

# \$95 million Inuvik school more than half complete

Project creates nearly 450 jobs

by **Guy Quenneville**  
Northern News Services  
Inuvik

The \$95 million school currently under construction in Inuvik will begin its life at the start of the 2013 school season.

"We're going to finish it a little earlier than that; we're going to finish in early spring of 2013; but then we still have to commission it and get it all into operation, get any new furniture moved into it. And the real move – the paper and the books and that sort of thing would happen during the summer," said Brent Rausch, superintendent of construction for the GNWT's Department of Public Works and Services.

But there's still a lot of work to do until then, he added.

"We're calling it 62 per cent complete," said Rausch.

"If you go on site what you see is the foundation and the superstructure – they were finished last summer. So the building's pretty well there standing. The building envelope was completed last fall, with everything except for the siding. So the building's all

closed in and it's under temporary heat.

"In the interior, the steel stud partitions are all up and mechanical and electrical rough-in is ongoing. They're almost done (that). Drywall's at various stages because it's a large project."

Large is right.

The two-storey school, which will replace Samuel Hearne Secondary School and Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, at almost 130,000 square feet, is about as long as two football fields. It can accommodate up to 1,050 students.

*"There's a lot of opportunity..."*

"We haven't done anything this large before. Just as an example: to walk around this thing is about half a kilometre," said Rausch.

"There are two large gymnasiums in it. One of the features is that one of those two gyms could be opened up between them so that you have one large gym."

The tight insulation and wealth of windows will help save on energy, said Rausch.

"There's a lot of opportunity for natural light to come into the building, and what that does is it allows you to

dim back your lights as you've got sufficient light outside and sufficient light coming in through your windows."

The project has created a tremendous amount of work for the region.

"The total person hours that we've got on this to date 226,280, which is a lot," said Rausch.

"So far there's been 442 workers on the job, and of those, we know that 52 per cent of them are Northern and 43 per cent of them are local."

In terms of spending, "So far, we've spent \$57 million on the job and of that, 76 per cent has gone to Northern businesses, and 52 per cent of it is going to local businesses."

In early 2009, the major contractor on the project, Downland Contracting Ltd., partnered with Aurora College, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Council to form the Employment Opportunities Group.

The aim of the group is to maximize the amount of local employment on the massive project.

After coming together, the partners put out a call for resumes from NWT residents.



photo courtesy of GNWT

**Todd Engram, senior project officer,** oversees the Inuvik school replacement project for the GNWT's Department of Public Works and Services. Here, he stands at the construction site at the start of the installation process for the school's steel superstructure.

The councils helped residents of the region prepare their resumes.

The group then screened the resumes to see if some

candidates required additional training before starting work on the school.

Twenty students graduated from a pre-employment

course offered by Aurora College in the fall of 2009.

"So far, 10 of those have been working on the school already," said Rausch.

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