



**Budget Address
2012 - 2013**

presented by
Premier

Darrell Pasloski

**First session of the Thirty-Third
Yukon Legislative Assembly**

**Whitehorse, Yukon
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A SURPLUS BUDGET

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is my honour and privilege today to table the 2012-2013 Budget, a surplus budget, Mr. Speaker, the first budget of the Thirty-Third Yukon Legislative Assembly.

The nine budgets tabled previously by the two successive Yukon Party governments have put Yukon on the Pathway to Prosperity.

The 2012-2013 Budget will help the territory continue that journey.

The Government of Yukon's Budget for 2012-2013 is \$1 billion and \$156.7 million.

The Operations and Maintenance Budget totals 925.1 million, of which \$110.8 million is recoverable.

The Capital Budget is \$231.6 million, of which \$70.2 million is recoverable.

This is the fourth Yukon Government Budget to exceed the 1 billion dollar threshold.

By way of comparison, the first Yukon Party government Budget for 2003-2004 was only \$550 million.

The Government of Yukon has one of the healthiest financial positions of all the jurisdictions in Canada today.

Only Yukon and Alberta have the fiscal resources available to fund future government operations without creating a net debt.

This 2012-2013 Budget like its predecessors includes a Multi-Year Capital Plan that allows Yukon's private sector contractors to plan ahead in relation to our commitment to stable predictable investments in key sectors of our economy.

The nine previous Yukon Party governments' budgets were utilized to help stimulate the Yukon's private sector economy.

Today, the Yukon's private sector economy is approaching parity with government in contributing to the growth of the territorial economy.

While our 2012-2013 Budget will continue to promote economic stimulation, it will also focus on initiatives to manage prosperity, to address the challenges that accompany a growing prosperous economy.

Mr. Speaker, the 2012-2013 Budget has a healthy \$80.009 million surplus.

This surplus demonstrates a forward looking financial plan. There are a number of funding pressures on the horizon that the Yukon Government must take into account in its long term planning such as:

- the Building Canada Plan expires in 2016 and no replacement fund has been announced by Canada;
- the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative expires in 2014 and as yet there is no federal commitment to extend the initiative beyond that date;
- funding by the Government of the United States for the Shakwak Agreement signed in 1977 to upgrade and maintain the north Alaska Highway and the Haines Road expired in 2009 and has continued on a year-by-year basis with no longer term funding agreement in place;
- the Government of Yukon is appealing a Yukon Supreme Court ruling to build a multi-million dollar school for French speaking high school students;
- Yukon's growing population will require the construction of one and perhaps two new schools in Whitehorse over the next five years in addition to construction of the new F.H. Collins High School;
- Yukon's growing population will require the expansion of the Whitehorse General Hospital; and
- The expanding economy will require more Yukon Government investment in energy, transportation and communication infrastructure.

In view of this surplus, our government will be in a better position to respond to these potential emerging priorities and pressures.

POSITIVE ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Mr. Speaker, Yukon today enjoys one of the most prosperous economies in all of Canada.

Our economy is growing and so is our population.

Between 2006 and 2011, Yukon experienced an 11.7% population growth rate, the highest rate of growth in the country.

Yukon's economic growth rate similarly has been strong recording seven consecutive years of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gains.

Our growth rate was the highest in the country in 2009.

The current conservative Yukon forecast is for 3.9% Real GDP growth for 2011.

The Conference Board of Canada, however, has an even more optimistic projection forecasting a 8.6% Real GDP growth rate for Yukon in 2011.

Yukon's mining sector is primarily responsible for this growth and 90% of exploration in Yukon is conducted by junior exploration companies which contribute significantly to the Yukon's economic development.

Between 2004 and 2006 total exploration expenditures increased from \$22 million in 2004 to just over \$100 million in 2006. Expenditures in 2007 were \$140 million, \$110 million in 2008 and a \$100 million in 2009.

Exploration expenditures for 2011 are estimated to be over \$300 million, almost twice the previous record of \$157 million set in 2010.

There are 107 active mining companies in the territory who staked 83,161 quartz claims in 2010 and a record 114,587 claims in 2011.

With three operating mines, the current mineral production value is estimated to be approximately \$420 million.

Tourism, another key economic driver, is holding its own despite the economic problems in the United States and Europe.

Annual tourism visitation for 2011 is estimated to be around 320,000 following strong growth in international border crossings in 2010.

While Yukon's labour force continues to grow, the territory continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada with the unemployment rate for 2011 expected to be under 6% for the year.

Based on the strong year-to-date numbers for building permits the 2011 forecast has been revised upward to \$180 million, which would represent a record value for Yukon.

Given the growth in retail sales posted in the first nine months of 2011, it appears that the 2011 total will likely exceed the May forecast of \$630 million and total over \$660 million.

Mr. Speaker, most of these indicators are from 2011.

We are now in the first quarter of 2012 and the population and economy are continuing to grow.

The question has to be asked: "Where will the territory be five to ten years from now should these trends continue?"

SO GOES MINING SO GOES YUKON

Yukon has a rich mining history. So goes mining so goes Yukon.

Mining has continued to be the cornerstone of the Yukon economy from the days of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 to the present day.

The territory has experienced several boom-and-bust cycles over the years.

