

1    Q.    **Re: NLH cover letter dated July 30, 2013, p. 3, note 3.**

2                Note 3 states: "With the annual Northern Strategic Plan subsidy, domestic  
3                customers in coastal Labrador pay the equivalent electricity rates as Labrador  
4                Interconnected customers for their basic electricity needs. The proposed  
5                increase to Labrador Interconnected rates will mean that the average rate  
6                increase for domestic coastal Labrador customers, after the subsidy is  
7                considered, will be 20.4%.

8                Please explain in detail the operation of the Northern Strategic Plan subsidy for  
9                domestic customers in coastal Labrador, and provide supporting documents,  
10               including:

11                - government documents enacting the subsidy and setting out its operational  
12                details, and  
13                - copies of bills or other correspondence showing the amounts claimed and  
14                paid since 2011.

15                If the subsidy is not explicitly and transparently integrated into the actual electricity  
16                bills, please explain in detail how the subsidy is applied with supporting documents.

17

18

19    A.    The Northern Strategic Plan (NSP) was announced by Government on April 20,  
20                2007. The NSP includes a rebate for residential customers in Isolated Systems in  
21                Labrador and on the L'Anse au Loup System. The residential customer rebate  
22                commenced July 1, 2007 and funding for continuation of the subsidy was included  
23                in the March 2013 Provincial Budget. The NSP provides funding to Hydro to  
24                subsidize customers' rates on Labrador Isolated Systems and on the L'Anse au Loup  
25                System to the level of rates on the Labrador Interconnected System for the Lifeline  
26                Block of electricity consumption. The Lifeline Block provides an allotment of  
27                electricity, which ranges seasonally from 700 to 1,000 kilowatt hours per month, for

1 basic needs, such as lighting, cooking and hot water heating. Residential customers  
2 on the Labrador Isolated Systems and on the L'Anse au Loup System would  
3 otherwise pay the same rates as Newfoundland Power customers for this  
4 consumption. The difference in existing<sup>1</sup> rates is shown in the following table:  
5

Rate Component	Newfoundland Power	Labrador Coastal Lifeline Block under NSP
Basic Customer Charge: Not Exceeding 200 Amp Service Exceeding 200 Amp Service	\$15.68 per month \$20.68 per month	\$7.15 per month \$7.15 per month
Energy Charge	10.945 ¢ per kWh	3.280 ¢ per kWh

6  
7 Based on Hydro's Application, the average proposed rate increase for residential  
8 customers on the Labrador Isolated Systems is 0.9%. The proposed increase to  
9 Labrador Interconnected rates however, results in a proposed rate increase of  
10 20.4% for residential customers on the Labrador Isolated Systems. Also, based on  
11 Hydro's Application, the average proposed rate decrease for residential customers  
12 on the L'Anse au Loup System is -3.2%. The proposed increase to Labrador  
13 Interconnected rates however, results in a proposed rate increase of 4.5% for  
14 residential customers on the L'Anse au Loup System.  
15

16 Government documents outlining the subsidy are shown in Attachment 1 and  
17 include "A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador", a press release dated April 20,  
18 2007 announcing the NSP and a press release dated June 29, 2007 announcing  
19 details of the Labrador coastal electricity rebate. In 2007, meetings were held  
20 between Hydro's Customer Service Department and Government officials to ensure  
21 proper billing procedures were enacted and to review presentation of the rebate on

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed Newfoundland Power rate design by component is not available for proposed rates.

**IN-NLH-137**  
**2013 NLH General Rate Application**

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**Page 3 of 3**

1       customers' bills. Typical bills showing the rebate for a customer on the Labrador  
2       Isolated Systems and a customer on the L'Anse au Loup System are included in  
3       response to IN-NLH-004.

4

5       Since 2011, funding for the NSP rebate has been as follows:

6

<b>Year</b>	<b>Labrador Isolated</b>	<b>L'Anse au Loup</b>	<b>Total</b>
2011	\$1.2 m	\$0.5 m	\$1.7 m
2012	\$1.3 m	\$0.6 m	\$1.9 m
2013 (to September)	\$1.1 m	\$0.4 m	\$1.5 m

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Natural Resources

Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

June 29, 2007

### Government Announces Details of Labrador Coastal Electricity Rebate

The Provincial Government today provided details of an energy rebate for residents of isolated diesel-serviced communities on the Labrador coast and the Labrador Straits.

The Provincial Government is investing \$1.6 million annually to cover the cost of this rebate for approximately 2,600 customers of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro. Hydro will provide the rebate to customers as a direct credit on regular monthly bills issued after July 1, 2007.

"The rebate ensures that these residents pay the same rate for electricity for basic needs as other residents of Labrador," said the Honourable Kathy Dunderdale, Minister of Natural Resources. "It is intended to provide some rate assistance to people living in Labrador's isolated coastal communities reliant on diesel power generation."

The rebate applies to the Lifeline Block, an allotment of electricity sufficient to cover basic needs, such as lighting, cooking and water heating. The rebate brings the monthly basic customer charge and the rate charged for this power to these customers in line with the Labrador Interconnected System and the rates paid by those living in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area. It was originally announced in the Northern Strategic Plan.

With the rebate, the effective customer service charge for these communities will be \$7 per month, versus \$15.59 previously. The effective rate for the Lifeline Block of electricity each month will also decrease from 8.9 cents per kilowatt hour to 3.2 cents.

Any kilowatt-hours over the Lifeline Block will still be billed at the current applicable rate. The Lifeline Block is not designed to cover home heating requirements. Residents in diesel-serviced communities primarily use other energy sources to heat their homes, such as wood or oil.

"Our government is committed to improving the lives of all Labradorians," said the Honourable John Hickey, Minister of Labrador Affairs. "The rebate is part of the Northern Strategic Plan, which will serve to further energize the social and economic well being of Labradorians and lay the foundation for a brighter future for the people in these communities."

The Lifeline Block varies through the year from 700 – 1,000 kilowatt-hours to reflect the seasonal basic need for electricity. The average monthly electricity rebate, depending on usage, will be \$45 to \$65 monthly.

For more information on the Labrador Coastal Electricity Rebate, please contact Hydro Customer Service at 1-888-737-1296.

-30-

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2007 06 29

2:10 p.m.



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Executive Council  
Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs  
April 20, 2007

### Premier Launches Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador

A hallmark of the Provincial Government's strong commitment to addressing the needs of Labrador was launched today in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The Honourable Danny Williams, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, officially released his government's Northern Strategic Plan entitled *The Future of our Land. A Future for our Children*. The Premier was joined by the Honourable John Hickey, Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs.

The release of this plan signifies the fulfillment of Williams Government 2005 Throne Speech commitment to develop a Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador. The plan sets out a new, comprehensive course toward a stronger and more prosperous future for all Labradorians. The Premier noted that the plan builds upon the unprecedented Provincial Government initiatives in Labrador over the past four years in addressing the social and economic needs of the region.

"This is a great day for Labrador and indeed the province as a whole, as we release a plan that clearly defines our vision for Labradorians and the role this region will play in the future success of our province," said Premier Williams. "Our government recognizes the pivotal role Labrador plays in our province and the tremendous contributions of the region to the economic well being of Newfoundland and Labrador. Implementation of the Northern Strategic Plan will serve to further invigorate the social and economic well being of all Labradorians, and will lay the foundation for a brighter future for the people and communities of Labrador."

The Provincial Government will invest more than \$250 million over the next five years to support the goals outlined in the plan, which includes existing and new Labrador initiatives. Approximately \$55 million will be spent for new initiatives over the next five years to implement the plan.

"The Northern Strategic Plan will improve the quality of living for Labradorians by providing improved infrastructure and programs and services," continued the Premier. "This plan will ensure that economic and resource development will directly benefit Labradorians. The Provincial Government will continue to work with Aboriginal people and community leaders to ensure the targets of the plan are achieved."

The Northern Strategic Plan is the result of extensive public consultations and input, supplemented by cross-departmental efforts. It identifies a wide range of initiatives dedicated to advancing programs and services throughout Labrador. The following themes emerged through consultations: transportation; natural resources; tourism, culture and heritage; capacity building; partnerships; programs and services; and Aboriginal issues.

"The Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador builds on our government's already strong relationship with the Aboriginal people of Labrador," said the Honourable Minister Rideout, Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. "The plan identifies numerous initiatives that will form the basis for exploring future partnerships, advancing communications and developing further programs and services that meet the needs of all Aboriginal groups throughout the region."

Minister Hickey noted that the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will play a lead role in overseeing the implementation of the plan.

"The Williams Government is committed to improving the lives of all Labradorians and today we are

making great strides with the launch of the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador," said Minister Hickey. "The Northern Strategic Plan is a living document that will continue to evolve over the next five years and I am confident it will significantly improve programs and services in Labrador."

The Provincial Government has identified four strategic directions in the Northern Strategic Plan. Those are:

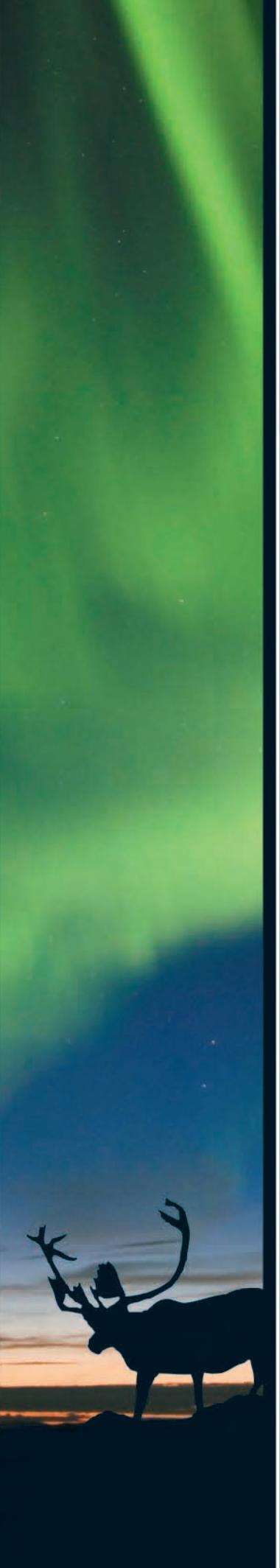
- Supporting equitable programs and services and improving infrastructure to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador;
- Fostering the progression of social development in Labrador;
- Providing leadership and supporting maximization of economic development opportunities;
- Encouraging communications and partnerships with governments, Aboriginal people, communities, organizations and other stakeholders.

Some of the major investments for the Northern Strategic Plan include:

- \$1 million this year, as part of \$8.3 million over five years, to enhance social work staffing to address the needs of children and families, and persons with mental health and addictions issues;
- \$4.8 million to construct a new K-12 School in Port Hope Simpson;
- \$4 million contribution to the construction of a new school in Sheshatshiu;
- \$1.6 million annual electricity rebate for home owners using diesel generated power in rural isolated communities along the Labrador coast;
- \$1.5 million to provide picture archiving and communications systems for the Labrador Health Centre and Captain William Jackman Memorial Hospital;
- \$1.4 million to strengthen the Tele-Health network and video conferencing capacity in Labrador, to improve access to address chronic disease management in Labrador;
- \$1.3 million to construct a new facility for the Francophone school in Happy Valley-Goose Bay;
- \$1.24 million increase to the Medical Transportation Program over the five years of the Northern Strategic Plan to assist with reimbursement of claimable expenses under the Medical Transportation Assistance Program for residents that incur significant travel costs in order to receive medical treatment;
- \$615,000 increase to the Labrador Travel Subsidy over the next five years;
- \$500,000 increase over the next five years to the Cultural Travel Subsidy program;
- \$200,000 towards the construction For Them Days Archive;
- \$1.5 million over five years to assess the status of inland fish species;
- \$1.6 million over five years toward management plans for significant big game populations in Labrador;
- \$750,000 to increase the Labrador Grooming Subsidy; and,
- \$43,000 to assist the youth of Labrador with the travel costs associated with attending YC Newfoundland and Labrador, which bring together youth from around the province.

The launch of the Northern Strategic Plan builds upon the past successes of the Williams Government as it relates to Labrador. These include funding of \$56 million in 2005 for key initiatives to continue the development, diversification and well-being of Labrador, and an investment of over \$47 million in Budget 2006 to address the infrastructure needs in the region.

A copy of the [Northern Strategic Plan](#) and a complete list of new initiatives emerging from the NSP can be found at [www.gov.nl.ca/laa/nspl/](http://www.gov.nl.ca/laa/nspl/). To order a copy of the Northern Strategic Plan, please call 1-888-435-8111.



**The future of our land.  
A future for our children.**

**A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador**

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Forward



## Message from the Premier

Our government recognizes that Labrador will play a pivotal role in shaping the province's future and understands that Labrador is a distinct part of the province in its geography, demographics, history, and culture.

In the 2005 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to developing a Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador. Our government has invested and will continue to invest in meaningful initiatives throughout the region. The Northern Strategic Plan has clear goals with focused priorities for Labrador over the next five years.



This government is committed to seeking input from its citizens to shape public policy. The priorities developed in this plan are the result of extensive consultations and working together with many stakeholders and community organizations. The Ministers Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work closely with the people of Labrador during the implementation of this plan.

The Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador identifies a wide variety of initiatives that our government will be pursuing to improve programs and services throughout the region. Our goal is to work together to implement a vision that will advance the social and economic agenda in Labrador.

I am pleased to release the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador.

Danny Williams, Q.C.  
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador

## Message from the Ministers

As the Ministers Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, we are very pleased to present the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador. The Plan launches a new vision for Labrador and is a result of extensive work over the past several months within government and the community.

In June, Government released the public discussion paper that launched the planning process of the Northern Strategic Plan through the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs. The Department heard from hundreds of people through the numerous consultation and one-on-one sessions as well as email and written input. The submissions and advice received helped to develop this strategy.

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will lead the implementation of the Northern Strategic Plan, but it will require the active involvement and support of all departments and agencies to ensure its objectives are met. It also needs the participation and commitment of all Labradorians. We are optimistic that, equipped with this Plan, we will have the focus and determination we need to meet our strategic directions and achieve the best results for Labradorians in the coming years.

This document should be viewed as a living document and we encourage you to read it and submit any thoughts that you would like to share with us. It will be updated regularly to adjust to changes in demography, technology, society and the economy. Working together, citizens, government and the community can achieve positive change.



John Hickey  
Minister Responsible for  
Labrador Affairs



Thomas G. Rideout  
Minister Responsible for  
Aboriginal Affairs

**We envision Labrador where Government and people work together to advance social and economic development so that residents share in an improved quality of life.**

*Government's Vision for Labrador*



## Executive Summary

Labrador plays a significant role in the overall future of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Its people, land, resources, diversity and culture make it unique and will contribute greatly to the province's future prosperity. Recognizing this, the Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador was developed to establish social and economic priorities that will enable strategic decision making by Government for the benefit of Labradorians and the province, as a whole.

Government's success in priority setting for development in Labrador lies in the strategic planning process. It is important to recognize the challenges faced in Labrador with recruitment and retention of employees, limited access to programs and services due to geographic location and the impending labour shortage. In light of these barriers, Labrador is abundant in its strengths through its resource development potential, perseverance of its people and the diversity of culture through its Aboriginal communities. It is these opportunities that need to be validated and built upon for the future foundations of social and economic development in Labrador.

In establishing Government's strategic directions for the Northern Strategic Plan, substantial research, interdepartmental collaboration and public engagement was required. Consultation with the people of Labrador was critical in establishing a path forward. Based on the feedback received from stakeholders, recurring themes were identified:

- Transportation
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Tourism and Cultural Development
- Education and Employment
- Health
- Access to Programming and Services
- Aboriginal Partnerships
- Working Together

These themes facilitated the shaping of Government's vision and strategic directions in the Northern Strategic Plan.

Government has identified four strategic directions to support the Northern Strategic Plan as it moves towards the advancement of social and economic development in Labrador:

- Supporting equitable programs and services and improving infrastructure to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador.
- Fostering the progression of social development in Labrador.
- Providing leadership and supporting maximization of economic development opportunities
- Encouraging communications and partnerships with governments, Aboriginal people, communities, organizations and other stakeholders.

These directions are Government's framework for future planning in the region. To support this, specific goals and objectives have been developed for the next five years. Actions and initiatives identified in the Northern Strategic Plan to achieve these goals and objectives were developed in collaboration with a variety of provincial government departments and agencies. Some initiatives resulting from the Northern Strategic Plan include an increase in annual funding to the Labrador Travel Subsidy, development of a Labrador based archive through Them Days Inc., the creation of a Justice Liaison position for Labrador and the implementation of integrated long term management plans for the significant wildlife populations of Labrador. The responsibility to implement the Plan lies with these entities and progress will be monitored by the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs to ensure success.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador looks forward to Labrador's future and to working with Labradorians in the implementation of the Northern Strategic Plan.



