

# **ANNUAL REPORT – 2008/2009**

## **Inuvik Interagency Committee**

### **Introduction**

The Inuvik Interagency Committee is a registered society under the Societies Act of the NWT and a registered charity under the Income Tax Act. The Board of Directors is elected at an annual general meeting and holds office for a two year term. Directors are eligible for re-election after the expiry of the two-year term. Officers of the society are elected from amongst the Directors and include the positions of President, Vice-President and Treasurer.

In August 2007 the Inuvik Interagency Committee's received an initial payment of \$50,000 from a contribution agreement of \$150,000 which was signed with the Northern Strategy-Community Capacity Building Fund. The Committee received the remainder of its funding (\$100,000) under this agreement in July 2008.

As a result of the receipt of funds from this Agreement the Interagency Committee hired an Interagency Coordinator in October 2007. Also, the Committee re-established its office at the NWT Training Centre in January 2008 and all regular Committee meetings are held at this location.

Noteworthy this year is the role the Interagency Committee was asked to play in support of the operations of the NWT Training Centre. Since September 2008 the Interagency Committee's Coordinator has carried out a number of administrative functions on behalf of the Training Centre. This has been helpful both by having a person available to provide services to other building tenants and assist with the overall logistics of building operations.

### **Committee Activities/Outcomes**

#### **Interagency Meetings**

In 2008/2009, ten (10) regular Interagency Committee meetings were held. Attendance at meetings ranges from 12 to 22 agency representatives with an average of 16 members attending meetings throughout the year. Attached to this report is a listing of the agency representatives that attended monthly meetings.

Interagency Committee meetings provide the opportunity for members to discuss a variety of social issues of mutual concern. Meetings are occasions for agencies to make presentations or share information on a variety of topics. Often, out-of-town organizations or individuals with a specific interest seek to address or consult the Interagency Committee, i.e. family violence, suicide prevention, housing and homelessness. This proves to be quite efficient for all concerned as it facilitates the

gathering of information in a forum where dialogue and discussion can readily take place. The Interagency Committee plays a unique role in the community for this important information-gathering/consultation exercise.

During 2008 regular monthly meetings were a forum for discussion on such other topics as, healthy foods, family violence, food bank operations, housing and homelessness, addictions, family counselling, child development and youth concerns. During Interagency meetings member agencies regularly give updates of a more routine nature on activities taking place in their organizations.

## **Communication Tools**

In 2008 the Interagency Committee supported by funds from the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture Canada developed specific communication tools which were designed to advance the Committee's goal for community communications and interagency collaboration. The creation of an internet web site (<http://inuvikinteragency.org>) was of particular importance to helping achieve this goal. The Interagency web site is designed to be a central information source on matters relating to health, education and social services in the community. Also, information of a more general nature is provided that is relevant to local residents, visitors or newcomers.

### **I. Resource Directory and Community Events Calendar**

The Resource Directory and Community Events Calendar are integral to the Interagency website and target more specifically the activities and resources of the community.

The Resource Directory presently has 33 entries from community organizations that provide services in the community. While the majority of entries are within the non-profit sector, it was agreed by the Board of Directors to allow local businesses to also register on the website. Entries to the Directory can be done independently by the user and requires no assistance from the Interagency Coordinator.

The Community Events Calendar is maintained by the Interagency Coordinator and it is essentially a service to Interagency members who need another means to promote events and activities. The Calendar allows users to see at a glance the schedule of activities in any given month or historically review community activities within the calendar year. It can be bookmarked and recalled easily as would be the case for any website.

In addition to these particular tools, the Interagency Committee posts to its website recent copies of meeting minutes and newsletters and the copies of research documents prepared by the Interagency Committee in recent years. The site is also the location for the GNWT Programs and Services Directory which was a significant undertaking of the Department of Executive (GNWT) in the Beaufort Delta region in 2008.

## **II. Interagency Newsletter**

During 2008 the Interagency Committee began publishing an electronic online newsletter. During 2008/2009 eight issues were published. It is sent electronically to a broad audience within and outside the community. Currently, the newsletter is being produced every second month. It attempts to offer in more detail information on issues discussed at Interagency Committee meetings or introduces new topics that are within the Committee's mandate.

## **III. Issue Monitoring**

As part of its ongoing communication strategy, the Interagency Coordinator monitors local issues and events that are relevant and important to its membership. At present the Committee has established an electronic email distribution list of more than 100 individuals that represents 30 + agencies that either are local or are located outside the community. This information service permits the Interagency Coordinator to have immediate email contact with Committee members and others for whom information on particular events or activities is important.

