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# NGC News

Vol. 5 No. 5 December 2020



The staff at the NGC office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay held a physically-distanced Nunatsiavut Day celebration. Holding the Nunatsiavut flag are Janice White (left) and Eileen Saunders. Rear, from left to right, Russell Banzet, Chris Webb, Lisa French, and Sevilla Hope.

## NGC Shares Christmas Spirit

The Nunatsiavut Group of Companies shared the Christmas spirit with food banks and community freezers in Nunatsiavut and in Upper Lake Melville in early December. NGC donated \$54,500 to the organizations, matching a donation from the Nunatsiavut Government.

“This direct financial assistance will allow food banks and community freezers to purchase food that local communities need,” says NGC President and CEO Chris Webb. “Food security is a major challenge in northern communities, and this is especially so with winter coming on and during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.”

The program to give back to

communities started when NGC was established a decade ago. It began with a firewood project for communities where wood is not easily accessible. In more recent years, with food insecurity becoming an increasing concern, the program has transitioned into support for Nunatsiavut and Upper Lake Melville food banks and community freezers.

“NGC is pleased to be in a position to make this donation to people in need,” says Webb. “Our company is owned by Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries and our goal is to support Nunatsiavut through employment, infrastructure development and provision of services, and through contributions like this one. We are in business for Nunatsiavut.”




Donation to food banks and community freezers

TaKuaKautik – Nain Food Bank	\$22,000
Hopedale Inuit Community Government	\$11,500
Makkovik Pantry/Woodbox Committee	\$7,000
St. Timothy's Food Bank - Rigolet	\$6,000
Postville Food Bank Committee	\$3,500
NunaKatiget Inuit Community Corporation Happy Valley-Goose Bay/Mud Lake	\$3,500
Sivunivut Inuit Community Corporation North West River	\$1,000

In the interest of preventing the spread of COVID-19, this newsletter is available online only.

This edition of **NGC News** may be read online at [ngc-ng.ca](http://ngc-ng.ca) and on NGC's Facebook page.



# New safety recognition and improvement program at TSI

Old Camp laydown area, Voisey's Bay (Photo: TSI employee)

As far as Wyman Jacque and his leadership team at Torngait Services Inc. are concerned, any discussion about safety should lead to something constructive. And that's what happened after his onsite teams at the Vale project recently discussed ways to recognize and reward safe work practices. They designed a card where employees can note good safety practices among their work colleagues. The cards will be reviewed by leaders and supervisors who will carry out a monthly draw for prizes.

"TSI has continuous conversations with Vale about developing and implementing safety measures," says Jacque. "From those discussions, TSI's senior managers and our Occupational Health and Safety team on site went away and developed a program. It's pretty simple. If an employee sees a colleague doing a job safely, they communicate that to the employee and fill out a card that's submitted to the management and leadership team. The team reviews the entries each month and chooses an employee to receive a prize."

## THE IDEA

The idea for the peer-to-peer recognition program at TSI was floated as the underground mine expansion project got back in full swing after the COVID-19 shutdown ended in July. "We had grown from 130 employees to about 250 by late summer," says Jacque. "There were lots of new people on site and because of

the many roles that TSI has as the site services provider, our employees can be assigned to many different roles. For example, a TSI employee might be working on the crusher one day and be assigned to port operations the next day."

As people move from job to job, the risk of a safety incident increases. "Vale recognized the safety risk because of all the roles that TSI employees play, from working at the port, clearing roads and runways of snow, unloading aircraft and ships, and operating various equipment, all the while with a huge amount of radio communication. There is a high risk of an incident," says Jacque. "We thought that it would be a great idea to implement the program at TSI."

***"Recognizing people who spot safety issues or who report good safety practices in others, is an important investment in keeping everyone safe."***

## CONSULTING WITH STAFF

TSI leaders wanted to have the full support of their staff before implementing the program. Leaders consulted with staff over a one-month period in order to cover all shifts at the site. Staff provided input and the program will get its first run in December.

"We decided that we would provide two prizes each month," says Jacque. "One for the north side where the existing mine is in operation, and one for the south side where work is taking place to develop the underground mine."

*continued on next page....*

# Safety recognition and company improvement program *cont'd*

Target Services Inc.

## PEER TO PEER RECOGNITION OR IMPROVEMENT CARD

Safe Action Observed

Employee Observed: \_\_\_\_\_

Did observer speak with employee observed?  
 Y  N

Observers Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:**

**Body Position**

Lifting                       Pushing/Pulling/Extending

**Human Factors**

Awareness to Surroundings                       Slip, Trip, and Falls

Attention to Work                       Communication

Using PPE Lifting

**Work Conditions**

Tools for the Job

*At right, a copy of the card that TSI employees at the Vale site will use to note good safety practices of fellow employees and report areas where the company can take action to prevent safety-related incidents.*

TSI employees were consulted not just on the shape of the program. They also came up with a list of prizes that would be both meaningful and useful. "These are bigger prizes than your standard company cap or coffee mug," says Jacque. "Employees suggested prizes such as shop vacs, wireless headphones, tool bags, and drill and impact driver sets. We went out and bought two of each of those items so that the monthly prize is the same for the north and south sides."

### SECOND PART TO PROGRAM

There is a second part to the program where

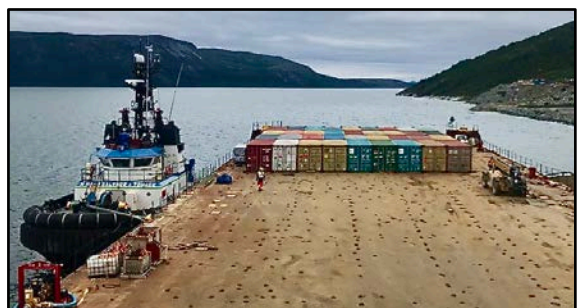
employees can make suggestions to the company to improve safety conditions onsite. "It might be that an employee at the port sees that a cable for lifting sea containers is past its expiry date and needs to be tested for strength and durability or that there's a buried cable which hasn't been marked," says Jacque. "These are all important issues. We want TSI employees to work safely and to be able to return home to their families in good health. Recognizing people who spot safety issues or who report good safety practices in others, is a huge investment in keeping everyone safe." 🏢

## INL barge lifts assist underground mine development

Integrated Nunatsiavut Logistics (INL), a partnership between NGC and Integrated Logistics, conducted barge lifts of equipment and material for the Vale underground mine again in 2020, the second year of INL's involvement with the project. Utilizing the 400-foot barge *Nunavut Spirit* and the 4000 HP tug *Beverly M*, INL completed 8 trips from Quebec City to Edward's Cove at Voisey's Bay in 2020.

