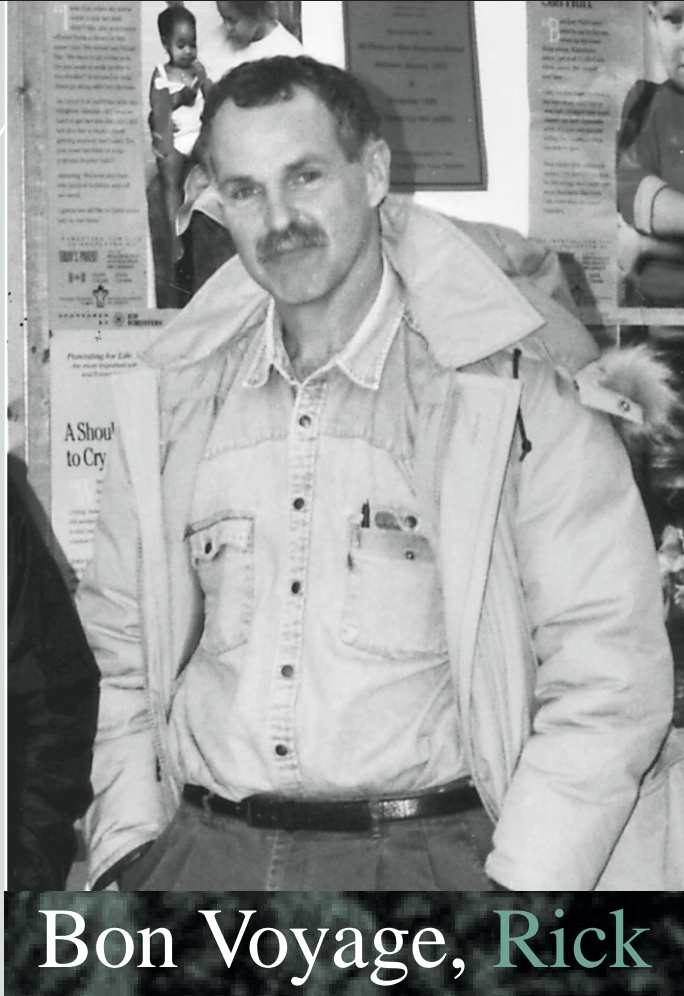




Trail Blazer

July / August 2002



Bon Voyage, Rick

A fond farewell to NRT founder and president

Rick Reynolds launched Northern Resource Trucking and, for fifteen years, held the company on course - a steady and vigilant man at the helm.

Now the President and co-founder of the strongest business alliance among Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan and

Senior Vice President of Trimac Transportation, in charge of Western North America, has, after 28 years in the industry, set out on a new and exciting life adventure.

With Rick's retirement, earlier this year, came the opportunity to take on new challenges and captain another craft - a 40-foot boat that he and his sons, Travis and Darcy, will, setting off in July, sail through the islands of the south Pacific to New Zealand and Australia. It promises to be the trip of a lifetime and a dream fulfilled.

Happily, Rick can look back with equal satisfaction on the achievements he has experienced in his professional life. He sees the founding of NRT, in 1986, as a highlight. "It was a significant part of my career," he says.

"Like all successful ventures, NRT was a company created to fill a need. There was no grand scheme," says Rick, with a smile. "We were trying to get an enterprise together that would include northern people. We took it one logical step at a time and it was a process that evolved. From the beginning it was different - different from anything that I or Trimac had ever been associated with. But it was was one of those right things that really worked. I'm proud of that and I will always be very proud of NRT."

And he should be. NRT is a north-south model that has been successful because everyone involved had the will to make it so. Pooling their resources, Trimac Transportation and First Nations and Metis

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communities throughout the north came together, with the support of the mining industry, to create a new, separate and distinct enterprise. As a significant stakeholder, Trimac was able to contribute its vast knowledge and expertise of the trucking industry to the northern venture. It was a solid plan. Over the past sixteen years, NRT has grown and flourished.

“A company strength, from the beginning was that Roger’s skills and mine really complemented each other,” says Rick of Roger Olyowsky, who retired as NRT General Manager at the end of last year. “Roger knows the trucking business inside out. I never questioned Roger. And there’s no doubt that he was dedicated to NRT. He was a hard worker.”

“Rick was an excellent man to work with,” says Roger. “From the beginning, Rick wanted to make sure that NRT remained independent from Trimac and ran on its own steam. I had lot of ideas about trucking operations. Rick could do the analysis very quickly and judge if an idea would meet our needs. He had a very good vision and stayed focused. While he stayed focused, I executed,” said Roger, with that famous laugh. “Two different minds focused on the same goal, always coming from different directions - we always had something unique to contribute.”

