

DENNIS BEVINGTON

MP WESTERN ARCTIC

Community Newsletter Fall 2009

Dear Friends,

Another Northern summer has come and gone, with festivals, assemblies, holidays, and other celebrations and get-togethers making the time go by very quickly.

Once again we come into a fall session in Parliament. The Parliamentary Agenda has all MP's back on the Hill on September 14, and will continue on till December 11th, barring the defeat of the minority Conservative government and an election.

The Government will be bringing forward an Economic Update at the end of September. There is much more to be done with the Stimulus Funds announced in the January budget. We need to ensure that these commitments are lived up to the full.

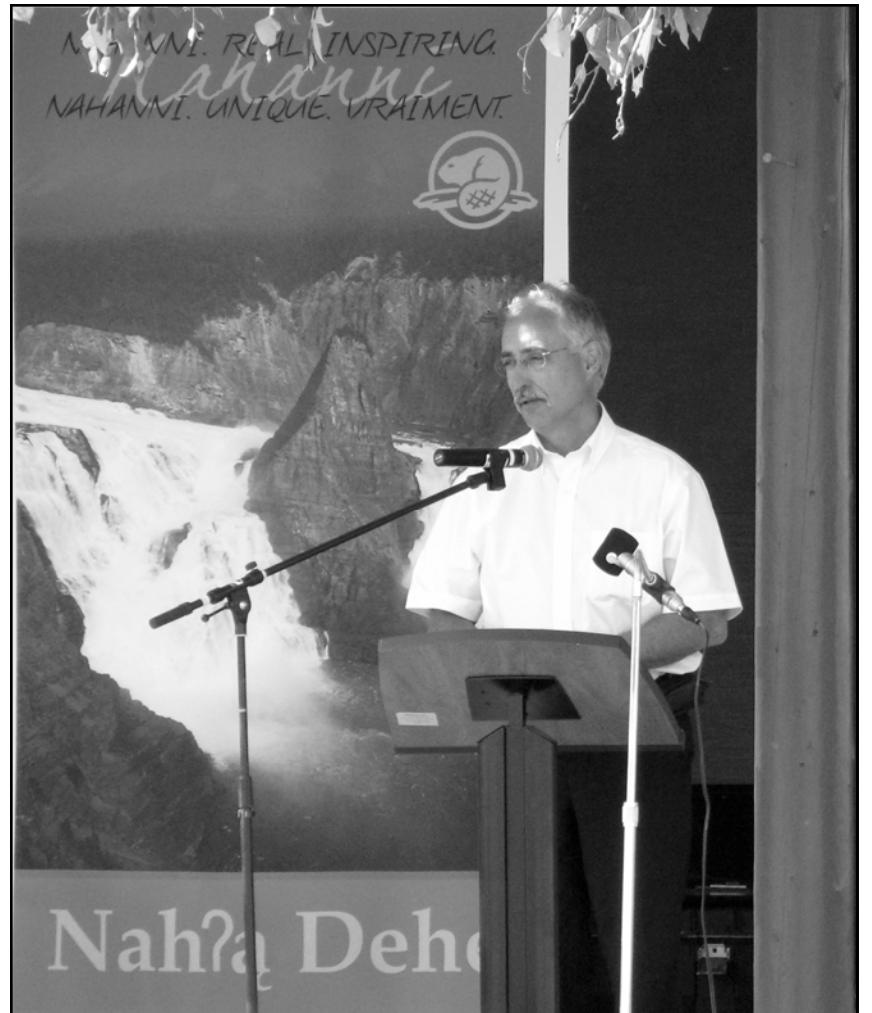
The summer has seen a number of Federal political events taking place in the NWT. The celebration of the expansion of Nahanni National Park was definitely one that was shared by all Canadians and represents a tremendous gift from the Deh Cho to Canada. The visit of the Governor General to Nunavut and her support for seal harvesters was another highlight that was well received by northerners.

However the visit by Prime Minister Harper to the North was much more controversial. His decision to ignore the best advice of everyone including his own advisors to locate the new Northern Economic Agency HQ in Iqaluit could undermine the validity of the Agencies future work.

The North remains a media center point these days. We need to ensure that the real needs of Northerners are well understood, that our land is respected and that the environmental challenges we are facing are not ignored.

I was pleased to be invited to participate in the Young Leaders Summit in Inuvik this August. It was great to see these young adults from across the North and Canada come together to plan for their active future, on issues such as climate change.

Have a great fall, and don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas or issues.



