

Step by step

Development conference instills hope

By Derek Neary
Northern News Services
Lidilli Kue/Fort Simpson

Few southern business and industry representatives attended last week's Deh Cho resource development conference, but those who did were encouraged by the proceedings.

Andrew Koostachin, Northern liaison for Calgary-based Canadian Forest Oil, said, "I'm very optimistic that with these kinds of conferences being held here in Fort Simpson, things are moving in the right direction ... it's really promising and very encouraging."

Brian Sumbot, president of Northgate Land and Associates in Fort St. John, B.C., was also optimistic.

"I feel this conference was money well spent," he said.

The region's political climate still is not pro-development, but he's planning to come back again, he said.

"It takes time. It takes years ... you have to build a relationship and you don't build it at one conference like this," Sumbot said.

The Deh Cho possesses staggering potential for natural resource development, according to Sumbot.

He said the Mackenzie Valley's sedimentary basin, thought to be rich in petroleum reserves, is about half the size of Alberta in area. There are minerals and forestry too.

"The resources in the NWT and the At-

tic are just phenomenal," he said. Conspicuous by their absence were oil and gas companies such as Chevron Canada and Paramount Resources, which are active in the Fort Liard area.

It was noted that this is the busiest time of year for oil and gas companies as they take advantage of the winter season for exploration and development.

Lidilli Kue First Nation Chief Rita Chi said, "For the people that didn't show up, they missed a good opportunity to talk to us."

Lyall Gill, manager of Noghta Enterprises, the Lidilli Kue First Nation's business arm, explained that conference invitations to oil and gas companies were supposed to have been distributed by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP).

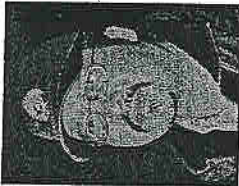
When planning started three months ago, it was decided that the top priority would be to have aboriginal leaders from the Deh Cho present.

Six of 10 regional chiefs and one of three Metis local presidents were in attendance.

"I think it's the first of many (conferences) that have to happen in the next little while," said Gill.

Few local residents sat in on the conference.

Gill noted that band members weren't charged the \$75 conference registration fee if they couldn't afford it.



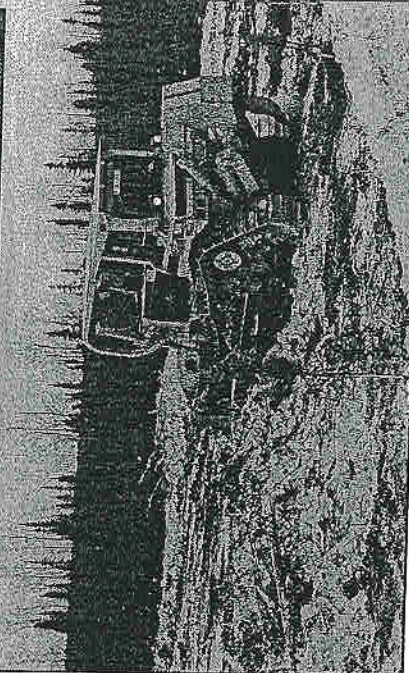
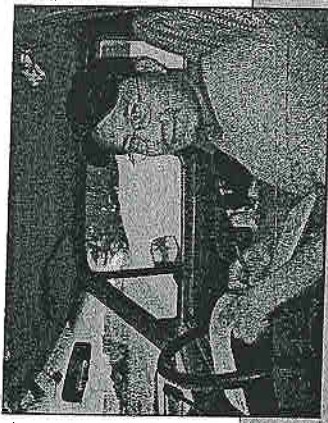
Andrew Koostachin:
"Things are moving in the right direction."

MV2000PASS

Monitoring progress at Paramount

Top: Kakisa's Percy Simba monitors ground-clearing work at Paramount Resources Ltd.'s Cameron Hills project. "I watch how much soil they take off the ground and I watch for chemical spills," he said. Paramount is drilling some new oil and gas wells as well as building a gathering system and pipeline to carry the product south to Alberta. The project received permitting less than a month ago and is working against time to complete work before the ground thaws.

Bottom: Cats work on ground preparation for oil and gas gathering facilities at Paramount's Cameron Hills project. There are 17 wells now and nine more are permitted to be drilled.



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