NMI general manager Gary Latimer anticipates at least the same number of trips in 2021. "We're extremely happy with how things have worked out, both this year and last when we carried out a dozen barge lifts," says Latimer. "We look forward to continuing this work next year." The first trip of 2020 was on July 7. The season concluded on November 22.

**Top right, INL conducted its first barge lift for the Vale underground mine in 2019. The work will continue next year. (Photos: INL staff)**





# Air Borealis triumphs over 2020 challenges

Air Borealis director Travis Barbour practically has to pinch himself as he reflects on the airline's recovery from the low point in 2020 when freight and cargo were the major part of his business and many of the airline's employees were laid off. "We are back operating at normal levels. Our jobs are safe. It's very rewarding that we could come back so quickly. In March, when COVID forced many businesses to shut and people stopped travelling, we were concerned. We didn't know what the next day would bring."

A quick recovery from the downturn brought about by COVID travel restrictions was never a given. But Barbour credits the hard work and determination of the airline's staff for making it happen. "We owe it to the frontline workers like the customer service agents on the coast who faced things head-on. They came to work every day when people were concerned about the virus. Our pilots kept flying. Our ground crews and loading staff in Goose Bay did the same. They were supported by management and front and back office staff. I feel great about what we've accomplished and I know that gives our employees deep satisfaction."

## EXTRA AIRCRAFT TO MOVE CARGO

December is one of the airline's busiest months for both passenger travel and cargo shipments. "We have two aircraft slotted to move cargo in December on a daily basis. We expect to be moving 80,000 pounds a week," says Barbour. "Cargo is very close to being double with the regular perishable food shipments and the added volume of Christmas packages."



With travel restrictions eased, passenger traffic is heavy as well. "We typically have three passenger flights a day. We're adding additional flights to keep up with increasing passenger levels as we near the Christmas season," he says. "It could be people coming from the coast to do Christmas shopping, people travelling home for Christmas, or groups trying to get in last-minute business meetings. We're monitoring the traffic flow and looking at adding extra flights if we need to."



*At left, and above, some members of the Air Borealis Cargo Agents team. Cargo agents will handle and load 80,000 pounds of food, Christmas packages, mail, and other freight each week during December. (Air Borealis photo)*

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

Like everyone else, Barbour is looking forward to an effective COVID vaccine that will allow life to return closer to normal. He's proud of the measures the airline took to clean and disinfect planes and to keep their staff and passengers safe. "Within Labrador, we have done a great job to keep the virus from spreading," he says. "By using masks early on, carrying out intense cleaning and fogging of our planes, we gave customers the confidence that it was safe to fly on our aircraft." Will those measures continue? "Some of the cleaning measures that we put in place, I feel we will always have," he says. "I don't think there's any going back to the way things were before." 🛩️

# Air Borealis Increases Medevac Capacity



Despite the business uncertainty brought about by COVID-19, Air Borealis plowed ahead and outfitted two additional aircraft to serve as medevacs, bringing the total in the fleet to four.

"We had planned to do this," Barbour says. "It elevates the level of service that we can provide in the event of an emergency. COVID wasn't the reason we outfitted additional aircraft, but it underscored the urgency of having additional resources in a pandemic environment."

The medevacfiguration allows for the safe placement of a stretcher and provides seating for the emergency flight team.



*Two views of one of Air Borealis' four aircraft that have been outfitted for medevac service. At top, looking toward the front of the aircraft. The configuration allows adequate space for the medical flight crew to attend to the patient as well as seating for the crew. At bottom, a view of the aircraft looking toward the rear.*

*All four aircraft were outfitted for medevac at PAL Aerospace in St. John's.*



## Helicopter Service Poised for Growth

Air Borealis entered the helicopter market in Labrador in 2020 through a partnership with Custom Helicopters. Through that arrangement, there is the capability of adding additional aircraft as business grows.

"We were late coming into the market in 2020," says Air Borealis Director Travis Barbour. "Our strategy was to do work for our Indigenous partners and then get more involved with other clients. "We've completed work for Nunatsiavut Secretariat and our Innu partners as well."

A major accomplishment in 2020 was a 3-year contract with Vale. That scope of work involves moving crews around to drill rigs, involvement in the harlequin duck survey and the water quality program, tower serving, and being on standby in case of emergency.

There's more potential ahead. "We just bid on work with NL Hydro and we feel there's more possibility with Base Camp and Mealy Mountains National Park," says Barbour. "We're in a good position to get a lot more work in 2021."



## Air Borealis continues to support DFO's right whale survey

Air Borealis completed the third year of a five-year contract with DFO to survey the right whale population in the Maritimes. The airline flew 450 hours for the project in 2020, in a season that began in mid-May and concluded at the end of September.

Air Borealis rotated two crews through the service to protect against COVID-19 spread, with the crews working only in the Maritimes.

Air Borealis Director Travis Barbour says contracts such as the whale survey are valuable. "It adds stability," he says, "to know that you have this a consistent amount of work from year to year."



*Timmiak constructed five Raise Bore Collars that sit atop mine shafts. Two of the shafts allow fresh air to be pumped into the mine and two will allow stale air to be expelled. A fifth will provide an escape route to the surface for miners. (Photo: Timmiak Construction Ltd.)*

## No change to Timmiak partnership as Bird Construction and Stuart Olson join forces

**Two of Canada's largest construction companies officially joined forces on September 25, promising that the merger will strengthen their team and create a Canadian industry leader. Of particular importance to NGC is that the merger will not impact Bird's partnership with Timmiak Construction Limited.**

Timmiak is a joint venture company that is 51% owned by NGC and 49% by Bird Heavy Civil Ltd. Timmiak, and its predecessor, Nillik Construction Ltd., have successfully completed several contracts and subcontracts at Voisey's Bay.

"We will continue to provide the same high level of service and commitment that you have come to expect," Bird Olson stated in an email to NGC. "For that reason, there will be no changes to our current Timmiak partnership agreement."

That is good news for NGC President and CEO Chris Webb. "We have had a very productive relationship with Bird. And we look forward to continuing that work with Bird Olson."

Most recently, Timmiak had a subcontract at the Vale underground mine site to place concrete, formwork, and rebar that became Raise Bore Collars for the tops of five shafts. That work continued through the winter but was interrupted in mid-March, when Vale closed the site due to the impact of COVID-19. Once the project resumed in June, Timmiak employees returned and completed their work. Timmiak and its employees left the Voisey's Bay site in July.