Purpose ■



## 1. Purpose

### 1.1 What is a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning can be described as a continuous systematic process used to identify and implement change. At a very high level, strategic planning involves the formulation of key priorities and the allocation of resources to achieve these priorities. In this sense, strategic planning serves as a guide for thinking and decision-making, as well as a tool that the public can use to evaluate progress on specific and time-limited commitments.

Strategic planning is often viewed as a process of renewal as it improves performance and serves as the foundation for future actions. It strengthens the decision making process by recognizing and addressing key internal and external factors. Strategic planning is also a means to adapt services and activities to meet changing needs of any organization.

### 1.2 Government's Commitment

Government recognizes that Labrador will play an important role in shaping the province's future which is why Our Blueprint for the Future recognized that "for far too long, the people, resources and potential of Labrador have been ignored and excluded from the decision making processes of the province." Government committed to ensuring that this sense of exclusion would no longer exist, and recognizes the pivotal role that Labrador plays in the future success of this province. In so doing, opportunities will be created for meaningful employment, optimization of resource benefits and development of infrastructure which, in turn, results in a stronger, more vibrant economy.

The provincial government has made strong commitments and developed a clear vision for Labrador as demonstrated through meaningful initiatives and financial investments throughout the region. Much progress has been made; however, there is more work to be done.

In the 2005 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to securing a brighter future for Labrador. Government recognized that "the barriers to development are pronounced in Labrador; yet, nowhere are the opportunities for growth greater." The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs was mandated to develop this Northern Strategic Plan to address Labrador's social and economic needs, remove barriers to development and advance Labrador's tremendous potential for growth. Government is willing to be accountable and measured on the progress made in Labrador through the commitments made in this document.

### 1.3 Why a Strategic Plan?

The Northern Strategic Plan will outline Government's vision, objectives and priorities for Labrador for the next five years. By doing so, the Plan will establish priorities for Labrador, develop a focused approach to Government's service delivery in Labrador and demonstrate Government's commitment to support Labrador issues through programs and policies. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the need for further economic and social development in Labrador and is responding with the Northern Strategic Plan.



Other provinces in Canada have developed northern strategies to address priorities and issues relevant to the north, particularly as they relate to social and economic development. These strategies emphasize the importance of coordination and advocacy for northern departments, as well as the importance of dedicated programs and services that demonstrate Government's commitment to support northern issues. The success of these plans reflects clearly defined mandates that emphasize the progression of northern issues and government structures that provide a focused approach to service delivery in the region. It is suggested that some of these mandates may be achieved through increased skills development, awareness of the north, increased local involvement, public accountability and transparency and strategic planning.

#### **1.4    Role of Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs**

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs coordinates and facilitates all Government activities relating to Labrador affairs and Aboriginal issues. Virtually all of the Department's activities involve close collaboration with one or more other provincial public entities, Aboriginal groups/governments and the federal government. In light of these realities, the Department plays a role similar to a central agency, as a coordinating and advisory body, rather than a delivery agent.

The priorities for the Department are to ensure that programs and services within the Labrador region are effective; that the Labrador region benefits from social and economic initiatives; that resource development occurs in a manner that maximizes benefits and is respectful of Aboriginal land claims and that the needs of Aboriginal groups in the province are met as fully as possible. This is clearly demonstrated through the development of this Northern Strategic Plan.

The Department is leading this strategic planning process in coordination with other government departments and agencies. It will also be responsible to monitor the progress of the Northern Strategic Plan and to ensure the effective implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in this document.

#### **1.5    A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador**

In developing this Northern Strategic Plan, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs has been cognizant of the uniqueness of Labrador and the strength of its people. Government is aware of the importance of consultation and the need to consider the Labrador perspective in provincial decision making and program and service delivery. The provincial government is committed to working closely with the people of Labrador to obtain their views on the Northern Strategic Plan.

Government developed this strategy based on research, feedback received, expert opinion, and most importantly, the thoughts of the many stakeholders that participated in consultations held throughout Labrador. The following sections outline the process of consultation and the methodology used in the development of this Northern Strategic Plan.

##### **1.5.1    Feedback**

As indicated, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to developing this plan in consultation with all Labradorians. Through the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Government provided many opportunities for input into the process.





In addition to stakeholder consultations, one-on-one sessions were arranged with industry (major employers within the various regions), the local Chambers of Commerce, Regional Economic Development Boards, the Labrador Metis Nation and other organizations that had not previously been consulted. In total, more than 300 individuals and organizations participated in the consultation process. Questions at the consultation and one-on-one sessions focused on social and economic development. While it is impossible to consult with everyone, the Department was very specific in targeting certain industries and organizations within Labrador to ensure adequate feedback was received on both an economic and a social level.

In June 2006, Government released A Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador, A Public Discussion Paper to stimulate discussion for the consultation process.

Beginning in July 2006, briefings were held with various groups to inform them of the purpose of the Northern Strategic Plan and to promote the process to all regions of Labrador. Briefings were held with the following groups:

- Rural Secretariat Regional Council for Labrador
- Labrador Regional Senior Management Council
- Ministerial Advisory Group for Labrador Transportation
- Federal Management Representatives in Labrador
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Innu Nation/Innu Band Councils
- Northern Strategic Plan Advisory Working Group

At the same time, stakeholder consultations were scheduled for all of Labrador. A total of six facilitated sessions, each with 15-40 participants and led by the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs were delivered:

- Central Labrador, July 17
- Western Labrador, July 18
- South Eastern Labrador, August 15
- Labrador Straits, August 16
- Northern Labrador, August 28
- Churchill Falls, September 25

Stakeholders and the general public were encouraged to submit their thoughts to the Department on the priorities for Labrador and what they would like Government to do over the next five years. The Department provided a number of ways to submit comments which included a prepared feedback form, a toll-free telephone number, a Northern Strategic Plan email address; a mailing address, and finally through the many consultation sessions. All feedback received assisted in determining the priorities that are outlined in this document. The quality and quantity of feedback received was significant. It should be noted that it is impossible to reflect all that was heard in this document; however, the Plan will target the key themes as presented. There are other topics that were raised and will be addressed in other provincial initiatives such as the Energy Plan and the Labrador Transportation Plan.

### **1.5.2 Research**

Over the past three years, the provincial government has been very proactive in developing plans for many aspects of its lines of business within the province. This gives the Northern Strategic Plan a large body of secondary sources from which to draw knowledge and data. As a coordinating body for the province within Labrador, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs reviewed and provided input into these plans to offer the Labrador perspective.

In the development of this plan, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs also considered recommendations from Aboriginal Women's Conferences that were held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Stephenville.

### **1.5.3 A Collective Approach**

The entire planning process has been a collaborative effort from many individuals, organizations and government entities within the province.

Collaboration within the provincial government involved the Rural Secretariat, the Office of the Provincial Development Plan and other relevant departments. The Rural Secretariat and Northern Strategic Plan will set out jointly agreed upon priorities for Labrador of a social and economic nature. The intent of each is clearly defined – the Rural Secretariat promotes information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within government and between government and communities. It facilitates horizontal thinking on regional issues, engages citizens to enhance the consideration of these issues in public policy development and is focused on the long-term sustainability of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Northern Strategic Plan will further Government's commitments on programs and activities for the short-term over the next five years.

The Northern Strategic Plan has been closely coordinated with the Provincial Development Plan, which was established to ensure that the various provincial development strategies and initiatives are being carried out in an integrated, coordinated fashion, in line with Government's goals. This initiative will examine these strategies, identify any gaps and areas that need further attention and make a determination about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the approach for meeting Newfoundland and Labrador's needs. In addition, the Plan will be consistent with the Comprehensive Regional Diversification Strategy under the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development.

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs was directed by Cabinet to establish an Advisory Working Group to oversee the development of the Plan. The Advisory Working Group was comprised of the following departments/agencies: Human Resources, Labour and Employment; Natural Resources (Mines, Energy, Forestry and Agrifoods Agency Branches); Transportation and Works; Innovation, Trade, and Rural Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Tourism, Culture and Recreation; Women's Policy Office; Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation; Office of the Provincial Development Plan and the Rural Secretariat.





The role of the Advisory Working Group was to provide advice and assistance in developing the Northern Strategic Plan while receiving feedback from departmental Executive. The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs consulted with and received input from the other provincial departments and agencies that were not represented on the working group.



A large, vibrant green aurora borealis (Northern Lights) dominates the upper portion of the image, stretching across the sky. The aurora is最亮 at the bottom right and gradually fades towards the top left. The background is a dark, deep blue night sky with a few small, distant stars visible.

## Status of Development in Labrador



## 2.0 Status of Development in Labrador

Labrador has a very large land mass with a diverse population which presents a number of distinct opportunities and challenges. Within this large geographic area there is a substantial amount of work being completed by many community and governmental organizations in all aspects of social and economic development. In order to assure effective strategic planning, there is a need to identify opportunities and challenges that exist in the region. By recognizing and understanding the current environment, Government will be poised to make better decisions.

### 2.1 Labrador Today

The region of Labrador consists of approximately 269,073 square kilometers<sup>1</sup> of primarily vast untouched wilderness and is larger than the Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) combined (133,851 km<sup>2</sup>)<sup>2</sup>

- According to 2006 population estimates, 26,888 people<sup>3</sup> reside in 32 communities<sup>4</sup> across this large expanse of land in comparison to over 1.8 million people living in the Maritime Provinces<sup>5</sup>.

**Labrador's population makes up 5.3% of the provincial total<sup>6</sup>. Thirty-five percent of the people living in Labrador have Aboriginal ancestry, self identifying as Innu, Inuit or Métis<sup>7</sup>.**

Labrador is very diverse in terms of demographic trends which will present a pressing public policy challenge over the next decade. There are many similarities when compared to the province, as a whole, but many differences, as well. Between 1991 and 2006, Labrador's population fell from 31,046 to 26,888<sup>8</sup>. This is a decline of about 13.4%; slightly higher than the overall provincial decline in the same period<sup>9</sup>. This trend was largely driven by out-migration which impacts labour markets, types of goods and services offered by the private sector and public services (such as education and healthcare), and community services, leadership and volunteerism. Between 2006 and 2021, Labrador's population is

expected to decline by 3.1%, while the provincial population is expected to drop by about 5.6%<sup>10</sup>. Within Labrador there are diverse demographic trends. For example, the population of Northern Labrador grew by almost 10.6% since 1991 and is expected to grow by almost 5% over the next 15 years, while the population of southern Labrador (Zone 4 only) declined by 14.8% since 1991 and is expected to decline a further 12.1% by 2021<sup>11</sup>.

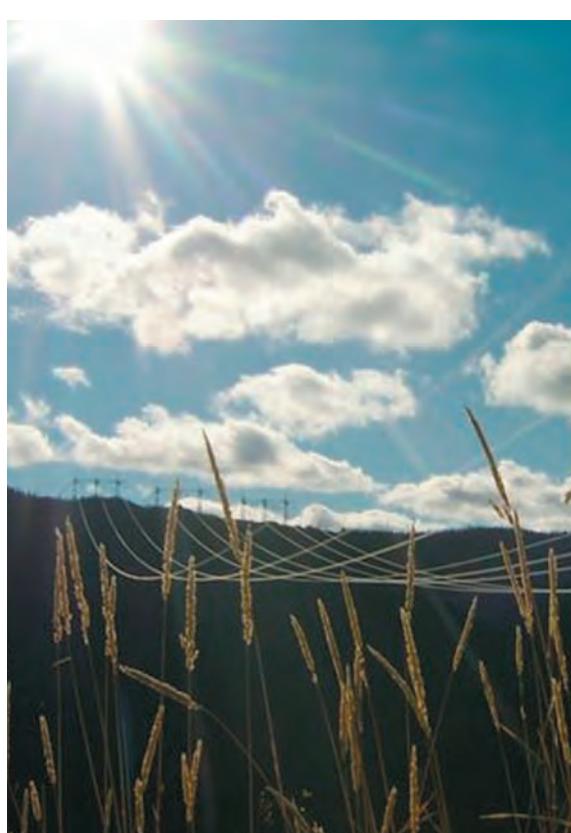
There are many cultures represented in Labrador that includes the aforementioned Aboriginal groups and many other settler people who have come to work and live in Labrador. Historical developments like the fishery, fur trapping, the Grenfell Mission, and more recent economic

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statcan.ca/start.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2006/demographyupdate.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.combinedcouncils.ca/home/20>

5 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)6 <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2006/demographyupdate.pdf>7 <http://www.statcan.ca/start.html>8 <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population/default.asp>9 <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2006/demographyupdate.pdf>10 <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/population/default.asp>11 <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2006/demographyupdate.pdf>

developments like mineral development in Labrador West, 5 Wing Goose Bay in central Labrador, the hydroelectric development in Churchill Falls and the Voisey's Bay Project on the north coast have spurred many people from other parts of the country and the world to move and settle in Labrador.

The Statistics Canada Census, which is conducted once every five years, is an important tool in determining an overall population estimate. Before this can occur, however, several adjustments must be made to the Census figures. Labrador's population estimates since the 2001 Census, the current estimate and all projections will be revised to reflect the results of the 2006 Census.

## 2.2 Opportunities for Development

It is widely recognized that Labrador, as a region, is at the beginning stages of maximizing its opportunities for development. In both the social and economic spheres, Labrador will emerge as a growth area for the province in years to come. Government, through this Northern Strategic Plan, recognizes that social and economic development is closely linked and neither happens in isolation.

The foundations for social and economic developments are in place. The opportunities are present and the commitment from Government has been made. Now is the right time for a Northern Strategic Plan for Labrador.

### 2.2.1 Resources

#### *Human Resources*

Labrador's diverse population and cultural diversity adds uniqueness to the region. The Aboriginal populations and the various settler cultures make for a rich tapestry of experience from which to draw. Labrador Aboriginal communities also have a young growing population which bodes well for future labour markets; provided that the appropriate training is available. The White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education places an emphasis on extending the post secondary involvement of Aboriginal students. Government will continue to ensure Aboriginal participation in post-secondary training and will persist in securing access to federal programs for members of Aboriginal communities.

The Skills Task Force will present a multi-year strategy to ensure the provincial labour force has the necessary education and skill requirements to meet emerging economic opportunities, particularly those associated with large-scale development projects. Areas of consideration will include post-secondary programs, the apprenticeship system and partnership opportunities, including research and development.

#### *Natural Resources*

Labrador has abundant natural resources that can be utilized in a number of ways for the betterment of the region and province. At present, resource development within Labrador is varied across sectors in terms of its maturation. Some industries like mining and electricity generation have a long history of economic and social development while others like commercial agriculture, are relatively new and emerging. Natural environments are important to Labradorians, and the value associated with them can sometimes not be measured in monetary terms.

Maximizing benefits from Labrador's rich natural resource base through sustainable development and management is a key priority for Government. Successful natural resource maximization is dependant upon effective policy development,

*Photo courtesy of VBNC*





resource management, resource assessment, and promotion and facilitation of resource development. Sustainable development focuses on improving the quality of life for the people of Labrador, and the province as a whole, while being attentive to sustaining the natural environment.

Mining in Labrador West, Voisey's Bay and other smaller operations have provided a valuable foundation and cornerstone for economic development and growth in Labrador. The province is forecasted to produce \$2.5 billion worth of mineral shipment in 2006, 98% of which comes from Labrador. This is divided equally between iron ore operations in Labrador West and nickel, copper and cobalt production from Voisey's Bay. Labrador mining operations are forecasted to employ 2298 persons in 2006, and mining in general will contribute 3.2% to the province's GDP, most of which comes from Labrador. The Voisey's Bay Project has brought considerable benefits, both in direct employment and in contractual services, to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and northern communities. After only one year of operation, Voisey's Bay Nickel Company Limited has a workforce that is already 53% Aboriginal. The dimension stone quarry operated by the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation near Nain offers a valuable source of employment on the north coast and is a model for community involvement in resource development.

Global demand for industrial and mineral commodities has intensified in recent years, resulting in renewed exploration interest in Labrador's mineral potential. Exploration activity is being driven primarily by the search for iron ore, nickel and uranium. For 2006, total provincial exploration activity is forecasted to be worth \$98 million, with the bulk of this activity based in Labrador. The majority of exploration is centered in three main areas. Iron ore is the primary focus in the west, nickel in the north, and uranium in the central mineral belt of eastern Labrador. At present Labrador is the hottest exploration centre for uranium in Canada outside of Saskatchewan. As a result of these exploration programs and intense demand for mineral commodities, new development opportunities and expansion of existing operations

could emerge in the future. Large scale mining development projects are generally long term and capital intensive and often result in significant economic and employment benefits similar to operations already existing in Labrador.