“And there was always a mutual respect between us,” continues Roger, “Rick really let you stand on your own two feet. He expected me run the business as I saw fit, within the boundaries of budgets. I’ll always remember and value that. When you’re allowed to do that, it brings out the best in you. Rick believed in me. So whatever needed to get done at my end, it just got done. End of story.”

“Trimac is a very strong operation and well managed, and success is not based on one person,” says Roger. “But what Rick contributed to Trimac and to NRT is certainly going to be missed. What Rick never forgot, over the years, is that NRT is a unique organization. Without a doubt, if NRT is going to continue to succeed, it must stay on the same path that Rick put it on. It



Roger presents Rick with a going away gift.

must aggressively look at improving training, hauling, buying equipment, maintenance, everything; reaching for the highest standards and getting better all the time. It must stay close to its roots and its mission - to select, train and develop northern and Aboriginal people. The day you stop doing that, you are in the same market as everyone else and you lose your edge. Rick believed that and that is the strength of the company.”

“If Rick had tough issues to deal with at Trimac Head Office, regarding our operating the company in this unique and different way, he didn’t bring that back to me. Mind you, it helped that NRT has always had a good bottom line and has always been a good investment for its shareholders,” says Roger, with a smile. “That’s hard to argue with!”

Granted, it wasn’t always easy, agrees Rick, but with good people, it stayed on course. Terry Owen, in his capacity as Executive Vice President of Trimac Transportation, has assumed Rick’s Western North American responsibilities. Terry also oversees



Inside the Treasure Chest Survival Kit - Treasure Island (the novel), eye patch, compass, waterproof matches, atlas, Castaway (the movie), flask and waterproof flashlight to find his way in the dark.

Trimac’s financial, legal and strategic planning functions. So Rick leaves, secure in the knowledge that NRT will enjoy a continuing good and supportive relationship with Trimac. “Terry is very interested in the success of NRT and wants to contribute” says Rick. “He will maintain a close consulting relationship with Dave McIlmoyl, especially in the areas of financial planning and ongoing information technology transfer.”

They were good times!



“And,” says Rick, “I cannot overestimate the importance of our northern partners in NRT’s success. From the beginning, there was a high level of professionalism. Over the fifteen years we worked together, there were some difficult times, but we never had a difficult situation. I have always appreciated that relationship,” he says.

With his and Roger’s retirement, who better to continue to build on these strengths than Dave, a true man of the north, says Rick. “With his years of experience as Executive Director of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, General Manager of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band’s business arm, Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, and his close involvement in the creation of NRT, Dave brought to NRT a deep understanding of the north, alongside excellent management skills,” he says. “His first job, when he became NRT Vice President in 1998 was to learn the fundamentals - the day-to-day operation of a trucking company and its people. He’s been a quick study. He’s put together a strong team and he’s doing a

good job,” says Rick. “There’s certainly no shortage of good people to carry on at NRT,” he adds, with a smile.

“We do have a great team of experienced professionals here at NRT,” says Dave, “but there’s still no doubt that when Rick left, there was a big hole. When you run a company as big as Trimac, there are definite ways of doing things. And rightly so. But NRT is a different company that sometimes needs different modes of operation. It takes a maverick to put together a company like this. Rick had the skill and experience to think outside the box. He made it work. And today, NRT is a highly successful company, on a par with any in the industry.”