During peak construction in 2020, 44% of Timmiak's craft employees - people who support construction trades - were Indigenous and Labradorian. 🇮🇵



*Umiak I at the dock at Edward's Cove, Voisey's Bay. (Photo: TSI employee)*

### TSI Teams to be Profiled in Future Issues

Torngait Services Inc. has provided site services for Vale since 2005. TSI employees carry out multiple roles, including loading and unloading airplanes and ships, clearing and maintaining roads, and maintaining the water supply.

In future editions, **NGC News** will profile TSI teams that play a critical in supporting operations at the Vale site.

## Message from President and CEO Chris Webb

As I write this last column of 2020, our companies are planning for 2021. They have just had their budgets and business plans approved by the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust and are looking forward to the next twelve months.

It's fitting that we look forward at this time of year, even as we reflect on the year just ending. And for certain, 2020 has been a challenging year on many fronts. The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a long shadow. It has disrupted lives with sickness and death. It has upended our natural inclination to want to socialize and visit with friends. And it has impacted business. NGC decided at the start of the pandemic to be guided by public health advice and to develop work plans that were prudent. Our focus was on protecting our clients, our employees, and our communities.

Our companies have adjusted. They are at work building infrastructure and providing the services that our clients have come to expect. The spirit of pushing ahead and getting the job done in spite of the challenges we face is not a new concept for Nunatsiavut. The road to a land claims agreement and self-government was a decades-long struggle. The leaders of that day looked forward, not backward.

It was in that spirit that the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies marked Nunatsiavut Day this year. NGC is a product of the struggle for a land claims agreement. Our achievements are Nunatsiavut's achievements. It was fitting that as we posed with the flag for Nunatsiavut Day, we remembered the people who made Nunatsiavut possible. One of them was the late William Barbour who passed away in November. In this edition of the newsletter, we pay tribute to William and to his contribution to Labrador Inuit and Inuit in general.

I started this column by noting that our companies are well into preparing for their operations in 2021. We continue to see the value of partnerships and we expect to announce more of these early in the new year. Partnerships allow us to leverage the strengths of others. We see that throughout NGC and it is making a huge contribution to the group of companies. I think



of our Vale partnerships; our partnership with the Innu and PAL Airlines in Air Borealis; Nunatsiavut Solutions Inc. and Air Borealis teaming up to operate Base Camp; Nunatsiavut Marine Inc. and Labrador Marine for the coastal marine service; and Nunatsiavut Construction's partnerships that made possible the awarding of a \$600,000 contract to build a warehouse for the Canadian military at Gander.

NGC's approach to partnerships is simple. We are not a name on the door. We will be active players and that means having a seat at the boardroom table, something that we have accomplished with all 31 of our ventures. We will continue that approach with the partnerships to be announced in 2021.

Our hope is that the promise of effective COVID vaccines will allow us to return to a more normal year in 2021. We look forward to resuming community visits to tell you more about the work that our companies are doing and to hear your feedback. We also want to get back into the schools to show young Beneficiaries the opportunities that exist with NGC and our affiliated companies. But of course, we have to continue to be patient until a vaccine is approved and widely available.

Naturally, as we head into Christmas, we will feel the urge to want to socialize. But we have to remember that the virus continues to spread across the world and in Canada. Public health officials tell us that we will see even more cases as people travel for Christmas. We should socialize within our family unit. That will make it a Christmas unlike any other in our memory. But we owe it to ourselves and to all the people we care about and love, to follow that advice.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Stay safe.

*Chris*



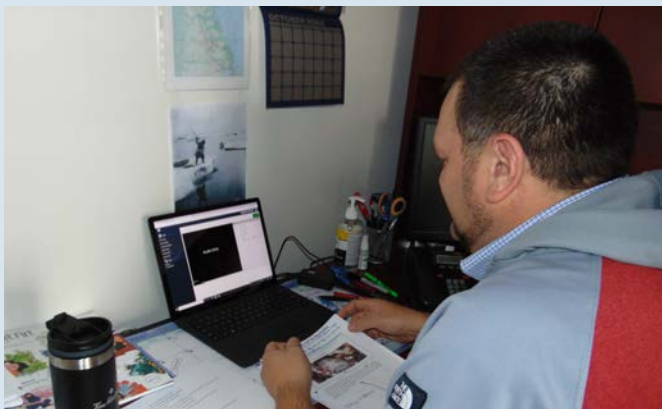


# NGC Report to Assembly

## Universal Helicopters write-off impacts NGC's bottom line in 2019

The difficult decision by the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust (LICST) to write off its investment in Universal Helicopters in 2019, turned an otherwise banner year for Nunatsiavut Group of Companies to a \$3.9 million dollar loss. That information was conveyed to the Nunatsiavut Assembly on October 26, as the Trust, NGC, and the company's auditors appeared by teleconference to present an accounting of NGC's operations in 2019.

"When the initial investment was made in Universal in 2013, it was expected to be a good revenue generator for NGC," President and CEO Chris Webb told members of the Assembly. "The resource sector (which was a major part of Universal's business) went into a downward spiral and hasn't bounced back. We would have had close to a \$4 million to \$5 million surplus [for 2019] if there had been no write-down."



**NGC President and CEO Chris Webb making a virtual presentation to the Nunatsiavut Assembly on October 26. (Janice White photo)**

### VALE PARTNERSHIPS SIGNIFICANT

NGC's many partnerships that support operations at the existing Vale mine and the ongoing underground mine development have been significant drivers of the growth in revenue. Webb cited Torngait Services Inc., which has provided site services to the Vale mine since 2005, and the new partnerships formed to develop the underground mine, such as Timmiak

Construction Limited, Integrated Nunatsiavut Logistics, and Innu Inuit Redpath. "We are using our position to leverage the skills of other companies," Webb stated. "Our collaboration with companies in mine development, construction, fabrication, and logistics (help us) deliver value to the people of Nunatsiavut."

And that value is not just showing up on NGC's balance sheet. NGC has clout in the various companies and is helping generate jobs for Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries. "We have board-level seats in the partnerships," says Webb. "We push for employment and other benefits" for Nunatsiavut.

Those employment benefits are substantial. Torngait Services Inc., which has provided site services for Vale since 2005, had about 250 people on the payroll in late fall. About 150 more people work for the various partnerships. In all, about 200 Beneficiaries are employed at the Vale site. "Beneficiaries are making careers in NGC," says Webb. "That is something that we are very proud of. And we are working on more partnerships on the Vale project."