Placer gold mining was the backbone of the Yukon economy from the time of the Gold Rush until the early 1920's. It rose in prominence again from the 1940's to the 1960's and remains an economic mainstay to this very day.

High-grade silver/lead veins were first discovered in the Keno Hill area in 1906. The first mill was constructed in 1925 with intermittent development and production until 1941.

The Keno Hill mines were reactivated in 1945 and operated more or less continuously until production was suspended in January 1989 due to low silver prices.

During its time, the Keno Hill area was the second largest silver producing district in Canada.

Skarn copper mineralization was first discovered in the Whitehorse area in 1897 with shipments of high-grade ore totalling 153,000 tonnes prior to 1930. In 1966, a 1,800 tonne-per-day mill was constructed followed by an open-pit mining operation that lasted until 1982.

Massive sulphide zinc/lead/silver mineralization was first discovered near Vangorda Creek in the Anvil Range in 1953. The huge Faro ore body was discovered in 1965 and mine production commenced in 1970 and continued intermittently until it finally closed in 1997.

When the Yukon Party took office in 2002, Yukon's mining industry was almost defunct with annual mining exploration and development spending in the territory being less than \$10 million.

There were several factors causing this decline irrespective of world mineral prices.

There was a lack of confidence in Yukon's mining industry due in large measure to an improper balance in government policy, regulation and legislation between the economy and the environment.

Unsettled land claims, a cumbersome time consuming Ottawa-based permitting regime and implementation of policies such as the Yukon Protected Areas Strategy at the territorial level and placer mining policies at the federal level impeded Yukon's mining and other resource industries.

Yukon experienced seven years of economic recession and Yukon's population had been in decline for six consecutive years following the closure of the Faro mine in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to compare where Yukon stands today in stark contrast to where it stood in 2002.

Yukon now has three operating mines:

- Capstone's Minto Mine
- Alexco's Keno Hill Mines properties; and
- Yukon Zinc's Wolverine Mine

Together these three mines directly employ more than 600 workers.

Four major mining projects are in the permitting stage. These projects could employ an additional 1,000 workers, providing additional economic growth and opportunity for Yukon people and business.

Over 2,500 direct jobs are currently working in placer mining operations and mineral exploration throughout Yukon.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines attributes the success of the mining industry in Yukon today to three key factors:

1. the devolution of land and resource management to the Government of Yukon by the Government of Canada in 2003.
2. comprehensive Land Claims Agreements being reached with 11 of 14 Yukon First Nations; and
3. the establishment of a single assessment authority on behalf of all responsible authorities (Yukon, Canada and First Nations) that has greatly simplified the assessment process and provides for more certainty and transparency in the permitting process.

Ten days ago, the Fraser Institute's "Survey of Mining Companies" announced that the Yukon is the tenth most attractive jurisdiction for mineral exploration and development in the world and the first Canadian territory to ever reach the top ten.

The survey assessed 93 jurisdictions around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the question earlier where the Yukon will be five to ten years from now should this positive trend continue.

In a recent report by Deloitte, "Extracting value – Yukon mining 2011, a core opportunity," it states eight companies anticipate having a newly producing mine by 2015 and an additional four have planned production no later than 2018.

Capital expenditures of \$5.242 billion, associated with mine construction is anticipated by 2018.

If even a quarter of this prediction proves true, there will be a significant impact on Yukon.

We have been advised that Victoria Gold Corporation's Eagle property near Mayo will be in production by 2014-2015. During construction there will be 415 direct jobs created and 384 jobs for the operations phase.

North American Tungsten reopened its CanTung Mine in October of 2010 and latest estimates have the mine with enough mineral reserves to support a mine life of four years ending in the fourth quarter of 2014.

The company's MacTung deposit has been identified as one of the largest high grade tungsten deposits in the world.

North American Tungsten is ramping up mine development activity at MacTung and anticipates major construction to begin in 2013-2014.

Selwyn Chihong Mining Ltd.'s Selwyn Project located at Howard's Pass on the Yukon – Northwest Territories border is one of the largest undeveloped zinc-lead deposits in the world.

The mineral resources are contained in more than 12 zones or sub-deposits, collectively part of one giant mineral deposit that is at least 38 kilometers in length.

The Selwyn zinc-lead deposit has the potential to be defined as the largest in the world.

The company is planning to submit its project proposal to YESAB by early spring 2012.

Western Copper and Gold's Casino property due west of Pelly Crossing is another massive deposit containing gold, copper, molybdenum and silver having a twenty three to fifty year mine life.

Should it proceed to construction, it would create 17,691 jobs in Canada with 3,340 jobs being in Yukon during the four year construction phase, and 1,610 jobs in Canada with 1,054 being in Yukon for the operations phase.

It would require 120 megawatts of power almost equivalent to the territory's total current energy supply.

Heap leach gold production has been targeted for 2017 with milling operation production being slated for 2019.

Mr. Speaker, I won't take the time to describe the other twelve major mining projects in Yukon today nor do I have a crystal ball to foretell the future of which of these ventures will ultimately turn into operating mines.

If I had that ability, Mr. Speaker, I would likely not be standing here before you today.

Suffice it to say that should one of these large mines come into production, Yukon would achieve a new plateau providing a stable foundation for economic growth and prosperity in the territory for decades to come.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES

Mr. Speaker, the Yukon Party's 2011 Election Platform, "Moving Forward Together," continues to build on the four pillars of the previous nine Yukon Party Government budgets: A Better Quality of Life, Environment, Economy and Good Governance.