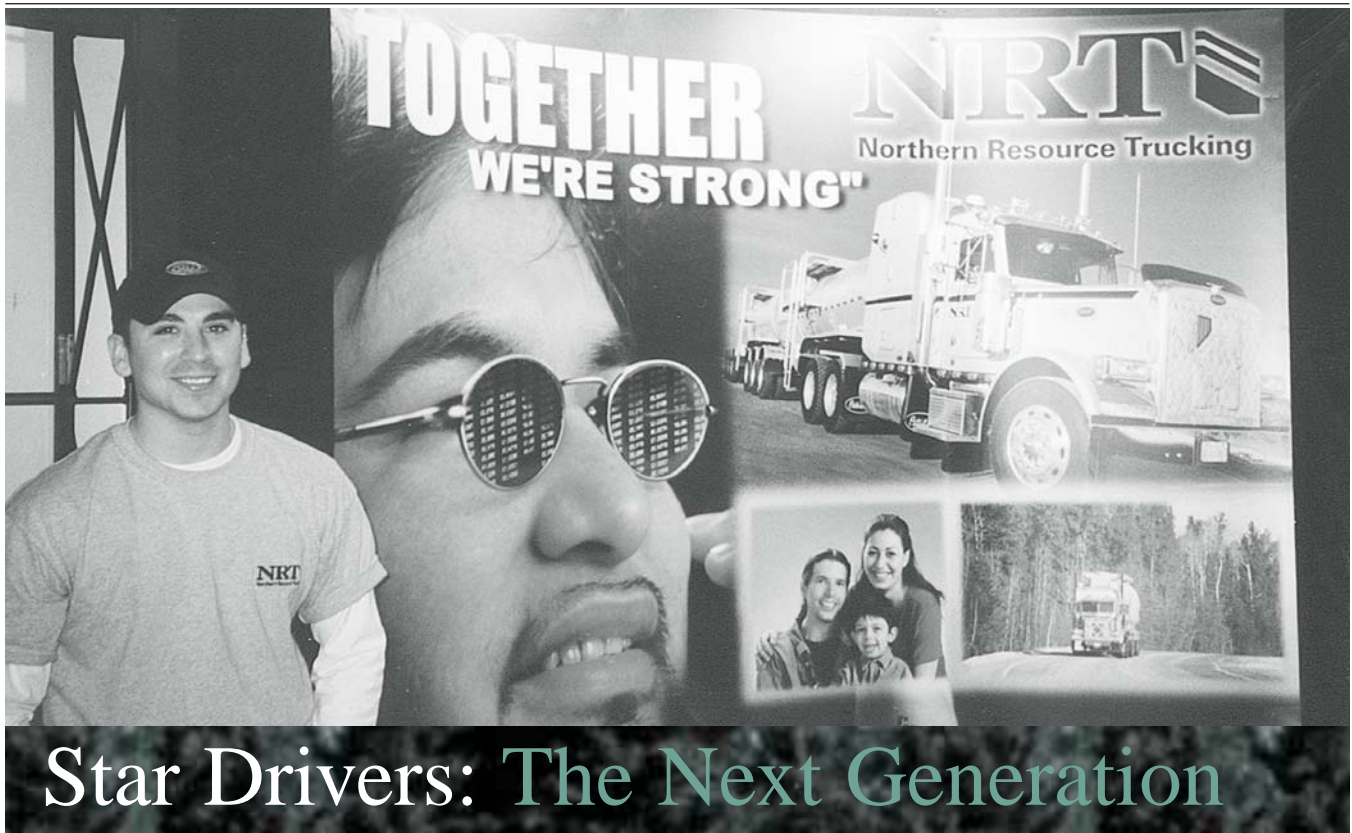
Dave smiles, “Actually, when I came into this job, Reynolds dropped me off the pier into the deep water and stood around with an amused look to see if I’d sink or swim.”

“But,” he adds, “I had a good teacher. Rick instantly understands what will work; where the strong points are and where the weaknesses are. I learned from him how to understand the financial statements better. Working with Rick on the Cameco proposal enabled me to do the Cogema proposal with much less input. I’d do it and he’d critique it. I’d do it again. There were countless iterations of it and every time that Rick made a change to a proposal or presentation, it was better.”

A memorable past. A great future. Rick can sail into the sunset knowing that the company born on his watch is in safe hands.

But that’s not the end of the story. Saskatchewan’s north, it turned out, laid claim to more than Rick’s business acumen. He went north to form a company and lost his heart to the wild beauty of that rugged terrain. When he returns from the sea, Rick and his wife Ursula, a professional artist, plan to spend several months of each year in their northern cabin retreat.

“It’s a natural for us,” says Rick. “Besides, you don’t just walk away. I will always have an interest in NRT.” □



Star Drivers: The Next Generation

Career Days In The North

Drivers travelling close to Ile a la Crosse on May 6 would have heard a succession of little voices say, "Can you hear me? Over." And then they'd hear Wendy Featherstone, who was in fact standing right behind the children, replying, "I can hear you. Over."

It was the magic of radio communication that had small students lining up at the NRT Careers Day booth to take their turn, talking over the air waves. What fun! Add to that pictures of big, shiny semis, an interactive action video, gifts of NRT rulers, erasers, magnets and stickers, plus a draw for eight hats and t-shirts and NRT was right up there in the popularity ratings.

Older students visiting the booth were given the responsibility of venturing further afield with two hand-held radios. They were charged with the mission of finding the highest paid jobs, comparing notes with each other, via radio, as they went. They subsequently met up at the booths that appeared to have the best paying professions and asked searching questions.

