

# Monthly Newsletter November 2017

## Welcome New Members



**WHITEHORSE CURLING CLUB**

## Events Calendar

Chamber Events	Other Events
Dec 07, 2017 Business Continuity Conference <a href="#">(Click here for more)</a>	Nov 29, 2017 Reverse Trade Show <a href="#">(Click here for more)</a>

## Business Continuity

Consider these data points from last year's Fort McMurray fires:

- 42,000 workers in the Fort McMurray region lost 7.6 million work hours over two months;
- Virtually all of the municipality's 3,900 businesses closed;
- 277 businesses were either destroyed or otherwise affected by the blaze;
- Direct and indirect costs of the wildfire are estimated at \$9.9 billion;
- One year later it is estimated that:
- 73,500 people are living in Fort McMurray today, down from 82,000 residents before the catastrophe, and
- As many as 40% of the businesses have not re-opened.

On the heels of the events of Fort McMurray, this year's wildfires in British Columbia, and our own magnitude-6.3 earthquakes in May, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce has recognised that disasters, both big and small, can have a devastating effect on businesses and other organisations.

When we reached out to the Ft. McMurray Chamber of Commerce to learn more about their experience, they were quick to point out that private-sector employers were not the only organisations impacted. They urged us to also be thinking about not-for-profit organisations (we have over 700 in the Yukon), as well as small municipalities and First Nations governments. They all need to address four elements order to survive a disastrous event:

1. Planning
2. Preparedness;
3. Response; and
4. Recovery

And a disaster doesn't have to be the scale of the Ft. McMurray fires or a catastrophic earthquake. We are all familiar with, and have been impacted by, power outages, loss of Internet and telephone services, highway washouts and severe weather. A fire that burns through a building can be as devastating for the tenant businesses as any of the events listed above.

To address this import issue for all organisations, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce has planned to a one-day conference on Thursday, December 7, 2017 with the theme of Business Continuity: Dealing with Disaster through Resilience. This will be followed in 2018 with a series of half-day workshops focusing on particular areas associated with disaster resilience that will be identified by the attendees of the December 7 conference.

The Yukon Chamber Business Continuity Conference will include speakers relating their actual experiences resulting from the fires at Ft. McMurray and Williams Lake, the floods in Calgary, and a full spectrum of other events that have impacted organisations and communities across the country. In each case lessons were learned... lessons that have been applied by the speakers, and lessons that Yukon organisations can use to inform themselves and plan, prepare, respond to, and recover from, disasters that might befall them.

Our morning keynote speaker will be John Coyne, the Yukon's only Business Continuity Professional certified by the Disaster Recovery Institute International. John has responded to climate events such as earthquakes, flooding and wildfires, to terrorist events, prolonged power outages, and numerous localised emergency events. He will speak on "**Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Toolkit**".

Our lunch keynote speakers will be Julie Dickson Olmstead, Director of Public Affairs & Corporate Services and Craig Anderson, General Manager of Operations (Prairies & Yukon), both of Save-On-Foods. Their presentation will be on: "**Lessons Learned and Applied**".

In addition, there will be sessions on:

- Employer obligations related to human resources and occupational health and safety, with speakers from the Canadian Human Resources Association and the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board;
- A presenter from AON Insurance who will speak on his organisation and his clients' experiences with the Calgary floods and the Ft. McMurray fires, as well as adequate and appropriate coverage for organisations;
- A moderated panel discussion with experts from the telecom and IT sector speaking on IT & telecom best practices plus backup and recovery solutions; and
- Speakers from ATCO Electric Yukon and Yukon Energy co-presenting on the subject **"Electricity in the Yukon – Behind the Switch"**.

Attendees of this conference should take away answers to questions that businesses and other organisations need to ask themselves to ensure that they are prepared to survive a calamity by taking steps to plan, prepare, respond and recover.

The Yukon Chamber thinks that this is a critical conversation to be had, not only with the business community, but also with other employers including not-for-profits, as well as First Nations and municipal governments. All of us would face similar challenges and as one of our Save-On-Foods speakers has already shared with us, working together as a community is a critical component to dealing with disaster.