In addition to current exploration activity, many areas of Labrador have yet to be prospected or fully explored, leaving potential opportunities for further discoveries. With the strength of the global mining sector, exploration activity and development in Labrador is likely to continue to grow. While not meant to diminish the importance and history of other natural resources in Labrador, at present, mining is the region's largest natural resource economic foundation.

Although the provincial Energy Plan will address more specific priorities and plans surrounding energy development in the province, building upon the foundation of energy development in Labrador is also a significant opportunity for the future.

The Upper Churchill project is considered one the world's greatest engineering achievements; however, the benefit derived from this development has been a topic of controversy for many years. Despite the contractual arrangements associated with the Upper Churchill development, the province is the owner of one of the world's largest, lowest cost source of renewable electricity. Without losing sight of the opportunities lost, the social and economic impact the development delivers to the town of Churchill Falls is significant, not to mention the infrastructure and expertise that has been developed in Labrador. With a move towards maximization of benefits from resource development, further electricity development within Labrador will move in a very different direction from that of the contractual obligations associated with the Upper Churchill.

Further development of the Churchill River hydroelectric potential is currently under study; however, there may be further opportunities for hydroelectric development that could be explored within Labrador. With recent technological advances and further study, wind generation may

also emerge as a potential alternative and or supplementary source of electricity. The Province is moving forward in evaluating these possibilities.

Labrador's offshore area is known to hold hydrocarbons. The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board currently estimates the area to hold approximately 4.2 trillion cubic feet of discovered natural gas and 123 million barrels of natural gas liquids. Although there are no plans to develop this resource in the shorter term, future development looks promising. The improved resolution of new seismic data acquired in the past couple of years shows a number of large, previously unmapped leads. This, combined with the emergence of new cold ocean production and transportation technologies, is setting the stage for a new cycle of exploration activity.

The commercial fishery is still a very important industry in many of the coastal communities of Labrador. There are opportunities to progress the industry by developing and diversifying existing and new fisheries. Exploratory harvesting of underutilized crab species, improvements to onboard product handling, development of cod pot technology and a small scale sealing initiative are examples of ongoing and recent projects.

The forest sector, on an international level, has undergone significant changes in recent years that have impacted Labrador operations. Maximization of benefits through value added-secondary processing, where possible, is a priority that may be expanded upon with sound business planning by industry. The recent release of the Strategic Plan to Develop Labrador Secondary Manufacturing and Value Added Wood Products Industry has potential to initiate further developments in the forest industry over the coming years. Increasing access to forest resources will also aid the industry's development.

Agrifood production in Labrador also has significant development potential for the future. While still relatively small in comparison to other agrifood sectors, many opportunities exist. In recognition of

the scale of development, and the challenge it presents, the Northern Agri-foods Development Strategy was developed. Building the industry, in connection with the Strategy, will be vital for future development.

Labrador is a natural resource in itself. Its beautiful landscapes, untouched vistas and wilderness have tremendous potential for tourism growth and development as shown by the development of the Torngat National Park Reserve. The feasibility study of the Mealy Mountain National Park currently underway will add to the national and international allure of this region.

#### *Cultural Resources*

The cultural resources of Labrador represent a wide diversity and breadth of cultures and encompass a massive historical and prehistorical time span. They include archaeological sites, historic cultural landscapes and communities, and the full range of cultural artifacts and products, both tangible and intangible. Irreplaceable, these resources require a high level of diligence fused with the engagement of best practices in their conservation, interpretation, and presentation. The recognition that both the past and contemporary cultural resources represent the heritage of tomorrow is paramount to the proper management and promotion of cultural heritage within Labrador.

#### *Other Resources*

Labrador's information technology infrastructure is a great asset and an opportunity for growth. Over the past number of years most communities in Labrador have been connected to high speed internet. This can lead to many opportunities for growth and development in the economic and social sphere. Because of increased accessibility in information technology, business activity continues to increase in these communities. On the social side, an achievement like tele-health provides better access to the healthcare system. At present, there are 11 communities that are not connected to a high speed system. The Province has committed to ensuring equitable access to these communities in the future.



### *Quality of Life*

Residents of Labrador experience a pristine environment and enjoy a high quality of life. Throughout Labrador's large land mass there are 32 separate and distinct communities. One commonality, however, is the sense of community within each. Clean air and outdoor living add to the desirability of the area. Although growth is desired it is not anticipated to be at a level where this would change.

Regardless of where you live in Labrador the ability to utilize the natural environment for sport and consumption is tremendous. Outdoor activities are numerous in both summer and winter. These include snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, bicycling, hunting, fishing and trapping. Some people within Labrador still rely on the nature around them for subsistence activities. People hunt, fish, trap and gather berries to feed their families throughout the year. Utilizing wood heat with firewood cut in their local area is a common practice as well. This provides a supplement to commercial forms of electricity generation. Overall, there is pride and respect throughout Labrador in the natural beauty and value of the land.

While Labrador is still an isolated northern region, the development of the Trans Labrador Highway is

opening up many new opportunities. This development has had an impact on many aspects of Labrador life from how things are transported, to how people travel for personal and business purposes, and how communities connect with each other. While this development is viewed as a positive move, there are efforts to ensure that the beauty and value of Labrador's natural environment is not negatively impacted. The goal is to ensure the quality of life present in Labrador is maintained, and even enhanced, for generations to come.

#### **2.2.2 Alliances**

Alliances already established between the provincial government and community based organizations are great foundations on which to build. There is an established network of leadership within Labrador, and Government and communities have worked hard to strengthen relationships to advance the social and economic agenda in Labrador. The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, the new addition of the Premier's office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the creation of the Executive Director position with the Department of Natural Resources in Labrador West create opportunities to influence decision making within provincial government.

Relationships with the Combined Councils of Labrador, the five economic zone boards, the Chambers of Commerce, the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, and industry and union leaders are all important to the future development of Labrador. Relationships with Aboriginal groups are important as the governance structures in Labrador change and evolve. Land claims negotiations and settlements are changing the way the provincial government operates. Important lessons can be learned from the Northern Development Ministers' Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for Ministers with responsibility of northern areas to collaborate and discuss and explore best practices that affect the north.

### **2.2.3 Aboriginal Environment**

Aboriginal communities are uniquely placed to benefit from economic development in Labrador. Significant federal funding is available to Aboriginal communities for infrastructure, education and training, and health and social programs and services. Moreover, the recently signed Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement includes significant economic benefits for Labrador Inuit including a capital transfer from the federal government, a share in provincial resource royalties, the requirement for Impact and Benefit Agreements on certain developments and preferences for government contracts and employment in Labrador Inuit Lands. Similar provisions will be available to the Labrador Innu in their land claims agreement that is currently being negotiated with the Innu Nation.

Both the Labrador Innu and Inuit receive considerable benefits including revenues, employment and preferential contracting under their Voisey's Bay Impact Benefit Agreements.

The establishment of the Nunatsiavut Government on December 1, 2005, heralded a new era for the Labrador Inuit. In addition to providing the jurisdictions needed to manage treaty rights, the new government can begin to develop and deliver programs and services that will better meet the needs of Inuit in the northern communities. Self-government also creates employment for Labrador Inuit as the new government creates the necessary bureaucracy and prepares for the devolution of provincial programs and services.

With the creation of reserves at Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, the Innu now benefit from an exemption from federal and provincial taxes. The immediate effect of this exemption is an increase in their disposable income. The creation of reserves has also provided the Innu with the land they need for economic development. Management of the reserves and the devolution of federal programs to the Bands will be a prelude to self-government.

The Labrador Metis Nation is in a different situation than the Labrador Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut

Government. The Labrador Metis Nation land claim has not been accepted by the federal government and there is uncertainty over the eligibility of its members for federal Aboriginal programs and services. The Province continues to encourage the federal government to make a final decision on the Labrador Metis Nation land claim. Until then, the Province is committed to work with the Labrador Metis Nation to access federal programs and services.

### **2.3 Challenges to Development**

There are challenges and barriers to development in Labrador. Government recognizes these challenges and through the Northern Strategic Plan, will find creative, innovative ways to overcome these issues.

#### **2.3.1 Infrastructure**

Although there has been much infrastructure development within Labrador to date, Government appreciates that more work is still required to adequately support social and economic development. Infrastructure is an underlying aspect to quality of life as it provides residents with access to quality goods and services, including healthcare and social services.

##### *Transportation*

The completion of the Trans Labrador Highway in 2009 from Labrador West to the Labrador Straits





will be significant to the economic and social progress of many sectors within Labrador. The Trans Labrador Highway, with nearly 875 kilometers and an additional 285 kilometers under construction, has been designated as part of the National Highway System, connecting Labrador to the rest of Canada. The completion of Phase II of the highway has reduced the use of air services on the south coast of Labrador. This is anticipated to continue with the completion of Phase III. Rock cuts that exist on the highway between Red Bay and Lodge Bay are blocked with snow at times and cause the road to be closed. Government has constructed a depot and provided additional snow clearing funds for this portion of the highway to assist with alleviating the problem. Government continues to review and monitor this section of the Trans Labrador Highway.

Labrador relies heavily on air transportation. The Happy Valley-Goose Bay airport serves as a primary hub for Labrador with almost all air traffic to and from southern, western and northern Labrador passing through this airport. There are 19 airports feeding into Happy Valley-Goose Bay including 13 coastal strips that have limited infrastructure, gravel runways and airstrip lengths not suited to larger aircraft.

Coastal communities continue to rely on marine services for transportation and for shipments of goods and services. There are five marine vessels currently serving Labrador; however, the completion of Phase III of the Trans Labrador Highway will compel a further analysis of the marine configuration for coastal and central Labrador. Marine services in the province are heavily subsidized by the provincial government.

The winter trail system serves as a vital transportation link where there is no road connection on the north coast and in the communities of Black Tickle, Norman Bay and William's Harbour on the south coast. Government provides funding under the Labrador Grooming Subsidy to support the maintenance of these transportation trails.

The Province has committed to a Labrador Transportation Plan reflective of the current and future needs in the region while also considering the geographic, demographic and fiscal realities facing Labrador.

#### *Electricity*

There are challenges with the access and affordability of electricity in several areas of Labrador. The coastal communities of Labrador are almost exclusively operated on diesel electricity generation which is costly and limits any new economic or social developments. Central and western Labrador may not have sufficient electricity to establish or accommodate any significant expansion or large development given current transmission infrastructure constraints and depending upon the size of the new development, the availability of electricity from Upper Churchill recall power.

The feasibility of developing the substantial gas resources off Labrador is currently constrained by harsh environmental conditions and technological limitations; however, advances in technology and increasing demand for cleaner burning fuels may accelerate development of these resources in the future.

#### *Social Infrastructure*

Various facets of social infrastructure have seen great improvement in recent years; however, Government recognizes that more work needs to be completed to develop models to cost effectively serve small, widely scattered communities. Educational challenges range from availability of early childhood education, to aging primary/secondary school infrastructure and to accessibility of post secondary offerings in Labrador. Challenges within the justice system involve the court and policing system. Varying cultures and social needs throughout Labrador have contributed to these pressures. The provision of adequate healthcare over an area the size of Labrador is an issue, particularly in relation to specialized healthcare. As well, there is currently an established need identified for more accessible, affordable housing, especially on the north coast and in Sheshatshiu.

### **2.3.2 Programs and Services**

Labrador is a northern remote area and, as such, there are challenges in the provision of programs and services. At the present time it is clear that there is a perceived lack of access to many programs and services in comparison to other parts of the province. Some of these issues include access to; specialized healthcare, post secondary education, pre-school services and start up business development funds. Government has developed a number of programs to help with some of these issues including the Medical Transportation Program and the Labrador Travel Subsidy.

Women continue to experience challenges accessing employment, training, adequate childcare services, violence prevention programs and community based addiction treatment services. These issues are at the forefront of social and health matters needing to be addressed within Labrador and the province, as a whole.

Challenges within the justice and emergency response systems include the need for family justice services to be made accessible to all regions of

Labrador, the need for additional RCMP services as well as a feasibility study relating to challenges and barriers to providing 911 services. As well, increased planning for pandemic emergencies is required along with providing residents with greater access to justice services and information in their own Aboriginal language.

Many of the challenges experienced by the Nunatsiavut Government, the Innu Nation and the Labrador Metis Nation related to delivering and gaining access to programs and services arise because of the difficulties associated with providing these programs and services to isolated and remote communities. These challenges mirror those faced by other residents of Labrador, and therefore are not necessarily tied to Aboriginal issues.

### **2.3.3 Labour Market**

Labour market conditions in Labrador, like all other regions of the province, have been improving. The region also shares many labour market trends, challenges and opportunities with the rest of the province and Canada, particularly related to growth and dominance of the service sector, increasing





skills demands among the workforce and changing demographic trends. However, unique labour market characteristics in the region may prompt some labour market challenges earlier, or to a greater extent, than elsewhere such as recruitment and retention difficulties and skills shortages.

#### *Changing Workforce Demographics*

An increasing rate of population decline and aging among the working age population is some of the most significant trends that will impact the Labrador, provincial and Canadian labour markets in the future. These trends will likely lead to increasing recruitment and retention difficulties and potential labour shortages. A large share of the baby boom generation will move into retirement during this period and there will be fewer young people entering the labour market to replace these workers. Over the next fifteen years, the working age population is expected to decline by 9.6 per cent in the region and by 14.6 per cent in the province. Although the rate of decline will be slower in Labrador, largely due to the impacts of growing Aboriginal populations, the region will face increasing competition for labour from the island portion of the province as well as the rest of Canada.

#### *Education*

Over the past decade, employment outcomes for individuals have improved with increasing levels of educational attainment. Employers will continue to demand higher skills in the future to remain competitive in the increasingly knowledge-based, global economy. In Labrador, a higher proportion of the working age population (25-54 years old) have a post-secondary certificate or diploma, than elsewhere in the province and there is a lower proportion of this population with less than a high school diploma. However, there is also a lower proportion of people with university degrees. Furthermore, these outcomes are not observed among all areas of the region. Workforce education levels in the larger regional service centres of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West are generally higher than the region overall; conversely, education levels among the working age population in northern Labrador, the south coast of Labrador and

the Labrador Straits area are significantly lower than observed in the region overall and the rest of the province and Canada. Ensuring access to a skilled workforce is essential to continued competitiveness of local employers and improved labour market outcomes for individuals.

#### *Employment*

Employment in Labrador has increased since 1996. Within the region, there is a higher proportion of people employed at some point during the year and for longer periods than elsewhere in the province and employment incomes are higher than the provincial average. While the number of different types of industries people work in is comparable to the rest of the province, employment is more concentrated in the goods-producing industries, largely related to the mining industry. As a result, there is also a relatively higher proportion of workers in the trades, transport and equipment related occupations in the region. This will be a particular challenge in supporting the continued competitiveness of local employers considering that skill shortages among these occupations are being cited throughout the country. Wage rates will likely increase as the competitions for labour among employers increase.

#### *Underrepresented Groups*

Labour market participation rates in Labrador have increased and are on par with the province overall. However, a number of groups, including women, persons with disabilities, older workers, youth and Aboriginal populations continue to experience weaker labour market outcomes than the total population in the region. Increasing participation among these groups will be critical to meeting future labour demands.



## Overview of Feedback



### 3. Overview of Feedback

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to developing this Northern Strategic Plan in direct consultation with Labradorians through the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs. The methods used for consultation are outlined in Section 1.5.1 of this document. Valuable information was received from consultation sessions, one-on-one sessions, feedback forms and written submissions and has aided in determining the priorities for Labrador for the next five years.

Key themes evolved from the analysis of all feedback received and include: transportation; natural resources; tourism, culture and heritage; capacity building; partnerships; programs and services; health care and Aboriginal peoples. Please refer to Appendix A for a more detailed account of feedback.





A Northern Strategy  
for Labrador



## 4.0 A Northern Strategy for Labrador

### 4.1 Our Vision for Labrador

We envision Labrador where Government and people work together to advance social and economic development so that residents share in an improved quality of life.

This vision was created by first listening to the people of Labrador throughout the consultation process. To give the vision more focus, four strategic directions have been formulated. These directions are broad areas of interest that incorporate themes heard from participants all over Labrador. The goals and objectives provide more detail of how the Northern Strategic Plan will advance the vision for the region. To achieve this vision all people and organizations in Labrador must work in cooperation.

### 4.2 Strategic Directions

Government has identified four strategic directions to focus the Northern Strategic Plan. These directions build upon the themes outlined in Section 3: Overview of Feedback, that were established throughout the consultation process: Transportation; Natural Resources; Tourism, Culture and Heritage; Capacity Building; Partnerships; Programs and Services; and Aboriginal Issues.

