

Opportunity before regret



Go ahead. Count the number of times we write about Herb Norwegian and the Deh Cho First Nations in this issue. You better have a lot of fingers to tally it on. It seems like it's impossible to talk about the Mackenzie Gas Project right now without also talking about the Deh Cho. And it makes sense.

Facts are facts: a significant portion of a Mackenzie Valley pipeline will travel through the Deh Cho's territory. And, as such, the Deh Cho deserves a significant say in how the project will proceed. But it has to act quick.

At the recent Resource Expo 04 conference in Vancouver, there was a lot of talk about this sort of situation. Canada is in the midst of a resource boom. Global markets are hot, and with continued rapid growth in markets like India and China, demand for Canadian steel, lumber, energy and more, will only continue to soar. With many of these resources found on land under claim or control by aboriginal groups, one conference attendee put it to me: "Aboriginal people are in the best position they've been in since the Europeans arrived."

With First Nations' living conditions and quality of life ranked 63rd in the world – putting them on par with Third World nations – there are certainly objections that can be raised to this statement. But I believe that what my acquaintance meant was that, for the first time since settlers arrived, aboriginal people are in a position of opportunity.

The conference was well attended by aboriginal groups across Canada participating in their resource economies. They are forming joint ventures. They are creating new companies. They provide jobs and training and hope for people in communities where abject poverty is often the norm. Opportunity is rampant in these communities, and the leaders are capitalizing on it.

The leadership of the Deh Cho First Nation (DCFN) should take note: The pipeline holds more than just natural gas – it holds promise. But before the DCFN can reach that promise, its leadership says it needs to settle its land claim. Is this true?

To an extent it is. But the DCFN must also learn that it needs to separate business from politics. Right now is the time of opportunity to form the joint ventures that will build the pipeline, erect the construction camps, feed the workers, and so forth. The DCFN cannot wait until its political situation is resolved. It must act now to capitalize on the business prospects the pipeline holds. Otherwise it will be left holding a settled land claim – and watching as benefits pass it by at 1.2 billion cubic feet per day.

Jake Kennedy, Editor

Marion LaVigne, Publisher

Jake Kennedy, Editor

Darren Campbell, Managing Editor

Tara Fraser, Associate Editor

John Pekelsky, Art Director

Wanda Brine, Circulation

Kathy Gray, Advertising Manager

Mildred Rivera, Advertising Sales

Tel: 867-920-4343

Fax: 867-873-2844

Far North Oil & Gas is published four times per year by Up Here Publishing Ltd. in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada. Contents copyright 2004 by Up Here Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in any form is forbidden without written consent of the copyright owner.

Far North Oil & Gas is mailed under Publications Mail Agreement No. 40049058. Postage paid in Edmonton, Alberta. Date of issue Fall 2004. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO CIRCULATION DEPT PO BOX 1350 YELLOWKNIFE NT X1A 2N9 Email: wanda@uphere.ca

ISSN NO. 0828-4253. Registered with the National Library of Canada. Indexed in Canadian Periodical Index. Available on-line in Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database.

Customer Service: Subscriptions are \$26.95 per year in Canada, \$32.95 per year in the United States and \$36.95 per year for other international orders. (Prices in Canadian funds.) Single copy price is \$6.95 in Canada. VISA or Mastercard accepted. Send your name, address and payment to:

Far North Oil & Gas
 Suite 800 4920 52nd Street
 Yellowknife, NT X1A 3T1, Canada
 Ph: (867) 920-4343 Fax: (867) 873-2844
 Toll-free in Canada: 1-800-661-0861

Printed in Canada



Canadian Magazine
 Publishers Association