[For full information on the conference or to register  
Click Here](#)

## Renewables in Remote Communities

Increasing the Human and Financial Capacity of  
Renewable Energy Systems in Remote Indigenous Communities

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce attended the conference that was held in Whitehorse from October 23-26. The event, hosted by the Pembina Institute and the Government of Yukon / Energy, Mines and Resources, welcomed more than 200 attendees from across Canada and Alaska. The conference brought together NGOs, First Nation Development Corporations and all levels of government, including many representatives from First Nation Governments and Councils. As indicated by its title, the conference revolved around human capacity and financial capacity.

Presenters stressed the importance of involving the communities when developing energy projects but then again supporting and developing the capacity of individuals and communities in a sustainable way. A presentation from Ryan Hennessey (Energy Branch / Energy Solutions Centre) on “The dynamic role of capital in the development of successful community energy projects” and the significance of nurturing human and social capital within the communities was particularly interesting in this regard.

The second critical dimension for advancing clean energy systems is financial capacity – the financing of the projects – but also the need for changing the actual approach when considering the economic value of renewable energy projects, especially when there are few, if any, economies of scale. Beginning in 2018-19, the Arctic Energy Fund from the Government of Canada will provide \$400 million a year for communities above the 60th parallel, including \$50 million for the Yukon. Information on the Fund itself is not available yet but three recommendations were presented during the conference:

- 1) To invest 50% of the Fund in clean energy
- 2) To use 25% of the clean energy money to capitalise a Northern Territories Green Bank
- 3) To invest \$2 million/year in culturally-accessible training and capacity development.

The Green Bank concept originated in the United States. The Connecticut Green Bank, established in 2011, was the first one in the USA. The goal of the bank is to close gaps in markets for clean-energy projects and facilitate financing to increase market penetration using market-oriented approaches. Since its inception, the Connecticut Green Bank has surpassed \$1 billion in clean-energy investment in Connecticut.

Another approach, from the consulting firm Navigant, proposed a framework including three principles for accelerating the deployment of renewables.

- Renewable energy development should not increase costs to the utility, government, or customers
- Renewable energy development should be financed using a mix of private and public capital to leverage limited public funds
- Long-term Power Purchase Agreement and an entity to provide coordinated access to federal funds in the form of grants and loans

If you are interested in getting more information on this conference, please contact Julie Dufresne, Research Analyst, at [research@yukonchamber.com](mailto:research@yukonchamber.com)

## Signature Tasting Series

“A wee dram shared gives twice the reward” – Jonathan Bray  
Read Jonathans blog from his visit to the Yukon for the Rum and Whiskey Tastings in September.

[Click here read the blog](#)



## From the Commissioner for Employers, Canada Employment Insurance Commission

### **2018 Employment Insurance Rates**

The Employment Insurance (EI) premium rate for employees for 2018 is \$1.66 per \$100 of insurable earnings which represent an increase of 3 cents over the 2017 rate. The 2018 rate for employers is \$2.32, up 4 cents for employers who pay 1.4 times the employee rate.

### **Upcoming Changes to Employment Insurance Special Benefits**

Bill C-44, Budget Bill Implementation Act, 2017, approved in June 2017, amended the Employment Insurance Act to provide parents a choice of parental benefit options, extend the benefit window for maternity benefits, create a new caregiving benefit for critically ill adults,

and make consequential changes, including amendments to the Canada Labour Code regarding leave periods to accommodate the EI changes. These changes are expected to come into effect later this calendar year; however, the precise “in force” date is not available yet. The proposed regulations to support these amendments should be posted to the Canada Gazette website by mid-November. The implementation of these changes on maternity, parental and caregiving may impact employer supplemental benefits (“top-ups”) and leave arrangements. Employers may want to consider their current provisions in anticipation of the changes.