The four strategic directions to guide the Northern Strategic Plan are:

- Supporting equitable programs and services and improving infrastructure to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador
- Fostering the progression of social development in Labrador
- Providing leadership and supporting maximization of economic development opportunities
- Encouraging communications and partnerships with governments, Aboriginal people, communities, organizations and other stakeholders

Each strategic direction is supported by numerous goals and objectives. For instance, goals and objectives in the education section contribute to fostering social development while also supporting equitable programs and services. The initiatives outlined in this document, when taken as a group, strengthen and support the four outlined strategic directions and demonstrate Government's commitment to Labrador.

Government realizes that by working together and forging partnerships all the regions of the province can realize its full potential. The Northern Strategic Plan will be instrumental in shaping public policy for Labrador.





A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a dark night sky. The lights are primarily green, with some yellow and blue hues, appearing as wispy, horizontal streaks and more concentrated, vertical-like formations on the left side. The background is a deep, dark blue.

## Goal and Objectives



## 5.0 Goals and Objectives

The following sections outline the goals and objectives of transportation, natural resources and environment, tourism and cultural development, education, health, access to programming and services, and Aboriginal partnerships. Goals and related objectives have been identified for each of these themes. The objectives provide direction which will result in specific actions during the course of the plan.

### 5.1 Transportation

People throughout Labrador maintain that transportation is a major concern in the region. From road to marine to air, stakeholders believe that the current transportation system is inadequate to manage the existing developments and potential growth that exists all over Labrador. Transportation is basic for effective social and economic development.

Government has invested heavily in the Labrador transportation system in the past and remains committed to improving all transportation networks in Labrador. The establishment of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Labrador Transportation has provided Government with advice on how best to address future Labrador transportation needs from a resident's perspective.

As part of Phase I of the ferry rate review, Government recently announced a reduction in passenger and vehicle-plus-driver fares on provincial ferries to bring them in line with road equivalency costs. The five per cent, across the board, rate increase for all fares that was scheduled to take effect April 1, 2007, has been canceled. Commercial freight rate inequities in certain rates within Labrador have also been corrected. For instance, freight rates on certain Labrador runs will be decreasing from approximately \$112.00 to \$35.00 for 680 kilograms of freight.

The Northern Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of transportation to Labrador and has focused on broad transportation themes. The Province committed to a Labrador Transportation Plan that will concentrate on specific outcomes

while addressing the unique issues relating to transportation in Labrador. Some of these issues include the continued effective delivery of marine services on the Labrador coast; the completion of Phase III of the Trans Labrador Highway and hard surfacing of Phase I of the Highway.

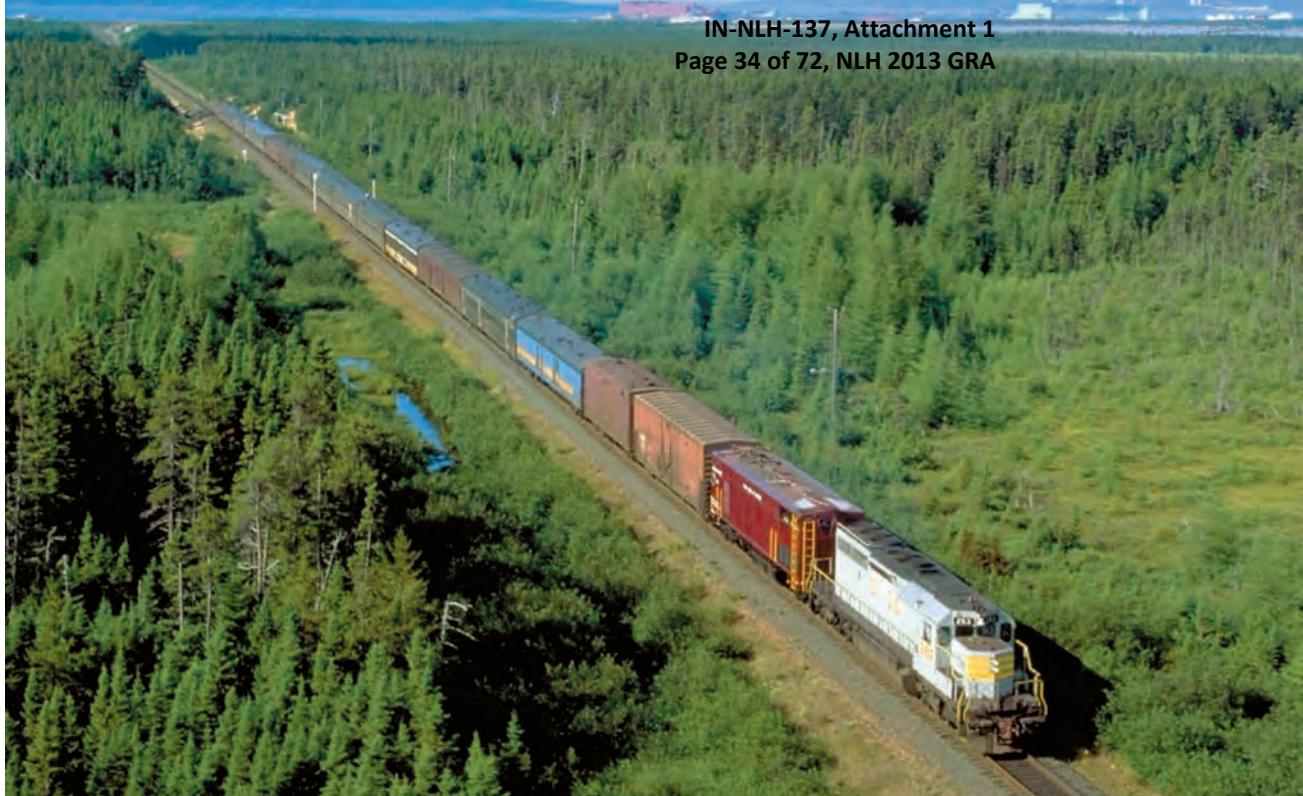
From the concerns that were raised in the consultation sessions and information received from relevant government departments, the following goal was established. It illustrates Government's strategic direction to improve infrastructure in order to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador. The goal has two main objectives and action items which illustrate the means by which Government will achieve these objectives.

#### Goal

An integrated transportation system that is responsive to business and individual needs

#### Objectives

1. Implementation of the Labrador Transportation Plan
  - i. Monitor the progress of commitments made in the Labrador Transportation Plan
2. Improved infrastructure and policy to support access
  - i. Decrease the average number of days that the road between Red Bay and Lodge Bay is closed due to inclement weather (provide additional snow clearing in the area)
  - ii. Provide flexibility with the ferry schedule in the Labrador Straits and consider extending the season as ice conditions permit
  - iii. Evaluate options for the provision of two new ferries for the Labrador Straits ferry route that would provide year round service pending ice conditions
  - iv. Extend the 2007 summer schedule of the M/V Sir Robert Bond by 3 weeks



- v. Complete Phase III of the Trans Labrador Highway
- vi. Complete hard surfacing of Phase I of the Trans Labrador Highway
- vii. Finalize decision on central airport for Southern Labrador
- viii. Consider options for the Nain Airstrip
- ix. Continue dust reduction strategies on the Trans Labrador Highway with specific emphasis where the highway passes directly through communities
- x. Increase funding levels for current and projected summer and winter road maintenance contracts
- xi. Increase engineering positions and funding to help with building maintenance in Labrador
- xii. Increase grooming subsidy to reflect rising operational expenses including gas prices and insurance costs
- xiii. Provide funds to Labrador Winter Trails Inc. for the purchase of a groomer and the construction of a groomer shed for the North West River to Mulligan trail
- xiv. Consult with the Nunatsiavut Government on the condition of the north coast winter trail system
- xv. Increase signage and tourism information along the Trans Labrador Highway

## 5.2 Natural Resources and Environment

Labrador is an area rich in natural resources. Many developments have been initiated in recent years and much exploration is on-going. In recognition of this fact, protection of the environment is an essential component of any current and future development. This creates the challenge of finding a balance between protecting the environment and encouraging economic development. Large projects, such as the Voisey's Bay Project underwent intensive environmental studies prior to being permitted to proceed. Future resource developments will be subject to the same requirement consistent with environmental assessment legislation.

Sustainable development of Labrador's mineral potential is a key priority for government and significant emphasis has been placed on increasing the competitiveness of its exploration attractiveness. Given the vast size of Labrador, substantial effort is required to uncover its mineral potential. Initiatives to encourage and stimulate exploration interest are focused on enhancing financial assistance and publicly available geoscience tools to aid the exploration industry. Considerable financial resources have been directed towards Government's Mineral Incentive Program



and at \$2.5 million this year, it is the largest budget in the program's history and Government is committed to seeing this activity continue. These funds assist grassroots and traditional prospecting as well as junior exploration activity and facilitate potential mining development. Equally as important, are efforts to enhance the extent and quality of geoscience knowledge that is publicly available to prospectors and exploration interests aiding resource development. The Department of Natural Resources, through the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador, spends \$1.5 million each year on Labrador specific projects. Government continues to promote the development of the province's mineral resources through initiatives such as, online mineral claim staking and exploration assessment reports, enhanced geological mapping, expanded drill core collection programs and prospector training in Labrador.

With relation to forestry, the recent release of the Strategic Plan to Develop Labrador Secondary Manufacturing and Value Added Wood Products Industry is anticipated to promote developments in the industry over the coming years in central and southern Labrador in particular. This study, while supported by Government, requires significant private investment into the industry in order for future developments to occur. The study

recommends the establishment of a sawmill and manufacturing plant in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to produce construction lumber and packaged homes for local and Northern markets. A team of senior managers from across government has been established to investigate investor attraction and marketing potential to determine the viability of the plan.

During 2006, Energy Plan consultations were held throughout Labrador as part of the effort to set an overall strategic energy direction for the province. The Energy Plan is expected to be released in 2007.

With regards to fishery development in Labrador, the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador launched the Fishing Industry Renewal Initiative in May 2006. This initiative intends to develop a made in Newfoundland and Labrador policy solution to current problems and challenges facing the fishing industry. The Fishing Industrial Renewal Discussion Paper released in October 2006 indicated that Aboriginal participation and involvement in the province's fishing industry has increased over the last decade.

While people have been farming for personal consumption in Labrador for centuries, commercial



development has been limited. This trend is changing and expansion of the industry is likely. Efforts, to date, have focused on land development, science and innovation, human resource development and renewal and partnership projects. Recent initiatives include completion of a new access road within the Mud Lake Road Agricultural Development Zone, advancement of fur farming interests in coastal Labrador, commissioning of investment in a dairy feasibility study for central Labrador to evaluate future opportunities in this sector, skills and technology transfer, land development and irrigation workshops, native berry development, and ongoing grain and green manure soil enrichment and root crop production research. Planning is also underway to identify and conduct soil surveying of new lands outside of existing developing agricultural areas for future growth. Government is committed to advancing the agricultural sector in Labrador and it is believed that with the assistance of the Labrador Agricultural Advisory Committee, further development will occur.

Aboriginal land claims will continue to have significant influence on the future development of natural resources throughout Labrador.

Development of natural resources requires a balanced approach to land use planning to ensure maximization of benefits is derived from all resources. It is important to recognize that through careful management and strategic planning, each of Labrador's resources can be developed to its full potential.

In recognition of Labrador's advancing development potential, protection of the environment is an essential component of any current and future plans. This creates the challenge of finding a balance between protecting the environment and encouraging economic development. It should be noted, however, that development of significant resource projects is required by law to undergo intensive environmental study prior to being permitted to proceed and establishes a benchmark for environmental integrity and future development.

Providing leadership and promoting maximization of benefits of Labrador's resource developments is the strategic direction that links to the theme of Natural Resources and Environment. Through consultations and discussions with relevant government departments, one main goal was developed with two related objectives. Several action items were identified related to the objectives.

### **Goal**

Enhanced resource based industry while ensuring conservation of the environment in Labrador

### **Objectives**

1. Implementation of key actions to protect the natural environment in Labrador
  - i. Formulate integrated long term management plans for the significant wildlife populations (big game) of Labrador that incorporates social, cultural and economic objectives
  - ii. Work with the Nunatsiavut Government to develop and implement a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for northern Labrador and also implement relevant aspects of the Provincial Climate Change Action Plan (2005)
  - iii. Negotiate the land transfer agreement for development of the Mealy Mountain National Park
  - iv. Assess the status of inland fish species in Labrador regarding the effects of climate change on the populations specific to species which have an opportunity for development such as Lake Trout, Northern Pike, Brook Trout, and Char
  - v. Continue the development of the Protected Road Plan for the Trans Labrador Highway
  - vi. Complete conservation projects for Labrador in support of the Natural Areas System Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador



- vii. Increase patrols of threatened caribou herds in Labrador on the Quebec-Labrador border
- viii. Increase the number of Conservation Officers for the Inland Fisheries Enforcement Program
- ix. Monitor and assess impacts on caribou and inland fish species along the Trans Labrador Highway
- x. Participate in a Stewardship Project with contributing partners regarding Labrador Species at Risk
- xi. Conduct a reassessment/inventory of Labrador populations of Peregrine Falcons
- xii. Conduct a Rare Plant Survey in Labrador

2. Further development and secondary processing of existing and potential natural resources

- i. Complete sustainable forest management plans for all forest management districts in Labrador and ensure they are implemented and updated as required
- ii. Follow through on the Strategic Plan to Develop Labrador Secondary Manufacturing and Value Added Wood Products Industry through the Interdepartmental Working Committee's marketing assessment and investor attraction strategy
- iii. Increase the productive forest land base by planting of poorly stocked areas
- iv. Increase the commercial forest land base in Labrador by undertaking an expanded forest inventory
- v. Assist the Nunatsiavut Government in the development of a strategy for optimum utilization of fisheries resources in northern Labrador
- vi. Encourage underground development at the Voisey's Bay Project
- vii. Support the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board in the strategic environmental assessment in the Labrador shelf
- viii. Support Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to conduct an ACOA funded assessment of technical options for natural gas developments off Labrador
- ix. Negotiate a new federal-provincial funding agreement to include a block of funding for Labrador agricultural development (5 year agreement)
- x. Continue to support and consult with the Labrador representatives on the Agriculture Policy Framework Industry Advisory Committee, and continue to work with agricultural organizations in Labrador
- xi. Complete the Dairy Feasibility study for central Labrador and follow-up on recommendations of the study

### 5.3 Tourism and Cultural Development

As previously indicated, both tourism and culture were identified as major areas of importance for Labrador's social and economic development. Although tourism and culture are distinct areas of development, they are closely linked. Labrador's unique and distinct cultures create great potential to its developing tourism industry.

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is very supportive of the tourism and cultural industries in Labrador and have recently released Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture. Many of the themes outlined in that document are represented in the following objectives and actions. Commitments to Mealy Mountain Auditorium, Torngasok Cultural Center and the Jersey Rooms Phase II highlight recent support shown by the provincial government.

Government is developing a Provincial Winter Tourism Strategy to leverage the potential of

winter tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador to enhance and extend the province's tourism season. Additionally, the Province has been supportive of the tourism industry by committing to Destination Labrador in cooperation with the federal government and industry. Improvements to the ferry system and the early release of the marine schedules have also been positives for the tourism industry.

### **Goal**

Strengthened tourism industry in Labrador that maximizes social and economic benefits

Two main themes prevail in strengthening the tourism sector in Labrador; increased supports and access.

### **Objectives**

1. Increased supports for tourism information sites of contact
  - i. Maintain annual funding for visitor information centers for the primary points of entry in Labrador West, central Labrador, and the Labrador Straits
  - ii. Enhance the Labrador Interpretation Center
  - iii. Increase interpretative services on ferry routes

iv. Continue financial support for Destination Labrador

v. Continue cultural tourism planning as it relates to the Torngat National Park

2. Improved access throughout the region to support tourism activities

- i. Complete hard surfacing of Phase I
- ii. Provide flexibility with the ferry service in the Labrador Straits and consider extending the season as ice conditions permit
- iii. Evaluate options for the provision of two new ferries for the Labrador Straits ferry route that would provide year round service pending ice conditions
- iv. Increase grooming subsidy to reflect rising operational expenses including gas prices and insurance costs
- v. Increase signage and tourism information along the Trans Labrador Highway
- vi. Provide enhancements to the Pinware River Park

### **Goal**

Maintain and strengthen cultural integrity in Labrador





Labrador cultures need to be supported and enhanced by provincial government. Through the planning process, three avenues of support emerged; awareness, preservation and enhancement of culture.

