

Northwest Territories Housing Corporation

# Under One Roof

Providing Housing Opportunities for Northerners

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## Northern Housing Forum, 2010: A Huge Success



Inuvialuit Regional Corporation CEO and Chairperson Nellie Cournoyea delivered the Northern Housing Forum, 2010 opening keynote address to a packed Midnight Sun Recreation Centre in Inuvik on March 22.

Architects, builders, energy efficiency experts, contractors and city planners were just a few of the more than 150 delegates and participants attending the Northern Housing Forum, 2010 in Inuvik March 22-25.

The international forum, sponsored by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTCH) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), brought together representatives from across the circumpolar arctic to discuss housing challenges in extreme northern climates. The goal was to share best practices on how to build energy efficient homes that exceed the highest standards currently in place, are affordable to construct and maintain, and will stand the test of time.

NWTCH Infrastructure Services Director, Scott Reid, co-chaired the forum along with CMHC Senior Researcher Bill Semple. Reid and Semple were on the Northern Housing Forum, 2010 planning committee for more than a year working with a team of people to ensure the event was a success.

"Overall I couldn't be happier with what our team accomplished," said Reid.

"The presentations and panel discussions were spirited, varied and comprehensive. Building techniques currently being utilized in Norway, Sweden, Alaska, Nunavik, and other regions were shared and debated. By networking, bringing forward new building technologies, and learning from each other we took away ideas that will help our organizations in the long run as we strive to deliver high quality housing that works for northerners."

Northern Housing Forum, 2010 (NHF) delegate Per Paulsen is the senior international affairs advisor with the Norwegian State Housing Bank, which represents the northernmost region of Norway called Hammerfest. It was his first time visiting northern Canada.

"There are differences in how we approach northern housing issues and I was glad to share the different ways we found to solve problems," said Paulsen.

"For instance, our electricity is primarily hydro driven so it costs much less to the end user than what is paid here. That gives us more options to build energy efficient homes, which we heat with wood that is locally available. Our secondary heating system is pellet boilers and stoves. In Norway, we don't use oil or coal because of pollution."

Paulsen says beyond the savings they gain by having lower energy costs, recycling programs are backed by a robust and established support system which he hasn't seen here in Canada.

"It's all connected. We burn pellets to heat our homes and businesses that are made, in part, with the garbage our society creates. Everyone in Norway sorts their garbage. Everything that can be turned into pellets goes into a red bag. All organic material goes into another bag and it's turned into fertilizer or even food for animals. Plastic goes into another bag. It's through long-standing, government supported programs like this and our commitment to build energy efficient, smaller homes and apartments, that

Norwegians are reducing their impact on the planet."

Many delegates said the messages brought forward through each of the six panel sessions came together in a complimentary way. This provided them with a comprehensive body of information to consider.

"For me I think it would have taken five years to collect the amount of information that was presented during one week of this forum," said Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation Director of Government Services, Peter Marangu, who attended the NHF from Old Crow, Yukon.

"The information I gained here will be helpful to us immediately. Because of what I learned, we are going to change the way we build houses in Old Crow."

For Richard Touchette who is the Director of Construction for the Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau (KMHB), the NHF was "hands down the most interesting and useful" forum he has ever attended. The KMHB serves 14 Northern villages in the Nunavik region on the shores of Ungava Bay, the Hudson Straits and Hudson Bay. The villages are located between 1,500 and 2,500 kilometres north of Montreal. There are no road links between southern Québec and Nunavik, or between the Northern villages themselves.

"I especially appreciated the cultural aspects of the forum and the acknowledgement of the importance of including culture as it applies to the design, construction, and community aspects of what we do," said Touchette.

"Without knowing the culture, history, place and environment of where we are working on projects, the projects will fail. That is an important lesson and something we are going to be working on as we move forward. This forum showed me that when you put people together who have common goals and good intentions, good things happen."

Inuvialuit Regional Corporation CEO and Chairperson Nellie Cournoyea provided the keynote address for the Opening Ceremonies. Her speech reminded everyone that a home is about family, and housing is about community.