Our platform deals with the challenges that a growing prosperous economy creates:

- the increasing demand for clean, affordable energy;
- the increasing demand for improved transportation and communication infrastructure;
- housing and land availability
- increased pressures on our land and resource management systems designed to protect Yukon's environment;
- achieving a final plan for the Peel Watershed Region that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy by following the processes set out in the Umbrella Final Agreement;
- increasing pressures on our health and social services safety net; and
- the increasing demand for more education and training facilities and programs to develop a skilled labour force.

We welcome these challenges.

I will address how we are going about meeting these challenges under the four pillars.

PROMOTING A STRONG, DIVERSIFIED PRIVATE SECTOR ECONOMY

Mr. Speaker, one of the greatest challenges facing Yukon in terms of promoting a strong, diversified private sector economy is the provision of affordable, clean energy.

The total hydro generating capacity for the Yukon Energy Corporation inclusive of the dams at Whitehorse, Aishihik, Mayo, Mayo B and the third turbine at Aishihik is 92 megawatts.

The total electricity generation capacity combining that generated by the Yukon Energy Corporation and the Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and including hydro, diesel and wind is 149.5 megawatts.

As stated earlier, the Casino Mine alone will require 120 megawatts of power.

In the 2011 election campaign, the Yukon Party committed our government to meet the territory's energy needs by investing in short, medium and long-term solutions.

For the short term, we completed the Mayo B hydro project that will provide an additional 10 MW, the development of an Independent Power Producer Policy (IPP) and Net Metering.

For the near to medium term, we believe development of the natural gas industry, in particular Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is the best alternative.

It is cleaner than diesel and is about half the cost.

Further, Northern Cross in partnership with China National Offshore Oil Company Ltd. (CNOOC) is in the process of developing its natural gas reserves out of the Eagle Plains basin.

Accordingly, natural gas is going to be our primary focus for development to meet Yukon's near to medium term energy needs.

For the longer-term, we would like to focus on larger scale hydro-electric projects; however, the development of such projects would be dependent upon connecting the territory's power grid west to Alaska and/or south to British Columbia in order to sell excess power to other jurisdictions. The estimated cost for connecting the Yukon grid to the British Columbia grid is between \$1.5 to \$2 billion.

Yukon simply doesn't have the financial capacity to undertake large hydro-electric projects or to connect the territorial grids in British Columbia or Alaska at the present time or for the foreseeable future.

Increasing Yukon's energy capacity even for the short to medium term is going to require partnerships – partnerships with the mining and oil and gas industries, partnerships with Yukon First Nations, Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. and the private sector as well as, hopefully, with the Government of Canada.

In a recent survey of Chief Executive Officers, one CEO was quoted as saying "Power and transportation needs a significant upgrade to allow Yukon's mineral potential to be realized." The comments of other CEO's in the survey echoed this remark.

Our government, like the two previous Yukon Party governments, continues to invest heavily in transportation infrastructure, primary roads, secondary roads, rural roads, resource roads, bridges and airports.

Under the Shakwak project, \$7 million has been allocated to stabilize and upgrade the Haines Road, \$8 million for the Alaska Highway, a further \$1 million from the Yukon Government will be spent to rehabilitate areas impacted by permafrost degradation on the north Alaska Highway.

The Campbell Highway will be undergoing reconstruction from km 10 to 190 with an allocation of \$7.25 million and a further \$1.5 million will be utilized for surfacing to minimize road degradation under current industrial traffic loads.

The 2012-2013 Budget is providing \$1.6 million to replace failing culverts at Too Much Gold and All Gold Creeks on the Klondike Highway as well as \$1.45 million to improve safety and road conditions on the North Canol Road.

The Atlin Road will be reconstructed from km 32 to 36 and will see BST work and re-vegetation from km 17 to 22 and km 36 to 41 at a cost of \$2.6 million.

Other highway improvements will include:

- \$2 million for the Takhini Hotsprings road reconstruction;
- \$500,000 for rehabilitation and surfacing of the Silver Trail;
- \$900,000 for surfacing, spot repairs and erosion control for the Dempster Highway;
- \$500,000 for the Resource Access Road Program;
- \$200,000 for the Rural Road Upgrading Program; and
- \$1 million for surfacing and safety improvements on various secondary roads throughout Yukon.

The Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport will also see improvement projects to support airside activities including taxiway improvements, hangar rehabilitation and the installation of a second bridge or jet way.

The 2012-2013 Budget is providing \$1.875 million for these improvements.

Mr. Speaker, a further \$7.406 million over two years (2012-2013 - \$3,321,050 and 2013-2014 - \$4,085,120) is being provided to extend water and sewer services to the south commercial area at the Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport.

Water and sewer service currently end at the air terminal building. Lack of water is hindering development in the area as the City of Whitehorse will not issue development permits for new construction without a commitment to provide sufficient water for structural firefighting purposes. This is directly affecting Air North and Alkan Air expansion plans.

In addition Yukon Government's Wildland Fire Management (WFM) needs upgrades to their current water supply system for the air tanker base. This is an above ground system that does not meet Transport Canada requirements so any replacement will need to be buried even one undertaken by WFM in the absence of any water and sewer extension.