### Objectives

1. Increased awareness of traditional Labrador crafts and various Labrador cultures throughout the province
  - i. Increase outreach of the Rooms Corporation through the enhancement of the Labrador Interpretation Center and continue to explore partnerships in Labrador
  - ii. Support the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Outreach Program for Labrador
  - iii. Continue support of the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
  - iv. Increase funding and promote the Cultural Travel Subsidy component of the Labrador Travel Subsidy for amateur and professional artists of Labrador and for youth cultural exchanges
2. Maintain and enhance traditional craft skills throughout Labrador
  - i. Support Labrador Craft Marketing Agency to develop training activities designed to preserve traditional arts and crafts skills and encourage new producers
  - ii. Support the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council Outreach Program for Labrador
  - iii. Continue support of the Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
3. Ensure preservation of various types of Labrador's culture and heritage
  - i. Continue to provide financial support to Them Days Inc. and support the development of a Labrador-based archive
  - ii. Provide annual operational grant to the Mealy Mountain Auditorium

- iii. Continue to fund and support the Labrador Creative Arts Festival
- iv. Support efforts by communities to identify heritage resources and ways to develop and preserve them
- v. Ensure that provincial organizations such as Association of Newfoundland and Labrador Archives, Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Writer's Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador and Visual Artists of Newfoundland and Labrador continue to include Labrador in their ongoing activities
- vi. Develop an Aboriginal Intangible Cultural Heritage Program
- vii. Continue to financially support the Labrador Winter Games
- viii. Provide cultural awareness training for prosecutors, educators and professionals who will work in Labrador to ensure they understand and appreciate the cultural uniqueness of the Innu and Inuit peoples
- ix. Work with the Nunatsiavut Government to develop a cultural centre for Nain

### 5.4 Education and Employment

Access to, and the provision of, a suitable education system is vital to all aspects of economic and social development throughout Labrador. The level and types of education among the population has a direct effect on the labor market. This begins at a young age with early childhood education and continues through primary/secondary and post-secondary levels. Issues related to all levels were recurring topics of discussion throughout the consultation process.

With regards to early childhood education, on May 24th, 2006, the Province announced a new plan to enhance early learning and child care services in the province. The plan is funded through a bilateral agreement-in-principle signed by the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The keys issues to be addressed include: making child care more affordable for families; supporting training and

other measures to attract more people to the field of child care; increasing the number of spaces in rural and under serviced areas; supporting the inclusion of children with special needs; and improving quality and developmental opportunities for children. The on-going plan is designed to support both one-time and sustainable initiatives in each of these areas.

One ongoing initiative which relates to education, in general, is the recent commitment to construct a new regional school in L'Anse au Loup in an effort to provide the highest quality learning opportunities for young people. In addition, based upon the evidence that children are better able to learn if they have had a nutritious start to their day, several provincial government departments joined together in October 2006 to provide support to the Kids Eat Smart Foundation Newfoundland and Labrador.

The White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education recommended many initiatives aimed to renew the public post-secondary system in the province to prepare residents for the future. Two of these initiatives have already begun which will have major impacts on the system in Labrador. Government has begun a major expansion to the College of the North Atlantic campus in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The extension will provide additional space for classrooms, two lecture theatres, a library, increased common areas and offices. The addition will also house the Labrador Institute of Memorial University. Government also recently announced additional funding for adult education in the province. This investment included the establishment of a full-time Adult Basic Education Level I position in North West River's College of the North Atlantic.

There are initiatives on-going within the province to address the shortage of skilled labour. In September of 2006, for example, the Department of Education piloted the Futures in Skilled Trades and Technology program for secondary students. This program is aimed to increase interest at the secondary level in the pursuit of trades and technology programs. Plans are in place to increase the number of courses offered and sites. In October 2006 the Department of Education announced three initiatives aimed at

increasing female participation in non-traditional trades. These initiatives included signing a contract with the Industrial Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, hiring a female industrial training officer and utilizing 66% of 25 Alberta educational scholarships for women enrolling in trade's courses provided by the Province of Alberta in celebration of its centenary. The Skills Task Force has been created with a mandate to ensure responsive training, education and supports to develop the province's workforce. They are completing consultations throughout the province to help address challenges in the skilled trades' field.

Having local people fill vacant positions is believed to be an effective tool in recruitment and retention efforts. The key is to encourage them to become qualified for the available positions. Another commonly used tool is offering retention incentives for positions such as nurses and teachers that are difficult to fill in remote areas. The Department of Government Services received approval in the 2006 Budget for an incentive program for the recruitment and retention of Environmental Health Officers. Incentives are in the form of an educational bursary program for qualified students interested in pursuing the program attached to a three year return in service agreement and a paid practicum to students already in the program.

The implementation of the Provincial Immigration Strategy will contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the province. Immigrants offer new ideas, new cultural experiences, specialized skills and establish successful businesses. The strategy will complement and support the Northern Strategic Plan and the development of Labrador.

The theme of education relates to two of the strategic directions identified previously. These directions are: supporting equitable programs and services and improving infrastructure to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador; and fostering the progression of social development in Labrador. The goal was developed through consultations and discussions with relevant departments and centers on academic achievement.



### Goal

An education system that produces outcomes for student achievements that are comparable to other parts of the province while valuing traditional knowledge

The existence of suitable infrastructure and offering adequate programming are vital components in an education system that meets the changing demands of the province and Labrador specifically. This includes all levels of education from pre-school, primary/secondary and post-secondary. The following summarizes the two main objectives that have evolved through the analysis of the issues raised related to education.

### Objectives

1. Improved and increased infrastructure for educational programming throughout Labrador
  - i. Construct a new purpose-built facility for the Labrador West campus of College of the North Atlantic
  - ii. Continue preliminary discussions on the concept and feasibility, including engineering and environmental-related work, of a fibre optic link throughout Labrador
  - iii. Contribute to the construction of a new school in Sheshatshiu

- iv. Construct a new purpose-built K-12 school in Port Hope Simpson
- v. Construct a new facility for the Francophone school in Happy Valley-Goose Bay

2. Enhanced educational programming offered within Labrador
  - i. Follow up on the recommendations of the Skills Task Force report once released, focusing on issues that could impact Labrador in particular
  - ii. Support the efforts of the Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board in its review of existing apprenticeship policies
  - iii. Continue to offer Adult Basic Education programs where needed
  - iv. Ensure Labrador sites are utilized in offering part-time Adult Basic Education courses as required
  - v. Establish two Resource Facilitators at College of the North Atlantic in Labrador to assist persons with disabilities
  - vi. Support the continuation of the Provincial Futures in Skilled Trades and Technology program after the three year pilot project is completed and expand the number of sites offered in Labrador

- vii. Improve distance education by increasing flexibility, providing more support for students and increasing course variety as appropriate
- viii. Ensure that the Culture Connections Strategy results in cultural benefits for Labrador
- ix. Build on recommendations of the Philpott Report by working with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Innu on an implementation plan
- x. Continue offering programming/curriculum that values traditional culture in the primary/secondary school system and conduct an evaluation of existing programs/curriculum
- xi. Work with partners and Aboriginal governments and organizations to enhance K-12 initiatives to prepare Aboriginal young people in Labrador for post-secondary education

#### **Goal**

A labour market supply in Labrador that meets employment demands within the region

#### **Objective**

- 1. Increased access to adequate employment for local people and improved retention initiatives to support labour market demands

- i. Increase Career, and Employment and Labour Market services staffing in Labrador
- ii. Continue to address recruitment and retention issues for healthcare professionals and specialists such as audiologists, psychologists, dialysis and dentists by maintaining retention bonuses
- iii. Follow up on the recommendations of the Skills Task Force report; focusing on issues that could impact Labrador in particular
- iv. Continue to offer retention bonuses for teachers in remote areas
- v. Develop programs for the recruitment and retention of qualified candidates for Environmental Health positions in Labrador
- vi. Continue the Labrador: Come Work and Play awareness campaign for recruiting purposes
- vii. Support efforts aimed at addressing recruitment and retention challenges in the provincial core public service

#### **5.5 Health**

Health was identified as a major area of importance for Labrador's social and economic development. Health builds on the wellness of communities. A major contributing factor to the strength of communities is the recruitment and retention of professionals and a skilled labour force. Each region





of Labrador faces many challenges in being able to deliver accessible healthcare due in part to great geographic distances between service delivery points.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador continues to work to address the healthcare needs of communities across the province. Plans, such as, Working Together for Mental Health, the Provincial Wellness Strategy, the Poverty Reduction Strategy and The Violence Prevention Initiative have all been created based on consultations held across the province as tools for the development of healthy communities.

The Labrador-Grenfell Regional Integrated Health Authority has developed a Strategic Plan for the region and outlines the vision and commitment of the organization to improve accessibility to appropriate health services. Labrador-Grenfell Health will continue to work with key partners, e.g. International Grenfell Association, the regional Grenfell Foundation branches, Aboriginal health organizations, federal government, schools, municipalities, community groups and others, in the development and delivery of services.

The Model for Coordination of Services continues to be supported by the Department of Health and Community Services and Labrador-Grenfell Health. The Model is mandated to support children and youth from birth to 21 years. The partner departments recognize that services cannot be fully effective if provided to a child or youth in isolation. Children and youth must be served within the context of families and communities where they live. The integrated service approach is intended to build on existing services, avoid duplication and at the same time enhance the role of parents/guardians and their children. All of this can be accomplished through the Individual Support Services Plan, a child centered approach designed to meet both the individual and service needs of the child/youth.

Programs and services such as the provincial Health Line help to bridge the distance in healthcare delivery as this program allows residents to talk

with experienced nurses to address health concerns 24 hours a day any day of the week. The Medical Transportation Program provides access to specialized services outside of the region when required. The Labrador-Grenfell Regional Integrated Health Authority also provides a medical transportation service for travel within the region. For a subsidized rate of \$40 return, patients from the north coast of Labrador can travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay and patients from the south coast can travel to St. Anthony for medical purposes.

The Department of Health and Community Services has developed policy standards for the Transition House Program. These standards were developed in conjunction with the shelters from the region, i.e. Libra House in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Hope Haven in Labrador City, the Nain Safe House and the Hopedale Safe House. The Department, in conjunction with Labrador-Grenfell Health and the members of the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, will continue to review models of service for the communities of Labrador.

Through the Provincial Wellness Plan, Government is enhancing the focus on wellness. The Plan works directly with Labrador-Grenfell Health and other partners to advance priority areas, i.e. healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco control and injury prevention. Capacity for wellness has been enhanced by funding provided to the region to support new positions including a Wellness Coordinator and a School Health Promotion Liaison, and the efforts of the Labrador Regional Wellness Coalition, the Healthy Students-Healthy Schools Initiative, the Provincial Tobacco Reduction Strategy and the Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework and Action Plan.

Each of these initiatives takes into account the unique culture and diversity of the northern region and works with the region to identify unique solutions for the area. The Provincial Tobacco Reduction Strategy supports Aboriginal governments and groups to build capacity to address tobacco prevention among children, youth

and adults and works to develop and implement a public education strategy to promote smoking cessation among Aboriginal children, youth and adults. The Provincial Food and Nutrition Framework and Action Plan includes strategic directions which have direct impact for Labrador residents: reinforce healthy eating and physical activity practices; support to vulnerable populations; enhance the availability of affordable, high quality food; and support food and nutrition research.

In respect to families and young children, Government continues to provide ongoing funding and support for the delivery of Family Resource Programs and Healthy Baby Clubs in several communities throughout Labrador. These community-based services focus on programs and activities that foster positive parenting and healthy child development outcomes in prenatal, postnatal and early childhood periods. Government is also committed to improving opportunities for families to access quality and regulated child care services. Ongoing developments with child care services are continuously evolving to address affordability, recruitment and retention issues, increasing the number of spaces, supporting children with special needs and improving quality and developmental opportunities for children.

Government has also committed funding to address the long term care needs for the region of Labrador with a commitment to build a long term care facility in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The design planning is underway and construction is anticipated for 2008. As well, Government has committed to building a new hospital in Labrador City which will include capacity for mental health patients to be safely accommodated, to replace the Captain William Jackman Memorial Hospital.

The Department of Health and Community Services developed an initiative, in conjunction with Labrador-Grenfell Health, to provide a new satellite dialysis unit in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The unique challenges that dialysis patients face in the region led to the commitment of services in Labrador by March 2008.

The Department of Health and Community Services and Labrador-Grenfell Health are actively collaborating in several areas such as programs and services, training, public awareness, diagnosis and assessment related to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The Department has also worked with Labrador-Grenfell Health and the health authorities to increase services for persons with severe and persistent mental illness as part of the new mental health and addictions strategy, Working Together for Mental Health.

Residents across the province should have the opportunity to avail of healthcare programs and services regardless of their location in the province. As referenced in Section 4.2 of the Northern Strategic Plan, Government is committed to supporting equitable programs and services and improving infrastructure to facilitate enhanced accessibility for the residents of Labrador.

From the concerns that were raised in the consultation sessions and information received from relevant government departments, the following goal was established. Each goal has objectives identified for Government and a list of action items to achieve the objectives.

### **Goal**

Improved access to primary healthcare services that is responsive to the unique needs of people throughout Labrador

Two main themes prevail in strengthening the health sector in Labrador, access to programs and services and adequate infrastructure.

### **Objectives**

1. Implement effective programs and services in the health sector that reflect the unique challenges that face Labrador communities
  - i. Facilitate discussions to accommodate the potential for designated seats on the Apollo for medical travel
  - ii. Continue to address recruitment and retention issues for healthcare professionals and specialists such as



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audiologists, psychologists, dialysis and dentists by maintaining retention bonuses and recruitment initiatives

- iii. Continue to explore meaningful ways to increase and improve early learning and child care services
- iv. Support the implementation of the Provincial Wellness Plan, which aims to promote health and prevent illness and injury, by ensuring that policies, programs and initiatives are implemented throughout all of Labrador
- v. Provide financial support for an Emergency Response Initiative under Fire and Emergency Services for pandemic planning and regional emergency situation response

2. Improved access to primary healthcare services that is responsive to the unique needs of people throughout Labrador

- i. Complete construction of the long term healthcare facility in Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- ii. Ensure new health centre in Labrador West includes capacity for mental health service
- iii. Increase reimbursement of claimable expenses under the Medical Transportation

Assistance Program for residents that incur significant travel costs in order to receive medical treatment

- iv. Establish a Family Resource Coordinator position through the Labrador Grenfell Regional Health Authority to enhance family resource programming in the region
- v. Provide Picture Archiving and Communications Systems for the Labrador Health Centre and Captain William Jackman Memorial Hospital
- vi. Strengthen the Telehealth network and video conferencing capacity in Labrador to improve access to address chronic disease management in Labrador
- vii. Enhance social work staffing to address the needs of children and families, and persons with mental health and addictions issues
- viii. Fund two new positions to support services for persons with developmental disabilities in Labrador
- ix. Increase administrative and technology support to reduce wait times for laboratory test results and to enhance care for surgery patients in western Labrador

## 5.6 Access to Programming and Services

A predominant theme that emerged throughout all of the consultations was that citizens of Labrador should be able to access various programs and services to the same degree as other people of the province. There were suggestions to expand some already existing programs and in some cases create new programs to more fully service the region.

Government has recognized the unique challenges in Labrador by creating a number of programs specifically designed for the Labrador environment like the Labrador Travel Subsidy, the Air Foodlift Subsidy, the Northern Agri-foods Development Strategy and the Labrador Grooming Subsidy.

The Province is also committed to increase access through the Government Broadband Initiative. This initiative will improve governmental connectivity while achieving improved broadband benefits for communities across the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation will continue to work with municipalities and public and private stock holders with a view to developing affordable housing options for Labrador.

While many of the objectives under this section support the strategic direction related to access, very few can be categorized under one direction.

### **Goal**

Accessible and effective programs and services that reflect the unique challenges that face Labrador communities

Labrador's unique challenges like geography and cultural differences were emphasized throughout the consultation process. Programming and services should be designed and implemented with these characteristics in mind.