### **EI Premium Reduction Program (PRP)**

The 2016 Budget measure changed the EI waiting period for benefits from two weeks to one week. Short-term disability (STD) plans that are registered with the Premium Reduction Program (PRP) may have an elimination period before the payment of benefits, similar to the EI waiting period.

To align with the EI one-week waiting period, a regulatory amendment was made to reduce the elimination period standard for short-term disability plans to a maximum of seven consecutive days (from 14 days), effective January 1, 2017. Some employers may have existing qualifying plans that were in place prior to January 1, 2017, and which no longer meet the new standard. To mitigate the impact on these employers and their employees, the Government has put in place a four-year transitional period (from January 1, 2017, to January 2, 2021) to provide affected employers time to make adjustments to their short-term disability plan to meet the new standard. During the transitional period, they can continue to qualify to participate in the Premium Reduction Program and receive a premium reduction.

However, the Commissioner’s office has heard from business associations that their members’ re-aligned short-term disability plans, which had been previously approved for PRP, were falling short in entirely other ways. Some firms had received 30-day notices to correct these other deficiencies, which meant they had to run interference between their short-term disability insurer and Service Canada. During this period, some firms were disqualified from receiving Premium Reduction Program relief.

Over the summer, the Commissioner’s office initiated a discussion involving senior operations officials and technical staff as well as several insurance companies, and the outcome was very positive: Service Canada will allow a similar transition period to the waiting period one (i.e. to January 2021) to correct remaining deficiencies. At the end of the transition period, all affected employers’ short-term disability plans will need to be in compliance in order to retain their premium reduction. Moreover, firms and their insurers are expected to move expeditiously on these STD plan corrections. Service Canada staff can also discuss plan discrepancies directly with the firm’s insurer with the consent of the employer.

## Re-doing Labour Market Transfer Agreements

A key outcome of consultations conducted on Labour Market Transfer Agreements by the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) was to ensure that the next generation of agreements is flexible and responsive to the needs of individuals, workers, employers and under-represented groups, including Indigenous Peoples.

The provinces and territories are currently considering the federal offer and negotiations are well underway on amendments to the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs). Note that LMDAs—paid for by EI rate-payers-- are almost three times the size of the other existing agreements put together.

Budget 2017 allocated an additional \$2.7 billion to LMDAs over six years, starting in 2017–18. LMDA base program funding is \$1.95 billion per year. The 2016 Budget announced an increment \$125 million for 2016-17. The total of LMDA funding paid by EI rate-payers (7/12 employers) amounts to \$14.5 billion during the six-year period.

Employment Insurance Act amendments broadening worker eligibility for employment benefits and support measures under the Labour Market Development Agreements take effect April 1, 2018. Under the new rule, anyone paying at least the minimum EI premium in five of the last ten years is eligible for skills training. Currently, a person has to be EI-eligible (for benefits) or recently so.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the full issue of the Commissioner's Fall Communiqué, please contact Julie Dufresne at [research@yukonchamber.com](mailto:research@yukonchamber.com).

## Airport Survey

The Yukon Chamber of Commerce considers Yukon airports critical assets for business success in the territory. An update by the Government of Yukon of the airport master plan for Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport is currently underway. The Yukon Chamber of Commerce is seeking membership feedback for input requested by the Yukon Government's consultant and to inform future Chamber policy positions on development, financing and management of Yukon airports.

You are invited to complete the survey by the end of the day on Friday, December 1, 2017.

Thank you for participating in the following survey.

[Link to Survey](#)

## CFTA Breakfast

The Trade and Procurement committee hosted its first event on November 9; a breakfast meeting where 16 attendees listened to a briefing from JP Flament on the [Canadian Free Trade Agreement \(CFTA\)](#) that came into force on July 1, 2017.

The presentation was illuminating and focused on the areas of the agreement pertinent to the Yukon. The presentation and ensuing discussion highlighted two areas that might be beneficial for follow-up; namely the status of the implementation of the provisions of the agreement by the Yukon government and the fact that unique in Canada; the MASH sectors i.e. Municipalities, Academic. Social and Health publicly-funded institutions are exempt from the provisions of the CFTA.

