



Trail Blazer

June/July 2005



A Team That ROCKS!

Cameco warehouse and NRT get the job done

A happy workforce is a productive workforce and nowhere is this more in evidence than at the Cameco warehouse, located in Saskatoon's north end industrial section. This is a central receiving facility for the Cameco mine sites.

As warehouse man Mark Semenuik, primarily in charge of van freight, so aptly puts it, "At all three mine sites, everything you see, every nut and bolt, every bit of cladding, everything in the building and the concrete it's sitting on, has come through here."



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Warehouse Manager Marty Camponi "Timing is everything"

Cameco Warehouse's next-door neighbour across the fence, is equally dedicated. Well placed to work together, Cameco and Northern Resource Trucking have a shared vision.

"Cameco needs the kind of efficiency and commitment we receive from NRT," says Ken Johnston, Cameco Manager of Purchasing and Administration. "When we're putting that much through, coordinating drivers and equipment is a challenge. NRT Dispatch and the Cameco warehouse work closely together and do a great job. NRT people and their trucks move all this, as well as everything else we need at the mine sites, including 55 million litres of fuel a year. They do this on an ongoing basis, safely, efficiently and on time."

Inside the massive warehouse structure, personnel answer phones and key information into computers at their workstations. Forklifts glide around the area, moving everything from popcorn to huge tires. And all around, there is an air of relaxed yet industrious efficiency.

There is no hierarchy here. "We've all got the same title - 'warehouse personnel,'" says Rob Trischuk, with a wide smile. "We're a team."

"Actually, I'm the most important person in this warehouse," quips Verna McCallum, laughing, as she handles a shipment of popcorn en route to a mine site.

Headed up by Warehouse Manager Marty

Camponi, it is evident that this warehouse team is working together, doing what needs to be done, operating like a finely tuned engine. The Cameco warehouse team needs to be a good one. It's a huge job.

"As goods roll in from all parts of the country and overseas, they are unloaded and inspected to ensure orders have been accurately filled and have sustained no damage," says Marty. "Goods are then received against their P.O.s, repackaged and forwarded on to the respective mine sites. Alongside that, we set up daily and weekly schedules for general freight; all the essentials needed for day to day life at the mine."

"One hundred and seventy five loads of freight are going out of here on a monthly basis," says warehouse man Jim Eshelby, whose primary responsibility is the flat deck hauls. "And it's going to hit full bore when Cigar Lake gets going, as soon as it warms up and dries up. If we weren't organized to the point we are, we wouldn't succeed."

"Cameco is a huge operation and everyone has their own job, but we're all working for the same thing; to bring out yellowcake in those little black drums," says Jim. "Every drum comes through here and is inspected before it leaves. We make sure the load is intact, that we have the right number of drivers and the right lot with the right trailer. The load is then released to the trucking company that takes it to the refinery."

"Every precaution is taken to make sure the environment is safe and the load is safe. Attention to detail is a big part of what we do," says Mark.



Jim Eshelby at his work station. "Our job entails a lot more than parking a trailer, throwing stuff on and away it goes."

"Yes. Our job entails a lot more than parking a trailer, throwing stuff on and away it goes," says Jim, with feeling.

"In the outside compound, we work with NRT Dispatch to spot deck trailers in the staging area, where larger outdoor goods and equipment get loaded," says Marty. "Then, keeping in mind the road and weather conditions drivers will face, we load strategically. Once trailers are loaded and ready for dispatch, it's a huge responsibility for the individual driver to ensure that his load arrives safely, without loss or damage."

Though this is my first visit to the Cameco warehouse, I see some familiar faces. Veteran NRT driver Phil Macala is picking up his paperwork for a vanload going to Rabbit Lake. Doug Wellings, Trimac driver, contracted to NRT, is in the yard, securing a flat deck load that he will transport to Cigar Lake. NRT Traffic Supervisor Robin Dalshaug has stopped by to talk to



Mark Semenuik - "Everything you see at all three mine sites has come through here."



Rob Trischuk - "We're a team!"



Verna McCallum - "Actually, I'm the most important person."



NRT Operator Phil Macala ready to roll.

Warehouse Manager Marty Camponi. There's an easy camaraderie and the same evident attention to detail, as drivers collect their paperwork and check their load.

Timing is everything in the fast-paced world of commerce and nowhere is this more so than throughout the Cameco operation.

Vans and decks have to be loaded at certain times to make the long journey to the mine site and arrive just in time for a new day and the mine shift hours of 7a.m. and 7p.m.