### **Objectives**

1. Ensure the unique challenges that Labrador's communities face are reflected when

implementing new or existing programming

- i. Increase funding to the Labrador Travel Subsidy program, including School Sports Newfoundland and Labrador funding
- ii. Provide funding to follow-up on the recommendations from the Business Retention and Expansion Program
- iii. Increase funding and promote the Cultural Travel Subsidy component of the Labrador Travel Subsidy for amateur and professional artists of Labrador and for youth cultural exchanges
- iv. Introduce an energy rebate to reduce the cost of basic electricity consumption needs (on the Lifeline Block) for residential customers in Labrador's rural isolated communities and the Labrador Straits to a level on par with the Labrador Interconnected Rates
- v. Review Labrador isolated commercial customer electricity rates, with a view to introducing a comparable rebate when the Lower Churchill project is sanctioned for development

2. Improve the delivery of services that are offered in the region





- i. Continue preliminary discussions on the concept and feasibility, including engineering and environmental-related work, of a fibre optic link throughout Labrador
- ii. Transfer administration of Combined Councils of Labrador funding to Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
- iii. Increase Career and Employment, and Labour Market services staffing in Labrador
- iv. Offer gender based analysis training to government employees in Labrador, to support departments in delivering programs and services as intended for women
- v. Continue support for the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder research project at the Labrador Correctional Centre
- vi. Contribute to the development of a sewage treatment plant for Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- vii. Provide funding for a feasibility study and needs assessment for a regional recreational sportsplex in central Labrador
- viii. Undertake a review of the service delivery model for the Motor Registration Division and Government Services Centres in the Labrador region
- ix. Conduct assessment of housing needs and address off-reserve housing needs by allocating funding under the federal off-reserve housing trust and ensuring access to provincial low-income housing programs
- x. Provide additional support for the delivery of Government Service Centre programs to the public through the provision of a dedicated Manager of Operations position in Labrador
- xi. Increase Highway Enforcement in Labrador with an additional Highway Enforcement Officer position
- xii. Ensure monitoring and assessment of water quality in Labrador

3. Improve justice services and emergency responses in Labrador

- i. Increase the number of prosecutors to effectively deal with the existing caseload
- ii. Provide financial support for an Emergency Response Initiative under Fire and Emergency Services for pandemic planning and regional emergency situation response
- iii. Continue to work towards the conclusion of Community Tripartite Agreements under the First Nations Policing Policy with the federal government as successful conclusion of these agreements will provide additional funding to be invested in Labrador communities
- iv. Expand Family Justice Services and Court Services in Labrador to address needs in the region, particularly coastal and remote communities
- v. Improve access to interpretation services in the justice system through the establishment of an Aboriginal Interpretation Project including the creation of a Justice Liaison position
- vi. Undertake a feasibility study to consider the challenges and barriers to providing 911 services in Labrador
- vii. Continue and enhance the grant program to advance violence prevention for women, children and families in Aboriginal communities
- viii. Assess need for family violence programs in Labrador communities
- ix. Create a Coordinator position for the RCMP's Community Justice Forums program to benefit coastal communities
- x. Organize an Aboriginal Justice Symposium to promote dialogue between Aboriginal people and the justice system

- xi. Provide housing units for RNC officers in Churchill Falls
- xii. Provide an additional solicitor for Child, Youth and Family Services in Labrador
- xiii. Increase existing staff positions to support justice initiatives in Labrador
- xiv. Provide videoconferencing capabilities for the Wabush Provincial Court and the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Supreme Court

### **5.7 Aboriginal Partnerships**

Throughout the consultations, Aboriginal governments, groups and community leaders stressed the importance of settling and implementing land claims as the first step in developing a new and respectful relationship between the Province and the Aboriginal peoples of Labrador. Land claims treaties and associated self-government agreements will define the roles and responsibilities of governments, provide certainty over future development and contain the tools and resources necessary to contribute to the sustainability of the Aboriginal governments and the well-being of their people.

The Nunatsiavut Government, in particular, stressed the need for a government to government relationship and, in the transitional period during which it begins to exercise its jurisdictions, the necessity of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each government in the provision of programs and services. A similar issue arises with the two Innu Band Councils as they begin to more fully exercise their jurisdictions on the reserves, begin to provide programs and services devolved from the federal government and the Province, and as they begin to plan and develop the capacity for self-government.

The members of the Labrador Metis Nation share similar aspirations to the Labrador Innu and Inuit. There is, however, ongoing deliberation over the status of the Labrador Metis Nation land claim and the eligibility of its members for federal Aboriginal programs and services. This has hampered the development of a good, productive and practical relationship. The Province continues to urge the

federal government to make a speedy decision on the Labrador Metis Nation claim.

Not all Aboriginal people in Canada can demonstrate Aboriginal rights and title, nor are all Aboriginal peoples eligible for various federal Aboriginal programs and services. It is the federal government that determines who is and is not eligible for those programs and services.

It would be unfair to other Labradorians to grant the members of the Labrador Metis Nation rights and benefits that they have not established in law. This does not mean that we should not celebrate the distinctive contribution the Labrador Metis make to the culture of Labrador and work with them to improve the economic and social circumstances of its members. Thus, the Province has offered to work with the Labrador Metis Nation and its members in gaining access to federal Aboriginal programs and services where they meet the eligibility requirements, and has listened to and attempted to address the Labrador Metis Nation's concerns expressed in the consultation sessions. The Province will continue to consult appropriately with the Labrador Metis Nation on developments, as required by law, and will work with them to ensure that their members, with other Labradorians, benefit from employment opportunities from developments that occur in Labrador.

Government continues to develop and implement programs and policies that hold the flexibility necessary to address the uniqueness of the Labrador region and its people. As referenced previously in Section 4.2, Government is committed to continuing to encourage communications and partnerships with governments, Aboriginal people, communities, organizations and other stakeholders throughout Labrador.

We listened to the concerns of Aboriginal peoples and are committed to the following goal:

#### **Goal**

A respectful and cooperative relationship with the Aboriginal peoples of Labrador

The prevailing themes regarding strengthening



relationships with Aboriginal peoples in Labrador focus on improved communication and partnerships and the development of culturally sensitive programs and services that meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples and their communities.

### Objectives

1. Develop and maintain communication networks and partnerships with Aboriginal governments and groups in Labrador
  - i. Continue to develop a government to government relationship with the Nunatsiavut Government
  - ii. Continue to develop a strategic plan with the Nunatsiavut Government for the devolution of provincial programs and services and address issues relating to cultural appropriateness of education, preservation of language, training and retention of professionals and capacity building
  - iii. Develop a Land Use Plan in conjunction with the Nunatsiavut Government
  - iv. Work with the federal government and Labrador Metis Nation to ensure their members benefit from federal initiatives to "close the gap", to support the Labrador Metis Nation in their request for access to federal programs and services; continue to urge the federal government to make a decision on the Labrador Metis land claims.

- v. Negotiate Land Claims and self-government agreement with the Innu Nation

2. Develop programs and services that meet the needs of Aboriginal communities in Labrador
  - i. Work with the federal government and the Mushuau and Sheshatshiu Innu Bands on the Innu Healing strategy and on the devolution of programs and services to the Bands; the activity addresses issues relating to cultural appropriateness of education, preservation of language, training and retention of professionals and capacity building
  - ii. Conduct assessment of housing needs and address off-reserve housing needs by allocating funding under the federal off-reserve housing trust and ensuring access to provincial low-income housing programs
  - iii. Organize an Aboriginal Justice Symposium to promote dialogue between Aboriginal people and the justice system
  - iv. Continue to work towards the conclusion of Community Tripartite Agreements under the First Nations Policing Policy with the federal government as successful conclusion of these agreements will provide additional funding to be invested in Labrador communities



- v. Allocate funding for an annual Provincial Aboriginal Women's Conference
- vi. Ensure Violence Prevention Initiative funding is used to increase awareness of and address domestic violence in Aboriginal communities
- vii. Provide cultural awareness training for prosecutors, educators and professionals who will work in Labrador to ensure they understand and appreciate the cultural uniqueness of the Innu and Inuit peoples
- viii. Ensure that the courts are sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal peoples so that they can understand court processes and judgments
- ix. Explore, more fully, the use of sentencing circles and alternative justice approaches, and train justice personnel in these areas
- x. Enhance capacity of Aboriginal communities and partners to provide intervention services to children affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, their families and caregivers through the development of training modules for professionals and paraprofessionals
- xi. Increase drug and alcohol awareness programs in the school system and the Aboriginal communities
- xii. Encourage culturally appropriate and holistic healing, including the development

of Therapeutic Foster Care to better meet the needs of Aboriginal children and their families

- xiii. Work with Aboriginal people to implement the Cultural Strategic Plan, to celebrate Aboriginal cultures and increase the economic benefit flowing to Aboriginal artists and craftspeople
- xiv. Define mechanisms for addressing Aboriginal women's socio-cultural concerns
- xv. Work with the Innu and Inuit education authorities and the federal government to develop Aboriginal curricula that will foster Aboriginal languages and culture
- xvi. Develop social, economic, and cultural development modules for learning – capacity development training, mentoring, adult education and skill development
- xvii. Work with the Nunatsiavut Government to develop a cultural centre for Nain
- xviii. Work with Aboriginal partners to support Aboriginal cultural tourism
- xix. Implement a grant program to address youth suicide in Aboriginal communities
- xx. Develop an Aboriginal Intangible Cultural Heritage Program
- xxi. Contribute to the development of a Federal Provincial Aboriginal Sport Participation Agreement



xxii. Work with partners and Aboriginal governments and organizations to enhance K-12 initiatives to prepare Aboriginal young people in Labrador for post-secondary education

### 5.8 Working Together

As identified throughout the consultations, people in Labrador want to see more collaboration between the provincial government and other governments and agencies. Government recognizes that it cannot work independently and understands the need to work in cooperation. The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will play a lead role in coordinating collaboration between provincial departments and agencies on issues related to Labrador.

The federal government's role in Labrador is very important given the matters currently facing the region including the continued downsizing of traditional fisheries, the future of 5 Wing Goose Bay and the ongoing issues with Labrador's Aboriginal communities. It is essential that the provincial and federal governments work together to address the needs in Labrador particularly where there is a general agreement on the priorities for action. There is a long history of cooperation and cost sharing between the governments and this must continue to achieve the strategic directions of the region.

Access to information is one of the major themes that were identified through the consultation process. The theme of working together is tied to the strategic direction of encouraging communications and partnerships with governments, Aboriginal people, communities, organizations and other stakeholders.

#### Goal

Continuation and expansion of partnership with all levels of government and outside agencies

Creating, developing and maintaining partnerships are important to the people of Labrador. This is viewed as important when interpreting and understanding information related to government

departments and agencies. Continuing and expanding partnerships is an important goal and has resulted in one objective.

#### Objective

1. To encourage and facilitate partnerships between the provincial government and other levels of government and community groups who work with Government throughout Labrador
  - i. Meet with Combined Councils of Labrador Executive once a year (6 months following the Annual General Meeting) to review resolutions that pertain to the provincial government
  - ii. Pursue potential economic opportunities and partnerships with Nunavut, in conjunction with the Nunatsiavut Government
  - iii. Continue to ensure that the federal government adheres to its commitment to 5 Wing Goose Bay and identification of new opportunities for military and non-military use of the Base
  - iv. Advance long term development priorities for Labrador with ongoing collaboration between the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs and the Rural Secretariat



Progress



## 6. Progress

This chapter will demonstrate how the progress of the Northern Strategic Plan will be measured. This process includes an accountability framework which will identify the reporting schedule and it explains the role that the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will have monitoring the outcomes from the Plan.

### 6.1 Accountability Framework

Accountability means the ownership of conferred responsibility, combined with an obligation to report to a higher authority on the discharge of those responsibilities and the results obtained.

An accountability framework defines the nature and scope of responsibilities, identifies key results, performance expectations and the monitoring and reporting strategies. The framework is supported by specific guidelines and policies to ensure public transparency and accountability to the citizens of the province. It also considers its operation with respect to the legislative and strategic directions of Government.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has a responsibility to be accountable to the public for all decisions it makes. The accountability framework for the Northern Strategic Plan reiterates Government's commitment to public transparency and accountability.

#### 6.1.1 Reporting Schedule

The Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs will provide a verbal update annually to the House of Assembly on the progress of the Northern Strategic Plan. In addition, a written report will be made available bi-annually to the public to monitor and report on the progress of the Plan.

The Northern Strategic Plan will also be reflected in the Department's Annual Report and Business Plan. This will provide additional opportunities to report on the progress of the goals and objectives outlined in the Plan.

### 6.2 Role of Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the Northern Strategic Plan is implemented in an effective and timely manner. While specific actions are the responsibility of line departments, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will monitor the progress of each action.

Departmental representatives will meet with stakeholders of Labrador periodically to illustrate what has been accomplished through the Plan. The Department will also be requesting structured feedback at this time to continue to build the Northern Strategic Plan for the future.

### 6.3 Performance Measurement

To monitor the performance of the objectives outlined in the previous chapter, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will create an internal process by which to measure the results. This process will include indicators, a baseline and benchmarks which will allow an analysis of the change of Labrador's social and economic development activity. This analysis will be conducted semi-annually to provide an update on the status of the Northern Strategic Plan.



From Plan to  
Implementation



## 7. From Plan to Implementation

The Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs will take a lead role in working closely with communities, provincial departments and agencies to move forward the actions contained in the Northern Strategic Plan. Government is confident that, through the extensive consultation process undertaken in the development of this Plan, it is building a solid foundation for a path forward in Labrador.

Working to address the social and economic challenges, as have been identified throughout the consultation process, will require innovative ideas, dedication and a spirit of cooperation from all partners who are vested in the future development of Labrador. The consultation process has initiated some exciting and challenging discussion on how to move communities forward. This is a living document, one which will change as challenges are met and new ideas surface to become a part of the landscape of Labrador.

The goal of the Plan references the creation, development and maintenance of partnerships as an important tool for the people of Labrador. These partnerships will be the building blocks for clear communication, access and development which are pivotal for the social and economic betterment of the people of Labrador.



A photograph of the night sky featuring the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). The aurora is visible as a bright, green, swirling light display in the upper portion of the image, with some blue and white hues. The background is a dark, deep blue/black. There are a few small, white stars visible.

## Appendix Overview of Feedback



## Appendix Overview of Feedback

This section outlines a detailed account of feedback that was received through the consultation sessions, feedback forms and written submissions. There were several themes that emerged through the analysis of the feedback and they are identified in the following pages. It should be noted that included in this section are a number of suggestions made by participants that are not necessarily the views of Government. Further analysis will be required to assist Government in determining what is affordable and achievable in setting its strategic priorities for Labrador.

### *Transportation*

Transportation remains a significant issue in Labrador, with the highest priority being a safe and affordable transportation system. Transportation was a predominant theme throughout all consultations and impacts all other themes outlined in the following sections. There are many thoughts on how transportation plays a key role in all aspects of life in Labrador. The argument remains with residents that Labrador's transportation system is not comparable to that of the island portion of the province and is important for the progression of social and economic development in the region.

### *Trans Labrador Highway*

In all consultations, the main transportation infrastructure requirement is the hard surfacing of the Trans Labrador Highway in its entirety. Residents were adamant that this is necessary to the future development of the region and are concerned that the current state of the 'highway' has negative impacts on attracting business and tourists to their communities.

*"I've lived in Labrador all my life from western Labrador to Goose Bay and I don't think we should accept anything less than a paved highway with the lines painted on the road."*  
(Upper Lake Melville Session, July 17, 2006)

Labradorians want a highway that meets National Highway standards and stated that the provincial government needs to determine what type of hard

surface is best for northern climates, chip seal or asphalt. A suggestion was made that Government should deal with the dust associated with the Trans Labrador Highway from Labrador West to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Until there is a hard road surface there needs to be dust reduction on the roads (calcium is used on the south coast, Churchill Falls and Sheshatshiu).

The Red Bay-Lodge Bay portion of Phase II continues to be a contentious issue for that region with closures occurring during the winter due to heavy snowfalls. Residents on the south coast want the rock cuts between Red Bay and Lodge Bay fixed or eliminated altogether.

A concern that was raised specifically in Labrador West and the Labrador Straits was the connection through Quebec to the rest of Canada. People want the Province to lobby the Quebec government to have Routes 389 (Baie Comeau to Fermont) and 138 (Natashquan to Elgin) upgraded to be comparable with the Trans Labrador Highway.

In its written submission, the Nunatsiavut Government requests that the Province fund a feasibility study on the development of a road from North West River to Rigolet. Rigolet has an ice free port that could provide additional opportunities for shipping to the north coast. There are mixed feelings within communities on the north coast regarding road connection and residents would like consultations by the Nunatsiavut Government to occur before a decision is made on any road connection.

### *Marine Service*

Marine service was an issue raised throughout the sessions with most comments being fairly strong and contradictory depending on the region of Labrador.

People want Government to realize that the marine service is part of the road system. Many participants called for separate passenger and

freight vessels to service Labrador ports. Concerns of residents included inconsistency of routing, scheduling, and services on the vessels. A consistent marine schedule was highlighted as a key component to a reliable and effective service. Changes in transportation routes affect coastal communities and the way they provide services within those communities.

The shipping hub for the north coast of Labrador was a topic of discussion in most regions. Depending on where you live, people are split as to where the route should originate. Arguments were heard for both Lewisporte and Cartwright. In addition, there were arguments put forward to have freight shipped out of Happy Valley-Goose Bay for coastal communities.