"The word came back that, over all, trucking stacks up pretty well," says Wendy.

"The radio exercise turned out to be a really good way of getting the students involved and communicating, not only on radio but with us about careers in trucking," she says. "And it was really good to have Kelly along to give them first-hand information."

Kelly Dinsdale, a 1999 driver trainee graduate has been an NRT driver for three years. He lives in Beauval, so many of the Ile a la Crosse students know him. Good looks. Good at his job. Great with the kids. Talk about a role model. Way to go, Kelly!

"I think a lot of young girls showed a great deal of interest in being truck drivers because Kelly was there," says Wendy, with a mischievous grin.

"But, seriously, we felt there was a lot of interest and we were able to pass along some good, solid information. The older students were very interested in our satellite tracking and communication system. We had a keyboard, screen and antenna set up to

demonstrate the scope and clarity of this system," says Wendy. "We talked about the education and training today's truck drivers need to operate and benefit from the high technology NRT has."

To give students a better idea of the size of the equipment an NRT driver handles on the road, they took the length of an NRT truck and a 9-axle trailer as an example. Kelly gave them one end of an 82 foot long rope and said 'start walking'. They were pretty impressed!

Weary, but satisfied with a good day's work, Wendy purchased a pair of runners that would be kinder to her feet than than her heeled shoes, and the intrepid NRT emissaries set off to do it all again in La Ronge, two days later.

"We were in good company," says Wendy. "The navy, the army, Health Canada, Cameco, Cogema and many more - overall a good representation of the professions. I think it's a great experience for the kids of the North. It gives them a really good idea of what's out there for them, and what they can aim for." □

Left to right: Terry Owen, Executive Vice President of Trimac Transportation; Dave McIlmoyl, Vice President of NRT; Glen Ertell, NRT Operations Manager; Al Solheim, Director of Finance for Kitsaki; Don Deranger, Athabasca Training and Employment Coordinator



NRT Management Goes North

Visiting our friends and partners

It was a particularly chilly March Monday when NRT's management group set off on a three-day tour of the north. But, in each community we visited, the welcome was warm, the conversation good, the northern banter entertaining as always, and the coffee excellent. As Terry Owen discovered, assuming the responsibilities of Rick Reynolds, the North is a great place to visit. Terry is Executive Vice President of Trimac Transportation in charge of corporate finance, legal and strategic planning, as well

as having operational responsibility for Western North America. He has also assumed the role of Trimac's executive support for NRT.

It was Terry's first trip to this wild and wonderful country and, like every traveller who ventures out of the big city into this vast expanse of lakes and forests, he was impressed by the splendour of it all. Our first stop was in La Ronge.

At the Gibson Petroleum office, NRT's

home away from home, we stopped in for a chat with manager Wayne Grewcock. Terry received a crash course on the Gibson operation, we talked generally about current events in the north and everyone got a new hat.

Unable to resist, our little group did our part for the northern economy when we visited Scott and Alec at Robertson's Trading and came out laden with boots, gloves, hats and fleeces. We agreed that this store has everything - and anything it doesn't have



Men in (Gibson) Hats - Wayne, Terry, Dave, Al and Glen.



Terry fit right in with a Beaver hat!



Trappers at Robertson's Trading.

isn't worth having. Terry was fascinated with the fur trading section. It offered an intimate look into an ongoing part of the history of the north that continues into the present day. It's a wonderful reminder that the traditional way of life is still very much alive and well and being passed on to the next generation.

At the Kitsaki Management offices, we met with CEO Ray McKay. This was Dave's old stomping grounds, although he points out that the beautiful log cabin they are now in is a far cry from the old band office where Dave worked. In the three years that Ray has been the CEO, Kitsaki, the business arm of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, has continued to flourish and provide jobs for up to 600 people and provide ongoing benefits back to the band. In the board room, Glen,



In the board room, Glen, Terry and Al watched a video with Ray McKay, which tells the success story of the many businesses that Kitsaki owns and operates in the north.



Liz and Dave catch up on northern news.

Terry and Al watched a video, which tells the success story of the many businesses that Kitsaki owns and operates in the north.

Having seen the video many times, Dave took this opportunity to catch up on all the gossip with office manager Liz Chenard, his old partner in crime!

A new project well worth a mention is that of band member Terence Johnson, a GIS (Global Imaging System) specialist and graduate of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology in Saskatoon.



Terence Johnson, planning for the forest industry.

