

CORRECTION

Policy

Did we get it wrong?

Inuvik Drum is committed to getting it right, either facts or names. With that goes a commitment to acknowledge mistakes and run corrections. If you spot an error in *Inuvik Drum*, contact the editor at (867) 777-4545 or e-mail inuvikdrum@nnsi.com.

NEWS

Briefs

Youth invited to conference

Youth 12-18 years interested in participating in a Regional Youth Conference set to take place in Inuvik in mid-March of next year can contact Inuvik Youth Centre coordinator Kelsey Dean.

The conference is also open to community organizations who want to get involved with improving the programming offered at the regions youth centres.

"The focus will be around building programs to help teens make positive life choices," said Dean.

Municipal and Community Affairs, Nihtat Gwich'in Council, Ingamo Hall and the Inuvialuit Community Corp. have already signed on.

Cash for utilidors

The town's sewage and water system is going to get a boost following a joint territorial/federal announcement of \$2.5 million for the replacement of 1,300 metres of utilidor. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$8.7 million.

Last week the federal government announced that it was pumping \$64 million into a gas tax rebate for the territories with \$37 million of that amount to go towards infrastructure.

Council votes for three-year terms

Inuvik Town Council voted last week to extend the next term of council from two to three years.

"This will bring us in line with all other tax-based communities in the territory," said Mayor Peter Clarkson.

At last week's committee of the whole meeting, Councillor Karen King said extending the term of mayor and councillors may discourage women from getting involved in municipal government as it would require a bigger commitment of time.

The next election for mayor and council is November 2006.

Getting socio-economic ducks in a row

On Wednesday the Inuvik Inter-agency Committee held a meeting regarding the assessment of future socio-economic impacts of proposed industrial development in the North.

Also in attendance were members of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, which will work to develop socio-economic impact assessment guidelines and will consult with those who deal directly with socio-economic issues on a day-to-day basis.

The guidelines are meant to evaluate proposed developments, including the Mackenzie Gas Project, and the impacts they may have on individuals, their families and communities.



photo courtesy of Sharon Katz

A muskox at the Assiniboine Park Zoo in Manitoba uses an old street sweeper brush to scratch. It was through observing muskox behavior such as this that Sharon Katz came up with the idea of the Muskomb.



Jason Unrau/NNSL photo

Sharon Katz, manager of research and technology at the Aurora Research Institute, shows "Muskomb." With help from both the Holman and Sachs Harbour hunters and trappers committees, Katz plans to fix these on boulders on Banks and Victoria islands next year as part of a pilot study in alternate methods of collecting qivuiq, the valuable wool on the undercoat of muskox.

Hair club for muskox?

Novel idea could aid in collection of valuable wool

by Jason Unrau
Northern News Services

It's called the Muskomb and it could be a windfall for Inuvialuit looking to cash in on the ever increasing demand for qivuiq, the valuable undercoat muskox shed each spring.

"I think it's a great idea as long as the wool goes into the hands of the hunters and trappers committees (in Sachs Harbour and Holman) to help them in further developing their economic opportunities," said Murray Arsenault, managing director of Muskox Product Company, of researcher Sharon Katz's idea.

Now working on several projects – including the Muskomb – at the Aurora Research Institute in Inuvik, Katz says she came up with the idea after observing muskox in captivity scratch themselves on old street cleaning brushes to aid in the removal of qivuiq, the thick undercoat that insulates the animal in sub-zero temperatures.

"What we are banking on is the animals will want to scratch," explained Katz of her hopes that muskox in the wild will actually use her Muskombs. "We did an experiment at the (Assiniboine) zoo and the muskox did use them and that

gave us encouragement."

While the original idea was to fix the Muskombs to barrels, Katz says the latest plan is to attach the boards, complete with a grid of plastic-coated screws, to boulders. Katz says exactly where these will be fixed on both Banks Island and Victoria Island will depend on hunters and trappers committees in those communities.

"That where be where the traditional knowledge part of the pilot project will come in," added Katz.

Help supply meet demand

Despite the high prices clothing fashioned from qivuiq commands – sweaters sell for between \$650 and \$1,000 in southern markets – Arsenault said that with the current collection methods, supply just doesn't meet demand.

"It's absolutely the finest natural fibre in the world and the demand is such that the harvest along with passive collection can't meet it," he said.

According to Katz, the reason the wool is so coveted is due to its light weight, fineness and warmth.

"It's different from sheep's wool because it doesn't have scales so it won't itch," said Katz.