"A lot of the work for the day is dependent on the material that's sent up," says Marty. "So it's critical that time lines are maintained to avoid production disruptions. Sometimes it's a real struggle to balance and

juggle out the day, but we do it."

"On a daily basis, Marty and his crew coordinate freight that travels by flat deck or van, and set schedules for the week with NRT Dispatch," says Ken Johnson. "Last year, 4200 loads of general freight went up to the mines. And, of course, everything that's going north is needed now or yesterday," he says, with a smile. "So NRT is dispatching all types of loads, to four different sites, every day. That's quite a bit of coordination. This job is pivotal. Communication is pivotal. The gentlemen at NRT do a great job."

"Altogether, we have a great relationship with NRT," adds Ken "They've grown with us. We started with a couple of mines and now there are four. They've worked round the clock and helped at critical times, such as during the flood that we had a couple of years ago. We can count on NRT."

"Safety is of paramount importance throughout the Cameco organization - for people and the environment," says Ken Johnson. "We have to make sure that our contractors live up to the high standards that we have for our company because, if anything happens during transportation of goods, it reflects directly on Cameco. So those high standards are equally expected in NRT drivers. I'm happy to say, we've had very few problems."

Bill Ledsham, Cameco Transportation/Logistics Administrator who, along with Marty Camponi, coordinates the scheduling of yellowcake from mine to refinery, agrees. "To their credit all NRT drivers are aware of the hazards associated with transporting yellowcake. It is dangerous goods and is a very high profile commodity. NRT recognizes the importance of transporting this and all dangerous goods safely and we have had no serious incidents. We appreciate the care NRT drivers take. Public perception is important to Cameco and it is, therefore, good to be known as a safe company in all areas of operation."

Scheduling the delivery of yellowcake to refinery poses a further challenge.

"There are some strict deadlines when



Marty explains van-loading procedure.

moving containerized material for ocean shipment; often a very small window," says Bill. "We've asked some pretty big favours from NRT drivers. Sometimes there's so little time to get the containers back to the rail terminal that we ask the drivers to take the empty containers to Key Lake, stay with the containers while they're being loaded and then bring the loaded containers back to the rail terminal to get to port in time for sailing. And, in the middle of this, the drivers are trying to get some needed bunk time while we're shaking and banging their truck as we load the containers."

As the new Cigar mine project progresses, even busier times are on the horizon.

"There will be a lot of freight going to



NRT Operator Doug Wellings secures his load.



Bill Ledsham, Cameco Transportation/Logistics Administrator - "We appreciate the care NRT drivers take."



Forklifts constantly on the go, moving goods through the warehouse.

Cigar Lake,” says Marty. “Besides Cameco’s own materials, there will be a large volume of contractor materials and equipment shipped through this warehouse. A particularly busy time will be during the construction of the new permanent road when scrapers, dozers and packers will all need to be shipped there. Once the new road is complete, it will be easier and safer to get materials in and out of Cigar.”

Right now, crews are sinking the #2 shaft, the new camp kitchen is up and working and there are plans to begin construction of the new permanent residence this year, says Marty. “It’s going to be a busy and challenging time, making sure we keep the freight and equipment moving. Drivers want to keep the wheels moving. With the

demands of Cigar, along with the requirements of the other sites, that won’t be a problem.”

“In a nutshell,” says Marty, “communication between NRT dispatch, the transit warehouse operation and NRT drivers is important, so that, together, we can support all of Cameco’s mine sites in a timely efficient and cost-effective manner. Drivers do understand that and the whole cycle works most effectively.”

“When two groups come together to make something happen, on an ongoing basis, it sure makes a difference,” says Ken Johnson. “It’s like a marriage. Neither of us is perfect. There are problems at times. But we work through our problems. This is a good relationship. It’s not, they’re truckers and we’re the customer. It’s an alliance and it’s working well.” □



Chelsey Thurber

Focus on Safety

NRT owner-operator Chris Thurber must be a very proud dad right now. His 16-year-old daughter Chelsey has just won a national award; the Skills Canada silver medal in the Workplace Safety category.

Chelsey won gold at provincial level in Moose Jaw and went on to impress the national

judges in Edmonton with her knowledge and understanding of the importance of safety in the workplace.

There were three parts to the Skills Canada competition: a safety talk for which Chelsey chose to talk about chemicals in the workplace

and the WHMS and MSDS training programs; an extensive theory test on workplace health and safety regulations; and a hazard assessment set, which was a hands-on investigation of potential hazards in an automotive area, a kitchen area and an office area.