Operating out of the Kitsaki office, Terence is working with SERM on an FMA (Forestry Management Agreement) TSL (Term Supply License) for the region. Using advanced computer software, he is analyzing data to help determine a 5-year forestry plan that will provide a guide to the areas where trees can be harvested to maximum benefit for both the harvester and the environment.

Terence has taken old topographic maps and compared the scanned images with the new satellite imaging of the area, using the lake as a control point. He can then determine how the forest has spread over the last 30 years. Also he can tell, from viewing the tops of the trees, how old they are.

"It's a fascinating job," says Terence. "In planning for the forest industry, we are dealing with traditional land use people and we've got to plan around them. There are lots of burial grounds which are sacred and must remain untouched, so we go and interview people and document everything -

smallpox epidemics, old settlements, mass graves - and we mark the burial grounds. This is information that we share with SERM, but it doesn't go public. It stays with the Band."

He is also using his GIS capability to do road planning, using contour maps to find the high points. Actually, says Terence, northern roads can be planned to follow the jack pines, because they grow in coarse, well drained soil, which is found in the high points.

With care and patience, Terence is also updating all the old maps of the North. One day, he says, one will be able to get the coordinates and go with confidence to anywhere in this vast area. If you have GPS (Global Positioning System), he says, you can bring it in to the Kitsaki office and, if the area you wish to go to is mapped, he can plot your course. "It's good for trappers and the general public who go hiking, as well as the forest industry," he says. "I did a map for my dad's trap lines for a school project. He knows where all the trails are."

At Kitsaki Meats, a thriving Band business, famous for its beef jerky, pepperoni sausage and wild rice, we were given a tour by Produce Manager Stan Dugan, "the best meat man you'll ever find", says Dave. Kitsaki products are now sold all over the world. A nice little bit of trivia: Kitsaki was chosen to be the provider of beef jerky for our military men on tour in Afghanistan. That should keep them going. What is the secret of Kitsaki's success? We cannot divulge details. Recipes and processes, are secrets as closely guarded as Canada's military maneuvers! But we can tell you that the operation hums along like a finely-tuned engine, with a happy group of workers.

We were joined the following day by Don Deranger, Athabasca Training and Employment Coordinator, and set off for Wollaston Lake. Here we enjoyed a most interesting and lively meeting with our Hatchett Lake partners, through the Denesuline Development Corporation - Paul Denechazhe, Bart Tsannie, Alex Besskkaystare, Chief Louis Josie, Ed Benoanie and Veronique Dzeylian.

Trucking, said Al, is a good business to have shares in. It's predictable. You don't make a lot but, if the company is well run, the return is consistent.

The meeting started with a prayer. Don, chairing the gathering, introduced Terry to the partners.

Dave thanked the group for coming and reviewed some NRT highlights. High on the list of NRT triumphs was the 5-year Cameco contract renewal one and a half years ago and, most recently, the 5-year Cogema contract renewal. With the support of our mining allies in the north, NRT remains strong.

He talked about the NRT training program, the selection process and the training schedule. Chief Josie asked for details - which is interesting information for all our readers. Training for a Class 1A license, entitling those who graduate to operate a semi, takes 8 weeks. After that, trainees work alongside experienced NRT leased operators/ trainers, learning the ropes of the day to day operation. They travel to the load and unload destinations and learn procedure. Their first driving opportunity, under the

watchful eye of their trainer, is travelling empty on pavement, then empty on gravel, followed by loaded on pavement and loaded on gravel. It takes a year or more for our junior drivers to reach NRT standards and begin driving alone.

This rigorous training program has gained the attention of both Government and the trucking industry and NRT driver trainee graduates are highly valued and respected operators. With fine northern drivers like this joining the NRT ranks each year, it is not



A lively meeting. Left to right around the table: Don Deranger, Veronique Dzelyian, Ed Benoanie, Chief Louis Josie, Alex Besskaystare, Bart Tsannie, Paul Denechazhe, Terry Owen, Dave McIlmoyl, Al Solheim and Glen Ertell

surprising that NRT maintains a safety record second to none. Our partners can be proud.

But NRT has not rested on its laurels said Dave. Over the years, the NRT training program has been honed and improved to better meet the needs of our young driver trainees. A bunk house in La Ronge provides accommodation while training with SIAST. Hotel rooms are provided when training in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. While they are in Saskatoon, the schedule is arranged so that

Wollaston Post, the Black Lake Band and the Fond du Lac Denesuline Band), the third largest shareholder, with 20 percent. Kitsaki (now holding 30%) and Trimac (now with 29%) both surrendered shares to make this possible and provide ownership opportunities for our seven other smaller shareholders in the north.