Extensions of water and sewer will also enhance the development potential of currently unoccupied lease parcels.

The Budget is also providing \$1.82 million to address airside deficiencies at Yukon aerodromes.

Projects include airfield levelling, brushing, safety and security improvements, lighting/navigational aid upgrades, installation of Run-up Pads and application of EK35 runway enhancement at Burwash, Dawson and Mayo.

Bridge work includes \$6 million for major rehabilitation including substructure improvements and deck repairs for the Upper Liard Bridge.

A further \$1.56 million is being allocated for rehabilitation work on the Aishihik River, Jarvis Creek, Stewart River and Haldune Creek bridges.

Communication infrastructure is also important for a growing and expanding economy.

By working with Northwestel over the years, every community in Yukon now has cell phone and high speed internet connectivity. However, broad band capacity could be improved and there is no redundancy.

If the sole fibre-optic cable is damaged, broadband traffic is re-routed through a slower and older, micro-wave system.

There may be opportunities by working with Northwestel and Alaska to address the redundancy issue. One option would be for a fibre-optic cable to run from Carcross to Skagway connecting with Juneau and Seattle.

There may also be opportunities to work with Northwestel and the Canadian Space Agency to extend a fibre-optic cable up the Dempster Highway to Eagle Plains to set up a system that retrieves information from foreign satellites.

Mr. Speaker, the more diversified an economy is, the stronger it is.

Successive Yukon Party governments have championed diversification by promoting natural resource development, research and development, information technology, agriculture, forestry, tourism, trade, arts and culture, film and sound, manufacturing, trapping, outfitting and wilderness tourism, and small business.

Of interest here, Yukon is set to host federal, provincial and territorial agricultural ministers in September 2012. This will allow for the subsequent bilateral agreement negotiations between the Yukon Government and the Government of Canada to take place.

The bilateral agreement provides funding for Yukon agricultural projects within the framework of the Growing Forward Multilateral Agreement and is mainly targeted towards producers and processors. Farm groups, non-profit organizations and territorial, municipal and First Nations governments are also eligible.

Tourism and Culture has always been and remains an economic mainstay.

Yukon Party governments have invested heavily in tourism marketing campaigns over the years with considerable success.

In February 2011, Yukon and Canada jointly announced funding toward Yukon's Overseas Travel Destination Awareness marketing campaign aimed at Europe, Australia, Japan and South Korea.

The joint partnership with the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) has identified \$3.4 million over four years with \$490,000 being allocated in 2012-2013 to continue the campaign to promote and strengthen the awareness of Yukon to overseas international travel trade, media and consumer markets.

Currently, Yukon is benefitting from a dramatic increase in the number of Japanese travelers visiting the territory this winter to experience the aurora borealis.

CanNor is also providing \$800,000 in 2012-2013 to fund Canada's North Marketing Campaign aimed at promoting the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut as travel destinations to southern Canadians.

This May, Yukon will host the 2012 Canadian Tourism Commission's Go Media Marketplace in Whitehorse that will bring in approximately 150 of the top travel media from around the world. This is the first time that Go Media has been held north of the 60th parallel and is an opportunity to showcase our world class destination to important media influences.

Yukon Party governments have also invested heavily in tourism, arts and cultural infrastructure, namely: the Old Firehall and Roundhouse in downtown Whitehorse, the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre and Whitehorse Public Library, as well as the new Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Da Ku Cultural Centre in Haines Junction scheduled to be open this fall.

We are providing five years of funding certainty for the Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Centre. The commercialization of cold climate technologies will provide important economic opportunities for Yukoners and contribute to the diversification of the Yukon economy.

Housing and land availability have emerged as a major challenge as a result of Yukon's growing, prosperous economy.

Our government is working with the City of Whitehorse, rural municipalities, First Nations and private developers to make land available for community, residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial purposes.

A request for expressions of interest on potential approaches to private sector development of affordable rental units was issued in November 2011.

Opportunities to incorporate the concepts and recommendations received into future projects and land offerings are being explored and options for the release of lot 262 are being developed for this spring.

The Yukon Government has a considerable number of lots in downtown Whitehorse that could also be developed.

A lottery and tender for 57 residential and 20 industrial lots and an evaluative process for release of three agricultural parcels is underway. Four of the residential lots are in Whitehorse and 53 are in Haines Junction. The 20 industrial lots are in Dawson City and the three agricultural lots are in Haines Junction.

Whistle Bend Phase One is scheduled for the fall of 2012 and will include 93 single family, 8 duplex and 9 multi-family lots plus one commercial and one school site.

Our government and the Kwanlin Dün First Nation signed a Letter of Understanding that enables Yukon and the First Nation to work together on potential residential land opportunities on Kwanlin Dün Settlement Land in the Whitehorse area.

Mr. Speaker, I recently met with the Mayor and Council of the City of Whitehorse and offered assistance to them to expedite the development of Phases 3, 4 and 5 of Whistle Bend. The 2012-2013 Budget provides \$5 million to start the detailed engineering and construction for these future phases to ensure additional building lots are available in 2014.

While Whistle Bend will accommodate 8,000 people, it is our belief and conviction that planning new areas for residential expansion should begin now.

Land development on the east side of the Yukon River and to the North would require the construction of another bridge and collaboration with Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations.