“I had to wear all the safety gear and find all the hazards and rate them on the probability of causing injury and the probable severity of that injury,” says Chelsey.

“I did learn a lot,” she says “Through my research, I learned that so many things can go wrong.”

Chelsey is considering a career in nursing. For her speech, she chose to talk on the topic of an improperly labelled solution that was thought to be a humidifying solution for an incubator. A baby, who should have been safe from harm in a hospital, died.

This was a powerful message and a sad reminder that, in every workplace, a small mistake can have disastrous consequences.

Congratulations, Chelsey. NRT applauds you for carrying the safety banner so superbly! □



Mud, Not So Glorious Mud!

Heading north and going nowhere

After a long, hard winter, most people welcome the spring; this year, NRT operators, Dispatch and Management did not! It was a nightmare.

“It was the worst spring and the worst road conditions in ten or twelve years,” says NRT Operations Manager Glen Ertell. “There was a lot of mud and we did a lot of towing,” he adds wryly, in that understated way that shows but a fraction of the frustration and logistical headaches suffered by the NRT



This is a road?

team; caused by a record, heavy snowfall, followed by a quick break-up and water, water everywhere.

For the Saskatchewan Department of Highways, northern road maintenance is never an easy task; this year it was downright dreadful. Not only did heavy snow arrive early in the fall, precluding road maintenance before freeze-up, but when spring break-up arrived it was quick, leaving no time to blade the roads, says Glen.

Mother Nature played a dirty trick at both ends of the season.

With culverts still frozen and a lot of run-off with nowhere to go, the roads weren't able to take the extra moisture and couldn't dry up quickly enough. Highways couldn't keep up, though they were working all hours, thawing out culverts with portable steamers, says Glen.

“It was certainly creating some heartburn for our guys,” he says. “Trucks were

getting stuck and breaking down and had to be towed. No one could get around them. The conditions were very hard on equipment, and maintenance costs rocketed.”

“Maintenance costs are always higher in the spring and we anticipate that. When the roads are not as good, we go slower. We truck differently than we do in July, when it's 25 above, or on snow-packed roads at 25 below. Then we can scoot along nicely. But this was beyond the usual spring weather. Trips were slowed down by three to six hours. Understandably, drivers were reluctant to go out and get stuck or break down. Dispatch had to convince them to go. Those three to four weeks seemed like an eternity,” says Glen.

But in true NRT fashion, everyone rallied around and rose to a seemingly insurmountable challenge.

“Everybody persevered and did what was needed. Everybody did a hell of a job and

our customers certainly appreciated our efforts," says Glen. "Fortunately, things tend to slow down in the spring so, even taking longer, we were still able to keep up with the demands of the customer."

"While we tend to feel that more can always

be done on the part of Highways, I have to say that they had huge manpower and equipment challenges of their own and they did well. It was a great effort on the part of everyone and everyone deserves a big pat on the back," he says.

"The roads are now in considerably better shape than when these photos were taken," says Glen with a smile. "We do our job and some days are better than others, but I hope we won't see another spring like this one for at least another ten to fifteen years." □



NRT's Ambassador at Work Again

Wendy Featherstone Speaks At Youth Action Now Symposium

"The Gathering", a multi-cultural symposium held April 29 to May 1 at the University of Regina, brought together 150 young people from many cultures into one dynamic group.

For youth who want to have a say in Saskatchewan's multi-cultural future, Youth

Action Now (YAN), the fount of this forum, is an excellent place to start.

At The Gathering, youth had the ear of Government, Business and Community leaders and an opportunity to focus on the recommendations gathered from 18 on-going forums.

Just getting together and having fun goes a long way towards creating understanding and mutual regard between young people of all cultures. It is not surprising, therefore, that "creating further opportunities to get together and learn about each other" was at the top of the list. Hand in hand with this suggestion went a recommendation that

there should be opportunity to educate others, so that they can accept and understand different cultures. And where better to start than with a specific multicultural component within the curriculum, especially in the younger grades.

All of the recommendations brought forward at The gathering will now be put together

Multicultural Business' - proved, she says, to be a bit of an eye opener for a group that tends to focus on anti-racism. Wendy pointed out that, since money is colour-blind, business is the great leveller, a place where egalitarian principles can naturally flourish.

"We use the advantages we have," she says. "If the strength of a company is in its

to contribute a knowledge of the rugged land in which this company would operate.