She says without the support of the community a housing program cannot succeed. Her talk, entitled: *'Social housing is not a home for people who want to help themselves'*, was about finding ways to reduce the influence of the social housing model.

"It is apparent that we must begin to look at housing in relation to our economic, social and cultural circumstances," said Cournoyea.

"Social housing is becoming a problem not a solution and we must, at a community and territorial level, make a concerted effort whereby people that are in need receive support but don't grow dependent on government."

She added providing support to those who want to take control over their own lives will enable individuals to pursue productive and happy lifestyles, and reduce many of the social problems experienced in the North.

"Government support should continue emphasizing individual responsibility. I spoke very strongly about communities taking more control over the housing crisis and improving social conditions so people will be less dependent on government. I hope that we will use this conference to advocate change in this essential and important aspect of the everyday lives of our citizens."

The Honourable Robert C. McLeod, Minister Responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, welcomed delegates to his hometown of Inuvik. He says he enjoyed meeting the wide range of people who attended

and was impressed with the range and depth of discussion that took place at the event.

"The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is taking steps to ensure every new home and building we construct meets the highest standards - both in energy efficiency and quality. We are also focussing on renovating our existing housing stock to ensure each unit meets or exceeds the EnerGuide 85 standard," said McLeod.

"What we heard in Inuvik during the housing forum was that there are many innovative and affordable ways we can achieve our goals. It's by sharing our successes and failures that we all benefit and I think after the forum each representative went home with new ideas, solutions and a range of contacts that they can rely on to help move their programs forward."

The Northern Housing Forum takes place every two years. The last one was held in Fairbanks, Alaska and Per Paulsen confirmed he will be looking into the possibility of his organization hosting the next Northern Housing Forum in Norway in 2012.



To see the Tuktoyaktuk ice road made famous by the TV show *Ice Road Truckers*, made for a great story for delegates to tell back home. More than 50 NHF participants, including Shun-Hui Yang from the Makivik Corporation based in St. Laurent, Quebec, were given a tour of the ice road and surrounding area.

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## Northern Housing Forum, 2010



The Aklavik Drummers and Dancers performed traditional songs for the delegates attending the NHF Opening Ceremonies. For most of those in attendance, it was their first time hearing the Gwich'in language.



Senior Energy Advisor Don Eaton promotes the concept that a house must be looked at as a system and not as individual parts, especially when it comes to energy retrofits. Don was on the NHF *Capacity Building in Northern Communities* panel. After a long day at the forum, Eaton enjoyed visiting the various Inuvik establishments such as the Northern Images Art Gallery that stayed open late to accommodate the NHF delegates that were in town. Here he looks down at a traditional carving, which looks right back at him.



The networking opportunities provided by an event such as the NHF are priceless. Here Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation Director of Government Services, Peter Marangu, discusses the points Vancouver, BC consultant Lesley Cabott made during her presentation as a panel member on the *Climate Change and Adaptation Strategies* panel.



After a week of presentations, networking, long days and sometimes late nights, delegates were glad to enjoy the first rate service provided by NHF Gold Sponsor First Air on the flight home.

Please visit [www.nhf2010.ca](http://www.nhf2010.ca) to view each presentation that was delivered at the NHF, along with many more photos from the forum.

# Northern Sustainable House

## Housing for Northerners by Northerners



In celebration of Earth Week, Ecology North held a series of public events throughout Yellowknife. At Northern United Place Apr. 26 they brought together an Earth Week Panel on Housing and Renovations. Panel members included a green builder, a representative from the City of Yellowknife, and NWT Housing Corporation (NWTHC) Design Development Manager John Robson (pictured left). Robson outlined the history, goals and objectives of the Northern Sustainable House Project and answered questions from the around 40 attendees.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) recognizes that the best housing solutions are those designed with input from the people who will be living in them. In an effort to find a housing solution designed by Northerners, for Northerners, the NWTHC is partnering with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the residents of the NWT on the design and construction of a Northern Sustainable House.

The goal of the Northern Sustainable House is to find a housing design that will provide an adequate, affordable and suitable housing solution with high energy efficiency and design features that recognize our diverse culture.

To achieve this, the NWTHC and its partners have designed a northern housing prototype that meets or exceeds the EnerGuide for Houses (EGH) rating of 85 while being economical and functional.