- The presentation can be found [here](#)
- The specific sections that provide for the MASH exemption can be found [here](#)
- Exceptions that relate to the Yukon on existing measures (Annex 1) are provided [here](#)
- Exceptions that are provided by the act for future measures (Annex 2) are provide [here](#)

We are looking for direction for our next event. At the moment we would look to hold follow-up briefings that focus on the implementation of the agreement by the Yukon government and how it would affect current procurement practices. We are also interested in inviting the MASH sector entities (Municipalities, Yukon Hospital Corporation, Yukon College, etc.) to a broader discussion about their procurement policies with respect to local procurement in light of the fact they are not constrained by the CFTA.

We encourage any recommendations and are actively seeking members for our committee. Please send any comments or questions to the Chamber at [research@yukonchamber.com](mailto:research@yukonchamber.com)

Philip Fitzgerald, Chair of the Trade & Procurement Committee

## Membership Recognition



The Yukon Chamber of Commerce would like to recognise  
**Waterstone Products**  
as they have been a member since 1994

## Recent Activities of the Employer Advisor

### Update on Employer Advisor Travel in Rural Yukon

We mentioned in the October edition of our newsletter that YCC's Employer Advisor, Mal Malloch, was on track to complete by mid-November visits to every community in the territory this year. By way of update we are happy to confirm that by the end of October Mal did complete that task. Since January he has visited every community in rural Yukon to connect with employers and tell them about the Employer Advisor Service.

Mal continues to reach out to Yukon employers to let them know help is available if they have questions or concerns about workers' compensation or occupational health and safety. The service is available to all Yukon employers. There is no charge to use the service. YWCHSB supports the service through a contribution agreement, but YCC operates at arm's length from YWCHSB and all dealings with the Employer Advisor are absolutely confidential.

If you have a question or concern, or if you would just like to know more about the service, please let us know. Just send Mal an email at [advisor@yukonchamber.com](mailto:advisor@yukonchamber.com) or call him at 393-6061.

## **Yukon** BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Putting you in touch with Yukon businesses

<http://www.directoryyukon.com>

On the Yukon Chamber website click the Invest Yukon icon on the lower left-hand side of the main page to access the Yukon Business Directory.

To find a Yukon business, simply enter a keyword, business name, category, or location using the search fields.

To register your business click "Register Your Business" in the top right-hand corner.

For more information, or to edit an existing business listing, please contact the Yukon Chamber 867-667-2000 or by email [office@yukonchamber.com](mailto:office@yukonchamber.com)



## Workers' Comp 101

### What Employers Need to Know

YCC offers a free half-day introductory workshop for Yukon employers on key aspects of workers' compensation. We have delivered it in Whitehorse and half a dozen rural communities. The most recent sessions were in Old Crow in May and Teslin in September.

Everyone who has attended this workshop has indicated on their feedback form that they agree somewhat or agree fully with the following statement, "I would recommend this workshop to other employers".

Below are the topics covered in the half-day workshop:

- Basic principles of workers' compensation (WC) in Canada
- The basis on which employers are classified
- How rates are set and what factors influence rates
- Employers' responsibilities with regard to WC
- Assumptions that underlie Return to Work (RTW) initiatives and employer obligations and opportunities in regard to RTW
- Basic concepts of the CHOICES program
- How Letters of Clearance work
- General parameters around appeals
- The Certificate of Recognition (COR) program
- Purpose and main activities of Northern Safety Network Yukon (NSNY).

We are planning a few more offerings this year in Whitehorse and one in Haines Junction. We will advertise the dates soon. Meanwhile, if you want to be advised directly once the dates are nailed down, please let us know. Just call Mal Malloch at 393-6061 or send him an email at [advisor@yukonchamber.com](mailto:advisor@yukonchamber.com).



YCC Staff. From left to right Rachel Morgan, Peter Turner, Julie Dufresne, Mal Malloch

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Thank you to all our members for your ongoing support for the efforts of the Yukon Chamber. It's your memberships that allow us to do the work we do for the Yukon business community.