### FISH OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE

Nuluak Fisheries added nearly \$2.5 million dollars to NGC's bottom line in 2019 through its quotas for shrimp, Greenland halibut, and Atlantic halibut. NGC told the Assembly that the fishery holds even more potential for the region. The results from last year's collaboration with Nunatsiavut Government and Torngait Fish Producers Cooperative on an experimental fishery for scallop and whelk, proved that a commercial scallop fishery is viable near Nain. Work will continue on assessing the whelk resource.

Webb also noted that there will be job opportunities for Beneficiaries as some offshore fishing crew members reach retirement age. But training will be a critical part of getting people into those positions. He also pointed out that NGC continues to collaborate with NG and others to lobby DFO for a greater share of adjacent fish stocks.

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# NGC Report to the Assembly *cont'd*

## SUCCESS ON OTHER FRONTS

Nunatsiavut Construction Inc.'s rock crushing operation continued to be a major asset for north coast infrastructure projects, both in the public and private sector. Crushed stone sales increased by more than \$1 million from the previous year. On the construction front, NCI has transitioned to become more efficient and productive. While employment numbers were lower in 2019 than in 2018, the company continued to employ the same percentage of Beneficiaries.

In response to questions about why NCI isn't carrying out more infrastructure projects on the north coast, such as water and sewer, NGC President and CEO Chris Webb stated, "we try to bid on every piece of work. We want to get the work. We want to make sure

[the 60 Beneficiaries who work with NCI] build careers."

## COVID IMPACT ON 2020 OPERATIONS

In his concluding remarks, Webb stated that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a financial impact on NGC's operations in 2020, although he noted that it is too early to say with any certainty what that will be. "We have been impacted in ways similar to other organizations," he said. "The major impact was with our Vale partnerships...and with Air Borealis." He concluded that NGC is in a good financial position to ride out the COVID pandemic. "We are in a very good financial position from a cash position to see us through a second wave." 🇩🇪

## PostMill Lumber site cleanup

In 2019, Nunatsiavut Construction Inc. completed a multi-year cleanup of the former PostMill Lumber site in Postville. PostMill Lumber pre-dated the formation of NGC, but the organization through NCI, assumed responsibility for this legacy project. Over the three years of the cleanup, NCI spent approximately \$250,000 to clean up and remove a substantial amount of derelict equipment, materials, and buildings.

In 2021, NCI will carry out a Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment, which involves soil testing and other tests in order to get a full understanding of the condition of the land, groundwater, and any other structures on the property.

Items and materials removed from the site over the three years of the cleanup:

- 15 vehicles/pieces of heavy equipment
- 4 buildings
- 3 tractor engines
- Oil storage tanks
- Miscellaneous waste (fuel drums, contaminated soil, batteries, waste steel)

# NG, NGC, and Premier pay tribute to William Barbour

## Province lowers flags to half- mast

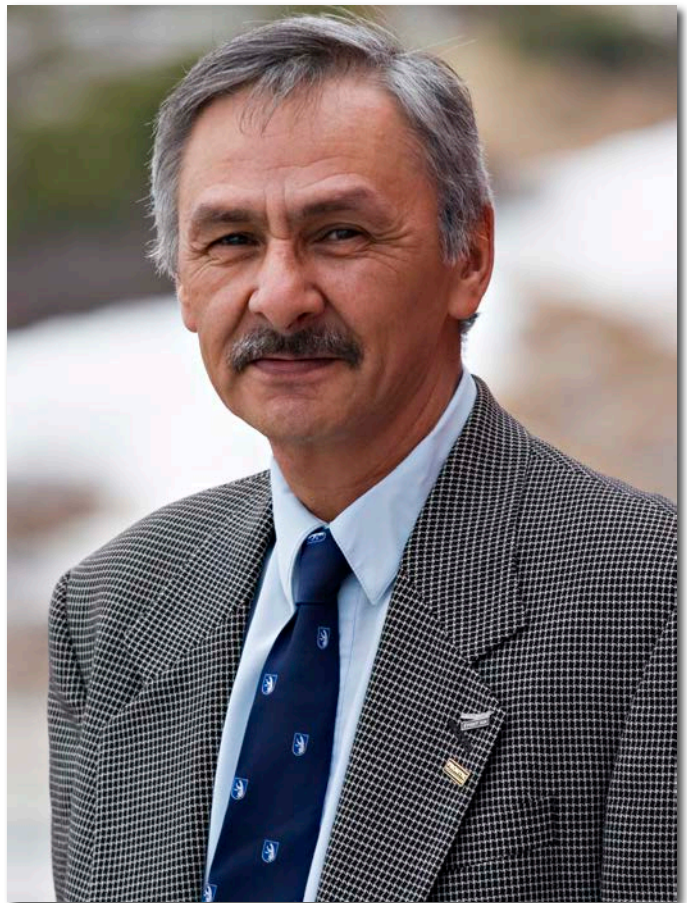
Tributes flowed last month to honour the contribution that William Barbour made in his many roles, as a President of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), a key negotiator for the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, and a member of the Nunatsiavut Assembly. Barbour died in Nain on November 19.

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe credited Barbour for putting the rights of Labrador Inuit ahead of all else. "William was very passionate about protecting Inuit rights, including those to lands and resources, and in promoting and preserving our language, customs and traditions," said President Lampe. "During the course of his career, as an elected official and as public servant, William's intelligence, integrity, sense of humour and humility earned him much respect in the Inuit circumpolar world as well as with his own people."

### DISTINGUISHED CAREER

Born in Nain in 1959, Barbour hunted and fished with his father and other elders. He attended residential school in North West River when he was 14 years old, and later, continued his studies at Grenfell College in Corner Brook. He returned to northern Labrador and began nearly three decades of work with Labrador Inuit, including as President of the LIA in 1994. His work as wildlife technician utilized science that eventually led the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to lift the prohibition on the hunting of polar bears by Inuit.

In his tribute, President Lampe stated that Barbour was "instrumental" in the negotiations that led to the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and in the negotiation of the Voisey's Bay Impacts and Benefits Agreement." Barbour later served in the Nunatsiavut Assembly as Ordinary Member for Nain and was appointed Minister of Lands and Natural Resources. His last role with the Nunatsiavut Government was as an interpreter/translator.



*Photo: Nunatsiavut Government*

### PROVINCE PAYS TRIBUTE

Flags were lowered at Confederation Building to half-mast in honour of Barbour. Premier Andrew Furey highlighted Barbour's role in helping negotiate the land claims and self-government agreements. "He held an unwavering commitment in ensuring the rights and culture of Labrador Inuit were protected, and his legacy lives on," said Furey. "He will be missed."