Our government has offered financial support to the City of Whitehorse to begin planning future developments.

Our government is committed to modernizing the Land Titles System. A Land Titles inspector will prepare a report with recommendations for immediate improvements to business processes as well as identify specific areas for legislative and systems modernization.

The value and number of transactions processed by the Land Titles Office continues to reach historically high levels. The value of real estate transactions for 2010-2011 was just over \$228 million, a 24% increase from the year before.

The 2012-2013 Budget is providing \$34.984 million for land development this year.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE

Mr. Speaker, the unprecedented high level of resource activity is placing increased pressures on our land and resource management systems designed to protect Yukon's environment.

Accordingly, our government is providing additional capacity for inspections related to mines and mineral exploration.

The Client Services and Inspections Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will be expanding its capacity for conducting inspections and ensuring regulatory and environmental compliance.

The Faro and Mount Nansen projects are entering a new phase where both will be completing remediation design and planning for assessment and permitting.

Due to the increased level of activity and the movement of these projects towards implementation, both projects require a significant increase in project funds of \$24,768 million for a total of \$49,985 million.

The Government of Canada, through the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan provides 100% funding for site operations and the development of remediation plans.

Yukon's Department of Environment is conducting a three-year \$452,000 Cumulative Effects Baseline Study.

The Fish and Wildlife, Water Resources and Environmental Programs branches are coordinating their efforts to acquire information on the cumulative effects of quartz mining exploration in three Yukon areas.

The information is to guide the long-term conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in order to support agencies responsible for environmental assessment and land disposition requests.

A further \$60,000 is being allocated to acquire water monitoring equipment to be used by the Water Resources Branch to gather information that will provide an understanding of the industrial impacts on waterways in the remote but highly active White Gold District.

The Department of Environment has established the Yukon Water website as the single source web portal to help individuals, industry, governments, non-government organizations and regulatory agencies get the information they need on everything to do with water in Yukon.

The site lists over 1,300 locations around the territory where water is being monitored, or was studied in the past, and provides details on how water is used for mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and oil and gas.

Information is also provided on the federal, territorial, municipal and First Nation governments and their role in water management, as well as the regulatory agencies which review water use in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to creating a Yukon Water Strategy that will ensure Yukoners have access to safe drinking water, increase data collection and information such as the yukonwater.ca website I described above, and upgrade drinking water and waste water treatment facilities in communities to meet new standards for water quality.

On February 16, 2012, our government contracted an independent consultant company to conduct a health impact assessment as part of its due diligence to ensure the integrity of the water supply at Keno.

Yukon Party governments in previous budgets have appropriated considerable financial resources to ensure Yukon communities have clean drinking water.

The 2012-2013 Budget is no exception.

Under the Building Canada Plan, the Department of Community Services is providing \$12.3 million in 2012-2013 as part of a multi-year program to improve the water and wastewater systems throughout Yukon. This work includes replacement of in-ground piping in Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo and Watson Lake.

A further \$15 million under the Building Canada Plan, is being provided for the construction of new wells, pump houses and treatment plants in Burwash, Carcross, Deep Creek, Dawson, Mendenhall, Haines Junction, Mayo, Old Crow, Ross River, Tagish and Teslin to improve the quality of potable water in communities.

Our government continues to implement initiatives in keeping with the Yukon Solid Waste Action Plan, including composting at community solid waste facilities, waste compaction systems, household hazardous waste containment facilities, installation of ground water monitoring wells in 18 Yukon landfills and installation of recycling bins and signage at all Yukon-operated solid waste facilities to provide the public with greater opportunity to recycle their solid waste.

The 2012-2013 Budget includes a \$766,000 increase in the operations and maintenance budget for solid waste management together with almost \$3.4 million in additional capital dollars, including projects identified under the Gas Tax Fund and the Building Canada Fund.

Since 2009, Yukon has met a number of goals with the Solid Waste Action Plan including an end to open burning of domestic waste last January at all 20 unincorporated solid waste facilities. These former open trench burning sites have been transformed into transfer stations or full service solid waste facilities.

We continue to implement our government's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as well as support the Yukon Research Centre at Yukon College.

The centre combines research, natural and social sciences and traditional knowledge to create solutions for northern climates, and is receiving \$1.088 million per year for the next two years to fund its operations.

Mr. Speaker, despite the controversy over the Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan, Yukon Party governments have done more to protect and preserve Yukon's environment and wildlife than any previous Yukon government.

Currently Yukon has 12.68% of its land protected – second only to British Columbia.

Six areas have been designated as future territorial parks and seven Habitat Protection Areas have been established.

Further, the previous Yukon Party government is the only Yukon government to succeed in developing a regional land use plan, the North Yukon Regional Land Use Plan, since the Umbrella Final Agreement was signed off in 1993.

The Peel Watershed Regional Land Use Plan was an issue in the 2011 territorial election campaign.

The Yukon Conservation Society, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Opposition political parties and the four affected First Nations all indicated they were supporting positions of either 100% to 80% protection for the Peel Watershed.

During the election campaign, the Yukon Party did not indicate its support for this high level of protection, but called instead for a final Peel plan that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

We were severely criticized for taking this position by those supporting 100% to 80% protection.

Mr. Speaker, there were cars driving around with bumper stickers reading “Protect the Peel. Let’s vote on it.”