"Too often business is seen as the bad guy. We are happy to let people know that is far from the case; that profit is not evil and that success is for all. The multi-cultural community that we enjoy in Saskatchewan can benefit greatly from its diversity and pool its strengths, if there is a will to do so on the part of everyone, including the youth of this province," she says.

The NRT Partnership, says Wendy, is a prime example of a 3-way balance where everyone wins.

For the Partnership communities, it means training, secure employment and income for northern people, alongside dividends for the communities.

Cameco, in choosing NRT as its carrier for the mines, can further its mandate to hire and train northern people and enhance its role as a highly ethical and caring corporate citizen in the north.

For Trimac, partnership in a company with solid contracts is a partnership made in heaven.

NRT is a company that is greater than the sum of its parts. That is the nature of multi-cultural companies, says Wendy. "Youth Action Now offered me an opportunity to highlight what NRT does best." □



NRT's Wendy Featherstone shares her knowledge and experience of a successful, multi-cultural company.

with the results of the Youth Voice 2004 Survey as a Blueprint for Action, to be released on June 27, 2005 - Canada's Multiculturalism Day.

There were several, dynamic and thought-provoking presentations at The Gathering, among them 'There's No Such Thing As A Canadian, Or Is There? : Cultural Identity And the Changing Ethno-Cultural Reality Of Saskatchewan'; 'Multiculturalism In Education: Not Your Parents Curriculum'; and 'In A Galaxy Not So Far Away: Exploring the Global Village.'

This was the perfect forum for Wendy Featherstone, NRT Executive Assistant to V.P. Dave McIlmoyl, to share her knowledge and experience of a successful multi-cultural company; to show that two strengths are better than one.

Wendy's session - 'Multicultural Business 101: The Advantages of Being a

people, then a multi-cultural company has a huge advantage in that it has a broader base of people to learn from."

NRT can be held up as an excellent example, she says. The north-south model that created a business alliance between First Nations and Métis Communities throughout the north and Trimac Transportation in the south can, 19 years hence, take pride in its service to the mines of northern Saskatchewan, in its fleet of highly professional operators and a safety record that is second to none.

It's a track record to be proud of and it's a company that works, says Wendy. Neither partner could have had the same success, she says, if they had not been combining and sharing their strengths. Trimac was able to bring to the table the business acumen and experience of North America's largest carrier. NRT's Aboriginal partners were able

YAN is a multicultural youth project unique to Saskatchewan. The project is a joint venture of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Saskatchewan Provincial Council and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Youth Action Now has had several additional sponsors, including Cameco Corporation.

You can learn more about the exciting opportunities of Youth Action now by visiting the YAN website at: www.youthactionnow.ca



Standing, left to right, Instructor Stew Mirasty, Trainees Percy Mikrasty, Dwayne Dorion, Wayne Clarke, Derek Joseph, Clayton Lee and Instructor Terry Hrenyk. Kneeling, left to right, Trainees Marty Robillard, Marvin Jobb and Leslie Markham)

A Very Good Year

A bright future for NRT's new trainees

Judging from the positive response of NRT Instructor Terry Hrenyk, it looks as though this year's eight trainees are headed for a great future in trucking.

"They're doing really well. Excellent in fact," says Terry. "They finish their training on July 8th and then they have three test days. I am fully expecting all of them to pass, have a 1A licence and be ready to begin their careers behind the wheel, with further training as they go."

Starting on April 18, Percy Mirasty, Clayton Lee, Derek Joseph, Dwayne Dorion, Leslie Markham, Wayne Clarke, Marvin Jobb and Marty Robillard spent four weeks in the classroom, soaking up all the knowledge they will use in the increasingly complex job of a semi operator on the northern run. With their instructors, they began driving in La

Ronge and north of La Ronge. By mid-May they were ready to take on the daunting task of navigating the streets of a large and busy city.

"They didn't kill anybody," said Terry, laughing. "Actually, it was their first time in the big city and they did really well. They were excellent."

Of course, these students are learning from

the best; seasoned drivers and fine instructors Tim Hrenyk, Phil Croisetiere, Stewart Mirasty, Cam Grewcock and Terry Hrenyk.

NRT Safety and Compliance Manager Lloyd Driedger is equally impressed with this year's group of trainees and very pleased with the instructors he has on his team. "At NRT, we're now working with the college



Marvin Jobb



Derek Joseph



Wayne Clarke

and doing the 1A training from the ground up. We've taken that extra move and so far we are very pleased. We can keep our sights on the needs of the students that much earlier in the program, not only ensuring better results, but helping our students achieve by seeing exactly what they need, right from the get go. From the outset, they're getting real life exposure to the NRT experience," says Lloyd. "And my answer to how they're doing? Wow, they're great!"