### NGC HONOURS BARBOUR'S CONTRIBUTION

Nunatsiavut Group of Companies recalled Barbour's many contributions to Labrador Inuit during this year's Nunatsiavut Day celebrations. NGC President and CEO Chris Webb called Barbour "a pioneer for Labrador Inuit and a builder for Nunatsiavut. His contribution will benefit Nunatsiavut and Beneficiaries for decades to come," said Webb.

NGC Chief Operating Officer Sarah Leo developed a working relationship with Barbour when she served as Nunatsiavut President from 2004 to 2008. Prior to that time, her family had close connections with Barbour when he fished with her father. "I've known William all my life," she says. "William was so dedicated to making sure Labrador Inuit got the best possible land claims agreement. He was a fierce negotiator and stood on his belief that we had to have the best agreement for the people. He was brilliant and a great leader. He looked after the best interests of Labrador Inuit and Inuit in general." 🇮🇸

# NCI spreads its wings

Projects in Upper Lake Melville and Gander bring new business



*NCI is general contractor on a project to construct a warehouse for the Canadian military at 9 Wing, Gander.*

The work crew, with Nunatsiavut Construction Inc. (NCI) as general contractor, moved onto CFB Gander in mid-November to break ground for a new warehouse for the military. By the end of the month, crews had installed water and sewer. If the weather cooperates, workers will have begun erecting the building by Christmas and have finished the warehouse by March 31. All that will be left then is paving and landscaping in the spring.

The Gander project is part of NCI's strategy to add to the body of work it undertakes each year in Nunatsiavut. "We have seen big swings in the amount of work that we win each year on the north coast," says NCI General Manager Tom Lyall. "We are working hard to be a 12-month a year company with work taking place right through the calendar year. We will always be a Nunatsiavut company with deep project roots in each north coast community. But in order to sustain our business, we have to find work outside the region as well."

## UPPER LAKE MELVILLE PRODUCTIVE IN 2020

NCI found some of that work this year in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area. Projects included window replacement at two quadplexes in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, installation of a concrete driveway and swale for the water treatment plant, and smaller projects, such as renovations for Key Assets and work for Nunatsiavut Marine Inc.

The projects on the island and in Upper Lake Melville add up to an additional \$900,000 worth of work for NCI in 2020. Tom Lyall is quick to add that the north coast remains the centre of NCI's focus. "Our people, equipment, and facilities on the north coast will stay there," he says. "We want to keep growing the work

that we get on the coast. The work outside the north coast comes under a new division that has to stand on its own, but that we hope will contribute to the overall strength of NCI."

## STONE CRUSHING A HIGHLIGHT OF NORTH COAST SEASON

NCI's stone crushing operation at Nain again met production targets, and produced stone for several projects, including the airport runway upgrading, water and sewer upgrades on Sandbanks Road, lot development for Torngat Housing, and repairs to a washed out section of road at Trouser Lake in Nain. "Stone crushing continues to be a valuable asset for NCI," says Lyall. "We're working with an older piece of equipment. We managed repairs in 2020 to keep the operation going. But now we have to decide whether to repair the crusher or to buy a new one."



*Pumphouse at Hopedale. NCI won the contract to upgrade the facility to ensure a high quality and stable water supply for the community.*

Valuable as crushing is to the operation, there were several other projects completed on the north coast in 2020. In Hopedale, NCI successfully completed a contract to upgrade the water intake building.

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## ***NCI 2020 cont'd...***

NCI also undertook repairs to the foundation of the Little Bay Camp near Hopedale. Final touches were placed on the Interpretation Centre in Postville, allowing NCI to officially hand the building over to the community.

Most of NCI's north coast work in 2020 took place in Nain. Among the completed projects were renovations to four staff houses owned by the Nunatsiavut Government, exterior work on the Morhardt Building which is owned by NGC's Nunak Land Corporation, and which rents space to the provincial Department of Justice and other organizations.

NCI also carried out accessibility improvements to the Sandbanks Building, another Nunak Lands property. That building houses NGC's Nain office and is home to the Nunatsiavut Government's Department of Land and Natural Resources.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

As 2021 approaches, NCI will again be active on the north coast. The crushing operation produced extra stone this year to meet anticipated demand in 2021. The company also has been contracted to build three homes for private clients.

NCI will continue to bid on suitable projects in Upper Lake Melville and on the island.

## **2020 Projects**

*Top*

**Crushing operation in Nain**

*Middle*

**Renovations to Nunatsiavut Government staff houses**

*Bottom*

**Renovations to Morhardt Building**



# Successful season for Nunatsiavut Marine

*Kamutik W at Makkovik during 2020 season.  
(Dwayne Canning photo)*

In the winter of 2020, when NMI General Manager Gary Latimer and his team began preparing shoreside operations for the coastal shipping season, no one dreamed of the extra preparations that would have to be made to cope with a public health emergency. "COVID-19 forced us to rethink how we did so many things," he said. "Everything from reducing the number of chairs in our seating area to 6 or so, to making changes to reduce contact between passengers and staff, to making sure that truckers could safely drop off their cargo."

By early December, with the *Kamutik W* making her last stops southward toward the Port of Goose Bay, Latimer reflected on a year that was a big success. "It was a good year," he says, pointing to season-end statistics released by the operator, Labrador Marine Inc. (LMI). "There was a drop in passenger traffic, which we expected because of COVID. But we saw a 40-percent increase in transportation of private vehicles from 2019 (504 vehicles carried in 2020) and a 17-percent increase in tonnage (14,538 tons shipped). We got the job completed."

## MAKING IT WORK

Success in 2020 was the product of off-season planning before the pandemic arrived, a good working relationship with LMI, investment in infrastructure, and a dedicated and motivated crew in Goose Bay and along the coast.

One of the major lessons that everyone learned from the 2019 season was that the main freight terminal in Goose Bay was inadequate for proper storage and assembly for freight operations to the coast. "Only part of the building was heated," says Latimer. "In the fall, that led to some freight being exposed to freezing temperatures before it was shipped. In the off-season, we installed heaters in the entire building. That was a huge improvement."

But it wasn't the only investment aimed at improving the freight operation. New steel racking was installed so that freight could be stored vertically. "In previous years, freight was stored on the floor," says Latimer. "The racking system improved the effectiveness of the warehouse and it kept freight off the floor."

