

FOR RELEASE #09-221
September 21, 2009

Employees Honoured with 2009 Premier's Award of Excellence

WHITEHORSE – Four individuals and three teams of Yukon government employees received the 2009 Premier's Award of Excellence at a special luncheon ceremony last week. The annual event honours employees who have demonstrated exceptional achievements and professionalism in the public service during the past year.

"It is clear from looking at the list of recipients that excellence and professionalism are expressed in many ways, whether through dedicated teamwork on a special and challenging project or through exceptional attention to detail and service in everyday tasks," Premier Dennis Fentie said. "These qualities make a huge difference to our colleagues and especially to the people of Yukon, whom we serve."

The individual recipients are: Marilyn Greeley, teacher-librarian at Jack Hlland Elementary School; Greg Komaromi, assistant deputy minister of the Oil and Gas and Mineral Resources division of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources; Lori Strudwick, community health nurse at the Watson Lake Health Centre; and Ellen Zimmerman, recently retired director of Human Resources for the Department of Community Services and the Yukon Lottery, Liquor and Housing corporations.

The team recipients are: the Healthy Families Yukon team from the Family and Children's Services branch of Health and Social Services; the Mobile Radio System team, composed of employees from the departments of Highways and Public Works, Justice, and the Executive Council Office; and the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods unit, made up of employees of the Department of Justice.

The Premier's Award of Excellence recognizes the significant accomplishments of Yukon government employees in providing outstanding service. Tied into the Investing in Public Service – serving Yukon people initiative, the award aims to strengthen pride in the public service, call attention to its good work and provides an opportunity to showcase individual employees' talents and teamwork.

-30-

See backgrounder attached.

Contact:

Roxanne Vallevand
Cabinet Communications
867-633-7949
roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca

Becky Striegler
Communications, Public Service Commission
867-667-8902
becky.striegler@gov.yk.ca

Premier's Award of Excellence

INDIVIDUAL RECIPIENTS

Marilyn Greeley

Marilyn Greeley has been teaching in Yukon since 1982 and has worked at Jack Hulland Elementary School since 1986 where she has served in several roles: kindergarten teacher, vice-principal, intermediate teacher, intermediate resource room teacher, learning assistant, and teacher librarian. She is known as a passionate teacher who goes the extra mile for her students to ensure they get the support they need. She served as a key member of several school and community committees, including the drama club, the Intermediate Committee, the Challenge Program, the Grade 7 Farewell Committee, the Global Community Committee, various fundraising groups and concert committees, to name a few. Nominators say Greeley always searches for the extra idea or incentive to motivate her students, which often requires a commitment of her personal time and resources.

Greg Komaromi

As assistant deputy minister of Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources for the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Greg is described by nominators as a results-based strategic leader. His contributions to the amendments of the *Quartz Mining Act* and *Miners' Lien Act* provided a dramatic improvement to Yukon's investment climate. He has delivered many initiatives in a consensus-based manner while sticking to tight timelines. His professionalism, focus on results and "can-do" attitude are highly regarded by his colleagues in government and the private sector. Komaromi is a role model for his staff and others in the Yukon government.

Lori Strudwick

Lori Strudwick is a community health nurse at the Watson Lake Health Centre. She is recognized for her strengths in – and dedication to – leadership and learning. Lori worked in oncology before moving to Watson Lake in 2002 to work as a general duty nurse at the Watson Lake Hospital. She was instrumental in supporting hospital staff in cancer care and the administration of chemotherapy. In 2005, she took on a developmental assignment as a community health nurse at the Watson Lake Health Centre, where she continued to provide oncology education and support to the staff at the hospital. Lori's leadership and her commitment to teaching are truly exemplary. Nominators say that "nurses like Lori are what Yukon needs to keep the workforce vibrant and strong and to ensure that Yukon residents get the best health care possible.

Ellen Zimmerman

Ellen Zimmerman joined the Yukon government in 1986 and retired in April as director of Human Resources for the Department of Community Services, the Yukon Lottery Corporation, the Yukon Liquor Corporation and the Yukon Housing Corporation. She held a variety of human resource roles throughout her career, working in staffing, classification, labour relations, collective bargaining and general human resource administration. She is an excellent role model and she demonstrated a high standard of public service, promoted continued improvement in management practices and fostered collaboration between departments. She demonstrated strong leadership and was known for taking a firm and straightforward approach to problem-solving, while being fair and consistent. Her former supervisors describe her as "exemplifying the model public servant, never wavering from her principles," and as someone who "worked tirelessly to ensure that all individuals were treated with respect and fairness and details were not left unattended."

TEAM RECIPIENTS

Healthy Families Yukon Team

This team is made up of employees of the Family and Children's Services branch of Health and Social Services. Members are: Brad Bell, Connie Epp, Debbie Mauch, Edie Berard, Lynda Silverfox, Bonnie MacDonald, Donna Pendziwol MacMillan, Marie-Stephanie Gasse, Inge Sumanik, Lila Nickel, Denise Sands, Anne Kennedy, Loretta Warnsby and Kristy Puururnen.

The Healthy Families Yukon team works with families facing challenges in their ability to parent. A key part of this innovative program is regular and intensive home visits, over a long-term, with up to 200 families per year. The team members work with parents to enhance the functioning of the family, to promote positive relationships between the children and parents and to support the healthy growth and development of the children. Nominators describe team members as highly skilled, passionate and dedicated, focusing their efforts on bringing long-term, positive change to Yukon families and children.

Mobile Radio System Team

This is a team of employees from the departments of Highways and Public Works, Justice and the Executive Council Office. Members are: Lisa Badenhorst, Phil Wintemute, Peter Laight, Janet Mann, Anne King and Sarah Overington.

This team was established at the request of the premier in 2007 to re-examine options for a territory-wide mobile radio system to meet the needs of emergency responders, highway workers, conservation officers, social workers and other service providers. This was a considerable challenge since the existing infrastructure was aging and at risk of failure. The team worked collaboratively and was able to negotiate two multi-year agreements with private sector suppliers. This was a project of great magnitude and, for most team members, outside the scope of their work responsibilities and experience. The team reached its goal through long hours of effort by creating innovative solutions and by working together through many setbacks and challenges.

Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Unit

This team is made up of employees of the Department of Justice. Team members are: Ken Putnam, Ryan Leef, Corinne Carvill, Jim King and Lesley Carberry.

Since May 2006, when the *Safer Communities and Neighborhoods Act* came into force, this team provided Yukon citizens with a confidential process to confront drug dealing and other illegal activities in their neighborhoods. It was instrumental in closing down one of the most notorious drug houses in Whitehorse while carefully considering options, keeping the affected neighborhood and tenants informed and working closely with other agencies. Evictions have received the most public attention, but a large part of this team's activities involved building strong relationships. Many citizens have thanked the unit for the positive impact it has had on their community. Members of the unit have been invited to several block parties to celebrate their achievements.