Every year, says Lloyd, NRT trainees go from a Class 5 to a 1A learners and step into

the trucks and that is a magic moment - a really big day.

"I was just speaking with all the instructors yesterday and they are totally pleased," says Lloyd. "There is no doubt in their minds that they've got 8 guys ready to challenge the test in July. When you see that confidence, it's only coming from one place - from the students."

"You almost get to the place when you're feeling like a dad, watching them coming along," says Lloyd, with a wide smile.

And this is certainly a proud 'dad'. "I was in for the beginning of the PDIC course yesterday. These questions are for seasoned drivers and the trainees were coming back with responses that showed how intently they've been paying attention," he reports, with obvious pleasure.

"This period, from the end of April until graduation in July, is the highlight of NRT's year," says Lloyd. "It brings to the forefront the fact that we're not just a trucking company, but a training and educational source for a lot of northern youth." □



Cumberland House 'Opimiskaw' team paddlers Real Carriere and Calvin McKay

Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest

NRT sponsorship recognizes original carriers on northern routes

History will come alive on June 18, when 186 paddlers in 31 canoes begin the race of their lives. The Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest, a premier event of Saskatchewan's Centennial year, will focus

on a time and place before the early settlers, before this province's towns and cities were born, when the prairie provinces were known as the Northwest Territory; a time when the people of the north fished, hunted,

trapped, travelled and traded for a living and knew the northern rivers, lakes and forests like the back of their hand.

Today, northerners still have this knowledge and it will stand them in good stead as they

take on the challenge of the wilderness and embark on a gruelling 17-day canoe race from La Loche to Cumberland House. From June 18 to July 5, they will cover 1018 kilometres, visiting 14 northern communities along the way. They will be taking supplies but, in keeping with tradition, they will not travel without the means to be self-sufficient. "We will stop and fish if we need to," says NRT-sponsored, 'Opimiskaw' team member Real Carriere, of Cumberland House, presently a Political Science student at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. "Opimiskaw means paddler," he explains.

The race will follow two river systems; the historic Churchill River waterway and Sturgeon Weir, which leads into the Saskatchewan River. With its string of rivers and lakes connected by rapids and waterfalls, this was the super highway of canoe transportation during the time of the fur trade, between the 1650's and the 1850's. Through this rocky and rolling terrain, our intrepid team will encounter the same rapids and portages as the early explorers. They will paddle by ancient rock paintings and relive a long ago way of life.

Paddling for six to seven hours a day, the teams will cover between 65 and 100 kilometres, before they rest each evening. This is not a venture for the faint of heart.

"We've been training since March," says Real "My father, Solomon Carriere, is on the team. Our other Opimiskaw team members are Bruce Barton, Glen McKenzie, Calvin McKay, Dennis Fosseneuve, Bill Torongo, Robert McKay, Jeff Kolka and myself."

"There are 10 paddlers on each team, with six in the boat and four spares to trade at the end of each day," says team-member and outfitter Calvin McKay, who lives and breathes this rugged environment.

"Though the early travellers' canoes were of birch bark, the Opimiskaw's model and most of the canoes in the race are fibreglass, the

best material to meet weight minimum requirements," says Real.

In its contribution to this venture, NRT is doing what it does best - helping with transportation. As well as transporting the Opimiskaw team's canoe from Shawinigan, Quebec to Saskatoon, NRT has also hauled Stanley Mission's Mamachewesipimawin Paddlers' canoe to La Ronge from Eb's Sail and Sports in Saskatoon. NRT is also working with Tom Charles in La Ronge, to accommodate the transportation needs of a guest team from Scotland.



Tom Charles' Scottish team, having the time of their lives!

This is an interesting story in itself. In April 2003, Abi and Duncan Thomson flew into Montreal from Edinburgh, Scotland and, with only three hours paddling experience, began a canoe journey up the Ottawa River, headed for Vancouver. The plan was to follow the intricate web of aboriginal waterways plied by the Voyageurs of old. It took three years and they made it.

By September of 2003, however, they were looking for a spot to winter and took a short detour off the Churchill River and into La Ronge. This town gave Abi and Duncan everything they were looking for; a beautiful place with all amenities and a wonderful

community they could become a part of, for a season. Thus bonds were formed and friendships made for life.

