

NWT Mining Industry Challenges Yellowknife Election Candidates

Responses to the questions from Tim Doyle, candidate for Mayor:

The City of Yellowknife was founded based on mineral development. Due to our geography, we need to accept we are well positioned to be a mining leader above all else when it comes to development. There are very few other industries that can be developed and sustained here due to that same geography. For instance, we will never be an agricultural capital, a manufacturing destination, or a major transportation center as a main source of the economy (no rail, no container piers, etc).

In recent years, we have allowed ourselves to slip competitively as a center for mining activity. Through various levels of government we have added layers of red tape and have rolled up our welcome mat for the firms that would want to do business in the north at a time when base metal prices have been their highest ever. The ranking of the NWT as a place to invest mining dollars has been lower than many of the places that are home to the world's worst despots because we have made it too hard to mine in the NWT. In recent years we have seen some movement from the federal government to jumpstart this industry again while cutting unnecessary red tape.

From a City of Yellowknife perspective, if we do not have mining support, our city will not thrive and may in fact die. The population will shift according to opportunity and not everyone can work for the government. Government needs a tax base to run services and without business support we lose residents and government jobs will also disappear.

To help grow and sustain our mining industry we need a plan, something we clearly do not have at this time. From the City perspective we need to immediately re-establish an economic development team for all business and one that will have a responsibility to ensure we know the facts and are prepared to step to the plate and welcome business to town. This team will be tasked with working with the local business community and other groups that are interested in seeing our city grow and prosper. They will create a welcome team that can help meet any visiting company delegation to let them know what services and products we offer locally that benefit their company as well as availability of housing, local amenities

for residents, medical care, and other items of interest to delegations wishing to consider setting up shop in Yellowknife.

In phase two of the process, we need to evaluate the potential jobs and employees that could come to Yellowknife as part of the future surrounding mines of the region. If planned correctly, we can estimate how many jobs we can gain and how many we will lose through attrition of mines that are heading for remediation at the end of their production lives. This number will help us determine the proper demand for housing while we must also ensure we work closely with agencies like CMHC to see what other variables we need to understand. Follow up the planning with implementation. We can cut the red tape at city hall in our planning department and focus on allowing the private developers to meet our housing needs by streamlining red tape and the permitting process.

In phase three of this process, we need to work closely with our resident firms and find ways we can work with them to benefit most from the planned expansion of mining services in the north. In addition to cutting red tape we can look into ways of promoting our city jointly and being a partner in conferences and forums where mining development is being promoted.

In phase four, we need to control our city spending so that excessive and continual tax rate hikes are controlled. Every time we hike taxes on local business we make them less competitive globally. By increasing local development we spread the cost of living risk and limit the number of times we need residents and business to pay more.

In phase five, we must start planning a proper evaluation of road networks and transportation issues in our local city so that we can assist the business community in their ability to operate in town efficiently and without damage to vehicles from poorly maintained infrastructure. This phase also includes working with partner governments such as GNWT and the federal government as well as aboriginal governments to ensure we are all working on the same planning strategy to benefit the regions. In addition to good roads and highways we need good airport services and we need to work to reduce tolls on the new bridge, to avoid putting our region at an economic disadvantage to other areas that mining firms can invest in.

Part of the mandate of the economic development department will be to examine subsidiary industries that can operate in our region and work with the mines and their supply companies and work to establish new offices and companies into the Yellowknife area that complement our existing firms and services.

For Yellowknife to regain their spot as the hub of the north for mining activity, we will need to be open for business and that is a job that a business person such as myself understands best. Instead of taking private company services into the public domain as has been the pattern the last number of years, I will work to ensure we focus on areas that municipalities do best and allow private industry the opportunity to grow here and be competitive here. If we successfully implement a strategy such as this we will regain our spot on top and attract more business to the region. The housing development policy will allow more units to be available to the public and will help attract new people to work in the support industries at an affordable price.

Yellowknife needs a planner who can take us back onto the right path and allow us the opportunity to prosper. I believe I am the only candidate running for Mayor who believes in business and private enterprise enough to allow this to happen.

Sincerely,

D. Tim Doyle

Candidate for Mayor of Yellowknife 2012