On October 11, 2011, Yukoners did exercise their vote and elected a majority Yukon Party government for a historic third term.

Our government has followed the planning process set out in the Umbrella Final Agreement and will continue to do so.

In the final stages of the planning process, we will consult with First Nations, stakeholders and the public to seek a final plan for the Peel Watershed Region that protects the environment and respects all sectors of the economy.

ACHIEVING A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr. Speaker, “Achieving a Better Quality of Life” is one of the central pillars of our 2011 Election Platform, “Moving Forward Together.”

Another major challenge created by the territory’s growing, prosperous economy is the increasing demand for more education and training facilities and programs to develop a skilled labour force.

Our government is committed to working towards developing Yukon College into a northern university over time.

The Yukon Research Centre and the Cold Climate Innovation Centre are already located at Yukon College and there are plans to develop a centre for Northern Innovation in Mining to be located at the college as well.

In January 2012, Yukon’s labour force saw yet another record-high of 20,900 people. Of those 19,600 were employed.

Since 2004, Yukon has registered year over year in-migration and an expanding labour force where the growth is concentrated in the 25 to 34 age group. This is the age group that has children.

There will be a need for more schools and training facilities.

We must train Yukoners for Yukon opportunities.

Our government has established a new \$75,000 annual Business Training Fund to help Yukon businesses access training opportunities to further contribute to Yukon’s economic growth.

The training fund will be administered by the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce and offer training opportunities to businesses and individuals to create job opportunities for Yukon residents.

The Business Training Fund resulted from a recommendation in the action plan for the 2011 Comprehensive Skills and Trades Training Strategy, which was developed by the Government of Yukon working together with local labour market stakeholders, including business and industry, the Government of Canada, First Nation governments and non-government organizations. The work done by these groups was the result of the Labour Market Framework which was created to ensure Yukon has the workforce it needs.

The Labour Market Framework Strategies comprise five strategies: Labour Market Information Strategy, Comprehensive Skills and Trades Training Strategy, Immigration Strategy, Recruitment Strategy and the Employee Retention Strategy.

We recognize that the Yukon will need to attract additional labour from other regions of the country and from around the world.

There is going to be an increasing demand for both skilled and unskilled labour.

Improvements have been made to the Yukon Nominee Program to make it easier for applicants to apply.

Four new Stakeholder Committees were created in the summer of 2011 under the Labour Market Framework. The committees oversee implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, and include members from the business community, industry, non-government organizations, educational institutions and First Nation governments.

The Licensed Practical Nurse Program launched by the previous Yukon Party Government in 2009 at Yukon College has graduated all 11 people who were enrolled in the first intake.

All of these graduates are now working in the Yukon healthcare field.

Our government will provide \$1.86 million to extend the LPN program to 2016. This continuation will allow two more intakes of up to 15 practical nurse students per class to graduate and find work in Yukon.

An updated construction schedule has been established for the F.H. Collins Secondary School Replacement Project.

The new schedule will allow our government the time required to review the design and ensure it takes into account all the objectives and input received from the education community.

The Wood Street Centre is introducing a new program this year that is open to all grade nine and ten students.

The new program is entitled CHAOS, the Community, Heritage, Adventure, Outdoors and Skills 9, program. It offers integration of the subject areas and develops understanding and connections to First Nations knowledge, traditions, skills, values and beliefs.

The program was developed in response to the Secondary School Programming Review Report and the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee's strategic plan.

Yukon First Nation language programs are offered in 21 of 28 Yukon schools and include seven of the eight Yukon First Nation language groups. This is a significant accomplishment.

The Arrest Processing Unit, formerly known as the Secure Assessment Centre will be constructed to replace the RCMP detachment cells.

This \$2.385 million investment is a major step forward in providing a more humane way of processing prisoners who will have access to 24 hour nursing and specially trained correctional staff while they are held pending processing.

The Department of Justice is moving forward with implementing another of the recommendations of the "Sharing Common Ground" report by appointing members to the Yukon Police Council.

The Yukon Police Council was created in response to the “Review of Yukon’s Police Force.”

The role of the Yukon Police Council is to:

- ensure that a broad representation of Yukon citizens have input into the Territorial Police Service objectives, priorities and goals established by the Minister of Justice;
- ensure that community needs and values are reflected in policing priorities;
- provide advice that the Minister of Justice may consider when establishing policing objectives, priorities and goals pursuant to the Territorial Police Services Agreement; and
- increase the flow of information between citizens, the Department of Justice and “M” Division of the RCMP.

Our government is proud of the new state-of-the-art Whitehorse Correctional Centre, one of the largest capital projects ever undertaken by any Yukon Government.

Many previous governments talked and complained about the old Whitehorse Correctional Centre, but it took a Yukon Party government to actually replace the aging facility.

Yukon is a recognized leader in dealing with FASD with the establishment of the Community Wellness Court, a therapeutic court in the Yukon justice system as well as our support for the Land-Based Healing Pilot Program at Jackson Lake administered by the Kwanlin Dün First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, we have been contacting Yukon First Nation chiefs in order to ascertain if there is support for the concept of one major land-based treatment program in Yukon.

Our government is committed to providing \$1 million over the course of our mandate to support a land-based treatment program that was so near and dear to the heart of our former colleague the Honourable John Edzerza, the MLA for McIntyre Takhini.