When plans began for the Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest, Tom Charles called his good friends Abi and Duncan and suggested they get a team together and come for the event. Sadly, Abi will not be able to come, but Duncan has gathered a team of ten Scots who will fly to Calgary and travel to La Ronge to share in the experience of a lifetime.

Duncan Thomson's Scottish team has invested a lot in this trip: testimony indeed to Duncan and Abi's happy experience in the north and the enthusiasm Duncan has passed on to his team of paddlers. Tom Charles is working diligently, with the help of sponsors, to make this an adventure the Scottish paddlers will never forget.

"It is fitting that NRT, along with many other northern companies, should lend its support to this canoe race," says NRT V.P. Dave McIlmoyl. "It was the canoe, providing the primary form of travel and communication, that linked the old world and the new. The voyageurs' job was to take supplies in for trappers and traders and return with furs. Today, following the trail blazed by those early carriers, it is the job of NRT operators to take supplies in to the northern mines and bring the product out. We follow a fine tradition of northern carriers who know and love this land."

To every brave soul who takes on the challenge of the Saskatchewan Centennial Canoe Quest we say, 'Bon Voyage! You will all be champions'.

If any of our northern readers capture the action on camera, when the canoe race reaches your community, we'd love to publish your photo in Trail Blazer.

Send digital photos to Wendy by e-mail at wfeatherstone@northernresourcestrucking.com or mail photos to NRT at 2945 Millar Avenue, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 6P6. □



Born to be Free

Driving north and loving it

Hope Hay - "From the very beginning, I knew this was my life."

“**H**ope Hay has always wanted to be a truck driver. In fact, one could say she was born to it.

“I was born on the back seat of a car on a logging road, on the way to the hospital. I weighed in at 4lbs 1oz and I survived,” says Hope, with a smile.

Before Hope was born, her parents had already lost a son and so, when another child was on the way, they decided that if they had a girl they would call her Hope, the child they hoped, so desperately, would make it. Hope did indeed survive to be her father’s pride and joy and all he could have wished for in a son or in a daughter.

“My dad was a logger in B.C. and I grew up around the bush and the logging trucks. From the very beginning, I knew this was my life and I never wanted to do anything else,” she says.

Hope has recently joined the NRT team. She has put her truck up for sale on the Volvo lot to become co-driver with NRT owner-operator Emile Frechette. Hope comes to the job with a wealth of experience; 12 years as a school bus driver on both city and rural routes for Hertz Northern Bus and in her tenth year pulling an 8-axle Super B for Guy Trucking, a grain and fertilizer hauler out of Kenaston.

“Joining NRT was a life-change decision,” says this determined woman, whose looks belie the inner fortitude that has taken her to the top of her profession in a predominantly man’s world.

When Hope’s husband passed away in 2004, she lost her mentor, her friend and her partner. “Ted taught me how to operate the big trucks,” she says, simply. “He was an awesome driver and he had patience.”

But this is a story of new beginnings and reclaimed happiness.

“Ted and Emile had always been good friends and when Ted died, Emile was there for me and for the family,” says Hope. “Over time, we became close, but we weren’t spending much time together. Emile had his truck and I had mine. I was hauling barley to Lethbridge and he was driving north. Most of the time we were 1,000 miles apart. So we decided to drive together and share the journey.”

“It’s working out really well,” says Hope. “We share the driving responsibility. We have time together and it’s easier on both of us.”

Hope is still on the spare board for Guy Trucking. “When they need me, I can take those runs,” she says.

Hope doesn’t look the least bit like most people’s idea of a truck driver. “I know,” she

says, laughing. "Blond. A woman. But what most people don't realize is that it's not brawn this job takes, it's brains. There's a lot to know and, when you get behind the wheel of a 62-ton rig it's a huge responsibility. You've got to do it right."

"When I drove the school bus, I was always very aware of the fact that I had children's lives in my hands and there was no room for error. I think that has made me a good

driver. I loved that job. I drove kids K to 12. For six years I had the Nutana route, with some Special Needs children, and it was awesome. There's no such thing as a bad kid," she says. "Kids respond well when you're fair and you care about them."

No stranger to grief, life on the road has not always gone happily for Hope. She has had to weather the experience every driver dreads; a fatal accident that, although she did

everything right, could not be avoided, and will always be with her.

