

STAFF PROFILE: NEIL PHILLIPS

A journeyman carpenter by trade, Neil Phillips has worked for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) for nearly ten years. Originally hailing from London, Ontario, Neil moved to Yellowknife in 1974. His first job in the north was as a guard at a correctional facility.

In 1978, Neil started training for his career in carpentry in Fort Smith. Part of the training included an apprenticeship at Giant Mine. After completing the four-year program, Neil earned his journeyman ticket and Red Seal, which allows him to work anywhere in Canada, aside from Quebec.

In 1985, he relocated to Hall Beach, which is now part of Nunavut, where he continued to hone his skills; spending four years as the maintenance foreman there for the Hall Beach Local Housing Organization. "I had my own company for a couple of years in Hall Beach," he said.

Neil has also added teaching his trade to his resume, when he taught a pre-employment course in Baker Lake. He then moved on to work for the GNWT's Department of Public Works, also in Baker Lake. In 1992, he moved to Iqaluit, working for various companies in the field of carpentry.

Calgary, Alberta became home for Neil in 1994, although he maintained his ties to the north through jobs at companies like Diavik in the NWT, and for a while, working in Siberia for an American company. In 2002, Neil began his work with the NWT HC, taking a job as a Technical Advisor at the Beaufort Delta District Office in Inuvik.

"We've got a very extensive and very busy schedule," he said of the job of technical advisor. It involves various responsibilities including planning, estimating, inspections, and project management, among other responsibilities.

Some of the projects he is proud to have worked on during his time in the NWT HC's Beaufort-Delta District Office include the new shop warehouse in Tuktoyaktuk, and onsite project manager for the Northern Sustainable Housing Project in Inuvik, which he was involved in from start to finish. Also, Neil was part of building a new shop in Aklavik after the old one burned down. It was done "way ahead of time and \$40,000 under budget," said Neil.

Neil says that delivering housing in the north presents many unique challenges. "Logistics is always a major thing" he said, noting that due to the remote locations of many communities, material procurement needs to be done a year in advance of a project commencing. This allows for materials to arrive in the community before the project gets underway.

Working in the Beaufort Delta region required a lot of travelling, Neil said, and was a challenge in that there was such variety in the community's circumstances; some are accessible all year round, some are only accessible part of the year and others are fly-in

only all year. "It required a lot of pre-planning and set-up ahead of time," said Neil.

Neil recently transferred to the NWT HC's Nahendeh District Office in Fort Simpson, where he will be the Manager of Technical Service.

Neil has five kids, all born in the north, and five grandchildren. The oldest grandchild for Neil and his wife Victoria, is 16-year-old Tristan, who is on his way to a professional soccer career, being scouted by Manchester United.



OFFICE PROFILE: PROGRAMS AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS

The Programs and District Operations Division is responsible for the development, implementation, training, monitoring and delivery of programs and Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWT HC) housing initiatives. Within the Division are the NWT HC's five District Offices that are responsible for the regional delivery of programs and services to the community residents. In carrying out its activities, the Division works closely with District Offices, Local Housing Organizations (LHOs), and other community housing agents. Through the development of policies and procedures, and the provision of training, the Division ensures that District Offices and LHOs have the support and capacity required to effectively and efficiently deliver the NWT HC's programs and services.

The Programs and District Operations Division have been very busy during the 2010-2011 year. The Division has had its hands full juggling responsibilities associated with the Public Housing Rent Scale Review, the Shelter Policy Review, and all the activities associated with the Public Housing Rental Subsidy transfer. On top of these initiatives, the Programs and District Operations Division has all of its everyday operations to carry out.

Franklin Carpenter, Vice President for Programs and District Operations feels that a lot of their accomplishments are felt at the community level. Of particular importance is the investment of infrastructure in the communities. In 2010-2011, 65 new units were built with federal investment from Canada's Economic Action Plan, and the GNWT's matching contribution through the NWT HC. Furthermore, the NWT HC built 39 Public Housing replacement units and 28 new HELP units. The Corporation performed major modernization and improvements on 214 units during 2010-2011 as well.

The Vice President stated that another point of pride is the dedication to housing by LHO staff. Across the NWT, LHOs help administer and manage the Public Housing Program. This partnership allows for a link between the NWT HC, the community and the tenants. LHO staff provide the vital front line work that allows the Public Housing Program to operate. The partnership that exists between LHOs and the NWT HC is an essential tool in meeting our collective goal to ensure that residents have access to adequate, affordable, and suitable housing no matter which community they live in.

While community staff are primarily focused on the operation and maintenance of public housing, they also provide a number of housing services to community residents. Staff are always available to discuss housing options with tenants and clients. While they are not directly responsible for delivering homeownership programs (homeownership programs are delivered by the NWT HC's District Offices), they have knowledge of NWT HC programs and are often able to counsel and provide recommendations on possible homeownership options for current public housing tenants and other interested families.