The Committee receives positive feedback on the value of its communications efforts from the community. Together with the other information tools described above, the Interagency Committee connects key agencies that are part of its network and brings relevant information in a simple and accessible manner.

## **Special Initiatives**

- National Addictions Awareness Week (NAAW): In the past 2 years the Interagency Committee has provided leadership and coordination to activities that support this national campaign. In both years a coordinating group under the leadership of the Interagency Coordinator planned and helped carry out events such as a Sober Walk, community gatherings/feast, posters, displays and advertising. The Interagency Committee believes in the value of bringing awareness of this subject to the community.  
This year we were pleased to be joined by the Inuvik Community Corporation as a full partner in supporting this initiative. In cooperation with the Native Counselling Services of Alberta the coordinating agency for NAAW, the Inuvik Community Corporation accessed a grant of \$2500 which assisted greatly local activities in the community.
- Healthy Foods North: With its focus on community wellness, the Interagency Committee has been pleased to support Healthy Foods North in its undertaking of a broad based community initiative. Healthy Foods North is a multilevel intervention program that uses formative research and community participative processes to engage the local community in overall health promotion. Its community plan for the education of community members in various aspects of healthy food choices and healthy living has been very positive in the community.

Its representatives have accessed the Interagency Committee's network of agencies and communication tools to promote its work. The Interagency Committee has been pleased to be an active partner in the work of this project.

- Children's First Society: The Interagency Committee has helped facilitate discussion and promotes the work of this organization and its goal for the construction of a Child Development Centre. This innovative project will integrate the delivery of all child development services in the community. This has become critical since with the construction of a new school, existing child care facilities will cease to be available. The opportunity to meet the needs of pre-school and early school age children through a new expanded facility will contribute significantly to community wellness and pay huge dividends in the development of children in their formative and later years.
- Inuvik Petroleum Show: In 2008 the Interagency Committee was asked by the Town of Inuvik to host a booth at the Inuvik Petroleum Show (IPS). The Interagency Committee collaborated and provided coordination on the use of the booth by other not-for-profit agencies who wished to participate in this important industry show. The Committee has been asked to play a similar role at this year's event.
- Inuvik Food Bank: The Interagency Committee's longstanding interest and support for the Food Bank continues. Committee support has been by way of inclusion of articles in the Interagency's newsletter, encouraging attendance of Board representatives to Interagency meetings and using the Interagency's network for special notices when required. The Food Bank has gained new sources of support and is now on a much more solid footing through the cooperative efforts of many individuals and organizations.
- Interagency Youth Sub-committee: The Youth sub-committee responds to concerns for the challenges facing youth in our community. This initiative is led by Mary Ann Ross, Vice-President of the Interagency Committee and is comprised of members from schools, youth serving organizations, the RCMP and other interested individuals and groups.

In 2008/2009 the Youth Sub-committee established operating terms of reference, elected a Youth Co-chair and held monthly meetings at Samuel Hearne Secondary School. (SHSS). Priorities have been identified and the concern for alcohol and drug abuse is considered to be the most important issue as determined by a survey of students at SHSS. Other concerns identified are student absenteeism and bullying. The Sub-committee is committed to pursuing specific actions that address these issues.

- Inuvik Youth Centre: The Interagency Coordinator has promoted the work of the Youth Centre through newsletter articles and special notices. The ASCWA/CKLB Youth Forum held at the Youth Centre in February was strongly promoted by the

Interagency Coordinator and resulted in youth issues being aired in a special youth forum broadcast across the CKLB radio network in the Northwest Territories.

- Community Consultation – Youth Issues: In response to the call by the Mayor of Inuvik for discussion on issues related to youth crime, Alana Mero, Interagency Board Chair participated in meetings convened by the Mayor of Inuvik to discuss this matter. These discussions involve a cross-section of community leaders and compliment the work of the Youth Sub-committee as it seeks to broaden the discussion on how youth issues can be addressed.