There was much laughter when Al spoke of the 'Denesuline Development Corporation'. Apparently his pronunciation was a little off

your equity position to get into other businesses," said Dave. "You can work with Don on this. "

Dave suggested that DDC could buy a truck and lease it to NRT. Since DDC has been spending a lot on fish hauls, they could book off time to haul fish in their own truck and put the truck on the NRT fleet for the rest of the time. With a truck working round the clock, 24/7, said Dave, it would be an asset, especially if it never ran empty - bringing

This rigorous training program has gained the attention of both Government and the trucking industry and NRT driver trainee graduates are highly valued and respected operators.

trainees work seven to ten days at a stretch and then have four days off that they can spend at home with their families. Our most recent initiative is to purchase trucks with double bunks to accommodate trainees travelling on the long haul to the mines.

Terry was able to listen first-hand to the concerns and interests of our partners, which he found most valuable. His new position at Trimac has given him responsibility for Western North America, of which the NRT partnership is an important part, he said. "This is the furthest north I have been and I am looking forward to going even further on our next trip later this year," he said, with genuine pleasure.

"It will be the right time of year to catch fish," said Don. I think that's a date!

Al, the financial wizard in our midst, Director of Finance for Kitsaki, NRT's majority shareholder, talked about NRT investment. He touched briefly on the history of the company in which Kitsaki was the original major shareholder alongside Trimac. Don Deranger, said Al, was involved in the expansion of the shareholder base in which shares were purchased and redistributed to render the Denesuline Development Corporation (comprised of the Hatcher Lake Band at

the mark. "Do you know what you just called us?" said Ed Benoanie "Sorry, from now on it's just DDC. That should be safe," said Al. Though the topic was serious, the mood remained lighthearted - always part of the fun of going north.

Al also explained the equity position; that a percentage of the dividend money is used to pay down the partner loan, that was used to purchase the shares at the outset. The good news, he said, is that the loans are close to being paid off.

Trucking, said Al, is a good business to have shares in. It's predictable. You don't make a lot, but, if the company is well run, the return is consistent. Every year, he said, the Partners can count on getting some return; the amount depending on how busy the mines are.

The last few years have been leaner, he said, but when Cigar Lake construction starts, trucking will pick up and we can count on our present contracts until 2005 with Cameco and 2007 with Cogema.

There was some discussion around the borrowing power of NRT shares. "Getting to the end of the loans, we are now at the point where we can talk about leveraging shares in NRT to grow a community. You can use

freight in and fish out and carrying full loads. "That's an idea worth a study. Yes, we should revisit that," he said. "You'd need to go to everyone in the community and find out how much freight comes in and the schedule for that - propane, fuel, stores for the confectionery, band freight, school freight. Also volume and schedule of exports - fish and possibly water."

The same idea can work for Band lumber hauls, with NRT utilizing the truck during the summer months, said Dave. "The trick is to buy one truck and keep it on the road," he said. "We'd be more than happy to work the numbers and get a DDC truck on the road and worked into our schedule."

"And get a Band member driving it," said Al.

"Absolutely," said Dave. "It's good to see trainees applying from the Athabasca Basin. A semi would be a good investment - jobs for a couple of families, a service for the community and equity for investment."

With increased mining activity on the horizon, this is a good time to make that investment," said Al. "Typically, a tractor would cost around \$150,000."

Also, said Dave, NRT management could bring the truck into its maintenance program. "The Trimac shop can get the



A warm welcome. Left to right, back row: Jimmy Laban, Dave McIlmoyl, Al Solheim, Glen Ertell and Don Deranger. Left to right, front row: Joe Reniee, Elder John Echodh and Terry Owen.

best life out of the truck for the best price,” he said.

Everyone agreed it had been a good meeting. The morning had flown by and it was time to move on to our next port of call.

We found the Black Lake Band office a hive of activity. There were several meetings in progress and Chief Victor Echodh was in high demand. But we received a warm welcome, fresh coffee (very welcome on this chilly day) and the undivided attention of Band Council members Jimmy Laban and Joe Reniee and Elder John Echodh.

John began the meeting with a Dene prayer.

Dave introduced Terry, outlining his position at Trimac and future close connection with NRT. He gave an update of NRT business, offering the encouraging news that though the company has gone through a somewhat slow, low-revenue period, our Cameco and Cogema contracts are secure and business is looking up with Rabbit Lake opening and milling in July and Cigar construction beginning in the fall.

