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2011 Election Candidates Respond to Questions from the NWT Chamber of Commerce

NWT, September 26, 2011 – With one week left to go before the people of the Northwest Territories choose the members of the next Legislative Assembly, the NWT Chamber of Commerce has received answers to its 11-point questionnaire it put to all candidates.

“We have a responsibility to facilitate a dialogue between our members and our would-be future leaders,” said Chuck Parker, NWT Chamber President. “Our questions obviously focus on issues that are of importance to the business community as together we search for strategic thinkers who can lead us through some significant challenges.”

The Chamber sought responses from all 47 candidates, including those who have already been acclaimed. Only 14 of those individuals chose to share their views with our members, added Parker.

“While we appreciate that election campaigns are busy times for the candidates, this low response rate appears to be symptomatic of the all too frequent opinion in the NWT that business issues don’t matter,” he said. “A robust, diverse economy is an important foundation for our Territory. Without a strong economy our social programs are less sustainable and the cost of living in the North will be negatively impacted.”

The questions that have been posed by the NWT Chamber were as follows:

DEVOLUTION

What is your position on the proposed devolution agreement? What do you see as the greatest benefits and greatest obstacles associated with devolution?

REGULATION

The NWT’s regulatory regime is seen to be a deterrent to resource investment. What will you do to overhaul the regulatory regime in the NWT?

CORPORATE TAXES

Corporate Income Tax rates in the NWT were once among the lowest in the country. The rate was recently raised and now other jurisdictions look much more favourable. Do you support a Corporate Income Tax rate that positions the NWT as a favored jurisdiction for investment? If yes, what will you do about it?

RESOURCE TAXES

Do you support the implementation of a Resource Tax during the life of this Assembly? Why?

CARBON TAX

Do you support the implementation of a Carbon Tax? Why?



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DEBT

The GNWT has hit the debt ceiling, even with the Federal Government's recently adjusted cap. How will you find the capital necessary to continue investing in infrastructure? And what will your capital priorities be: transportation, schools, or hospitals?

YOUTH

What specific initiatives will you implement to aggressively engage our youth in contributing to the NWT economy either as skilled workers or professionals?

ENERGY

What are you going to do to harness our hydro potential in a meaningful way?

COST OF LIVING

What are your ideas for lowering operating costs for businesses in the North?

INFRASTRUCTURE

What will you do to develop "nation building" infrastructure such as the Mackenzie Valley Highway, the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Optic Link and energy projects?

EXPLORATION & DEVELOPMENT

What will you do to attract and encourage exploration and development in the NWT?

"We would ask our members to both consider the content of the answers provided as well as which candidates did not take the time to respond to the territorial business community," said Parker. "All answers received by the deadline we set have been posted by riding in the Public Documents section of our website, www.nwtchamber.com and we ask members and non-member alike to take the time to review these before casting your ballot on October 3."

In association with the network of community chambers of commerce in Fort Simpson, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Hay River, Yellowknife and the Northern Aboriginal Business Association, the NWT Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of members across the NWT. For more than 35 years, it has been the only pan-territorial voice of businesses across all sectors of the Northern economy.