

District Office Profile – Nahendeh



Nahanni Butte - PHOTO BY PAULA MACFADYEN

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) Nahendeh District is located within the Deh Cho territory of the Northwest Territories and services six communities: Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Jean Marie River, Nahanni Butte, Wrigley and Trout Lake. The District Office is located in Fort Simpson.

Chris Hewitt is the Director for the Nahendeh District. The District Office financial, administrative, technical and program staff provide excellent support to the six communities they serve. Hewitt adds that because the staff is mostly from the region they are familiar with the challenges of providing housing in the region, and better equipped to work with local residents to find solutions to their housing needs.

Hewitt says a priority for the District Office is administering the housing programs and services that are available to Nahendeh residents. Hewitt singles out the Solutions to Educate People (STEP) educational modules, offered through *Housing Choices*, as one of the most important services offered to Nahendeh residents. He says STEP, which provides training to residents who apply for homeownership and repair programs, is incredibly effective at preparing clients for the responsibilities involved in owning a home. Clients are offered training in the areas of budgeting, finance, home purchase and home maintenance/repair.

Hewitt says education is a key component to supporting successful, independent homeowners in the Nahendeh. Community partnerships are essential at the district level, and the Nahendeh staff spend considerable time working together with local aboriginal governments, local housing organizations, private contractors, and northern businesses.

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Housing Solutions - A Legacy for the North

Isolation isn't the only challenge met by the Nahendeh District Office. Delivery of some programs to repair and build new housing units has been met with issues centering around access to land, land suitability, and the availability of qualified contractors and trades people within the communities. Although the challenges have caused the District Office to experience delays, they've focused their energy on finding solutions.

Hewitt says identifying approaches to improving turnaround time for applications and building stronger relationships with clients and partners through improved communication are the areas they are focussing on to improve NWT HC housing stock throughout the Nahendeh region.

The challenges have taught them that strong partnerships are key to successful delivery of NWT HC's programs. Hewitt says the Nahendeh District Office team will continue to build on the relationships they've developed throughout the region as they move forward.



Barges, like this one on the Mackenzie River, are one of the many ways the NWT HC transports building supplies to communities - PHOTO BY PAULA MACFADYEN