Dennis speaking at the recent Nahanni Park Expansion announcement made by the Federal Government.
Photo by: Anna Kikoak, Parks Canada

Inside:

NDP Aboriginal Commission p.2

Northern resolutions p.3

Employment Insurance, a Northern viewpoint p.3

MP's summer events p. 3

Harper's Northern Strategy p.4

H1N1 precautions p.4

Food Mail Program p.4

Precautions for H1N1 p.4



Dennis talking with Elders at the Deh Cho Assembly in Jean Marie River.



Dennis congratulates John and Mary Kay on their 70th wedding anniversary . The community celebration was held in Fort McPherson in June.

The New Democratic Party's Aboriginal Commission, Be Part of it

Formed on March 16th 2007 the New Democrat Aboriginal Commission (NDPAC) is an official body of the party, protected under the party's constitution and supported by the party's Federal Council. The Commission aims include:

- Develop and promote policy positions of value to Aboriginal people;
- Promote greater awareness among Canadians of the contributions of Aboriginal people to Canada and of issues concerning Aboriginal people;
- Allow for increased Aboriginal input and authority within the New Democrats particularly in the development of policy
- Work to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in party operations; and
- Promote the New Democrats amongst Aboriginal People.

The NDPAC is made up of First Nations people, Metis and Inuit who are New Democrats. Non-Aboriginal people who have an interest in promoting Aboriginal rights and issues and Aboriginal people who are not New Democrats may join as affiliate members.

Government and politics matter and it is time Aboriginal people have a greater voice. The New Democratic Party is the only federal political party which puts social justice first. New Democrats dare ready and willing to listen and act on what we hear, in order to build a Canada which puts people first. Joining the NDPAC is a tremendous opportunity to make a real positive difference on behalf of Aboriginal people across Canada.

At the recent New Democratic convention in Halifax the NDPAC was fully involved in the policy development process. The convention passed three important resolutions from NDPAC.

The first called for action to prevent violence against indigenous women. This resolution called for the Conservative government of Stephen Harper work with indigenous organizations and police forces to take action on the many missing Aboriginal women, ensure services like shelters and counseling are in place, establish a national hotline for and a registry of missing women and to increase education of police, justice officials and others to ensure effective action is taken to stop violence against indigenous women.

The second amended the New Democratic Party constitution to include the following as foundational principles of the party. As a

party, New Democrats believe in:

- Investing in First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities, notably in health and social services, education, housing, community and sanitary infrastructures and recreation;
- Developing restorative justice initiatives, consistent with First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures;
- Promoting the economic development of First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities by supporting traditional economies, social and physical infrastructures, access to capital and increased training; and
- Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Metis people in urban settings by funding Native Friendship Centres, investing in affordable housing, and supporting health, education, and training measures.

The final resolution recognizes the important role Inuit, Inuvialuit and Innu have played in Arctic Sovereignty. The resolution reads:

"Be it resolved that the New Democratic Party of Canada recognize that the Inuit, Inuvialuit and Innu have lived in the Arctic Archipelago for centuries, that they have hunted and travelled over the land, the ice and the Arctic seas and that this continuous usage is evidence of sovereignty in the Arctic Archipelago;

Be it further resolved that the New Democratic Party of Canada acknowledge that Inuit, Inuvialuit and Innu are all residents of Canada, and their sovereignty in the Arctic Archipelago should be asserted at all international meetings where Arctic matters are discussed."

"Our party's Aboriginal Commission has been the driver of key policy developments. The resolutions we passed demonstrate clearly that New Democrats are on the right path," said Jean Crowder (Nanaimo-Cowichan), critic for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Affairs. "We believe that fair deal starts with greater governance, which is why we significantly expanded the breadth of our policy on First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Aboriginal peoples need to have a greater say in the governance of their communities and lands at all levels – from local mining commissions to international negotiations over Arctic sovereignty."

If you want to find out more about NDPAC or wish to join, check out the Commission webpage at www.ndpac.ndp.ca or by contacting the Commission by e-mailing NDPAC@ndp.ca or by calling 613-236-3613.



Dennis with Robin Urquhart and Meghan Hajash from the Yukon. They attended the Young Leader's Summit for Northern Climate Change held in Inuvik on August 17 to 20. Photo: Daniel T'seleie

Summer in the NWT, the season for Assemblies

It was a busy summer for the Member of Parliament of the Western Arctic. Dennis's busy schedule included attending community events, festivals and Aboriginal Assemblies across the Northwest Territories.