"It took me seven months to get over it," she says. "Then I decided that I'd done my best and I should get back in. You cannot punish yourself forever for someone else's mistake. When there's a fatality it's not usually the truck driver's fault. Most of us drive not only for ourselves, but for everyone, trying to second-guess what other drivers will do.

Fun Times in 2004

The NRT family plays well together!



People can be so unaware of the danger. They think, 'Let's get ahead of the big truck', without realizing that we can't brake suddenly or stop on a dime. And it only takes a second to die. I would like to see SGI create educational programming to help people understand that," she says with feeling.

"I have to say that Lloyd (Driedger, NRT Safety and Compliance Manager) is amazing. He is a hands-on type of man. When

he's needed, he gets in his pickup and goes. He is genuinely interested in the safety of his drivers and it shows in NRT's safety record."

Hope is happy with her move to NRT. "I love driving. Period. It's in my blood. Going north is slower, it's beautiful country and I love it. We haul to all the mines and everyone is so friendly. And the food is good! When you drive into a yard for the first time, the odd person will think you're out of your league.

You'll find old school types everywhere. But the majority, 95%, have accepted that women can do this job. Some will laugh and say,

"You really drive that big thing?" and I say, "I always give it my best shot."

"That's what I always do-my best. Never think you're too good to learn anything because if that time ever comes, it's time to hang up your keys. You can never be complaisant." □

2004 ended with a wonderful celebration of NRT family values. The NRT Children's Christmas Party, held at Wanaskewin Heritage Park, was well attended with more than 110 children and parents, many of them making the long journey from northern communities.

December 4 was an afternoon of fun and laughter.

First there was a children's feast of favourite foods, followed by a desert that was a most creative endeavour. The kids decorated their own cookies with flair and enthusiasm.

The children then sat, wide-eyed and fascinated, as Indian dancer Lorin Gardypie, in glorious costume, danced to the drumbeat of ancient lore and the storyteller told tales of young braves. When Lorin gathered children and parents into his circle to dance with the spirit beings, it was a magical moment.

"We all dance to the same beat. We are all the same. We connect here with Mother Earth," said the storyteller. "By making this connection, we are all one people - all one heartbeat - all dancing in unity with one another."

On this wonderful afternoon, one fun event followed fast on the heels of another. Children gathered around tables to make their own masks and our pictures tell the story of bonds between dads and their children.

On December 18, we enjoyed a warm, fun and happy NRT adult Christmas gathering at the Travelodge, where old friends wined, dined and chatted the evening away.

We always appreciate the effort that our President Rick Reynolds and his so-gracious

wife Ursula make to be at these celebrations.

The professional comedian providing the evening's entertainment was very funny, but Dave was funnier. The timely wit and pith of our own V.P. is hard to beat. Moreover, Dave carried the evening along in the suited, sartorial splendour we only see on special occasions or when he's going to Cameco for a meeting.

It was a fitting end to a good year and a fine launch for 2005. □





Who's on First?

A new team member making everyone's life a little easier

Meet Elsie Ballantyne; the woman with the pleasant voice you hear when you call NRT; the smiling face you see when you come through the door.

Elsie joined the NRT team in February as receptionist, but she does a lot more than answer phones. "I help everyone out," she says, with a smile. "Phones, photocopying, entering driver pay, working on payroll, sorting tach cards, filing; whatever needs to be done."

"I like it here," she says. "It's a new job and the people are nice. I already know that this is where I want to stay and enjoy the opportunities that NRT will give me. But I don't get to use my language now, as much as I'd like. I've been teaching Wendy a few words. But not bad words," she hastens to add, laughing. "Words like 'Tansi', which

means "Hi, how are you?" and 'namôtha nânitaw', meaning 'Fine'.

Before joining NRT, Elsie worked at the SIIT call centre, a SaskTel contract job, making outbound and courtesy calls to northern clients, many who speak Cree. She loves the language she grew up with in Pelican Narrows; a language she spoke exclusively until she moved away to school in Prince Albert when she was 12. There were other kids at school who spoke Cree, she says, so although English became her primary language, she has remained fluent in her native tongue.

Going home to Pelican Narrows, where she is one of a family of 16 brothers and sisters, with many nieces and nephews, Elsie has lots of opportunity to be a real northern girl, speak Cree to her hearts content and go fishing. After a recent weekend in the north,

she shared her catch with everyone at the office, cooking a feast of fish and bannock.

"My brother knows where the fish are. I know where they are too, when it's windy," she says, "because the wind blows the feed in the bottom and they go where the wind is."