## Conferences/Special Events

The Interagency Committee represented the community and region by participating in a number of conferences during the year:

1. The ***Boom, Bust, Economies Conference*** was held in Inuvik in June 2008. Participants to this conference came from across the country both as researchers and as community representatives that have direct experience in boom and bust economies. Inuvik can contribute and learn much from the experiences of other communities. The choice of Inuvik as a location for the conference was a good one.
2. The Interagency Committee was invited to represent the western Arctic at a forum hosted by the Canadian Council for Social Development (CCSD) in Ottawa in September 2008. This forum's theme was ***Mapping Poverty Reduction Initiatives***. The work of the forum was one of information-gathering and preparatory to the Canadian Social Forum that will be held in Calgary in May 2009. The Interagency Committee continues by its association with CCSD to be well connected to national issues in poverty and other areas studied by this organization.
3. The Interagency Committee was invited to the annual Counterparts Gathering 2009 conference held this year on February 8-10 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This event brought together over 35 leaders from provincial and territorial governments and the non-profit voluntary sector. The theme of the conference was ***“Building Sustainable Relationships between Provincial/Territorial Governments and the Non-Profit Voluntary Sector.”*** The Inuvik Interagency Committee was the only organization in attendance from the Northwest Territories.
4. In March 2009 both the Interagency Committee Chair and Coordinator attended the **2009 Volunteer Summit** hosted by the Financial Management Board (FMB) and Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) of the Government of Northwest Territories. The Summit's goals were twofold: 1) MACA lead a number of volunteer representatives from across NWT through a

Both sessions were productive and the Interagency Coordinator continues to participate in a Working Committee along with other government and NGO representatives to continue the dialogue on these important matters.

## **Summary**

The Interagency Coordinator, under the direction of the Board of Directors, has focused primarily on the core functions of interagency communication and coordination. The commentary above notes the specific actions and initiatives that have been undertaken to support this work.

The Inuvik Interagency Committee may conceptually, by its network of community agencies and interagency cooperation, exist and operate from “the corner of the desks” of its members. Nevertheless, experience has shown that to be truly successful the Committee and Board of Directors require the services of a full time Coordinator. The work of the Interagency Committee has proven to be immensely valuable to the community. Regrettably, the turnover in staff and Board members over the years has not left a great deal in the way of historical records.

Our recent experience over the past few years is that not a week goes by that the Interagency Coordinator is contacted for information or is requested by individuals or agencies to be placed on the Interagency’s membership/contact list. Interagency members appreciate that interagency communication and cooperation is essential to achieving the goals for community wellness.

New employees or new arrivals to the community quickly contact the Interagency Committee to seek information about meeting dates and agenda items. Inuvik, although a relatively small community, has a labyrinth of organizations, governmental and non-governmental that contribute to the community in a variety of ways. In the area of health and wellness the Interagency Committee is the singular agency that allows agencies in this sector to meet and share information. Lacking this opportunity would mean a great loss to the community as the Committee is often the envy of other communities who inquire about its operations.

An important initiative this year was the preparation and submission of an application to the Canada Revenue Agency to secure charitable status. As noted above, this is now achieved and this status should enable the Committee to more easily seek funding from national foundations on projects of specific interest. In this respect, it will be beneficial if the Board and Interagency members dedicate some time to better articulate and develop

specific initiatives for which funding might be sought. The Interagency Committee completed a Strategic Plan in 2006 and this could be a starting point for conversation.

Currently, the finances of the Interagency Committee allow it to operate with full time staff support until December 2009. The Board of Directors is exploring the means by which it can sustain its operations in the longer term.

## **Inuvik Interagency Committee attendance list – 2008/2009**

1. Aurora College
2. Aurora Research Institute
3. Aboriginal Healing Foundation
4. Arctic Turn-Young Offenders Facility
5. Beaufort Delta Education Authority (BDEC)
6. Beaufort Delta Health and Social Services Authority (various representatives include  
Community Health Representative, Public Health, Health Promotion Officer)
7. Bob Mellet
8. Children First Society
9. Department of Fisheries and Oceans
10. Department of Executive
11. Department of Employment Culture and Education (ECE)
12. Department of Industry Tourism and Investment (ITI)
13. Department of Justice
14. Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC)
15. Great Northern Arts Festival
16. Healthy Foods North
17. Inuvik Community Corporation (ICC)
18. Inuvik Community Greenhouse
19. Inuvik Community Counselling Program
20. Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC)
21. Inuvik Food Bank
22. Inuvik Homeless Shelter
23. Inuvik Justice Committee
24. Inuvik Victims Services
25. Inuvik Youth Centre
26. Joyce Lillegran
27. MLA – Floyd Roland
28. MLA – Robert McLeod
29. NWT Housing Corporation
30. NWT Association of Persons with Disabilities
31. Patricia Davison

32. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
33. Samuel Hearne Secondary School (Principal, Vice-Principal & School Counsellor)
34. Sir Alexander Mackenzie Elementary School
35. Town of Inuvik ( Mayor, Councillor & By-Law Officer)