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**Successful season  
for NMI cont'd...**

*Kamutik W is loaded for the second last voyage of 2020. Private vehicle and freight shipments were up compared to 2019. (Gary Latimer photo)*

New electric forklifts were purchased for the Goose Bay facility and that also contributed to the success of 2020 freight operations. In addition, a decision was made to have NMI crew load and unload the vessel. "That worked out for NMI and LMI," says Latimer. "Our operators on the dock are trained and certified and they did their work with great professionalism. By

that in place, the online reservation system was replaced by a telephone reservations system. "By its very nature, that system was time consuming and it frustrated customers," says Latimer. "A reservation couldn't be confirmed on the spot. The system involved taking names and then calling back later to confirm. But toward the end of the season, we made improvements."



**"NMI had a great season this year...Our crew did an extraordinary job."**

**Gary Latimer,  
NMI General Manager**

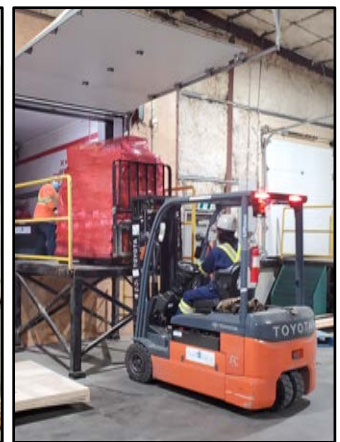
putting this system in place, the ship's crew could focus on the ship. We also benefitted from the leadership of our Port Manager, George Eldridge. He was responsible for the whole operation. George is a great asset."

A two-line queue system was introduced with two reservation phone lines. If customer service agents were busy with other customers, the caller was asked to stay on the line and wait for the next available agent. "That was a big improvement," says Latimer. "If we have restrictions next season where people can't use the online reservations system, this system will be effective in serving people and reducing their frustration."

**ADAPTING TO COVID-19**

The major challenge in 2020 was in keeping the passenger and freight operation on track while also operating safely within public health guidelines that were put in place to halt the spread of COVID-19. The easy part was completing physical alterations to the freight terminal to allow for physical distancing. Seating was removed in the passenger waiting room and a second loading bay and freight check-in office were added.

The public health measure that most impacted the public was the restriction on passenger numbers. Early in the season, travel was limited to 53 people on each trip, and later increased to 70. Each community was allocated a set number of reservations. In order to put



**Investments at the freight terminal in Goose Bay helped improve the safe storage and movement of freight. Above left, steel racking was installed to allow for vertical stacking of freight which also increased capacity. Above right, new electric forklifts improved productivity around freight operations and contributed to the successful 2020 season. (Gary Latimer photos)**

# Mission Accomplished

On October 29, Jennifer Saunders (Decker) got to experience the dream that she's had since graduating high school in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 1994. Her name was called as part of Memorial University's graduating class in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program. While COVID-19 meant that the ceremony took place virtually through Zoom, it was no less special for Jennifer and her family.



"My parents, grandmother, boyfriend and my son, Isaac were at my house for the ceremony," she says. "It was very nice for everyone to be there as they would not have all been there had it taken place in St. John's. They got to see my name scroll across the screen and I surprised them with having my maiden name put on my degree. Isaac was particularly excited because he got to get out of school for part of the morning."

It took Jennifer six years to make the journey to earning her degree as she juggled a full-time job, family, and studies. "The last year was the hardest," she says. "I knew that I was getting near completion, but I think I was getting tired." Seeing the finish line was one motivator to finish. Another was the COVID-19 pandemic that shut down much of the world in spring and summer. "I had originally planned on finishing in December of this year," says Jennifer. "But with COVID-19 and all the extra time we were spending at home, I decided to do three courses over the Spring Semester...I was just ready to be done."

## THE ROAD TO A DEGREE

Jennifer had planned on attending university when she graduated high school in 1994. But at that time, she wasn't ready to leave home. "I wanted to take a year off and then go," she says. "But the College of the North

Atlantic offered a two-year business program here [in Happy Valley-Goose Bay] during that time and I enrolled in that."

Jennifer worked at various office-related jobs in Goose Bay and Alberta after graduating from college. After several years in Alberta, she returned home to take a position with an exploration company. With the downturn in the exploration industry in 2012, Jennifer looked for a change and applied for the position of Office Manager with Nunatsiavut Construction. She was the successful applicant and started at NCI on January 2, 2013.

Office Manager was a new position at NCI, so that gave Jennifer the opportunity to grow in the job and have the job grow with her. "The job duties were always changing," she says. "The first big thing I worked on was getting our safety program rolled out. NCI was going for COR designation (*Certificate of Recognition program is an accredited occupational health and safety program in construction and related industries*) and that involved a more in-depth safety program than what was available at that time. There were also a lot of administrative duties."

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# Mission Accomplished *cont'd*

As she settled into the job, the idea of getting a university degree kept coming back into view. "[While I was in Alberta] I could never find the time or the financial means to stop work and go back to school," she says. "In 2014, I heard that I could get my Business degree solely online through Memorial. I applied and started my first course that May."

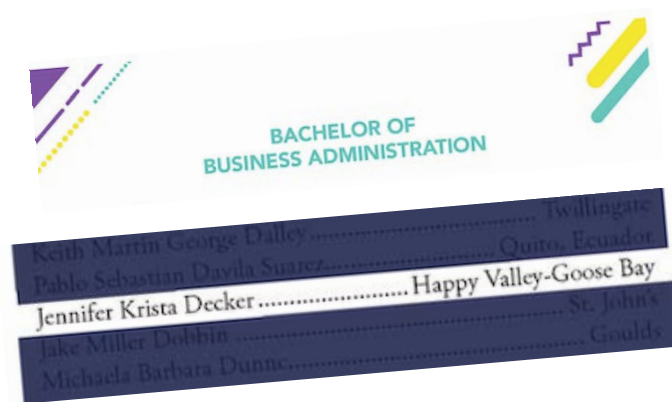
## BALANCING WORK, FAMILY, AND SCHOOL

From the start, Jennifer adopted a strategy that allowed her to balance a busy work and school life along with being mom to Isaac. She's quick to disavow any notion that she's a super human who did it on her own. "I am fortunate to have a great support system," she says. "I studied around my work schedule and my son's schedule. If I had to write an exam, my parents or my boyfriend kept Isaac entertained. Without their support, I never could have done this."



***Jennifer graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree at the October convocation, which took place virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic.***

It also helped that the entire program was offered online, which meant there was no travel. But Jennifer says studying fully online has pluses and minuses. "It's good that you are free to learn at your own pace and you can be done early in the semester if you're not required to write a final exam," she says. "It's bad in that you are on your own. Most courses that I took had no lectures, just slideshow presentations. There was no teaching like you would [expect]...It was very hard to do group projects by distance."



## ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Now that she's completed the journey that was a dream in high school, what advice would Jennifer have for others thinking of going back to school? "If it's something you want to do, then do it," she says. "But don't be too hard on yourself and don't take on too much." She followed that advice as she worked her way through the BBA program, and that meant being reasonable with herself.

"The main thing I had to adjust was my expectations for myself. I was always an 'A' student in high school, but I found that I could not maintain that in my courses. With working full-time and being a mom, and especially being out of school for a while, sometimes I was happy if I passed the course, especially the more difficult ones. In some courses, I did really well and some not as well as I had hoped. If you meet the overall requirements, you are still presented with your degree."

She discovered that technology was an asset for the online student. "I have found that YouTube was a great resource,...especially with my calculus course. I took my time and didn't take on more coursework than I could handle. If I felt overwhelmed, I dropped a course and picked it up at a later time."

## THE FUTURE

Now that she has her degree, does that change Jennifer's future plans? "Not at all," she says. "Getting my degree is something that I wanted for me. I love my job and I love coming to work at NCI. I will be here eight years in January and I've enjoyed watching the company grow and evolve into what it is today."

Jennifer's thoughts return to her son, Isaac. "When I started this, my son was seven and my only goal was to graduate university before he graduates high school. He's really happy that it's done and [that] I'll have more free time. I don't think he understands the significance of what this is quite yet." ☸



# Planning for the Future

## Scholarships available

The Nunatsiavut Group of Companies and its partners are committed to helping Beneficiaries achieve their education goals. As part of that commitment, our companies have established several scholarships. The details are listed below. If you are a student planning post-secondary education, please apply. If you know of someone who might benefit, pass along the word that these awards are available.



NGC awards four scholarships annually of \$1250 each. One award is reserved for students enrolled in business, one for construction/mining trades, one for marine, and one is reserved for female candidates in either area. Applicants must be a Beneficiary of the LILCA and enrolled full-time in a post-secondary, professional development, or college program. In addition, applicants must have completed a block or year of training.

**NEW FOR 2021: All applicants must submit a 500-word essay explaining how their studies will benefit Nunatsiavut.**

Apply through the NGC website at [ngc-ng.ca](http://ngc-ng.ca). Under the **In Our Community** tab, find **Scholarship Application**.

Air Borealis awards two \$1000 scholarships each year, one to a Beneficiary of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement and one to a member of the Innu Nation. The scholarships are renewable for a period of up to three years, for a maximum value of \$4000. The award is based on academic ability, community leadership, and financial need.

Application forms are available from Air Borealis and completed forms can be emailed to [scholarships@airborealis.ca](mailto:scholarships@airborealis.ca) or by mail:

Scholarship Committee  
P.O. Box 1101, Station C  
Goose Bay, NL. A0P 1C0

### APPLICATIONS OPEN:

March 15 and close on April 30, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

Bird Heavy Civil Construction Limited awards one \$1500 scholarship annually to an Inuit student to encourage pursuit of a post-secondary education. Applications are accepted from students already attending a post-secondary institution or from Grade 12 students intending to attend post-secondary.

Application deadline: May 31.

To apply, contact:

Bird Heavy Civil Construction Ltd  
95 O'Leary Avenue  
St. John's, NL. A1B 2C7

**Attn: Boyd Humby**



TSI awards six \$1000 scholarships. A scholarship is awarded to one high school student from each of Nain, Makkovik, Hopedale, Postville, Rigolet, and Upper Lake Melville. Applicants must be a Beneficiary of the LILCA.

Apply through your school principal.



PiKalujak Fisheries Limited

PiKalujak Fisheries awards four \$1250 awards annually, two in each in the fall and winter semester, for students attending the Marine Institute. First preference is given to students who are Beneficiaries of the LILCA.

Apply through the Marine Institute.



## NGC Human Resources Manager Achieves National Designation

*This fall, NGC Human Resources Manager Russell Banzet earned membership in the national organization that represents HR professionals. In order to earn the designation of a Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR), Russell undertook studies in nine separate HR topics including Labour and Employment Relations, Employee Engagement, and Workforce Planning and Talent Management. In this interview, he discusses CPHR and what having the designation means for NGC.*

### **NGC News: What motivated you to work toward becoming a member?**

As an HR professional, I am committed to continuous professional development for both my team and myself. This is a shared belief of Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR) so naturally it was a good fit to become an active member within this well-established professional association.

### **What is the value to NGC for you to have this designation?**

CPHR is the national voice for the HR profession within Canada. They maintain a registry of over 27,000 members from all three coasts of our nation. Having HR leadership hold this designation demonstrates NGC's accountability to excellence in everything we do, and in particular our commitment to HR best practices. HR continues to evolve in relation to employment law, talent management and acquisition, and labour relations. It's important to keep up with these changes as they happen in order to continue to manage its human capital successfully.

### **How do you connect with other HR professionals to take full advantage of CPHR membership?**

CPHR has created a knowledge community by providing a 'member only' access forum that allows HR professionals to exchange ideas and to converse on best practices while collaborating with leading industry experts in a safe and open environment. This free flow exchange of information is advantageous to CPHRs as we actively participate and are exposed to emerging changes as they happen in real time. Outside of this forum, CPHR holds monthly webinars, an Annual General Meeting (AGM), and virtual conferences that allow HR professionals to stay up to date with emerging issues, while meeting the social

distancing requirements imposed upon us as a result of the ongoing pandemic. By actively participating in these events, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours are accumulated towards meeting CPHR requirements of maintaining the designation on an annual basis.

### **One of CPHR's goals is to help both employers and employees reach their potential for success. Can you talk about how this might work for NGC?**

A fundamental role of Human Resources is to match the needs of employees to the needs of the organization. The closer that an HR department can advance toward this objective, then the more successful the organization will be in achieving this mandate. CPHR helps HR professionals achieve these goals by providing educational support on how to balance the interests of both parties.

An example for NGC and its employees is succession planning, which is a way of ensuring that we develop future leaders. Through a job analysis, the requirements for each position within our organization is assessed to determine an employee's appropriate Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Other Characteristics (KSAO's). When an employee demonstrates growth potential through their established performance, a succession plan can be put in place that will allow them to narrow the knowledge gap between where they are now and where they want their career to take them. It allows for development opportunities so that employees can fit into positions of greater leadership, and that's pivotal for our organization's continued longevity and success.

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## NGC's Human Resources Manager earns national designation cont'd...