"I was anxious for my staff to get the list of the Assemblies from the Dene Nation. The summer is my favorite time of the year to travel across the NWT," said Bevington.

In late June Dennis attended two assemblies. The first was the Akaitcho Assembly at the new community centre in Dettah before driving to Jean Marie River to attend the Deh Cho Assembly. On June 21st, Dennis helped flip a few pancakes, and spoke at the biggest National Aboriginal Day celebration in the NWT.

In July, Dennis attended Canada Day festivities in his hometown of Fort Smith. Then he travelled by boat with his long time friend and Aboriginal leader Francois Paulette, sailing to Lutsel K'e for the Dene National Assembly.

At the end of the month, Dennis and his wife Joan drove up from Fort Smith to Yellowknife, with stops in Hay River and Fort Providence, before attending Folk on the Rocks.

August was also packed with events, including a visit to the Sahtu, Inuvik, and a cycling trip through New Brunswick to Nova Scotia leading up to the NDP Convention in Halifax. Bevington added, "I am returning to Parliament this fall with lots of advice, support and questions from all corners of the Northwest Territories."



Contact Dennis Bevington, your Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic

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Northerners Denied Home-Grown Justice

In Canada today there are 83 Employment Insurance Boards of Referees.

When a Canadian becomes unemployed and is denied benefits in the EI system, there is supposed to be access to appeal through an EI Board of Referees in the province or territory in which they live and work. However, of the 83 Boards across the country – NOT ONE is located in the Northwest Territories or Nunavut. Unemployed Northerners are forced to seek justice through the Board in Edmonton Alberta!

With over fifty billion dollars of surplus in the EI fund that Northern workers and employers have been paying into for decades, it is high time that we are entitled to the full benefits and services afforded other Canadians.

Support our Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic, Dennis Bevington, to call upon the Federal Government to create an EI Board of Referees for residents of the Northwest Territories.

Submitted by: Mary Lou Cherwaty, President, Northern Territories Federation of Labour



Chief Isidore Simon of Jean Marie River and Dennis.

Delegates to New Democrat Convention Pass Resolutions Important to the North

Delegates to the recent New Democrat Convention in Halifax passed four resolutions important to the North, including increasing the Northern Residents Tax Deduction by 50 per cent and negotiating a fair funding formula for the three territories.

“With the passage of these resolutions, issues important to Northerners are now the official policy of the New Democratic Party of Canada,” said Dennis Bevington MP (Western Arctic). “Northerners have told me these are how they feel important issues like the cost of living and proper provision of government programs and services are dealt with. New Democrats have listened.”

The first resolution makes it the policy of the New Democratic Party of Canada that Arctic Sovereignty is best protected by improving the lives of Northerners through affordable housing, quality education, good health care and investments in physical infrastructure like highways.

Delegates also approved a policy to increase the Northern Residents Tax Deduction by 50 per cent and to have further increases indexed to a Northern cost of living measurement. A 50 per cent increase would mean the maximum tax deduction would go from \$6,000 to \$9,000.

“Northerners really need a break when it comes to the cost of living here,” said Dennis Bevington. “This policy does just that.”

The third policy adopted by the New Democrats requires the federal government to fund the territories under a formula which uses the real cost of providing government programs and services like health-care, education and housing.

“Under this policy the territorial governments would be able to provide Northerners with the same level of services enjoyed by Canadians living south of 60,” said Bevington.

A fourth resolution passed at the New Democrat Convention was a policy where the interests of the Inuvialuit, Inuit and Innu would be represented at any international discussions on the High Arctic.



Members of the RCMP with Dennis on a wet Canada Day in Fort Smith.



Retired Senator Willie Adams, Claire Barnaby and Dennis on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.



Harper's Northern Strategy, Nothing New Here

This summer saw the Conservatives unveil their long awaited Northern Strategy, unfortunately it is meant more to gain votes in the South than to help Northerners.

Simply a repackaging of existing programs and previously announced but yet to be fulfilled promises for increased military spending, the Harper strategy for the North is nothing but hollow rhetoric. Even the plan to locate the Northern Economic Development Agency in Iqaluit smacks of political opportunism.

"Despite what his officials and ministers told him was the best place to put the agency's headquarters, Stephen Harper decided he would get more political mileage by ignoring their advice," said Dennis Bevington MP (Western Arctic). "Northerners are being used for cynical political purposes by the Conservatives, how this helps Northerners is beyond me."

