

Francophones not giving up the fight

New president Richard Letourneau warns GNWT it could end up back in court

by Paul Blackford
Northern News Services
Hay River

The new president of the Federation Franco-tenoise said the organization is not going to stop fighting the GNWT for more services in French.

"We've been fighting for 10 years," said Richard Letourneau of Inuvik. "We're not going to give up. The government has got to understand that."

Letourneau was acclaimed leader of the territorial francophone organization at its Nov. 28 annual general meeting in Hay River.

The president said it is sometimes frustrating dealing with the GNWT, adding it seems the federation has to go to court for every little thing.

"But, if we have to, we're going to do that again, because we know we're going to win," he said. "We're always winning, but it's just so long."

Letourneau said it would

be less expensive for taxpayers if the GNWT paid for French-language services instead of lawyers, both their own and the federation's lawyers when the government loses a case.

In March, a decade-long legal battle between the GNWT and the federation over French-language services came to an end when the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear the case.

During the course of the case in other courts, judges issued several orders which are still in effect, including that a joint committee of GNWT and federation representatives be set up to create an implementation plan for 1988's Official Languages Act.

However, the makeup of that committee is in dispute.

Letourneau said the GNWT told the federation it could put anyone on the committee, but the government would only pay for people from the NWT. The federation wants to

name southern experts – a former Supreme Court of Canada judge, a former language commissioner of Canada, and professors from the University of Moncton and the University of Alberta.

The committee needs experts to get the implementation right, Letourneau said. "Not fight for the next 20 years."

Common sense

The GNWT has to use some common sense, he said. "We feel that it's not much money to get the committee going and, in the long run, we don't think it's going to cost that much to implement (the act)."

Letourneau, 33, said the federation tries to work in good faith with the GNWT.

"It's not fun to always look like the bad guy," he said. "Sometimes the public thinks that French people are the ones that show their teeth all



Richard Letourneau: It's sometimes frustrating to fight the GNWT for French-language services.

the time, but it seems like that's the only way that we can get something done."

Letourneau, a French immersion teacher at Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, was a vice-president of the federation for five years before becoming president.

The Quebec native is president of the Association des Francophones du Delta du Mackenzie, but he plans to resign from that position

in the next few weeks.

Letourneau succeeds former president Fernand Denaud, who served for nine years before resigning in February.

Hay River's Christian Girard filled in as interim president since then.

Letourneau said he decided to run for the presidency after no one else expressed an interest in the position.

"I said it would be best for the organization to have some continuity and somebody who knew the agenda and the fights for these past years," he said.

Among the other issues the new president will face is hiring a new executive director, since the current one – Leo-

Paul Provencher – is leaving in a few months.

Letourneau said another issue is finding more space for the federation in Yellowknife, especially in light of its recent creation of a French-language college.

"We need room for that, and our building right now is just too small," he said.

The College des Territoires du Nord-Ouest was formed in February with a director as its first and so far only employee.

The college, which Letourneau describes as a work in progress, has offered some language and computer courses through contracted instructors.

Get in on the ground floor MINERAL PROCESSING OPERATOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINEE TRAINING PROGRAM

The North Slave Metis Alliance (NSMA), in partnership with De Beers Canada Inc., BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc., Diavik Diamond Mines Inc., the GNWT Department of Education Culture and Employment and Aurora College are proud to offer an exciting and challenging training opportunity for 16 northern Aboriginal residents.

The Mineral Processing Operator Pre-Employment Trainee Training Program has been designed to qualify candidates for entry-level positions as Mineral Process Operators (MPO). An MPO works at a variety of stations in the process plant and monitors equipment and processing circuits that are used to separate diamonds from kimberlitic rock.

The training program is expected to take a total of 26 weeks and will start February 15, 2010. The training program will include 12 weeks at Aurora College, Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith, a short break and three two-week rotations of practical training in the process plant at the BHP Billiton Ekati, De Beers Canada Snap Lake or the Diavik Diamond Mines mine sites. At the completion of the Training Program, successful students may be offered employment in the process plant at either of the mines, subject to the availability of positions.

