

# Forest Industry Workshop

---

*Hon. J. Michael Miltenberger*

*October 24, 2005*

*Statement to the Legislative Assembly*

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report on the recent Forest Industry Workshop, held in Fort Providence earlier this month. The workshop on community-based forest industry development in the Northwest Territories was hosted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Experts on small-scale forest industry met with community leaders, forest industry entrepreneurs and GNWT staff. Participants learned there are many small-scale opportunities that can work well within community development needs and can be sound economic initiatives.

The workshop focused on community-based forest development and covered activities from planning and harvesting, to processing and product marketing.

The workshop was led by Environment and Natural Resources and involved the participation of Industry, Tourism and Investment, the Forest Engineering Research Institute of Canada, Forintek Canada, and the First Nations Forestry Program.

Mr. Speaker, more than 40 participants from 12 communities attended the Workshop, one of the largest gatherings since the mid-90s to discuss forest industry development in the Northwest Territories.

Response from workshop participants was positive and supportive of the approach being taken by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Participation in discussions and working groups was enthusiastic and there was definite interest in future workshops.

Topics of interest include both the details of long-term business plans, and the broadening of the area to include gathering and marketing aspects of non-timber forest products such as birch bark and sap, country foods, and florals. The Department will work to develop a better understanding of the role of cottage industries for local use. We will continue to work with communities to develop sustainable local economies based on marketable forest uses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.