

JUNE 2011 • B SECTION

# OPPORTUNITIES NORTH

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**news/north**  
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**NWT tourism spending  
tops \$111 million**

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**Nunavut Tourism  
worth \$30 million**

**Watch for  
*live links*  
inside!**



# New Bluefish dam enters construction stage

## New markets for Taltson expansion project

### NWT home to plenty of untapped hydro power: GNWT

by Guy Quenneville  
Northern News Services  
NWT

The Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC) has a number of projects under development.

In late March, the Power Corp. received the necessary land use permit to begin construction of an approximately \$35-million replacement dam at the 70-year-old Bluefish hydro dam, located 20 km north of Yellowknife between Bluefish and Prosperous lakes.

Construction of the new dam, which is located 400 metres from the original, has commenced under general contractor North American Construction, based in Edmonton.

The new dam will replace the current rock fill timber

crib dam, which suffers from timber deterioration on the overfill spillway and a collapsing timber crib.

In 2008, NTPC added a spillway when a leak threatened to break the dam.

The replacement dam will be constructed with local rock fill and an impermeable membrane of stainless steel.

The spillway, bottom outlet and sections of the dam that are not in-stream are scheduled for completion by October.

Construction will start on in-stream work, then the diversion before closing the dam across the Yellowknife River.

The dam should be operational in 2013, with decommissioning of the former dam starting in March 2013.

Bluefish currently provides

20 per cent of Yellowknife's electrical needs, including Behchoko and Dettah.

#### Taltson

The proposed \$700 million Taltson Hydro expansion hit a bump in the road earlier this year.

In March, speaking in the legislative assembly, Premier Floyd Roland said the NWT's three diamond mines could not commit to buying an economically-viable amount of power from Taltson, which is being developed by NTPC subsidiary Deze Energy. The company is a partnership between the Power Corp., the Akaitcho First Nation and the NWT Métis Nation.

While the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board recommended that the project move forward, it did so without ruling on where the transmission route should fall, prompting Indian and Northern Affairs Minister John Duncan to order the board to go back to the drawing board and resubmit its recommendations.

As of press time, the project's environmental assessment was still paused at the request of Deze Energy.

"...we don't know exactly where we're going. We do have, admittedly, probably more questions than answers," said Brendan Bell, the Power Corp. chairman, at the mid-April annual general meeting of the NWT Chamber of Commerce.

"I think the question we're starting to ask is, can we blend long-life customers

with some other customers who can afford to pay a lot for hydro in short increments? And that's what leads us to the new markets that we're analyzing."

Among the other markets being considered are mineral exploration projects in the territory, such as Avalon Rare Metal's Nechalacho project and Canadian Zinc's Prairie Creek mine, as well as parts of Alberta that will see their power sources decrease over the next five years.

The Taltson River hydro-electric site, 64 km north of Fort Smith, produces 18 megawatts of electricity. An expansion would add between 36 and 56 megawatts to the NWT's power supply.

#### Distribution

Negotiations continue with the Tlicho Investment Corporation for the development of additional hydro on either the Snare River system or other sites, such as the La Martre River, to serve future growth in Yellowknife.

Electrical needs in the NWT are met by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation and Northland Utilities Ltd., a division of Calgary-based ATCO Group. NTPC is owned by the GNWT and provides nearly all electricity generation in the territory, distributing power to 45 per cent of the population. Northland Utilities distributes power to the other 55 per cent of the population located in eight communities. They generate their own electricity in four of these communities.



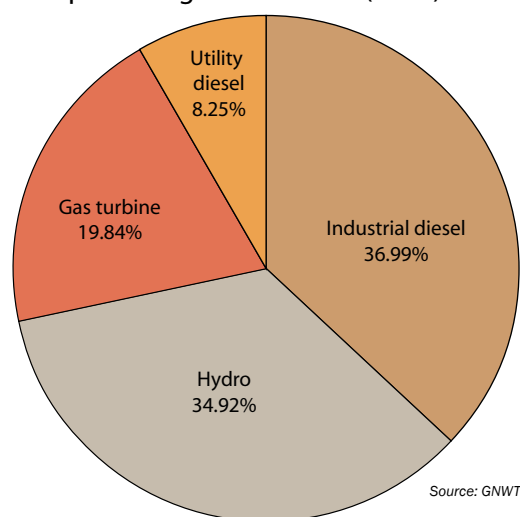
Guy Quenneville/NNSL photo

**NWT residents served by the Northwest Territories Power Corporation (NTPC) get their power via hydro, diesel fuel or natural gas.**

Currently, electricity in the NWT is generated in three ways: hydro, diesel fuel or natural gas. Eight communities rely on hydro power for electricity, 23 communities rely on diesel and two depend on natural gas.

According to the territorial government, the NWT has over 11,000 megawatts of hydroelectric potential.

Electrical generation percentage breakdown (2009)



Source: GNWT

**Diesel accounts for the largest share of electrical generation in the NWT.**

NWT hydro potential by select river (in megawatts)

River	Developed	Undeveloped potential	Proposed Development
Bear	0	568	126
La Martre	0	27	1
Lockhart	0	269	0
Mackenzie	0	10,450	0
Snare	30	33	13
Snowdrift	0	1	1
Taltson	18	172	35
Yellowknife	7	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11,520</b>	<b>176</b>

Source: GNWT

**The GNWT predicts the NWT has more than 11,000 megawatts in hydroelectricity potential.**

# Qulliq Energy serves 11,500 customers

by Guy Quenneville  
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Nunavut

Qulliq Energy Corporation, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in April, generates and distributes power to residents of Nunavut through 27 stand-alone diesel plants in 25 communities, with its headquarters in Baker Lake and an office in Iqaluit.

In all, there are approxi-

## Company employs 191 people – 57 per cent of them Inuit

### Rates increase by nearly 19 per cent

mately 11,500 electrical customers across Nunavut. Each community has its own independent electricity generation and distribution system. There is no back-up grid.

As of March 31, 2010, the corporation employed 109 Inuit people – 57 per cent of all employees (191).

During 2009-2010 fiscal year, Qulliq Energy's capital

projects focused on capacity increases to improve the stability of the power supplied.

Some projects were partly funded by a \$5.8-million investment from the Canadian

Northern Economic Development Corporation (CanNor) and included capacity increases in Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay, Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay.

Capacity increases scheduled for 2010-2011 included Cambridge Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove.

QEC is currently in the first phase of construction on a distribution upgrade for the City of Iqaluit, which will enable Qulliq to keep up with the city's growing population and reduce fuel costs. The completion of the distribution upgrade, from 5 kV to 25 kV, should be completed by 2012.

In April, the Government of Nunavut approved an 18.88

per cent power rate increase that Qulliq had requested to help cover a large shortfall in revenues.

The corporation anticipated about \$101.2 million in expenditures in the 2010-11 fiscal year, but due to revenues in the range of \$76.2 million, a shortfall of \$20 million was expected.

A cash infusion from the territorial government was expected reduce the overall burden on residential and commercial customers, however.

As of press time, it was expected that businesses across the territory would see a 12.3 per cent rate increase, while residential customers would see a rate increase of 2.5 per cent.

A business owner in Cambridge Bay using 2,000 kWh was estimated to start paying 58 cents per kilowatt, up from 44 cents and an increase of \$280 per month.



Emily Ridlington/NNSL photo

**Qulliq Energy Corporation is currently working on a power upgrade in Iqaluit that will be completed some time in 2012.**

