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COMMITTEE FORMED TO ADDRESS OIL-FIRED APPLIANCES

WHITEHORSE – Industry representatives in partnership with Yukon Government and the City of Whitehorse have formed the Oil Fired Appliances Advisory Committee to address issues related to the safe operation of oil-fired appliances.

Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) and the Energy Solutions Centre (ESC) commissioned an independent study on the state of oil-burning equipment in the territory following a claim from a former member of the heating industry about improper furnace operation in Yukon homes.

“YHC is interested in all home-related issues – especially when they concern safety,” Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, Jim Kenyon, said. “We are using this report as a tool to help assess the current state of oil burning equipment operations in Yukon. We are also holding meetings with industry to seek solutions and ensure furnaces operate safely.”

The results of the study indicate that some Yukon oil-fired furnaces are unsatisfactorily installed and maintained. The units surveyed had one or more deficiencies, the majority of which were minor. However, there were some cases where the deficiencies posed an imminent or potential health hazard.

The committee will work cooperatively to develop recommendations for industry and government to address any gaps in the installation and regular maintenance of oil fired appliances.

“This committee is a positive step in the right direction,” Don Fulmer, industry committee member and owner of Fireweed Plumbing and Heating, said. “We are finding problems ranging from owner-installed furnaces to poor or no maintenance on the furnaces. We are working together to create and apply solutions to keep Yukon homes safe and warm.”

“The City of Whitehorse supports the recommendations of this report,” Supervisor of Building Inspections for the City of Whitehorse, Doug Thorseth, said. “The advisory committee has been struck to develop increased awareness toward education and training oil burning appliance technicians, and to ensure continual training and enforcement by inspectors. The public can be assured of the highest level of inspection services. The City of Whitehorse will remain involved in this committee and will diligently apply the National Building Code, and related bylaws.”

Yukon government is studying options to address the matter including the potential for certification options for Yukon oil burner mechanics. Workshops are being offered to raise public awareness, and to upgrade the skills and knowledge of inspectors and members of the industry.

Yukon Housing Corporation has programs available to help with energy efficiency and the operation of heating systems. Homeowners with concerns related to their oil fired appliances can contact YHC at 667-5759 or toll free from communities at 1-800-661-0408, extension 5759. For more information visit <http://www.housing.yk.ca/>.

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