"I do miss the north, but I like Saskatoon and I like NRT," says Elsie. "NRT feels like a northern company. The people aren't too serious. There's a time to work and a time to joke around and people know the difference."

To all her Cree-speaking friends in the north Elsie says,

**"niwi'-ki'wa'n ki'htwa'm.
ki'htwa'm ka-
wa'p(a)mit(i)na'wa'w." □**



It's a Match!

A new member of the NRT happy family

Alice Genaille is just beginning her third week as NRT Human Resources Compliance Administrator and knows already that this is a place where she'd like to stay.

"I enjoy the people. I like the work. I got lucky to get this position," says Alice, with that million-dollar smile, and one knows immediately why the feeling is mutual.

"Isn't she a lovely person?" says Safety and Compliance Manager Lloyd Driedger, to whom Alice reports.

In her new position, she will work for both Lloyd and Administration Manager Robert Cremers. So far, she says, she has been handling personnel files, hiring kits and log sheets and looks forward to the job expanding into more challenging tasks that will help Lloyd and Robert with the huge workload that is inherent in each of their

positions and responsibilities in a busy, growing company.

"I like to keep busy, so as long as the work keeps coming, I'm happy," says Alice.

When she's not busy at work, she's busy at home, raising her four boys, aged thirteen, nine, eight and four.

"I've been blessed with healthy, happy kids," she says. "They all love baseball and all but the youngest are in baseball leagues."

There are no prizes for guessing what Alice does in her spare time. "We go to baseball games, we go to practices or just pick a park and practice batting, throwing and sliding. I pitch to them to make sure they can hit. There's lots of laundry," she says, laughing.

This is the Genaille family's first baseball season; a new sport in a new city. They moved to Saskatoon last September.

"My sons didn't know that I was quite a good ball player until I started practicing with them. It's amazing what makes you a hero," she says, with that ready smile. "It's quite amazing how kids think, altogether."

"My kids have made tons of friends since we've been here," says Alice. "I see a different kid at my table and I ask, 'Are you mine?' I just feed them all. I love kids."

"All in all, I'd say, generally, it's a nice life!"

"But do you know what I could use?" she says, pointing to the somewhat neutral surroundings of her office space. "I could use a little paint on my walls, some colour, any colour. Maybe that will be a graduation gift when I pass my probation period."

Whatever the colour of the walls, one gets the distinct feeling that Alice tends to view most things in living colour. □

Scrapbook



Happy is back

Raymond (Happy) Young was one of our 'Day-one Guys' who helped launch NRT on the road to success in 1986. Happy was, for five years in a row, the most amazing NRT Santa on the face of the North Pole. So it's really great to see him back on the NRT scene.

Though he was stolen away by Cameco Corporation, a little bit of his heart obviously remained with NRT. And he's been able to choose the best of both worlds. Always a hard worker, Happy works the 'seven days in' part of his Cameco mine schedule and, on his 'seven days out', he drives on the NRT team.

Since Cameco is virtually NRT's next of kin, Happy's work life is still 'all in the family'.



Like father, like daughter

Daddy's little girl seems to be getting the hang of this truck-driving job daddy does. Way to go, Ebony! Way to go, Tyson Carrier! You have the most adorable little daughter.

Capturing the North

Wendy's call for fabulous photos brought to the fore some awesome talent. The top shots this time were by:

Tom Grimsdale (x2), Raymond (Happy) Young, Brad Caisse(x2), Ken Heyer

Winning photos were enlarged, framed and presented to the photographers. More awards are on the way.

Keep those masterpieces coming!



Who is this masked woman?

She said to Marianne, "If you make it, I'll wear it" And here she is, in all her Miss Piggy splendour!

The first person to guess (and report to Wendy) who this lovely lady is will receive an NRT gift.

Caring and sharing

When the call went out for Tsunami Relief, our NRT people were there. Together, the staff of NRT, WCL and C.Gibson Holdings raised \$550, which was matched by NRT company funds.

What a great effort! ☐



Goodbye Dear Friend

At NRT, we mourn the untimely passing of Larry Powling.

Larry's experience encompassed all aspects of the trucking industry. From 1992 to 2003, he was a member of the NRT fleet, as a Leased Operator Driver for two years and an Owner Operator for the next nine. Most recently, Larry was a Traffic Supervisor on the NRT Dispatch team, bringing to the job a familiarity with product handling, mine procedure and what drivers have to contend with on a day-to-day basis.

A true man of the north, Larry spent a total of 25 years on the northern roads he loved.

He will be sadly missed. ☐