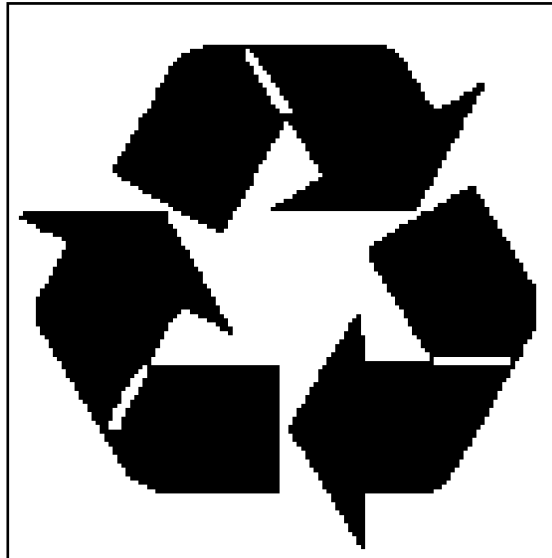
New Democrat MP Bevington is taking a different approach to developing a Northern Strategy.

"I have begun a consultation process to hear from all Northerners what they want in a Northern Strategy," said

Bevington. "In August I released a discussion paper about the Northern Strategy, I think all Northerners should read it and send in their comments to me."

Bevington's Northern Strategy Discussion Paper can be found on his website www.dennisbevington.ca.

"One thing I have already heard from Northerners is that the Conservative plan is the wrong plan," said Bevington. "Based on the comments I have already received, the New Democratic Party of Canada has adopted policies which will really help Northerners."



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The Conservatives Still not Listening to Northerners



How much did this photograph cost?

Stephen Harper and Defense Minister Peter McKay watch CF-18s fly over while standing on the deck of the HMCS Toronto frigate in Frobisher Bay August 19, 2009. Sailing beside the Toronto are the submarine HMCS Cornerbrook and Coast Guard Ship Pierre Radisson

Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent whirlwind trip to the North proved once again that he is more concerned with what is best politically for the Conservative Party than he is about what is best for Northerners when it comes to Arctic Sovereignty.

"Northerners are getting tired of being props in what has become Stephen Harper's annual Northern photo-op," said Dennis Bevington MP (Western Arctic). "Posing with fighter jets flying overhead and a submarine in the background must have cost piles of public money. I'm sure we could have built an elders centre or carried out the survey work for the Mackenzie Highway for the cost of Harper's few photographs."

New Democrats are listening to Northerners on Arctic Sovereignty. At the party's recent policy convention in Halifax delegates voted that putting the needs of Northerners first is the best way of protecting Arctic Sovereignty.

"We approved policy which would see increased investment in human capital and physical infrastructure rather than warships," said Bevington. "We think investing in the people of the North is a better way to spend money than military themed photo-ops."

Preventing H1N1 flu: some helpful tips

More and more Canadians are hearing about the spread of H1N1 flu, also known as swine flu. Aboriginal communities are being hit particularly hard and the across the country there have been more than 50 fatal cases.

While it is important to stay calm, prevention is also key. Many experts are predicting a second wave of this global pandemic in the fall. As your MP, I want to be as helpful as I can. That's why I am sharing these tips on flu prevention.

Follow these simple steps to help keep you, your family and your community healthy.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. Make sure you do a thorough job.

Sanitize the things you touch frequently, such as doorknobs and telephones.

When you go out, take **antibacterial wipes** to keep your hands clean.

Cough and sneeze into your arm and sleeve.

Only go to the hospital if it's a true emergency. Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches, fatigue and lack of appetite.

For more information, go to your local nursing station, or visit.

www.publichealth.gc.ca

FOOD MAIL PROGRAM

If you have been wondering whether you would benefit from the Food Mail Program, here are the facts.

Based on surveys conducted in 2007-2008, a family of four in most isolated communities in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, for example, would spend \$400 a week to buy a basic nutritious diet.

The Government of Canada set up the Food Mail Program, also known as Northern Air Stage Program, is administered by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The department provides funding to Canada Post for transporting nutritious, perishable foods to isolated communities by air. This funding helps keep the cost of food down and requires that transportation of these products be done in optimum conditions to improve the quality of food reaching remote communities.

All isolated northern communities that do not have year-round access by surface transportation are eligible, except those where surface transportation is not available only for brief periods during freeze-up and break up. About 135-roughly 100,000 people—are eligible. Most of these are Aboriginal communities located in the three territories and in Labrador and northern portions of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

For more information on the Food Mail Program contact: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Email: InfoPubs@ainc-inac.gc.ca