### **COVID-19 has been a big disruptor in people's personal lives and in business. How does CPHR help people in your role navigate issues such as COVID?**

We are in the second wave of the pandemic, and we have been successful in safely keeping our offices open while respecting the government enforced rules on social distancing and mask wearing. CPHR has provided COVID-19 navigation guidance and helpful information that complements the provincial government's directions and regulations.

CPHR continuously provides updated information on challenges including providing webinars on how to minimize the impact of mental health issues in the workplace. Through networking with other CPHRs within multiple regions, I have been able to find out what has worked and what hasn't for other professional organizations that are also adapting to this pandemic.

### **CPHR provides continuing education on human resources issues. What are some of the topics the organization plans to cover in the coming months?**

CPHR has partnered with the Maslow Centre for Executive Leadership to sponsor a seminar hosted by guest speaker Timothy Tiryaniki to discuss the People and Culture era, which is focused on unleashing an organization's culture potential. This is a fascinating topic for us at NGC. We have fostered a positive and respectful working culture that has allowed staff to seamlessly adapt to changes in the workplace as change happens.

CPHR will also host a live stream outlining the future of workplace mental health. Mental health and well-

being has been a critically important topic that continues to take center stage as a key component for successful HR planning. At NGC, we recognize that our staff have been put through adverse challenges with the ongoing pandemic. It's important that we continue to create an environment that promotes a culture of fostering positive mental health during these uncertain times.

### **What are some of the emerging issues in Human Resources that are particularly relevant to NGC?**

As we enter a new year with the promise of a vaccine on the way, we plan to prepare our employees several months in advance for our peak operating seasons for Nunatsiavut Construction Inc. and Nunatsiavut Marine Inc. This includes enhancing our capacity by forecasting projected staff levels during the early months of the year.

That will allow us to plan for training and development opportunities with our current staff who are eager to showcase their talent and evolve their skills within our group of companies. We want to hit the ground running as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and ensure that our staff have what they need so they can stay safe in the workplace for the remainder of the pandemic.

We will continue to evaluate our workforce and find innovative ways to attract and retain Beneficiaries to fill key positions. We will build on our labour market analysis to determine the benefits and compensation that competing organizations offer for similar positions, so that we can continue to have a competitive edge as an employer of choice within our communities. 🏠

## We will continue...to find ways to attract and retain Beneficiaries to fill key positions...

**CPHR/CRHA**

- *The national voice for enhancement and promotion of the HR profession.*
- *Represents 27,000 members in the HR profession across Canada.*
- *Helps employees and employers reach their potential for success.*
- *Protects the public and advances the economic and social success of workplaces through strategic HR leadership.*

# 2020



## NGC leaders plan for 2021

NGC's senior leadership team met in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on November 26 to make business plans for operations in 2021. The meeting was a key one for the group prior to presentation of business plans and draft budgets for approval by the Labrador Inuit Capital Strategy Trust in early December.

Participants in the meeting, left to right: Wyman Jacque, General Manager, Torngait Services Inc.; Tom Lyall, General Manager, Nunatsiavut Construction Inc.; Gary Latimer, General Manager, Nunatsiavut Marine Inc.; Russell Banzet, NGC Human Resources Manager; Robin Webb, NGC Financial Controller; Chris Webb, NGC President and CEO. (Janice White photo)



## HO! HO! HO!

### 30 YEAR TRADITION OF SANTA TO THE COAST CONTINUES

Despite concerns about COVID-19, no one dared even mention cancelling the 30-year tradition of providing gifts to children in coastal Labrador communities. Rather, the discussion at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Rotary Club was about how to safely have *Santa to the Coast* take place this year.

Their plan will have the Rotary Club and Air Borealis spread the magic on Santa's behalf. Santa will see to it that Rotary provides gifts to children in Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, and Hopedale.

Rotary President Philip Earle, who is also VP Business Development at Air Borealis, says the plan conforms to public health guidance and the wishes of the Inuit community governments. "Rotary knows that

Christmas is a special time for everyone," he says. "And while COVID has interrupted the delivery schedule, Rotary will not allow COVID to interfere with the spirit of Christmas giving."

Air Borealis Director Travis Barbour had his first experience with *Santa to the Coast* in 2019. "The kids were waiting at the airport for the plane to arrive," he says. "It was heartwarming to see them come out to meet Santa. It will be different this year but we are so happy to be involved in initiatives like this at Air Borealis."

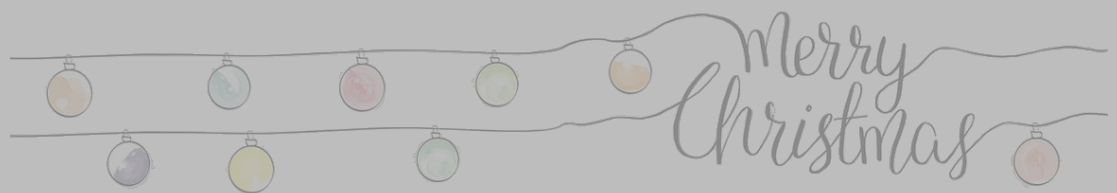
This year's *Santa to the Coast* excursion is planned for December 19, weather permitting.

## NGC Inuttitut Language Seminar



On December 15, NGC staff invited Inuttitut language instructor Selma Suarak to provide an introductory language training workshop. The two-and-a-half hour session introduced staff to the basic elements of Inuttitut, including vowels, consonants, verbs, and pronunciation. The event was so successful that NGC plans to hold some future sessions. "Selma kept everyone engaged," said NGC President and CEO Chris Webb. "After going through this session, it becomes much easier to pronounce Inuit words."

In the photo, left to right: Lisa French, Keith Hillier (NCI), Robin Webb, Chris Webb, Selma Suarak (instructor), Eileen Saunders, and Russell Banzet. (Janice White photo)



# Kuviana Inovia

## How are you?



## Kanuiven?



# Safety First



A Nunatsiavut Construction crew in Nain takes part in a safety seminar in late September. NCI's Health and Safety officer Steve Downey conducted two seminars - one on roles and responsibilities for supervisors and a second on general safety, with a focus on roles and responsibilities for staff.

Steve produces a weekly health and newsletter that is circulated to all NGC divisions. Several editions in 2020 were directed at coping successfully with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics included Proper Handwashing Techniques, Cleaning and Disinfecting, Handling Stress, and Tips on How to Care for Cloth Face Masks.

More recent topics include Fire Prevention and Control, Workplace Harassment, Distracted Driving, Safe Winter Driving, Common Safety Mistakes, and Preventing Slips and Falls. The December 9 edition dealt with Safe Working Procedures around Power Tools and Cords.



***NGC News is a publication of the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies.***

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