



In order to strengthen the success of this innovative project concept, it was crucial that partnerships be created between essential organizations. The Corporation assumed the lead through the formation stage. It was imperative that commitments be obtained from local educational institutions and private businesses in Hay River for the vision to become a reality. The project concept was Later expanded to include Fort Smith.

This initiative has proven to be an overwhelming success on many fronts.

- A total of four houses have been completed under this initiative and expressions of interests are received for more.
- Students at Diamond Jenness High School, P.W. Kaeser High School, or Aurora College experience first hand the demands and rewards of construction trades. They put into practice the theoretical aspects learnt in a classroom setting. The students have direct experience to rely upon when evaluating whether a career in trades is a path they wish to follow.
- The construction trades businesses contribute to the pilot project on a volunteer basis. They willingly share their specialized trades with students and the community at large is also a beneficiary. Furthermore, the businesses are able to recruit students who express interest in pursuing such careers.
- The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation gains an additional housing unit for placement in a community through the provision of the building materials.
- Educational institutions provide their students with an outlet to apply knowledge and skills obtained in the classroom. This project also provides teaching employment to individuals.

Although the concept is still referred to as a pilot project, it provides the optimum opportunity for learning and an affordable attractive home for clients.

Our Partners and Contributions

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| • Diamond Jenness High School | Instruction/Supervision |
| • P.W. Kaeser High School | Instruction/Supervision |
| • Aurora College | Instruction/Supervision |

Business Partners

- | | |
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| • Mackenzie Electric | • Igloo Supplies |
| • B & T Plumbing | • Home Building Centre |
| • PDQ Painting & Decorating | • Wesclean |
| • MSS Ltd. | |

Staff Profile

Milt Pittman



Milt Pittman arrived in Yellowknife from Newfoundland in the winter of 1983 intending to find work with one of the gold mines. To the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's good fortune, Milt responded to an employment advertisement and was hired shortly after his arrival in Yellowknife.

Milt's original work was to look after lot development for all the Northwest Territories communities. In those days, the NWT included both the eastern and western arctic. Lot development consisted of gravel pads, legal pins, the laying of gravel, pile foundations and coordinating the work of contractors; there was no shortage of work.

In the early days, home construction was undertaken in approximately fifty communities based on a two year cycle. Typically, six to eight gravel pads were installed in each community and the following year the homes were built making for busy construction seasons. Milt shares that finding the people and contractors to do the work in the communities was challenging. "Competition for services was strong. Fortunately, housing was given priority which made my job a little easier" he says.

The greatest change over the years Milt reflects is the variety of housing programs offered to the residents of the Northwest Territories. "Where before the focus was on public housing, the shift to homeownership provides residents with the opportunity to become homeowners; it encourages personal commitment to take care of their needs and promotes independence". Broader programming has lead to a greater interaction between Milt and clients as the clients become actively involved in planning for their homes.

Now twenty-three years later, you will find Milt at the North Slave District Office. He is the technical advisor and provides inspection services for new home constructions as well as home repairs. He finds it easy to measure job satisfaction – as a house progresses through the construction or repair stages, the results can be seen immediately.

The Corporation provides a unique work environment. As a Technical Advisor, Milt travels to several small communities and interacts with many clients. Milt gets to wear many different hats during the course of a day - at times he is a housing consultant helping people decide what they want in a home or discussing possible changes to plans, at times an inspector checking that things are as they should be, and at times provides technical advice to individuals on how to take care of their homes. He enjoys helping first time homeowners as they venture into homeownership.

The greatest challenge for the future Milt believes is access to lands for home construction. He believes that this challenge can be overcome by working and partnering with community governments and stakeholders.

Milt is not ready to retire as yet – "Perhaps in three or four years and then someone younger can take over".