Terry, now beginning to feel quite at home

in the north, thanked the group for taking the time to meet and said how much he was enjoying the beauty of the country on such a beautiful day.

“Trimac is very involved in the trucking business throughout North America,” he said. “And NRT is a very important part of that business for us. So we look forward to growing the business with our partners. There is a lot more we’d like to do with you,” he said.

There was some discussion around the challenges for northern drivers. Dave talked about the programs NRT has in place to help them. Money management is an important one, he said. Also, time management, he said. It’s vital to be reachable when needed for a trip.

Jimmy, who has worked at the mines, said that he understood these challenges; that in business there are standards to be met and you’ve got to keep you’re customers happy.

Dave said the ongoing goal of NRT is to provide the very best environment for drivers, while providing an excellent service that will keep us in business.

“For example, we know it is difficult for drivers to be away from home. NRT works to make sure drivers are on a rotation that provides them with blocks of time at home with their families, but it isn’t easy for them. Some don’t make it in this business,” he said, “but many do. Some of the highest earners in the company are Aboriginal,” said Dave.

Dave said that he was happy to see, of the 25 trainee applicants this year, seven were from the Basin. Asked what is required of trainees, Dave said a Class 5 license, a clean driving abstract and the ability to pass a medical and a drug and alcohol test. He outlined the training as he had for the Partners at Wollaston Lake, adding that it is a real asset to have leased operators who have in depth knowledge and experience hauling specialized products. “We like to have guys who can haul anything. When a trip comes up he can take it,” said Dave.

“Our year-long training program contributes to excellent, all-round drivers,” said Glen. “The longer a driver is in training, the more comfortable he is with a product and with driving - especially city driving. Our trucks and trains are some of the heaviest on the road, and long,” he said.

Al outlined the NRT investment strategy, as he had for the group at Wollaston. It was welcome news that DDC can count on increasing cash flows from the Partnership. He was able to report that returns are, in fact, close to the original proposal in outcome, the training program is getting better, NRT has always made money and the future looks bright.

Everyone agreed that it will be a pleasure to meet again at the partners meeting in Calgary, the date of which is still to be determined.

En route to the Stony Rapids runway, we visited the site of its new hospital. Even in the early stages of construction it looks amazing.

The following morning we set off from Saskatoon to Ile a la Crosse with an additional passenger. Guess what? Rick Reynold’s can’t quite retire! Being in the vicinity, he took the opportunity to travel



Ile a la Crosse - a community with a rich history.

north and meet with some of our partners. It was great to have him along. Business as usual.

Rick enjoyed introducing Terry to Ile a la Crosse, a predominantly Metis community, with a rich history. This is one of the oldest settlements in the north. Strategically placed at the head waters of the Churchill River system and at the end of the Beaver River, Ile a la Crosse served as a meeting place - the forks on a major fur trading route - for 250 years, a wintering spot for hunters before setting out to the Arctic. The interior walls of the town's recreation centre form an impressive gallery of historical murals by local artists.

This is the home of Buckley Belanger, once mayor of the town and now serving our province well as the Saskatchewan Government's Minister of Northern Affairs.

We were given a warm welcome by our NRT partners at the Sakitawak Development Corporation. Dave introduced Terry to Lawrence Johnson and William Caisse, saying that this was a fine opportunity to give him a flavour of the west side, where we have always had an excellent relationship with our partners. Dave gave the update on contract renewals, pleased to be able to assure our partners that revenues are secure with our two major customers for a few

more years. Though uranium prices remain low, he said, with Cigar Lake coming on, we've turned a corner.

"On the topic of things getting better," said Al, "Your loans are getting lower." That was welcome news.

Sakitawak, along with independent business people in the town, is working hard to create an economy as vibrant as that at the turn of the century. This is a resourceful community that has taken advantage of every opportunity, but it is an ongoing struggle for Metis people who do not have the support that their Treaty counterparts do. It was good to brainstorm a few ideas.

Lawrence and William talked about a possible opportunity to expand their logging operation to the north west side.

Dave thought perhaps NRT could help make this a more viable endeavour. "We don't want to compete with our partners, but if someone wants to work with us and asks, we have experience in trucking and have, of late, learned a lot about hauling lumber," he said.

Conversation turned to the future of expanded logging in the north. Compared to British Columbia, it's small business, but the

opportunity is there, said Dave. "The important thing is to protect the resource - educate people on harvesting and the importance of a good reforestation plan, so that you don't knock it all down in 60 years. The industry is moving towards greater responsibility. If, for every tree cut, you plant another, there are lots of opportunities within that cycle. When the prices come back, there will be opportunities."

