

## Did we get it wrong?

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## NEWS Briefs

### Det'on Cho buys G&G Expediting

*Somba K'e/Yellowknife*

Det'on Cho Logistics has bought G&G Expediting another major NWT logistics company, according to a press release sent out Jan. 18. The combined company will have 34 full-time workers and 16 seasonal workers.

Det'on Cho Corporation, itself fully owned by the Yellowknives Dene, is the majority owner of Det'on Cho Logistics.

— Tim Edwards

### Seniors' society calls out housing corporation

*NWT*

The Northwest Territories Seniors' Society held a news conference on Jan. 17 to release recommendations from the territory's information and privacy commissioner about members' housing concerns raised back in 2016.

The society's complaint against the NWT Housing Corporation focused on the way the GNWT was trying to obtain personal information from its members in order to assess rental rates in public housing units.

Members were asked to sign a document allowing the housing authority to collect personal information, including details about income directly from Revenue Canada.

A news release from the society states members who approached the corporation to raise their privacy concerns were told failure to comply could result in their rent being raised to full market value and, following that, failure to pay the new rent would result in eviction.

— Michael Hugall

### Loblaws issuing gift cards after price-fixing

*Canada*

NWT residents who bought bread at the Your Independent Grocer grocery stores — or Extra Foods, the previous branding — in Yellowknife between 2002 and March 2015 are eligible for a \$25 gift card from Loblaws, the stores' parent company.

The cards are part of an effort to recover from the admission that the company fixed and inflated bread prices across its various national chains. Those who've bought bread in the provinces from other Loblaws stores — such as Real Canadian Superstore, Loblaws, Zehrs or No Frills — are also eligible. A full listing is available on Loblaws' website, as well as the form to fill out to get the card.

The catch with the card is that those who sign up for it will have \$25 deducted from any settlement or payout resulting from lawsuits around this scandal.

— Tim Edwards

### Minimum wage to rise to \$13.46

*NWT*

The minimum wage in the NWT will be rising in the spring.

Effective April 1, the minimum wage will increase from \$12.50 per hour to \$13.46 per hour. Education, Culture and Employment Minister Alfred Moses announced the change on Jan. 10.

"I am confident that this increase will be both good for workers, who will earn a better wage, and good for business, which will be able to better attract workers for minimum wage positions," stated Moses in a news release.

The minimum wage was last increased in the NWT in 2015. It is reviewed every two years.

— Paul Bickford

# Permafrost project gets funding boost

## Deh Cho research maps permafrost loss, effects on water levels

by Tim Edwards  
Northern News Services  
Deh Cho

By recognizing the plain-to-see symptoms, it's been easy for the Consortium for Permafrost Ecosystems in Transition to monitor permafrost thaw throughout the Deh Cho region.

"Scotty Creek is kind of an interesting insight into permafrost because it's a place where, when permafrost thaws, you can see it from the air or from satellites, you can see it from space," says Bill Quinton, principle investigator for the consortium (CPET).

As Scotty Creek, which drains into the Liard River, is in a wetland area, all the land around it is water-rich. When permafrost thaws, the land heaves and shifts and black spruce trees — which only survive in relatively dry areas, which permafrost can provide — become waterlogged and die.

These measurable impacts have helped CPET highlight 10 areas, each 36 square kilometres, and measure satellite images from 1970 with some from 2010 to determine trends in permafrost loss.

At the beginning of the year, this project was one of 41 projects that received funding through Polar Knowledge Canada, a federal agency responsible for Northern knowledge, science and technology.

Run through Wilfrid Laurier University, CPET has been awarded \$250,000 over two years to continue the research it's been conducting since 2015, though Quinton says its building on research that began in the 1990s.

Beginning in 1995, water levels in the Liard River were observed to be rising. This rise tapered off in 2014, corresponding with the driest year on record since 1941, according to Quinton, who's been involved in the research over the years.

There was no corresponding increase in rainfall or snowfall, and Quinton says his team initially thought there might be a link to the water from melting permafrost. The problem was, the amount of water released by the melt didn't hold a candle to the raising levels in the river.

What happened, says Quinton, was a bit more indirect. As the permafrost thawed, the landscape changed. New channels opened up for drainage from wetlands that, before, didn't have routes to flow into the river.

"It's like removing the dams," says Quinton.

In 2014, two things happened to halt this gradual increase, he posits: precipitation reached historic lows and the drainage basin in the lower Liard River valley reached a point where everything was more or less connected, so no new water sources were becoming available.

This is a big part of CPET's aims: to predict changes in the amount of water available around the NWT-B.C. border, and to share that knowledge with government and First Nations so they can plan accordingly.

Another aspect of CPET's work that Quinton highlights is a thermosiphon system, developed by his student, Michael Braverman, that can stabilize and even refreeze permafrost. Quinton says the system could have practical application for stabilizing roads and runways or ground around pipelines.

Quinton says CPET has developed a website, scottycreek.com, at which residents of the area can read information about the project and get updates on its findings.



photos courtesy of Bill Quinton

**Alex Maclean** throws a drone that the Consortium for Permafrost Ecosystems in Transition uses to collect imagery on permafrost loss around Scotty Creek in the Deh Cho, during field work in 2015.



**The Consortium for Permafrost Ecosystems in Transition winter fieldwork team** in 2015 consisted of Ryan Connon, back row left, Emily Haughton, and Bill Quinton; and Lindsay Stone, front left, Michael Braverman and Nick Lillie.