Dividing up the \$1 million 14 ways for individual First Nation land-based treatment programs will not be as effective as having one unified treatment centre. Further, if we combine our resources we may be able to attract other funding sources and other jurisdictions.

We raised this issue already with the federal Health Minister, the Honourable Leona Aglukkak, and she expressed an interest in the concept.

Should we succeed in developing a certified treatment program that equals that found at Round Lake in British Columbia, we may in fact attract clients from the other two territories and the provinces on a fee for service basis.

We believe Kwanlin Dün's Jackson Lake land-based treatment program would be the natural choice because of its experience and location.

Should Yukon First Nations endorse this concept, we would like to put it on the agenda for the Yukon Forum for discussion in order to determine how to proceed.

At the present time, we are also working with the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society of Yukon (FASSY) to continue their good work as their funding agreement with Canada is due to expire.

Mr. Speaker, Yukon's expanding population and growing economy are creating public demands for more developed lots and affordable housing.

Housing and land availability are the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

We are addressing both issues.

The Yukon Housing Corporation through Economic Stimulus funding has constructed in excess of 125 new units along with upgrading 350 units to better meet the housing needs of low and moderate income earners.

No previous government has done more and we intend to continue to address the housing needs of Yukoners.

The Women's Directorate has committed a total of \$4.5 million for a second stage housing facility in Whitehorse.

"Betty's Haven" will provide 10 units of supportive, secure and affordable transitional housing for 12 to 18 months to women and their children who are fleeing abuse.

This is another election commitment that has been met.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to our lobbying efforts we were able to secure a two-year extension to the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative or THSSI until 2014. This funding is used to support healthcare innovation and transformation and to improve access to services. We plan to work with our two sister territories to develop a business case for presentation to the federal government to justify a continuation of this funding for a longer term.

Health care costs are constantly rising. The 2012-2013 Budget includes \$4.048 million to deal with the increase in costs and volumes of hospital claims.

Our government is providing a \$561,000 increase in funding to help NGO's keep up with the cost of living by recognizing that these organizations costs also increase and that those costs should not be absorbed at the expense of core programs.

The Department of Health and Social Services is providing \$65,000 in this budget to continue to support the Challenge program for people with mental disabilities to learn life and job skills at Bridges Café in Shipyards Park.

An additional nurse is being added to the roster in Mayo and \$797,000 is being provided to provide staff for six additional beds at the Whitehorse General Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Social Services is allocating \$60,000 to begin capital planning for the replacement of the Sarah Steele Building in Whitehorse.

Our government is committed to taking good care of our seniors and those with disabilities. Specific initiatives include:

- \$457,000 to add 6 FTE's to meet the significant growth in the Home Care client numbers and the complexity of care needs;
- \$653,000 for planning for the replacement of McDonald Lodge in Dawson City;
- \$110,000 to undertake a feasibility study and functional planning for continuing care; and
- \$2.244 million for a 10-year lease for the Thomson Centre and operation and maintenance of an additional 10 bed care unit.

Mr. Speaker, community infrastructure plays a key role in contributing to Yukoner's quality of life.

Construction is underway for a new \$7.3 million Emergency Response Centre that will serve as the city's primary ambulance station in addition to the Riverdale station.

The addition of a centrally-located centre will bolster Yukon's vital emergency medical services and reduce response times to growing neighbourhoods along Hamilton Boulevard, the Alaska Highway and the new Whistle Bend development.

Emergency responders play a significant role in fostering safe and healthy communities.

Our government also acquired a new \$147,000 state-of-the-art ambulance that will be part of a fleet of 23 ambulances that provides territory-wide Emergency Medical Services coverage.

The 2012-2013 Budget is also allocating \$300,000 to commence work on the planning and design of a new Beaver Creek Fire Hall to replace the existing building. The new facility will house both the Beaver Creek Volunteer Fire Department and the community EMS volunteers.

Mr. Speaker, 2012-2013 will see the last phase of the multiple projects that comprise the Whitehorse Waterfront Development under the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF). This \$3 million allocation will relocate the high voltage power lines that cross the river at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.

As most Yukoners now know, the Whitehorse Public Library has successfully relocated to leased space adjacent to the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre.

The library has settled into its new home and has been well received by the public as is demonstrated by increased use and new users. Once the Cultural Centre is in operation, there will be opportunities for shared programs, promotion and other initiatives.

Other potential library moves concern Beaver Creek and Carcross. The Department of Community Services is exploring options for relocating the Beaver Creek Library once the fire hall space is no longer available and replacing the Carcross Library location.

Mr. Speaker, sports and recreation are essential ingredients to improving the quality of life of Yukoners.

Look no further than the legacy left by the 2007 Canada Winter Games. The Canada Games Centre and other facilities were put to good use last week when Whitehorse hosted the 2012 Arctic Winter Games.

Recreation facilities are equally important to rural Yukon communities.

The fire in March 2011 that destroyed the Ross River Recreation Centre was a tragedy for that community.

Ever since the fire, the Yukon Government has worked closely with members of the community to build a temporary ice rink and plan for a replacement facility.

As an interim step, in December of 2011 our government constructed an outdoor rink and the Yukon Mine Legacy Foundation coordinated in-kind donations of material and labour and provided \$10,000 to build and install a warm-up hut.

