

Asiniy Announcement Backgrounder

Transportation for Economic Advantage

- *Transportation for Economic Advantage* (TEA) was unveiled by Premier Lorne Calvert on March 6, 2007.
- TEA is a long-term strategy to fundamentally realign Saskatchewan's transportation network to meet the current and future needs of the province's thriving export-based economy.
- To achieve the goals of TEA, the province has committed to investing \$5 billion over the next 10 years.
- Under TEA, transportation investments will be focused in six key areas:
 - International Gateways and Corridors;
 - Urban Connectors;
 - Rural Economic Corridors;
 - First Nations Connections;
 - Regional Shortline Railways and Airports; and
 - *Roads to Prosperity* - The Northern Economic Infrastructure Strategy.

Roads to Prosperity – The Northern Economic Infrastructure Strategy

- *Roads to Prosperity* – also known as NEIS, the Northern Economic Infrastructure Strategy – was announced by Premier Calvert in 2005.
- Through this \$65 million commitment, the Province is improving access for isolated and remote communities and enabling economic development through upgraded connections to the broader provincial transportation system.
- NEIS is focused on four pillars:
 - Providing lasting employment in the north through "capacity building" that will help generate a skilled and efficient labour force;
 - Upgrading existing roads and building new infrastructure to develop a principal northern road system that serves as the core network for northern Saskatchewan and improves connections to the broader provincial transportation system;
 - Enhancing community access to the principal northern system; and
 - Forging partnerships with industry and other levels of government.
- Major projects that will be completed under the NEIS include:
 - Building new roads to Wollaston Lake and Fond du Lac, and upgrading the road to Stony Rapids to "all-weather" status;
 - Completing the link from La Loche to Fort McMurray; and
 - Improving community access roads, often the only land link to the rest of the province.

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Capacity Building and the Asiniy Gravel Crushing Partnership

- One of the primary goals of NEIS is to leave a legacy for northern residents beyond one-time projects.
- Traditionally, northerners have only been able to participate in limited aspects of larger road building contracts by supplying equipment or labour.
- A new set of guidelines has been established under NEIS to address some of the barriers that start-up companies face.
- To further the goal of capacity building, the department also works with unsuccessful bidders to help them fine-tune their submissions for future NEIS work.
- The Department has employed Project Coordinator Al Loke, based in La Ronge (306-425-4268), to work with northern businesses and communities in identifying and developing capacity building opportunities arising from NEIS.
- This past winter, Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation approached northern entrepreneurs to create a made-in-the north gravel crushing operation – not only to supply the many NEIS initiatives, but also for general highways preservation and maintenance.
- The mining industry was also supportive, saying a northern gravel crushing operation would be an asset to mining operations.
- Start-up companies were asked to partner with more established companies and explain how they would create a greater skilled work force in the North.
- Asiniy Gravel Crushing is the first partnership opportunity of its kind awarded under NEIS.
- The company will employ 20 full-time workers and will bring in qualified trades people to provide on-the-job training. Asiniy will also use northern sub-contractors and help northern logging companies diversify into gravel hauling.
- Under the partnership, Asiniy will produce 350,000 tonnes of aggregate annually for up to four years.
- The value of the work is in excess of \$20 million.