A message provided throughout Labrador was to have the Apollo ferry operate year round, pending ice conditions, to provide a link to the island portion of the province. In addition, stakeholders in the Labrador Straits drew attention to the lack of space on the Apollo for medical travel from the Labrador Straits to St. Anthony. This makes it difficult to travel for medical reasons on such short notice.

#### *Air Service*

The completion of Phases I and II of the Trans Labrador Highway has impacted air service to coastal regions. Airlines have reduced flights due to decreased usage and increased costs. Residents aren't happy with current provision of air service.

The most frequent topic brought forward in the sessions was the high cost of air travel in and out of Labrador. This is an issue for all regions regardless of where you are flying.

A new air terminal for Happy Valley-Goose Bay was referenced often as being necessary to accommodate growth and development of the region. In addition, suggestions were made for larger, more centralized airports on both the north and south coasts of Labrador to accommodate larger aircraft.

*"We don't have a reliable air service so I think probably the only way we're going to solve it here in South Eastern Labrador is if we have an airstrip in a centralized area that is capable of handling probably a plane larger than the twin otter."*

(South East Coast Session, August 15, 2006)

The Labrador North Chamber of Commerce has indicated there may be future opportunities with the establishment of an air link from Labrador to Iqaluit.

#### *Winter Trails*

Labradorians want the groomed trail system completely developed throughout all regions of Labrador. Trails should be a top priority and snowmobile associations have requested to have the Labrador Grooming Subsidy increased to reflect the rising cost of fuel and insurance.

A common theme across transportation sectors is the impeding access to markets for shipping goods to and from Labrador. Shipment of goods and the costs associated is a major concern to residents, specifically on the coast of Labrador. This relates to all facets of transportation; air, marine and road. Connections to other parts of the province and other provinces were emphasized as critical to the future economic prosperity of Labrador.

#### *Natural Resources*

The development of natural resources was a recurring topic of interest throughout the stakeholder consultations. Electricity, fishery, forestry, agriculture and mining are believed to offer many opportunities for future developments. Protection of the environment, while developing natural resources, was seen as an important underlying theme throughout all regions. It was requested that further research be conducted into areas which may need to be formally protected in Labrador. Developments in the natural resource areas must recognize environmental concerns and risks and protect the environment.



Throughout the consultation process there were reoccurring themes pertaining to Labrador's electricity needs.

#### *Access to Electricity*

Throughout Labrador, the discussion regarding hydro-electric power centered on the need for an affordable, accessible source of electricity. The Central Labrador Economic Development Board echoed the sentiments of many in their discussion regarding the region's current electricity demands and capacity. They feel that there is not enough hydro electricity across the region for development initiatives with little room for expansion or development. During the Labrador West consultation session it was stated that a block of electricity should be designated for future development in Labrador and it should be included with the development of the Lower Churchill, possibly through an adjacency principle.

The Lower Churchill was discussed widely across the region as well as the potential for growth that this development could bring. During the Labrador West consultation session participants discussed the need to transmit electricity throughout Labrador. There was discussion by many groups that power lines should also be extended to the coast as the north and south coasts and Labrador Straits experience the highest prices for electricity usage in Labrador.

Feedback indicated that future development of Labrador's industries hinges on accessible, affordable electricity. In the Labrador West consultation session, participants discussed the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the Iron Ore Company of Canada. The need for accessible electricity for development was also echoed when discussions turned to forestry, mining, the fishery and other potential projects.

Participants at the Labrador West consultation session indicated that development opportunities have been lost in their area because of lack of electricity. This had been reiterated in the Upper

#### *Electricity*

Similar to the Northern Strategic Plan, the Province's Energy Plan also engaged in a consultation process involving a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the province. The Energy Plan will provide a foundation for the prudent development and management of the province's energy sector.

Throughout Labrador consultation participants identified electricity as a focus area and discussions encompassed two main themes: affordability and accessibility. The information obtained through the Northern Strategic Plan and Energy Plan consultation process will assist the Province in making policy decisions for the region.

*"We need to have affordable, sustainable power to develop our resources to give us an even field to compete in the marketplace."*

(South East Coast Session, August 15, 2006)

Lake Melville consultation session with regard to the expansion of 5 Wing Goose Bay and potential developments in the natural resources sector.

It was also expressed during consultation sessions that the Province should consider alternate sources of electricity, such as wind generation, as another source of electricity.

#### *Affordable Electricity*

The challenge for all coastal communities is to access affordable electricity that will also meet development demands of the region. During the south coast consultation session the attendees discussed how many of the rivers in their area could be used for hydro development which would also bring the added bonus of job creation for their area. The north coast consultation session included discussion on having more consistent hydro rates throughout the region.

It was suggested that alternative forms of electricity generation should be investigated in an effort to reduce costs on coastal Labrador.

While western and central Labrador have some of the lowest hydro rates in the province, comments were made at some sessions that coastal Labrador experiences some of the highest rates, (even though heavily subsidized by the provincial government) as they depend on diesel generation as sources of heat and electricity. It was also stated in the consultations that communities using diesel as the primary fuel source need to look at alternate sources of electricity in order to be competitive for development opportunities and community growth.

Industry discussion regarding fuel consumption focused on the need for an enforced base line price for petroleum for resource development. It is difficult for industries, such as the fishery, to compete mainly due to the high fuel costs to get to fishing grounds, handle the fish at the plant and transport product to market. The Torngat Fisheries session also noted that current hydro rates are expensive and that there is not enough hydro feed available to operate both the snow crab and groundfish plants at the same time.

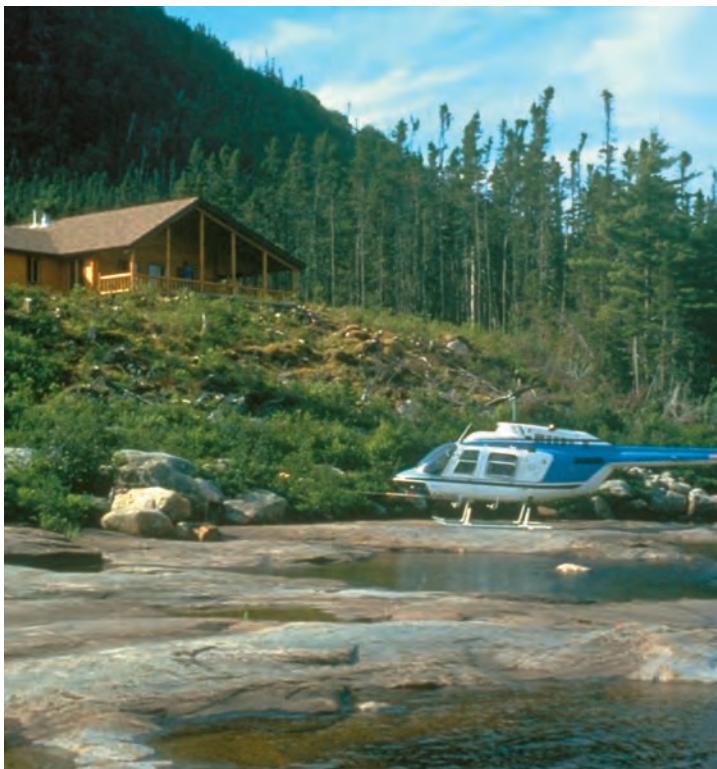
#### *Fishery*

During the consultation sessions, discussions on the fishery brought attention to both existing commercial fisheries and experimental fisheries. It was evident throughout Labrador that the fishery was seen to be an important part of the current and future economic environment of many communities. This is particularly true of the south coast, straits, and northern Labrador.

Stakeholders identified that Government currently offers assistance with programs related to experimental fisheries. Feedback indicated that there is a desire to continue such programs and a belief that there are future economic prospects related to the experimental fisheries.

During the session in Port Hope Simpson it was expressed that the fishing sector should be a priority for growth and sustainability. It was proposed that this could be achieved by utilizing different species; reconfiguring the crab fishery to extend the season; developing aquaculture projects; and by fully utilizing fish offal.

A lack of adequate cold storage facilities was an issue raised during consultations on both the north and south coasts of Labrador. Concerns were related to exploring opportunities to move product from the plant to market. Industry stated that





limited storage could be alleviated with the establishment of a storage facility. It was stated that the provision of a storage facility would enhance potential opportunities to access partnerships with Nunavut to bring species to a larger market. During this discussion stakeholders indicated that while Government may be able to assist with some of the initial analysis and investigation related to the feasibility of these projects, the actual projects should be pursued by private industry.

Stakeholders throughout Labrador stated that availability and cost of suitable transportation systems was having a detrimental effect on the ability to access markets. As a result of this concern, it was requested that existing subsidies for marine shipping be maintained and the possibility of an air subsidy was also raised as a way to increase the access to an expanded market, such as Nunavut.

Opportunities in the sealing industry were raised through several forums with industry and community representatives throughout Labrador. Further developments within the seal fishery were definitely seen as a possibility. This was particularly evident during the session along the south coast.

#### *Agriculture*

Agriculture was identified as a potential growth industry in many areas of Labrador throughout the consultation process. Feedback indicated that it was viewed as a virtually untapped resource within Labrador. Stakeholders expressed feelings that the industry does not have many formal support mechanisms in place. It was requested that the Government formally recognize the Labrador Agricultural Advisory Committee and give it a mandate and mechanization to enable them to meet their objectives. Industry stakeholders said that the Northern Agrifoods Development Strategy, a component of the Agriculture Policy Framework, provided positive support from both the federal and provincial governments. As this strategy is currently being renegotiated, farmers now feel positioned to have input into the new agreement.

*"We're producing almost nothing here of what we consume right now, but everybody in this room knows from backyard gardens in past history in this area; that we can and have produced wonderful food and consumables that we spend a lot of money for in the stores and bring in from very far distances away. We grow that stuff ourselves here, and there are a lot of problems, but huge number of opportunities in that regard as well. And that's something that needs to be developed." (Upper Lake Melville Session, July 17, 2006)*

It was brought to attention, that particularly in the agriculture field; policies developed for the whole province may not meet the needs of the farmers in Labrador and may have an impact on development. One of the recurring issues raised during consultations was difference between farmers leasing land as opposed to being permitted to purchase land.

In considering development of this industry infrastructure was identified as lacking. Desired infrastructure developments related to agriculture include a large animal vet, slaughter house and processing facilities. A vegetable storage facility in central Labrador is seen as a first step towards future development.

#### *Forestry*

During consultations all areas of Labrador indicated a desire to further develop the forestry industry. The immediate request was that the government commissioned study entitled the Strategic Plan to Develop Labrador Secondary Manufacturing and Value Added Wood Products Industry be released and acted on in the near future. This document was subsequently released on November 2nd, 2006. The stakeholders want Government to ensure that all Forestry Management Plans are maintained and followed. It was identified during a session in central Labrador that the plan for District 19 is very restrictive in relation to industry development and needs to be reviewed. In central and southern Labrador a particular area of concern was a plan

identifying access to resources on the south side of the Churchill River. Secondary processing is seen as having the greatest economic potential.

Industry indicated that opportunities for growth are dependent upon the availability of suitable and affordable transportation routes. The importance of accessing markets in order to be able to sell the raw and finished products was also raised. Another issue raised by industry was the need for continued reforestation programs to exist along side any future developments in the forestry industry for long-term sustainability.

#### *Mining*

Industry representatives highlighted the challenging environment the mining sector currently faces. Primary concerns were focused on three main areas. It was indicated that recruitment of professional and skilled trades' persons, given the current demand globally for such skills, is constraining operations and new development. Challenges associated with retaining skilled workers were also identified as being a significant problem. Industry representatives emphasized the importance of having well functioning communities with access to healthcare, education, housing, efficient transportation networks and recreational facilities as critical links in attracting and retaining employees to settle and work in northern communities. Electricity pricing was also raised as a very significant factor in the sustainability and growth of mining operations in Labrador.

#### **Tourism, Culture and Heritage**

Almost all consultations touched on some aspect tourism, "culture or heritage". Many respondents suggested that culture and heritage is a great strength and is also a great product that many tourists would like to experience. Some participants said tourism is the only sector that cuts across all regions and is one that all of Labrador can really work together on.

*"...there is only one sector that crosses all regions of Labrador and that is tourism...tourism [priorities] can be pan-Labrador"* (Labrador Straits Session, August 16, 2006)

#### *Tourism*

There was consensus throughout Labrador that the tourism industry is a sector for growth. It was further suggested that the tourism sector is the only one that cuts across all regions and can be approached from a Pan Labrador perspective. Further comments included; Labrador needs to begin marketing on an international basis, and there are many international winter sport possibilities to avail of in Labrador. A common theme was that although each region is unique Labrador should be working together to explore all possible opportunities.

Based on feedback specific areas of growth include; nature and wildlife photography, more fully utilizing cultural and historic resources (including the Norse background and the abandoned communities), expansion of the outfitting industry (hunting, fishing and eco-tourism), Agri-tourism and expansion of the cruise ship industry.

There are many existing strengths identified throughout the consultation process. The beautiful scenery in Labrador is a huge strength. The Torngat National Park Reserve, the proposed Mealy Mountain National Park and the Battle Harbour Historic Trust have potential to assist Labrador's tourism industry. The Labrador Winter Games, regional winter festivals and the Cain's Quest Snowmobile Endurance Race are great examples of winter tourism products that have a lot of potential.

Throughout the consultations participants mentioned a number of significant challenges to the tourism industry as well. Many people said that there is inadequate transportation infrastructure to support the tourism sector. The fact that the Trans Labrador Highway is not completed and is not hard surfaced is a huge deterrent to potential tourists. Some stated that many tour buses come across the Strait of Belle Isle and drive to Red Bay on the pavement but refuse to go north to Battle Harbour and beyond because of the dirt road. Another issue included the poor condition of the road to L'Anse-Amour lighthouse.



The configuration and running of the ferry systems was identified as a problem for the industry. The system needs to be more reliable and efficient, which means better scheduling, more equitable rates (compared to the rest of the province) and year round operation across the Strait of Belle Isle pending ice conditions. Additionally, passenger service should not be compromised for freight service at any time of the year.

The winter trail system was also identified as a potential area for growth and development. There is a large trail network in place but some indicated that it needed to be improved upon and the product needed to be more consistent with respect to grooming and maintenance.

There are also a number of specific items people mentioned that could help to improve certain situations within the tourism industry. One of these is that the provincial government should advocate for Battle Harbour to receive heritage funding from the federal government. Another is that highway signage needs to be improved to help tourists. More interpretive materials and kiosks were suggested for various tourist points of contact. Another suggestion was that there needs to be skills development and capacity training in the crafts and tourism industry to fully meet the needs of the growing tourism industry.

There is also an aspect of the tourism industry that overlaps with the culture and heritage sector. Many people at various sessions stated that Labrador's unique culture and heritage should be supported to help the tourism industry. There should be more interpretation centers and museums built to showcase Labrador's unique people and cultures.

Other comments about tourism included that tourism tends to be a fall-back resource. Tourism is considered a supplementary industry to other sectors. The fishing or mining industries, for example have long been the mainstay for many communities.

#### *Culture and Heritage*

Labrador's many distinct cultures and heritages emerged as a theme throughout consultations. There are many cultural differences but there are also similarities like the resilience and determination of all Labrador people. Some people stated that the diversity that is present in Labrador is great strength. Recognizing the distinct cultures and heritages of Labrador was mentioned a number of times when developing policies and regulations. For example there are various languages spoken in Labrador and participants would like the provincial government to be more cognizant of communicating with people in their own language.

As mentioned in the tourism section, culture and heritage was closely linked by respondents to tourism gains and benefits. Many people also mentioned the preservation of various Labrador cultures on its own merit. It was emphasized that the continuation of cultural activities is important and needs to be supported and fostered.

Participants suggested that cultural events such as the Mina Hubbard Celebrations and the Creative Arts Festival could be seen as a generator for more tourism as well as create opportunities for theatre education and craft development.

It was also suggested that there is a huge market for the craft industry but it is under developed. The Labrador Craft Marketing Agency is in place but it is beginning to experience a shortage of producers and craft products. There needs to be craft workshops to educate new producers in product development, quality control and other important facets to grow this aspect of the economy and keep traditional Labrador craft skills alive.

The delivery of youth and adult cultural exchange programs within Labrador to learn more about each other and respective regions was suggested.