The Yukon Party committed to constructing a new recreation centre for Ross River in its 2011 Election Platform.

Our government is following through on that commitment. Construction will begin this summer on a new \$7 million recreation centre for Ross River.

The new facility will be an important gathering place for youth and community members that will promote active and healthy living.

PRACTISING GOOD GOVERNANCE

Mr. Speaker practicing good governance is another pillar of the Yukon Party's 2011 Election Platform.

Our vision for Yukon's coming of age is through effective leadership, political stability, cooperative governance and strong fiscal management.

Our government supports cooperative governance and forming partnerships.

We work with Yukon First Nations through bilateral accords, the Yukon Forum and the Intergovernmental Forum to advance the interests of all Yukoners based upon mutual respect of each other's jurisdiction.

We fully respect and support the implementation of the treaties and work with the three non-settlement Yukon First Nations to advance their interests as well.

In Resource Revenue Sharing discussions with Canada, we are fully committed to ensuring that resource revenues remain in Yukon for the benefit of all Yukoners.

We are pursuing that goal through negotiations with Canada and in concert with Yukon self-governing First Nations.

We successfully negotiated a Yukon Asset Construction Agreement with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation in September 2011 regarding a Yukon Government water infrastructure project in Carcross.

We successfully negotiated a Yukon Asset Construction Agreement with the Kwanlin Dün First Nation regarding the F.H. Collins replacement project.

On August 31, 2011, we signed a Residential Land Development LOU with Kwanlin Dün to work collaboratively to investigate development opportunities in relation to Kwanlin Dün settlement land.

Mr. Speaker, our government also works cooperatively with municipal governments and the Association of Yukon Communities.

We are working in partnership with communities to implement the findings of the *Our Towns, Our Future* Review.

We are preparing to launch a multi-year review of the *Municipal Act* in partnership with the Association of Yukon Communities.

We work in partnership with our two sister territories through the Northern Premiers' Forum to advance pan-northern positions on matters such as the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative with the federal government as well as with the provinces through the Council of the Federation.

We work in partnership with the Western Premiers and have bilateral accords with our neighbours, Alaska, Alberta and British Columbia.

We work in partnership with the members of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.

We also enjoy a very constructive good working relationship with the Government of Canada, Yukon's Member of Parliament and Yukon's Senator.

Mr. Speaker, our main task is to serve Yukoners and we are always striving to find better ways to accomplish that task.

One of the commitments we made in our 2011 Election Platform was to continue to explore options to utilize technology to make government services available online or to improve existing services.

The French Language Services Directorate (FSLD) has worked tirelessly to improve access to French content on the Yukon Government's websites and has achieved substantial results in the past year. In total the Yukon Government now administers 26 websites in French, compared to 18 in 2011-2012. All French speaking Yukoners benefit from this development. Yukoners are now able to access the motor vehicles branch registration services entirely in French.

The Department of Community Services is improving three of its current systems by laying the foundation for a future web portal that:

- in the case of the Property Assessment and Taxation System will give citizens access to the assessment roll and details of their individual assessment;
- in the case of the Corporate Affairs System, will permit businesses and lawyers to submit documents electronically; and
- in the case of the Building Safety System will allow citizens and contractors to apply for building permits on-line, review the status of their application, request inspections and get copies of the final approval.

Mr. Speaker, part of good governance is good record keeping, storage and protection.

The Department of Highways and Public Works through its Records Program Improvement Initiative has allocated \$1.115 million to conduct this multi-year corporate initiative that will improve records management practices across government to a standard that will support the management of digital records.

The Yukon Government Corporate Information Systems (Finance, HR Records, Land Information Management System (LIMS), Data Warehouse) are regularly upgraded and enhanced to remain current as well as to improve the functionality of reporting in order to better meet government needs.

Yukon Archives is undertaking a major Cold Storage Expansion Project that will bring the facility into the 21st Century with much needed storage space given the amount of material the archives collects each year.

In 2012-2013, \$291,000 in new funding will go towards the planning and design work of the new storage vault/cold vault for archival records.

It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2013-2014 at an approximate cost of \$2.6 million.

This much needed work will ensure the long-term preservation of Yukon's precious archival heritage that captures not only the personal stories of Yukoners who have helped to shape this great territory, but also houses many legal records defining Yukon's economic and social growth.

CONCLUSION – MANAGING PROSPERITY

Mr. Speaker, the 2012-2013 Budget is the first budget of our renewed mandate that will begin the process of implementing the commitments we made to Yukoners in our 2011 Election Platform, “Moving Forward Together.”

As you can see we are serious about meeting our commitments, about doing what we said we were going to do.

We ask for patience in that we cannot meet all our commitments in one budget.

We have a five-year mandate with many more budgets yet to come.

Rest assured the commitments we made will be met.

As Robert Service said “a promise made is a debt unpaid” and we will deliver on our promises. We have the fiscal capacity to fulfil these promises.

Mr. Speaker, the 2012-2013 Budget in large measure is designed to manage prosperity, to meet the challenges that a growing prosperous economy brings.

Yukon’s future indeed looks radiant.

I commend the 2012-2013 Budget to all Members of this House.

May God Bless Yukon.

May God Bless Canada.

God Save the Queen on the occasion of Her Diamond Jubilee.

Long May She Continue to Reign Over Us.