Every new structure constructed by the NWTHC will meet this standard, and the Corporation is working diligently to retrofit existing buildings to bring them up to these high efficiency standards.

To involve community members in the Northern Sustainable House project, two sessions were undertaken in Inuvik to seek northerners' ideas and suggestions about what the final design should take into consideration.

"The design of our first Northern Sustainable House didn't begin until we spoke to community members, Elders, leaders and builders in the community that the first Northern Sustainable House will be built in," said NWTHC Manager of Design Development, John Robson.

In 2009, the NWTHC and CMHC met with residents and industry representatives from Inuvik in an effort to create a prototype design for further review across the NWT. Based on this input from the stakeholders

involved, a preliminary design was developed with emphasis in the areas of construction and insulation systems, heating and ventilation systems and energy efficiency.

"Our design team heard many comments and suggestions from the local stakeholders and, where possible, we are working to incorporate what we learned at those meetings. The goal is to develop a design concept that is uniquely

northern while promising to meet the most stringent energy efficiency standards in the world," said Robson.

The design development concept that resulted from these consultations were on display for viewing by Northern Housing Forum, 2010 delegates this March in Inuvik and in Yellowknife at the April 26 Ecology North sponsored Earth Week public meeting on housing and renovations.

Over the coming months the NWTHC will continue to seek input from regions throughout the NWT so that the Northern Sustainable House Project delivers a home that reflects what residents expect in terms of layout, practicality, and energy efficiency.

When completed, it will be a home that truly reflects the concept of a home built by Northerners for Northerners.



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HOUSING CORPORATION

# Public Housing returning to NWT Housing Corporation June 1st

During the recent sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the GNWT announced that responsibility for assessing public housing rent will be returning to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and its partners, the Local Housing Organizations.

The NWTHC and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) are working together to make a smooth transition of the assessment process back to the LHO'S. For the time being, assessments will continue to be handled by a Client Services Officer (CSOs) at your nearest ECE Service Centre. It is anticipated that LHOs will begin handling assessments during the first week of June, 2010.

Until this time, tenants will receive their Public Housing Rental Subsidy through the CSOs. Remember, LHOs depend on the money collected through rent payments in order to complete maintenance and repairs on your unit, as well as others. The quality of housing in your communities depends on your LHO's ability to complete this work and it is difficult for them to do without the full participation of all tenants in the public housing program. Your rent payment is an important way to contribute to the quality of life in your community, so ensure you have a plan in place to make your payment every month.

Should you have any questions regarding the transition process, you may wish to contact your NWTHC District Office at the following numbers:

North Slave District Office	(867) 873-7795
South Slave District Office	(867) 874-7600
Beaufort Delta District Office	(867) 777-7271
Nahendeh District Office	(867) 695-2519
Sahtu District Office	(867) 587-5100

# Natural Resources Canada accepts NWTHC as an official builder of EnerGuide rated homes



NWTHC's Technical Officer Jacob Shank (left) answered questions posed by delegates at the Northern Sustainable House display during the Northern Housing Forum, 2010 in Inuvik. Bob Danner, who attended the forum from Barrow Alaska, where he works for the North Slope Borough Housing Association, said many of the concepts in the Northern Sustainable House would work in the remote communities they provide housing to.

Natural Resources Canada has granted the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) a licence that officially recognizes the Corporation as a builder of EnerGuide rated homes. On March 15, after taking into consideration the commitment made by the NWTHC to build the Northern Sustainable House to an EnerGuide rating of 85 or better, the licence was granted.

To become an officially recognized EnerGuide builder an independent advisor must be brought in to evaluate a project either underway or completed to ensure the builder can meet the standard. In the case of the Northern Sustainable House an advisor was provided by the Arctic Energy Alliance to model all the energy-using aspects of the proposed home. The results showed that once completed, the NWTHC's Northern Sustainable House is expected to achieve an EnerGuide Rating of 88.

The licence allows the NWTHC to promote the EnerGuide Rating System as part of its marketing activities. It also means that all new structures constructed by the NWTHC must meet, or exceed, the EnerGuide standard.

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