### **Capacity Building**

Building capacity within Labrador is the foundation for all social and economic development. Building capacity begins with the education system. This system is responsible for producing individuals who are able to fulfill the job market of the future. When the local labour pool does not provide the desired employees, recruitment efforts are vital to capacity building. In all situations, retention is important to successful capacity building as well. Recruitment, retention and human development are all equally important in the process of capacity building.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

Recruitment and retention was a recurring theme in stakeholder and industry sessions throughout all regions of Labrador. The specific issues may vary; however, the overall concerns are the same across

the region. This concern is the difficulties faced in attracting and retaining a labour force sufficient to meet the current and future needs of the region.

Some of the issues that were raised in relation to recruitment included out migration, lack of housing, lack of services and amenities, lack of educational programs, cost of living, transportation systems and costs, access to childcare, and limited medical services. Residents are leaving communities in an effort to receive higher salaries. Communities on the north coast and in Labrador West in particular expressed concerns related to a lack of suitable and affordable housing. A lack of services and amenities, such as recreational facilities, banking services, and shopping were reported as having detrimental effects on recruiting efforts. People declared that if more training programs were offered locally more people would be able to utilize the programs. People indicated that electricity, food and travel costs are significantly higher in the north. The condition of the current transportation systems, in particular the road networks, are seen as a deterrent to recruitment by the stakeholders. As a result of attracting more women into the workforce there is increased demand for childcare. The issues and concerns related to the availability and costs of childcare are summarized in the Human Development section.





*"...what is more important then recruitment and retention? And how can anyone expect to recruit and retain young professionals with families, if you don't have daycare...."*

(Upper Lake Melville Session, July 17, 2006)

Concerns were expressed throughout Labrador regarding the lack of healthcare services offered. There are limited specialist clinics and costs to travel to appointments outside the region are often prohibitive. Community representatives reported problems with difficulties in attracting people to low pay, low skilled jobs. This is enhanced further due to the fact that many communities have an aging workforce.

According to the consultations, once employees are recruited, retention becomes the issue of concern. It was identified that all of the factors affecting the ability to recruit people to work in Labrador are the same factors which affect the ability to retain them. People believe that training local people to be qualified to fill local jobs is the most effective tool in retaining employees which connects closely with the desire to provide local training.

Several suggestions were made at the session on how the problems currently faced may be rectified. With regards to recruiting and retaining educators and healthcare professionals in particular, it was suggested that more incentives be offered to them.

### **Human Development**

A variety of issues related to human development were raised throughout all areas of Labrador. Human development issues impact all aspects of social and economic development throughout the region. This incorporates early childhood education, primary/secondary education, post-secondary education and the workforce in general.

In the area of early childhood education, the lack of available spaces, staff, and high operational costs were the major issues raised. This is summarized as issues related to quality, affordability and accessibility. The Early Childhood Development Association in central Labrador presented a submission indicating that the ability to recruit and

retain professionals throughout Labrador is directly linked to the provision of an adequate education system, including early childhood education. "Research has shown that when children start school behind they tend to stay behind." And that "...high quality early childhood education helps prepare children to succeed in school and become better citizens." The Association cited that in Quebec 40% of children enrol in day care for early development, in Labrador it is 15% of children who enrol. Academic achievement begins early and should be fostered throughout a child's education.

With regards to the primary/secondary system, a recurring theme that was raised during consultations was the relationship between the primary/secondary education system and Aboriginal education. It was expressed that Aboriginal education was being left out of the system. The question was raised whether language and culture actually factor into the learning curve. Through the sessions it was indicated that the curriculum doesn't always fit what is needed by students with regards to specific language and cultural needs. Recruiting and retaining teachers to work in Aboriginal communities and to teach the language was viewed as a solution to this issue. Related to this is the level of cultural knowledge held by the teaching staff.

Labradorians for Peaceful Communities, among others, feel that there needs to be more done to orientate people relocating to Labrador to work and live so they are better prepared and more knowledgeable of the region.

It was expressed that the current educational system is not always working for people on the north coast. Many people who may not be academically inclined may be able to succeed at technical skills programs. During consultations throughout the region it was identified that there is a need to do more with respect to promoting trades at the secondary level. Also related to this matter, is the fact that traditional skills and knowledge are not valued academically.

It was stated that more incentives are needed to keep youth in school so that an increased number of Aboriginal youth can complete high school.

*"Our culture is the basic issue to deal with.... because we have a different way in learning. I hear a lot of people say that Inuit learn a lot better hands on..."*

*(North Coast Session, August 28, 2006)*

Through the Northern Strategic Plan sessions, several requests were made for intervention from Government to improve the existing system. These requests included increased investment into programs, particularly trades; recognition that distance education is not suitable for all students; changes to the teacher allocation formula for coastal communities; and more research into the low succession rates.

Access to programs in Labrador, availability of apprenticeship programs, and the associated costs were the most common issues raised in terms of post-secondary education. It was clear that people want to be able to access post-secondary programs as close to home as possible and if not viable within smaller communities, it should be available elsewhere in Labrador.

*"...recruitment and retention is a major issue right now in Labrador especially with skilled trades.....businesses need to put more into training and development to get local people to stay here, to get involved with those programs..."*

*(Labrador West Session, July 18, 2006)*

The need for easier access to apprenticeship programs was reiterated several times during the consultations. It was affirmed that once people have completed trades programs requiring an apprenticeship they need to be able to access the requirements without too much difficulty or costs. It was also stated that existing programs take too long to complete and a more streamlined program needs to be available to get people into the workforce sooner.

Government needs to address the shortage of trade's people immediately according to the information presented during the consultations. Post-secondary training for apprenticeships is not available entirely within Labrador. Participants must go to another location to do so and often do not return. This concern is even more evident among female single parents. It was suggested in Labrador West that training be made available in the local area and incentives created to remove the obstacles that currently exist.

The role and presence of Memorial University in Labrador was raised several times. Concerns were raised over the fact that the Director position for the Labrador Institute continues to be vacant after two years, and that the advisory board has not been active during this period. Limited programming is offered within Labrador. The Labrador Institute is currently focused on research; however, an increased focus on educational programs is required as well.

While on the south coast, human resource development was viewed as a priority for future growth and sustainability. The comment was made that "We need to develop more skills within our people".

### **Partnerships**

Throughout Labrador there is a growing realization that in order to address community issues there needs to be clear communication and an understanding of the roles of local organizations and governments. This holds true from the grass-roots community groups, who must work together to look at creative ways to pool resources, to how Aboriginal, provincial or federal governments can assist with service delivery, appropriate policy development or funding.

One comment that was repeated in sessions was there are too many groups working in isolation of each other and more should be done to work together on issues. By working together it would be easier to understand the role of each organization and look at meeting the gaps to address issues.



*"There's a lot of time and energy being placed on coming up with ideas [in communities] that would be beneficial for the economy and we just seem to hit brick walls from time to time. A lot of team work and partnership should be in development. Now it has to be taken it to the next level, by those in a position of authority, to make some of these ideas become reality."*

(Upper Lake Melville Session, July 17, 2006)

There were many layers of partnerships that were explored in consultations across Labrador and ways in which each partner could best serve residents. Session discussions examined how partnerships for the economic and social development of communities, regions and Labrador as a whole can be fostered or strengthened.

In many sessions throughout Labrador, including the north coast consultation session, it was indicated that Government often has not provided clear communication and communities did not have a good understanding of program availability or departmental responsibilities within regions. It was also noted that a quicker response time in providing answers to queries should be a standard practice by Government.

Further to strengthening communication, people suggested that Government should do more increase awareness of government initiatives and the roles of each agency.

It was mentioned on a number of occasions that Government often develops population-based policies which may not be representative of

Labrador's dynamics due to the lower population of this portion of the province. The ability for regional offices to make decisions that will impact Labrador was discussed and noted that provincial government departments in Labrador should have more autonomy for decision making.

During the Labrador West consultation session it was mentioned that the Province should be doing more to talk to community organizations and listen to what they have to say about what communities need. During this same consultation session, participants noted that Government is to be complimented on consultations being held of late throughout the province that show that Government is listening to the people of the province.

There was much discussion about collaboration and planning in all sessions. The sentiment that federal, provincial, municipal and Aboriginal governments need to collaboratively look at the resources of each government and discuss how they will meet the needs of communities was expressed many times.

During the Upper Lake Melville consultation session it was noted that Government should be using suggestions provided by volunteers and community organizations for program development and policy formation. A lot of time and energy is placed on developing ideas and groups feel they are not being heard. Partnerships between all levels of government and local groups need to be forged.

Partnerships with other provinces and territories, particularly Nunavut, were also seen as potential areas of exploration. The Labrador North Chamber of Commerce expressed that pursuing developments related to Nunavut and other Northern areas holds great promise. Government should play an active role in pursuing these opportunities. Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative noted the potential for economic partnerships with Nunavut as a possibility for the expansion of existing businesses and the further development of the industry.

Throughout the consultation process it was identified by Aboriginal groups as well as community leaders that the first step to providing clear communication and interaction between governments/groups is to settle outstanding land claims. Labrador Metis stakeholders want the federal government to make a decision on whether or not to accept the Labrador Metis Nation land claim. Each Aboriginal group stated that only through defined land claim agreements will there be certainty as to the role of each government. This will also assist with providing clear direction regarding future developments and the sustainability of communities governed by Aboriginal governments.

In consulting with the Nunatsiavut Government the need to identify and clarify jurisdictional issues between the Province and the Nunatsiavut Government was identified for future action. The Nunatsiavut Government has noted that it wishes to be treated as a third order of government in Canada.

Governance and communication were also discussed during the initial Aboriginal Women's Conference. It was recognized by participants that there needs to be communication between provincial, federal and Aboriginal leaders who are aware of the gravity of issues in communities and who can communicate with Aboriginal women's groups. This was seen as a large step towards finding a balance to ensure that these socio-cultural concerns can be addressed.

Capacity building and how it relates to service delivery by Aboriginal governments was also noted in some of the consultation sessions with emphasis being that more needs to be done to help communities and roles need to be explored as to how to work with governments. All groups stated that they are looking at creating brighter futures for their communities.

It was expressed in many of the consultations that regional knowledge could be increased through initiatives such as exchanges, including youth cultural exchanges, within Labrador to learn more about each other and look to ways to share/pool resources and information.

During the Labrador West session participants maintained that people throughout the province need to know about the opportunities that exist in Labrador for employment instead of the continued out-migration of skilled workers and professionals to Alberta.

During the Upper Lake Melville consultation session it was suggested that Labrador needs to be marketed as a whole. Labrador needs to become a provincial focal point and its assets need to be marketed well to show what the area can offer. It was also suggested that Labrador needs to develop its own identity and provide northern development information like other northern jurisdictions do





across Canada. Public and private collaboration through a "Team Labrador" approach needs to be considered to endorse development opportunities within the different communities in the region.

### **Programs and Services**

Many people throughout the consultations stated that the "one size fits all" approach to programs and services does not work in many parts of Labrador. It was suggested that the intent of government policies has to be the same all over the province but the implementation can and should be different in unique regions. Most of the comments people made through all sessions could be categorized into five major themes including: healthcare; basic infrastructure; recreation and sport; business development; and other government services.

### **Healthcare**

Many people throughout Labrador want greater access to healthcare, including more specialized services being offered in the region and an improved Medical Transportation Program.

As in many parts of the province, people in Labrador would like improved access to many medical professionals including doctors, dentists and mental health professionals. This could be best accomplished through more visits by specialists to each area of Labrador. This issue was more pronounced on the coast of Labrador but it was also an issue in central and western Labrador. Access to specialized services and recuperative care should be available in the local area as much as possible. Patients are expected to pay for their own travel back to Labrador when using the Medivac service. The family of a deceased person is also expected to pay for the airfare for the return of the body if a person dies while receiving medical treatment outside of Labrador. Participants stated that people in Labrador should not be required to pay in either of these situations.

*"...Labrador is a little different...if you have to have a CAT scan you may have to drive eight hours at the best of times..."*

(Labrador West Session, July 18, 2006)

There were concerns expressed regarding the level of mental health support throughout Labrador and the need for more psychiatrists or other mental health professionals in the area. One participant went on to say that a full time person to help deal with mental health issues would be a good idea.

Issues surrounding the Medical Transportation Program were raised throughout the consultation process and two underlying suggestions that emerged were; increasing the subsidy and timelier processing of claims. Many participants suggested that the Labradorians should have reasonable access to publicly funded healthcare facilities at a reasonable cost. Additionally, participants want Government to consider covering road travel and not just air travel for all people traveling for health reasons. It was also suggested that there needs to be increased awareness about the Medical Transportation Program.

Finally, seniors housing and adequate seniors care facilities for those requiring long-term or specialized care was raised as an issue that needs to be dealt with on a regional basis.

### **Basic Infrastructure**

There were a number of comments from south coast communities about the need for water and sewer infrastructure. Many local service districts and smaller municipalities said that they cannot afford to build such systems of infrastructure and want Government to consider covering the costs associated for these communities.

In Happy Valley-Goose Bay it was suggested that a sewage treatment plant is needed for health and environmental reasons.

### **Recreation and Sport**

School Sport Newfoundland and Labrador suggested that the funding for the Labrador Travel Subsidy, which provides a percentage of the funding for high school sport teams traveling to the Island portion of the province, be increased to reflect the rising costs of airline travel. It was also suggested that the funding be raised so that students could participate in 7 of the 12 possible

provincial sports competitions, representing an increase of one competition opportunity over 2005.

In the Labrador Straits it was mentioned that a recreation director needs to be funded for the area so that programming can then be developed and delivered.

### **Business Development**

Participants from a number of areas made suggestions that affect business development. Most areas indicated that Government's Red Tape Reduction Initiative was a step in the right direction but that access to programs and funding was still difficult.

It was also suggested that access to capital is a problem in Labrador and that the provincial government should take measures to try to improve this situation.

It was suggested that Government can improve already existing programs like the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development's Cooperative Information Program by promoting them more. The Business Retention and Expansion Program, which the provincial government funded, was also commended and it was suggested that it should be followed through with a second phase to work on some of the issues that were identified.

Many participants want the provincial government to work with local areas and the federal government to create incentives for large companies to purchase locally which could include rebates or tax breaks.

### **Other Government Services**

The accessibility and the affordability of housing were identified as concerns in Labrador West. The current prosperity in Labrador West is resulting in rising rent and the people living in rental properties cannot afford the increase. This has caused people to live with family or friends and has created "hidden homelessness".

Respondents in Labrador West also highlighted that improvements are needed in the justice system such as increased court time, a family court judge in the area, and more support for lawyers, legal aid and other community support programs.

On the north coast there was concern in the location of court proceedings. Participants commented that court is held at the bar in the communities and this situation is not acceptable.

One common concern that emerged throughout a number of regions was the importance of women's shelters. These were viewed as essential for the health and safety of women and families in Labrador. Many suggested that core funding be continued to keep these shelters open and accessible for women in all communities was essential.

Participants from the south coast of Labrador indicated that provincial government should hire a municipal planner to help smaller municipalities in their rezoning efforts. At the present time small rural municipalities are required to hire a consultant to complete this work for them and this is not feasible for most. If the provincial government would hire a planner all communities could take advantage of the same resource.

### **Other Issues**

Other issues that emerged included the current communication systems within Labrador. It was suggested that improvements in the quality of phone service is desperately needed. It was also suggested in the Labrador Straits that provincial government needs to build upon and support Labrador's growing IT sector. Participants suggested that the work of SmartLabrador was a great foundation and would like to see further growth in this sector. Additionally, wider access across Labrador to cell phone service was considered beneficial to a number of people. Another issue from the remote areas of Labrador is a lack of financial services.



Aboriginal students (and other residents of small, isolated communities) when they pursue higher education in urban centers.

Aboriginal peoples have asked the Province to ensure that the programs and services delivered to them best meet their needs and respect the different Aboriginal cultures. The Province is committed to doing so through the devolution of provincial services and by working with them and the federal government to "close the gap" between the economic, social and educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples when compared to other Canadians.

### **Aboriginal Peoples**

While many of the issues and concerns raised by Labrador's Aboriginal groups arise due to the challenges of providing and accessing programs and services in isolated and remote communities, several issues have been raised as being particularly pertinent; specifically, education and the need to value, protect and foster the distinct cultures and languages of the Aboriginal peoples of Labrador.

Both the Nunatsiavut Government and the Sheshatshiu and Mushuau Innu Bands stress the need to improve the level of primary, elementary, and secondary education available in their communities and to do so in a manner that protects and promotes their distinctive languages and cultures. Innu and Inuit recognize the importance of education in increasing the number of skilled Aboriginal professionals in their communities. This is important not only so that programs and services can be delivered by individuals who speak Innu-aimun and Inuktitut but by professionals that are sensitive to cultural differences.

The Labrador Metis Nation agreed with the Nunatsiavut Government and Innu Bands that more specialized training and university courses should be available locally. Local availability would both reduce the cost of education and training and mitigate the cultural shock often experienced by



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