, is part of the government's effort to promote Northern development and the country's sovereignty in the region, according to Dimitri Soudas, the prime minister's communications director. From Churchill, the prime minister will travel to Cambridge Bay and Resolute, Nunavut, on Tuesday, with an announcement expected in Cam Bay. Harper will witness military exercises and address troops in Resolute on Tuesday and Wednesday. From there he will travel to receptions in Inuvik on Wednesday and Tuktoyaktuk on Thursday.

His tour will finish in Whitehorse on Friday.

— Peter Varga



Katie May/NNSL photos

**Inuvik hosted a national youth summit Aug. 16 to 20, led by the National Inuit Youth Council, on which Beaufort Delta Inuvialuit are represented. The youth heard from guest speakers, participated in workshops and attended an on-the-land trip last week. From left, Keenan Carpenter from Sachs Harbour, David Lucas from Tuk, Alecia Lennie and Douglas Price, both from Inuvik.**

# Inuvik hosts national youth summit

*Young people to set priorities for Inuit council*

by Katie May  
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Inuvik

Throughout Canada's Inuit regions, young people believe governments should focus on three main priorities: aboriginal health, education, and the preservation of Inuit culture.

Those issues were the common thread tying together Inuit youths, from the Inuvialuit of the Beaufort Delta to the Inuit of Nunavik, during a national youth forum last week, which allowed young people to have their voices heard across the country.

Inuvik became the backdrop for lively discussions about fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide prevention, Northern post-secondary education, oil and gas exploration and more as Inuit youth met to help set priorities for an onslaught of issues facing their generation.

About 70 Inuit youths aged 15 to 30 from across Canada gathered at the Inuvik's Midnight Sun Recreation Complex last week for the youth and elders summit. The summit, led by the National Inuit Youth Council (NIYC), on which local Inuvialuit are represented, brought together young people and a small group of elders from the Beaufort Delta region of NWT, Nunavut, and northern Quebec.

The NIYC is a division of the national Inuit organization Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Holly Donley, local summit coordinator for the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, said the workshops give young people a chance to address issues Inuit face on a daily basis while learning about cultural differences among Canadian Inuit.

"What we're wanting to accomplish is to keep our culture going and to find more ways to do that," she said. "This is a good opportunity for local Inuvialuit to meet other Inuit from all over Canada. It's an even better opportunity for other youth not from here to see other regions."

After arriving Aug. 16, the youth council swore in its new president, Jennifer Watkins of Kuujuaq, a village in Nunavik, northern Quebec. Watkins takes over from past president Jesse Mike.

Over the course of the summit, which wrapped up Aug. 19, the youth divided into regional groups to help set priorities for the NIYC's governance, participated in workshops on topics ranging from Inuit history to magazine publishing — and the council launched its own magazine, Nipiit, or "Our Voice" at the same time.

One of the guest speakers the youths heard from was NWT Premier Floyd Roland. He offered his own story of growing up in Inuvik, from a small boy who "learned to run fast so I wouldn't get beat up," to leader of the territorial government.

"If a boy from Co-op Hill in Inuvik can be the premier of the Northwest Territories, anybody can," he said, to applause from the audience.

Alissa Blake, from Fort McPherson, a past participant in the youth forum, was chosen by organizers as a role model for this year's summit.

Blake told the youths she's going to aviation school to pursue her dream of becoming a pilot, and urged each of them not to give up on their dreams.

"I never, ever set out to be a role model or a leader," she said. "I just



**Miranda Amos and Sabrina Lucas, from Sachs Harbour, listen closely during a Beaufort Delta region session led by Tuk's youth co-ordinator John Stuart Jr.**

wanted to do what I always wanted to do and that's fly airplanes. If it takes me another five years to do it, then it takes another five years. But I'm still going to do it."

Inuvik teen Alecia Lennie said she got involved because she wanted to meet new people. Early in the week, she said she'd already learned a lot, particularly by participating in a post-secondary education forum where recent college graduates offered advice.

"They said not to pick (a career) that you don't really want to do, but to go for what you want," the Grade 12 student said. "It just encouraged me to keep on going with what I really want to do."

Douglas Price, also from Inuvik, said he wants to be a youth leader and hoped hearing from other young people at the summit

would put him on the right path.

"It's surprisingly everything I wanted it to be," he said. "I'm learning about oil and gas, as well as helping our people, the way it's supposed to be. Everyone here is getting together like our ancestors did."

For Tuk's David Lucas, "it's all about education."

He said he was happy to be sitting in on a variety of workshops, particularly an information session on the Canadian Rangers, to learn more about his culture and his options as a young adult.

"It's great," he said.

The first NIYC youth summit was held in Kuujuaq in 1994 and since then young people have gathered regularly, if not annually, in various Inuit regions across Canada. Inuvik last hosted the event in 2002.