And, of course, in NRT, Sakitawak has a partner it can always count on for business advice, expertise and help with access to finance.

It was a good meeting. Like all communities in the north, there is a need in Ile a la Crosse to get better established in the wage economy, so that northern people can stay close to their roots, where they love to be. No-one understands this better than Dave, who has worked in economic development in the north for more than 20 years.

"The skill and expertise of northern people has increased dramatically over the years," he says. "There is now a nucleus of people who have the skills to be employed in mining, forestry and any industry that takes root here."



A visit with old friends. Around the table clockwise from front: Terry Owen, Rick Reynolds, Glen Ertell, Lawrence Johnson, William Caisse.

A Good Place To Work

A human face and an ever-open door

Sometimes, amid the busyness of life, it's good to stop and reflect on what we have achieved and recognize the people who have made this company a success.

In its first decade, NRT went through tremendous growth and a major learning curve. A company like no other, it blazed a trail in the north that changed north-south business relations in a significant and profound way. Our partners, our clients and the people of NRT can take credit for that. Everyone worked together for the good of the whole. We never lost sight of our mission; to train, develop and provide employment for northern people and maintain a partnership in which northern communities could share and profit.

NRT has had, from the beginning, a nurturing aspect seldom found in other companies, taking care of people entering a new culture, far from home. And that care



NRT has had, from the beginning, a nurturing aspect seldom found in other companies, taking care of people entering a new culture, far from home.

has been rewarded and is evident in the teamwork that has created a company that runs like a well-oiled machine. Administration, company drivers, leased operators, management, partners, customers - all contribute their expertise and commitment to NRT's success.

The drivers and operations staff work ever more closely, respecting each others' ideas for continuous improvement. They have worked hard at maximizing payloads in all commodities to provide the most cost-effective, efficient service. And we now have a full time person to monitor the safety and effectiveness of our fleet and supervise the training of new northern drivers.

As a major carrier, Trimac Transportation (an NRT shareholder, holding 29%, alongside Kitsaki with the majority 30%

share) has generously shared its buying power in the purchase of tires, equipment and fuel, as well as offering NRT operators its own preferential shop rates. The leading edge satellite tracking system and dispatch technology that Trimac developed for its operation, it has also shared with NRT.

Above all, NRT management's door has always been open to help our leased operators get through tough times. Rather than applying a blanket 'company policy', which too often leaves people to fend for themselves, each person has been treated as an individual and every effort made to alleviate problems. That kind of help has, over the years, given good operators that little extra help that has kept them on the road and earning a living.

Having, as a team, established a strong and viable company, NRT has been able to weather the downturns in markets. However, in this changing world of tighter profit margins, we have had to adapt our training program and reduce head office staff. With declining revenues, we have had to reduce overheads, because we still have to make a profit. NRT management has striven to do all of these things in a way that will preserve and maintain the caring character of NRT.

It is not management alone that creates a successful company. Each person has an important job to do to serve our customers well, safely and efficiently. We are all here to get the job done. NRT has, for the past 16 years, grown from strength to strength. That is a tribute to all the people who make this company strong. □

Scrapbook



Marianne Thomas has been in office management since day one. Needless to say, there isn't much this lady doesn't know about NRT. Many Happy Returns, Marianne!

Birthday Greetings

February: Jerome Niekamp, Lionel Heppner, Rick Sproull, Terry Sarabin, Ron Milligan, Vincent Mitchell, Bryan Otte, Kelly Dinsdale, Richard Wilm, Harvey Moosehunter, Lawrence Matchee, Stanley Porter.

March: Edward Sanderson, Leo Gaudet, Wendell Harris, Curtis Hubel, Earl Turner, Brad Caisse.

April: Robert Kustaski, Don Sanderson, Leo Voz, Perry Medynski, Timothy Mansuy, Ron Magee, Gerard Hanotte, Ed Schappert, Mervin Stacey.

May: Don Bilinski, Ben Walk, Tim Frook, Robert Giroux, Les Driedger, Ralph Settee, Dave McIlmoyl, Chris Thurber, Andrew Lamontagne, Conrad Lehmond, Robin Stomp, Terrence Grams, Lloyd Driedger.

June: Lawrence Joannette, Larry Smith, Chris Bouvier, James Harbicht, Larry Balon, Greg Kruger, Marianne Thomas, David Campbell.