To be considered, applicants must meet each criterion listed below:

- minimum Grade 10 Mathematics (or ABE Math 140) and Grade 10 English (or ABE English 140). Preference will be given to Grade 12 graduates
- successful completion of the Test of Workplace Essential Skills at the time of the interview
- applicants must provide a criminal records check (applicants with a criminal record will be considered subject to a case by case review by the screening committee)
- minimum 18 years of age prior to commencement of the training program
- favourable references from at least two recent supervisors

All applications must be received no later than January 15, 2010 and sent to:

Registrar, Aurora College, Thebacha Campus
Box 600 – 50 Conibear Crescent, Fort Smith, NT X0E 0P0
Phone: 867-872-7509 • Fax: 867-872-4511

Applicants must include:

- a complete Aurora College application form which can be obtained at the nearest Aurora College Campus or Community Learning Centre, or from the Aurora College website at: www.auroracollege.nt.ca
- a resume that includes at least two references from recent supervisors
- high school transcripts or Aurora College placement test results confirming ABE Math 140 and ABE English 140 or higher

DeBeers, BHP Billiton, Diavik Diamond Mines and NSMA will screen and select candidates. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered during the screening process.

For more information, please contact:

MTS Coordinator, North Slave Metis Alliance
PO Box 2301, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7
Phone: 867-873-6762 ext. 28
e-mail: mts@nsma.net

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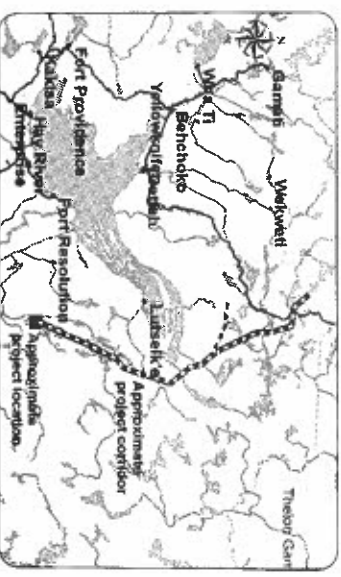
**Application
deadline
January 15,
2010**

Mackenzie Valley Review Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (Review Board) is holding a public hearing in Dettah on Thursday, January 14th and Friday January 15th, 2010.

The public hearing will discuss Deze Energy Corporation Ltd's proposed Talsion Hydroelectric Expansion Project. This project proposes to add 36 megawatts of power generating capacity to the Talsion Twin Gorges Plant and includes a 690 kilometre transmission line to the diamond mines.



The Review Board is conducting an environmental assessment of this proposed development and would like to hear any evidence from the parties as well as the views of the public about the proposed development's impacts on the environment and on the social, cultural and economic well being of the residents of the Mackenzie Valley.

Hearing Location: Dettah

Meeting place: Chief Drygese Conference Centre
Date: Thursday, January 14th and Friday January 15th, 2010

Duration: 9:30 am – 7 pm or longer if necessary

Requests to make a presentation:

Please contact the Review Board as soon as possible if you wish to make a formal presentation at the public hearing or if you require special assistance to participate in the hearing.

The public hearing will be run according to the Review Boards *Rules of Procedure (2005)*, which can be downloaded from the Review Board's website: reviewboard.ca

For further information, contact:

Tawanis Testart, Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
Box 938, Suite 200 Scotia Centre, 5102 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Phone: (867) 766-7050

Toll Free: 1-866-912-3472

Fax: (867) 766-7074

Email: ttestart@reviewboard.ca

Visit us online at reviewboard.ca

Note: Applicants must apply for Student Financial Assistance (SFA) for the Fort Smith portion of the program no later than January 15, 2010. During the practical program at the mine sites, students will be compensated at an hourly rate.



Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment