



Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment

Yukon Business Case Studies 2003:

Three Year Follow-up

Prepared by:

Jennifer Ellis

January 2003

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
I. Introduction	1
II. Methodology	1
III. Themes	3
IV. Business Case studies	
Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp.....	7
Aroma Borealis.....	9
Bean North Coffee Roasting Company	11
Birchwood Tours.....	13
Camp K-9 Pet Daycare	15
Caribou Records.....	16
Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations	18
Dakwakada Forest Products.....	19
Dawson Peaks Resort	20
Day Star Construction.....	22
Fresh From the Yukon	24
Go Wild.....	26
Harper Street Publishing	28
Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network.....	30
Jarand Building Products Ltd.....	32
Keno City SnackBar.....	33
Kwaday Dän Kenji (Long Ago People's Place).....	34
Madley's General Store	36
Midnight Sun Plant Food.....	37
Minto Resorts Ltd.....	39
Northerm Windows	41
OPpEN HOUSE	42
Penny's Place	44
Pine Valley Motel & Cafe.....	45
Second Time Around Sports.....	46
Shane Wilson Sculpture.....	48
Shannon & Mikey's Plants and Eggs	50
Sportees Active Wear	51
Swiss Bakery.....	53
Treeline Woodworks Ltd.	55
Wild n Wooly	56
Wind River Adventures	58
Appendix I: Contact List	59

Executive Summary

In April and May of 1999, the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment (YCEE) hosted a series of community conferences called "Focus on the Future – Building Sustainable Communities". To help inform community discussions and provide examples of non-traditional economic initiatives in the Yukon, YCEE prepared brief profiles of 16 Yukon businesses. The common challenges experienced by these businesses, as well as their keys to success, were highlighted in these case studies. The following fall, 18 additional business case studies were completed to enhance YCEE's understanding of sustainable development and to provide additional educational materials.

Three years later, the YCEE was interested in determining the status of all of these businesses. The Council wanted to learn about the common themes regarding successes and challenges and to share this information with others. Each of the 34 businesses profiled in 1999 were contacted and 32 of these were interviewed. Of these, four had closed their business. Another two had stopped their operation and have been identified as "dormant" as the owners may restart their business at a later date. The remaining 26 are still in operation. Individual profiles on all of these businesses have been drafted and common themes and messages identified. This report includes a summary of the themes and a profile of each interviewed business.

Summary of the themes

1. Growth in the export of products and need for marketing support

Almost every non-tourism businesses that was interviewed noted they are now exporting more of their products outside of the territory than they were in 1999. Others who are just starting to export, or wanting to do so, viewed the export market as an area with significant growth potential. In addition to wanting government financial support for marketing, a few identified a need for government staff dedicated to helping business people make contacts and learn the red-tape of cross-border sales.

2. The role of competition

In a number of the interviews, businesses referred to competition as healthy and desirable as it builds the identity of a sector and draws similar business to the territory. However, there was some concern from businesses in the tourism sector about government competition.

3. Need for targeted tourism marketing

The need for increased government tourism marketing of specific locations and aspects of the Yukon was raised a number of times. Most tourism businesses also noted a need for financial support for their individual marketing initiatives.

4. Importance of personal service

By far the greatest key to success that people mentioned was the importance of personal service.

5. Staffing difficulties for seasonal businesses

Seasonal tourism-oriented businesses outside of Whitehorse who required staff said their most significant challenge was finding people who were reliable, honest and willing to work for the wage they could offer.

6. Value of networking

Many business owners or managers highlighted the importance of connecting with others in the same sector, whether here or outside the territory.

7. Different definitions of “success”

It became apparent that profit was only one measure of success. A number of business owners were in it for the love of the work, the learning that occurred, or the lifestyle it offered. For some, they were also rewarded by their involvement in what they viewed as an important area of work.

8. Need for “buy local” policies and promotion

A number of businesses want the government to improve its local buying practices. A few also highlighted the need for an educational campaign on the benefits and spin-offs of local purchasing.

9. Value of monitoring and adapting to market changes

Watching the market and being ready to adapt has also been a key to success for a number of businesses.

10. Direct employment not only spin-off

Although many of the interviewed businesses do not have regular employees, they do hire many people on an as needed or contract basis.

11. Regulatory wrangling

A few businesses have faced regulations that have changed all or some of their business. Other businesses have felt the burden of extensive regulatory paperwork.

12. Access to resources

The lack of secure access to resources was the lead cause in two value-added forestry businesses closing down.

13. Need for dedicated staff in government

Many business people mentioned the need for dedicated staff in government to help in a few key areas: marketing advice; assistance with regulatory challenges; and general management advice for small businesses.

I. Introduction

In April and May of 1999, the Yukon Council on the Economy and the Environment (YCEE) hosted a series of community conferences called "Focus on the Future – Building Sustainable Communities". The purpose of these conferences was:

- 1) To bring together diverse community interests and individuals to discuss the economy in a community context;
- 2) To share information on sustainable economies and community development in Yukon communities and the circumpolar north; and
- 3) To stimulate discussion on alternatives to the traditional sectors of the economy.

In March 1999, 16 Yukon businesses were interviewed to provide examples for the conferences of non-traditional economic initiatives in the Yukon. The common challenges experienced by these businesses, as well as their keys to success, were summarized to inform community discussions on economic sustainability. The following fall, 18 additional business case studies were developed to enhance YCEE's understanding of sustainable development and to provide additional educational materials for other workshops on economic sustainability.¹

Three years later, the YCEE was interested in determining the status of all of these businesses. The Council wanted to learn about any new common themes regarding successes and challenges and to share this information with others.

Each of the 34 businesses profiled in 1999 were contacted and 32 of these were interviewed. Of these, four had closed their business. Another two had stopped their operation and have been identified as "dormant" as the owners may restart their business at a later date. The remaining 26 are still in operation.

This report includes individual profiles on all of these 32 businesses as well as a summary of the common themes and messages. These themes highlight the recent challenges faced by these businesses and some of the keys to success that they share. In the interviews, the businesses had also been asked about what others could do to help their business and recurring suggestions for support have been incorporated into the themes.

II. Methodology

The approach used to select the original businesses interviewed in 1999 was informal and non-scientific. The objective was to select a sample of businesses that would highlight the diversity of opportunities in the Yukon for sustainable economic development. A list of businesses was brainstormed by a sub-committee of YCEE, with input from the contractor. The businesses that were selected covered a range of sizes, sectors, locations and types (e.g. service, wholesale, manufacturing and retail).

¹ A 500-600 word profile was written for each of the 34 businesses. In addition, display boards with shorter write-ups and photos were prepared for use at the community conferences and other workshops. All of these shorter profiles can be found on the YCEE website: <http://www.ycee.yk.net/initiatives/index.html>.

In 1999, businesses were interviewed in two separate sets. The first 16 were completed in March 1999 in time for YCEE's "Focus on the Future" community conferences. The second set of 18 interviews was conducted in October 1999. Brief write-ups of approximately 500-600 words were done for each business. In addition, a number of non-profit community initiatives were also profiled in both March and October to highlight what many community people were doing to build healthy, sustainable communities (e.g. setting up community gardens, arts initiatives or interpretive centres). Overall, 34 businesses and 18 community initiatives were interviewed in 1999.

For this report, all 34 businesses were contacted again between November 2002 and January 2003. Of the 34, one declined to be interviewed and one did not return calls requesting an interview. All others were interviewed by phone for about 20-40 minutes each. The focus of the interview was to gather qualitative data on the status, challenges and keys to success for their business. Information on specific quantitative data (e.g about income and expenditures) was not sought. A list of all 34 businesses, including contact information where appropriate, can be found in Appendix I.

Each business that was still in operation was asked to describe:

- Changes that had occurred since 1999
- Any new keys to success
- Any new challenges
- Anything that others could do to help the business
- Outlook for the future.

If a business was no longer in operation, it was asked to describe:

- Reasons for closure
- Lessons learned
- Anything that others could have done to help the business
- Future prospects.

After all of the interviews were completed, the resulting profiles were reviewed for common themes and messages. These are summarized in the next section of the report.

III. Themes

Introduction

One of the key reasons for following up with Yukon businesses first interviewed in 1999 was to identify any new themes in their experiences over the last three years. The themes highlighted below focuses on messages that were raised multiple times during the interviews. However, it is also important to remember that the sample size for these case studies is quite small (32 in total) so the themes that have been identified may be unique to this group of businesses. The reader should, therefore, be cautious about drawing firm conclusions based on this sample. It is also important to read the individual case studies as some people raised issues unique to their business or sector.

1. Growth in the export of products and need for marketing support

Almost every non-tourism businesses that was interviewed noted they are now exporting more of their products outside of the territory than they were in 1999. Whether it be coffee beans, chocolate, furniture, videos, herbal products, windows, clothes or music, many Yukon products are being shipped to Alaska, Canada, the southern US and overseas markets. Businesses that were exporting back in 1999 saw a substantial growth in this part of their business in the last three years (anywhere from a 10% to 45% growth). Others who are just starting to export, or wanting to do so, viewed the export market as an area with significant growth potential that they intend to tap into. The Asian market in particular was being viewed by many businesses as their next area of expansion.

A number of the businesses that have exported their products for a few years or more once accessed the Yukon government's Trade and Investment marketing program to help fund websites, brochure development, travel to trade shows and other initiatives. While some indicated that there may be a need to strengthen the criteria and reporting requirements of such a program, everyone said it was extremely helpful program that should be reinstated. One person remarked that the program gave him the equivalent of a ten-year kickstart. Businesses new to the area of exporting also voiced a need for support. In addition to wanting financial support for marketing, a few identified a need for government staff dedicated to helping business people make contacts and learn the red-tape of cross-border sales.

2. The role of competition

In a number of the interviews, businesses referred to competition as healthy and desirable. In the cultural industries, one person noted "the more the merrier" as they felt it was a benefit if the Yukon or a particular community became known as a mecca for musicians and artists. In addition to attracting other successful people who work in this sector to the Yukon, they believed it also increased the quality of life and encouraged many others to both live and visit here. A log builder noted that Prince George had become renowned for log building after someone from the area wrote a successful "how-to" book on the trade. Afterwards, more people set up their log-building trade in this area and the sector grew. A few people noted the same can happen here in a number of sectors such as winter or eco-tourism, natural health care, cultural industries or log building. One person suggested government and the business community should look at what is successful here and find ways to build on further on that success. Focusing on many small businesses in a sector, he felt, was preferable to supporting one large employer.

However, there was some concern from businesses in the tourism sector about government competition. Some government initiatives were seen to be in direct competition with private initiatives. One government activity promoted marketing of individual operators which was seen to undermine the booking agent aspect of one private business. The Yukon government's tourism publication *On Yukon Time* was considered direct competition with another privately produced tourism guide. On the other hand, a previous tourism business owner argued that there was a strong need for government to help promote the Yukon's attractions even if it meant competing with a few private initiatives. She felt it was important for a variety of products to become known in order to attract new markets and make the Yukon a destination of choice. The other booking agent, however, felt government should not provide marketing for individual products or packages but should focus on increasing awareness of general facts about travel in the Yukon.

3. Need for targeted tourism marketing

The need for increased government marketing to attract tourists was raised a number of times. However, many of the businesses that rely wholly or substantially on the influx of tourists to their area noted a need for government to increase its marketing of specific areas or aspects of the Yukon. Whitehorse, Dawson, Keno, Old Crow and Haines Junction were all identified as in need of improved marketing as a tourist destination. One operator also wanted to see government place more emphasis on the wilderness attractions in the Yukon and another highlighted the need to strengthen marketing of cultural tourism opportunities in the Yukon. A number of people accepted that more attractions were needed in many of these areas to help draw in tourists in the first place. One recognized that this was a bit of a chicken and egg situation as competitors were needed to help increase the profile of an area, but a currently limited market made competition difficult to survive.

Most tourism businesses noted a need for financial support for their individual marketing initiatives. Some also highlighted a desire for government to provide expert support on both marketing and other small business management issues.

4. Importance of personal service

By far the greatest key to success that people mentioned was the importance of personal service. For retail outlets, this means spending one-on-one time with the customers and responding to their needs. For tourism businesses, it means the owners spending time directly with the visitors and not leaving that to other staff. Even when marketing high-end art, personal contact with the artist was noted as a way to increase the likelihood of a sale.

5. Staffing difficulties for seasonal businesses

Seasonal tourism-oriented businesses outside of Whitehorse who required staff said their most significant challenge was finding people who were reliable, honest and willing to work for the wage they could offer. A couple had even been robbed in the last few years by staff. Limited housing in one community was an additional cost and challenge as the owner had to open her own house to her staff. To deal with this issue, one person was intending to approach the College to explore the option of setting up practicums for their tourism and culinary program students.

6. Value of networking

Many business owners or managers highlighted the importance of connecting with others in the same sector, whether here or outside the territory. Existing and new organizations like the Yukon Apparel Design Association, the Yukon Holistic Health Network, or the Recording Arts Industry - Yukon

Association were identified as providing a venue for learning from others in the same field. These groups also are mechanisms for highlighting and providing access to the services offered in the particular sector. One person noted some of the umbrella tourism organizations need to improve their approaches to networking to take into account the high cost of travel to meetings for rural members. A couple of business people also participated on boards or committees outside the Yukon to learn from others and to keep on top of trends and changes occurring in their field.

7. Different definitions of “success”

Attempting to determine if businesses were still successful three years after their first interview highlighted how “success” can be defined very differently. It became apparent that profit was only one measure of success. A number of business owners were in it for the love of the work, the learning that occurred, or the lifestyle it offered. For some, they were also rewarded by their involvement in what they viewed as an important area of work, such as cultural industries, holistic health care, or fair trade products. While putting in 12 hour work days, sometime seven days a week, might not be a lifestyle many people would take on, for many small business owners it was just part of the package. Other who made their principle income at other work did not consider this as a sign of failure but just part of what a Yukon business owner must often do to survive.

8. Need for “buy local” policies and promotion

A number of businesses want the government to improve its buying practices. Whether it be coffee beans and baked goods for government meetings, packages of bath products for government gifts, or windows for government buildings, Yukon businesses felt there was more room for government and other organizations to improve their local purchasing practices. In some cases this would mean giving local businesses more time and opportunities to gear up – or partner up – to fulfil requirements for large orders (e.g. for hats or jackets for large events). As one person noted, “local” meant buying in the community you were in. In her view bringing donuts from Whitehorse to a community with a bakery did not measure up as buying locally.

A few also highlighted the need for an educational campaign that would highlight the many benefits and spin-offs of local purchasing. This should include products that are sold here, not just made here. For example, one business owner explained that buying a car in the Yukon has the benefit of local service and also the spin-off of jobs for Yukoners. Additionally, Yukon businesses often sponsor community events and donate to groups. On-line and out of territory shopping do not provide these spin-offs and benefits.

9. Value of monitoring and adapting to market changes

For most tourism-oriented businesses, September 11th significantly impacted their operations in the following year. However, most have managed to weather the decline in business by anticipating and planning for the impacts. For example, one retail business cancelled orders for high-end items in anticipation of a decreased interest in luxury goods. In addition to adaptation and hard work, diversifying and offering new tourism products and packages was recognized as key to tapping into new markets. European travelers were most often mentioned as a market for expansion.

Watching the market and being ready to adapt has also been key for a number of non-tourism businesses. The opening of Walmart and presence of other chain stores has led some businesses to drop products that these larger stores can bring in cheaper and to focus on other customer needs.

Some noted they visit these competitors to get a good sense of the prices they offer and of product quality. A community grocery store is shifting its focus to providing more fresh goods instead of the bulk items other stores supply more cheaply. A used sports equipment store only takes on higher quality brand name items that the chain stores do not supply.

10. Direct employment not only spin-off

Although many of the interviewed businesses do not have regular employees, they do hire many people on an as needed or contract basis. Part-time staff are hired for special events, tours or courses. Contractors are hired for writing, bookkeeping, publicity, graphic design, snowmobile tours, or to play music. When looked at individually, the impact of a business's extra hiring and contracting is small. Collectively, however, the generated impact is far more significant.

11. Regulatory wrangling

A few businesses have faced regulations that have changed all or some of their business. In one case, a bacteria scare with sprouts in southern Canada led to the creation of health regulations that caused a successful local sprout business to completely change the focus of its business. In another, a locally developed non-toxic bug repellent has been pulled off the shelves as it tries to deal with the same federal regulations that a major pesticide company has to deal with. Another can no longer use vacuum packaging for smoked salmon which limits sales outside of the territory.

Other businesses have not had to change their practices significantly but have felt the burden of extensive regulatory paperwork. One mentioned the difficulty of meeting the reporting requirements under the *Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act* and others highlighted the challenges of exporting products outside of the country. A few of these impacted businesses identified the need for government to provide support to small businesses to help them through these hurdles.

12. Access to resources

The lack of secure access to resources was the lead cause in two value-added forestry businesses closing down. In both cases, federal government delays in permitting and moving to a long-term tenure program made it impossible for the businesses to plan for the future and secure clients. Another business loss a notable portion of its income with the related closure of the mill in Watson Lake.

13. Need for dedicated staff in government

As already noted in a number of the theme areas, many business people mentioned the need for dedicated staff in government to help in a few key areas: marketing advice; assistance with regulatory challenges; and general small business management advice. A few of these people also indicated that they felt "bumped about" when they called with questions or in need of support and would like a clearer access point. Although the service they needed may have been available, they did not find it.

Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp

Contact: Marge and Peter Kormendy

Location: Yukon River, south of Dawson City

Started: 1997

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp is a cultural eco-tourism camp 27 miles south of Dawson on the Yukon River. The camp offers weekend and eight-week programs for Yukon youth, designs custom packages for tourists, and hosts salmon barbecues in the summer evenings. The owners also organize workshops on topics like traditional medicines, fish smoking or drum making. The longer youth programs, contracted by Social Services, occur in the spring and fall, with tourism being the focus in summer and winter. The two owners run the business full-time with lots of support and help from their extended family. Staff are hired on an as needed basis.

Changes since 1999: Ancient Voices continues to offer many of the same services as when it first started. However, a dwindling economy and September 11th have contributed to a slow-down in business in the last few years. Additionally, the number of youth programs they deliver are declining as government has reduced its funding in this area. Last summer a group of surveyors made Ancient Voices their base as they surveyed First Nation lands. This helped supplement the decline in other areas. As people are changing the way they are travelling – fewer bus tours, more RV travellers – Ancient Voices is exploring how they can adapt to this change. Currently, both owners also have full-time work elsewhere.

Keys to success: The beauty and location of the site continue to be the business' greatest asset. Marge believes they have built the area into a special place that touches the spirit of their clients. Clients have a personable and memorable experience and often plan a return trip as a result. Offering a diverse range of services (e.g. workshops, cabins, saunas, hiking trails, salmon barbecues, boat trips and charters) makes the business more resilient. The owners also recognize that building relationships with the bus drivers and guides is key to getting part of the tour business so they offer these people complimentary

tickets when they integrate Ancient Voices' salmon barbecue into their tour itinerary.

Challenges: In the last few years, the client base for Ancient Voices has been changing. The decline in bus tours to Dawson City has been replaced by more independent travellers. However, RV travellers tend to stay close to their home on wheels and fewer people are doing river trips. As it is European travellers who are most interested in the cultural product Ancient Voices offers, the decline in this market since September 11th has been a challenge. More targeted marketing to this sector is required but that requires significant time and resources which are both limited. There needs to be an increase in the number of attractions to draw people to the Yukon and Marge believes there is room for growth in cultural tourism. However, in a slow economy, competition over a small market base can also be detrimental. Marge noted that one option is to do more marketing in partnership with other businesses and possibly to combine services and offer an appealing, packaged product. The biggest challenge, however, to growing the business is the difficulty of finding and keeping skilled people in a seasonal business. The Kormendy's have found it difficult to get dedicated staff with the necessary cultural knowledge as these people can generally find year round employment elsewhere.

What others could do to help the business:

Building a new business requires a consistent base income to enable reinvestment and growth. It is very helpful when government hires a business to deliver a service, such as the youth programs. However, there is seldom any assurance that this part of the business will be consistent from year to year. This makes it impossible to plan and take risks in other parts of the business. So when government contracts a small business to deliver a service, Marge believes it needs to be on a longer-term basis. Too often the delivery of cultural programs is viewed as a "pilot" project even though there is a track record that they are effective. The need for consistency in resources is also needed in other areas such as funding for marketing as marketing is a multi-year undertaking. It would also help if government placed more emphasis in its own marketing efforts on the cultural tourism opportunities the Yukon offers as this is becoming an increasing draw to the territory. Government can also perhaps play a role in facilitating the development of marketing partnerships among businesses. Tourism

associations such as the Tourism Industry Association can help with this partnership building but they need to recognize that many rural business can not afford to travel to their meetings. New, less expensive ways of networking are needed. This concern also applies to the cost of training courses offered by the Yukon Tourism Education Council. New approaches and partnerships are needed to help overcome the financial barriers for small, individual businesses.

Future Outlook: Ancient Voices is currently reassessing the direction it will take in the future. It plans on launching a new website very soon and also sees an opportunity to reach out more to the Yukon River travellers who paddle by their doorstep on the way to Dawson. Though they already get some clients from this market, there is definitely an opportunity to increase the number of people who will stop for the pleasure of a bed in a cabin and a relaxing sauna so near the end of their river trip.

Aroma Borealis

Contact: Bev Gray

Location: Whitehorse

Started: Wholesale started in 1995, store opened February 1998

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Aroma Borealis is a retail store with a wholesale component. The shop sells a diverse number products made primarily from Yukon grown or wild harvested plants (teas, body care products, and jams, jellies and vinegars). About 5% of sales are to the BC and Alaska markets. The shop also sells non-Yukon products such as tinctures, vitamins, essential oils and other self-care products. In addition to keeping the owner, Bev Gray, and her family busy, the shop employs one full time and on part-time employee.

Changes since 1999: Business for Aroma Borealis has continued to grow over the last three years. The most notable growth has occurred in their exports as sales outside the territory now represents at least 20% of the business. In Ontario alone, there are over 20 people they wholesale products to. Bev has just completed a special line of four new teas for a tour company owned by the Burrard Inlet First Nation in BC. In addition to the two owners, there are now three full-time employees and one part-time. Two of these work in the manufacturing side of the business and there have been about 60-70 new products added to Aroma's inventory as well as some "do it yourself" kits (e.g. for making bath balms or salves). Bev has stopped working in the store during the summer months and is dedicating this time to working on workshops on herbs for health and for food. She is also working on a field and medicine-making guide on local herbs.

Keys to success: One of the keys to the continued growth of the business is that all of the marketing tools have been integrated. Aroma's marketing now includes a website, a full-colour catalogue, store promotions, advertising. Educational materials and workshops also help with sales. For example, Aroma has free "herb-a-list" and "aroma-ther-a-list" booklets for customers so they can learn about the various herbs in the store. Free local and national media coverage has been a real

boon to the business. Her export market is something that has developed through this media exposure, word of mouth, gifts that Yukoners have sent out of the territory and from people who have come into the store while visiting Whitehorse. Bev says the key to success is providing the best service and product, with integrity.

Additionally, owner Bev Gray is a founding member of Yukon Holistic Health Network which encourages people to adopt a natural health lifestyle and draws like-minded people to the community. Bev also sits on a national committee that is looking at Health Canada's new regulations for health products. This networking is important and helps her keep on top of regulatory developments so she can determine which direction to take her business.

Challenges: As Bev noted, "We grow, we harvest, we manufacture, we educate, we retail, we wholesale. This is both a blessing and a challenge." The amount and diversity of work means they need dedicated staff who can work hard and juggle many balls. Bev says she is better at hiring people and has clarified her expectations. Misinformation in the media is another challenge as sensationalist cures or fears create myths and impact people's health. She is constantly counteracting these misconceptions. Another

significant challenge has been on the regulatory front. Her successful herbal bug repellent has been pulled off the market as Agriculture Canada is treating it as a pesticide. They want a study of its contents (at a minimum cost of \$37,000) even though Bev, a registered herbalist, has done a chemical break down of all of the contents and how they interact. She is hesitant to pursue further work on *Buzz Off* as it would mean a significant investment of time and energy, something a small business owner can't afford. If Health Canada also develops onerous regulations Bev said she "won't play" and may shift her business focus to delivering workshops and helping individuals make their own products.

What others could do to help the business:

Wading through regulatory requirements presents a large challenge and is time consuming. The Yukon government could provide staff resources to help small businesses address these challenges.

Government can also support small, local businesses by buying locally more often and consistently (e.g. gift packages at events) and by listing local businesses in departmental newsletters and other publications. Additionally, it would be helpful if government included more small businesses on its trade missions, especially to Alaska.

Future Outlook: The future direction of the business will largely depend on the scope of new regulations. Bev intends to increase her focus on education (writing, workshops, product development) and, if regulations are too onerous and energy consuming, this may become a substantial part of the business. There are a number of other ideas for growth which Bev is also considering. For example, she may build her production of teas by investing in a "tea bagger".

Bean North Coffee Roasting Company

Contact: Jennifer Groot,

Location: Whitehorse (rural)

Started: 1997

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Bean North is a coffee business that roasts and sells “Fair Trade” coffee. Fair Trade coffee is an alternative way of doing trade as it skips the middle person allowing coffee growers to get more money for their product. It is also based on growing the product in a sustainable manner. All of Bean North’s coffee is organic, though not all of it is certified. Bean North is owned by four people, two of whom work for the company (one full-time, one part-time). They retail and wholesale their coffee primarily in the Yukon but about 15% of the sales are to customers in western Canada, the U.S. and even Scotland. Local retail sales are delivered to the buyer’s doorstep.

Changes since 1999: The same four partners continue to own Bean North but have expanded to take on one more full-time person as their business has steadily grown in the last three years. Their sales outside of the Yukon now constitute about 60-70% of their business as the appeal of Fair Trade products in Western Canada has steadily grown. They are now a part of a North American wide Fair Trade co-operative which increases the range of products they can buy and reduces their shipping costs. Coffee continues to be the mainstay of their business but they carry a few other Fair Trade products as well.

Keys to success: Jennifer believes good communication among the partners has been key to Bean North’s success. At the outset the partners committed to the business as well as to the relationship with each other. They took the time to predefine the steps they would use to resolve conflict and have successfully referred back to these steps to work through some issues. Once or twice a year, Bean North representatives travel to coffee conferences to network and to take skill-building courses. Client feedback continues to be an important part of keeping in touch with market needs and desires.

Challenges: The challenges of financial management experienced by most businesses are a part of life at Bean North although Jennifer feels that their learning in the last three years has made them better at anticipating their future needs and possible changes. For example, they have learned to build up financial buffers to help them avoid tight spots. Bean North recommends other new businesses should make sure they have enough money to start up and a big enough personal credit line to draw on until profits can be made as banks are not very supportive in the first three years or so. Bean North managed to secure financing in last few years to help their business expand its inventory and buy new equipment.

What others could do to help the business: At one time, Bean North received a matching grant from a Yukon government fund to help them successfully market their product for export. Jennifer believes this fund should be reinstated as it was very helpful and, while business needs to be able to stand on their own, it helps to have small, additional support available from time to time. Bean North would also like to see the Yukon government strengthen its support for buying local products for its own use and to promote others to do the same.

Future Outlook: Bean North has put an addition on their shop and will soon be opening up a café at their location on the Takhini Hot Springs Road. Even though it will only be open Saturdays for their first winter, the café will provide a break from coffee roasting. It will also mean the roasting end of their business will be open to the public. To prepare for their café opening, one staff member went to work at a café in town in order to

build her espresso skills. Jennifer said they will also bring in more Fair Trade products to sell at the café. But coffee roasting will be continue to be the mainstay and steady growth is anticipated. They are getting a new roaster soon and are reviewing their practice of door-to-door delivery. Although this connection with their clients is rewarding, the service is also very time-consuming.

Birchwood Tours

Contact: Lael Lund
Location: Whitehorse
Started: 1997
Status: Active

Description in 1999: Birchwood Tours has worked with “in-bound” agents in Vancouver to customize a winter “Northern Lights” tour package that focuses on meeting the interests and level of comfort of its primary target market, Taiwanese tour groups. The company also packages tours for independent travelers. One of the two business partners, Lael Lund, works full-time for the company and additional staff are contracted to help out on a tour by tour basis. The other partner owns the hotel that the tour company operates from which helps keep overhead costs for the business low.

Changes since 1999: Birchwood Tours has experienced continued growth in the last three years and has also undergone two significant changes. Once a partnership, Birchwood is now solely owned. Additionally, the business was moved from Watson Lake to Whitehorse for both personal and business reasons. The long drive from Whitehorse to Watson Lake was a deterrent for many of her Taiwanese clientele and it also added to the cost of her product. The move to Whitehorse made the company more competitive. Birchwood’s Northern Lights tour now primarily involves three nights in Whitehorse. Watson Lake trips continue to be offered for group bookings but not to individual travellers. Birchwood hires tour guides and others on an as needed basis and also contracts out parts of the tour if necessary (e.g. for an afternoon of snowmobiling). At most, she will have four people working at a time.

Keys to success: Success for Birchwood is all about establishing and maintaining relationships with buyers of their product. Owner Lael Lund travels overseas annually to a Canadian Tourism Commission trade show and also hosts buyers when they visit the Yukon. Additionally, a group of agents visited the Yukon last year, along with a media contingent, and were shown how Birchwood operates their tours. This “fam” tour doubled Birchwood’s numbers last year, even in the wake of September 11th. Because of events

like September 11th, Lael also believes a key factor to success is keeping on top of the market and being willing to adapt, to change a program if needed, to discount prices if that is what it takes to be competitive.

Challenges: Birchwood has continued to concentrate on the Taiwanese market which provides focus and takes advantage of a strong knowledge of the clientele. However, the lack of diversification also increases vulnerability to market changes so Birchwood is starting to broaden its product and market. It is trying to introduce a summer tour but finds it difficult to compete with the rest of Canada and the many well-known attractions. Lael believes the key is to develop a theme that is unique to Northern Canada and the natural phenomenon (e.g. themes on fall colours or the midnight sun). People have also coached her that she needs to expand into the Japanese market. However, taking this step requires learning a new market and understanding the needs of a new client group. It also requires significant marketing resources. She is also aware that her main Yukon competitor already targets Japan. Another challenge for Lael has been working on her own as she soon realized that she was the “bottom line for everything.” However, her best friend is “focus” and she feels that she is just coming into her own as she understands the business, the market, and the distribution system.

What others could do to help the business:

Birchwood feels the Yukon government has been offering services that directly compete with its business. The government's website promotes tour packages and Tourism kiosks provide inexpensive space to individual operators, allowing tourists to directly book with an operator. This competes with a portion of Birchwood's "upsale" business where they book short tours or activities for tourists already in the Yukon. Individual operators are less likely to use a booking service like Birchwood if government is offering a cheap service with lots of marketing power behind it. The government should spend its time on building awareness of the Yukon as a destination and less time on promoting packages and individual operators.

Future Outlook: Birchwood will soon be launching on an online vacation planning tool that will focus exclusively on Yukon products (e.g. accommodations, RV rentals, tour packages, day trips, self-drive tours). The website could also provide more links to relevant information (e.g. links to sites about Kluane Park or articles on how to deal with bears). All the product information and pricing would be on the site with online payment options and a downloadable application form. Birchwood is also exploring opportunities to expand more into "learning travel" by organizing tours around an interesting topic (e.g. First Nation history, northern lights). Lael sees room for continued growth for her business and for the winter tourism field in general. Also, she believes the Yukon government's anticipated marketing plan for Asia will be helpful.

Camp K-9 Pet Daycare

Contact: Mary Motley

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1999

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Camp K-9 Pet Daycare is a daycare for dogs that is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the week. After a dog has passed an initial 'interview' by the daycare owners, people can drop off their four-legged friends for all or part of a day, without advanced booking. Camp K-9 can accommodate up to 40 dogs in the facility's play room, puppy room and three outdoor pens. Owner Mary Motley also does dog grooming and runs obedience training classes in the evenings in the winter. The business has recently started retailing dog food, treats, toys and other equipment.

Changes since 1999: Although Camp K-9 was run as partnership for a while, the business is now solely run by Mary Motley as the other partner decided to move on to other things. Mary hires a part-time employee on an as needed basis to help with the ongoing workload of grooming, obedience training and the pet day care. The business has grown and generally runs at full capacity. On one of her busiest days she had 34 dogs using the daycare services.

Keys to success: Much of Mary's success is based on her ability to care effectively for people's pets. Word of mouth and positive references provide the bulk of her advertising. She also advertises in the Whitehorse Guide so that tourists travelling with their pets can find her.

Challenges: Mary's days are longer now that she is running the business on her own but she likes having direct contact with all of her customers. She added that it is difficult to find employees who are suited to working with the animals.

What others could do to help the business:

Mary is self-sufficient in her business and could not identify anything others could do to support her continued success.

Future Outlook: Mary anticipates the business will continue as it currently operates and has no plans to expand or change Camp K-9.

Caribou Records

Contact: David Petkovich

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1994

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Caribou Records is a record label company that promotes, develops and distributes recordings by Northern musicians. The business is owned by two Yukoners who typically approach musicians to enter into a recording deal. Promotion of the artists is done world-wide.

Changes since 1999: Caribou Records has released 6-7 albums since 1999 and garnered a Juno nomination. In the process, they have gained a high national profile and are now getting interest from artists across Canada who would like to be on their label. A fully operational website allows sales through a local music store and is a helpful marketing tool. However, Caribou partner, David Petkovich, said getting their artists out on tour is seen as the most important investment in marketing and many more tours have happened in the last three years. The same two partners own Caribou records and they now have one employee to help with the co-ordination and administration. Many people are also hired on a contract basis for recordings (e.g. musicians, graphic designer, artists or photographers, a publicist). As all profits are reinvested in the business, both partners have other work to provide an income for themselves.

Keys to success: Recognition of Caribou's label is due to ongoing work to improve the quality of the recording and overall there is a higher level of workmanship for the whole product. David noted that the success of the recordings has created spin-off business for one of the partners recording studio. For example, two bands from the US will be coming o the Yukon to record their next album at the studio. Tourism Yukon has also recognized the value of using Yukon musicians as part of their promotional events outside the territory and the recording company often schedules a tour for its musicians to coincide with such events. Other

funds for touring are raised by proposal writing. Caribou Records has also gained "Direct Board Approval" status from the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Records (FACTOR) as one of Caribou's artists sold over 25,000 albums. This status means that Caribou's applications for FACTOR loans or grants for production, marketing or touring of artists go directly to the board and bypass the jury process.

Challenges: David explained that finding a place to sell Caribou's recordings is becoming more difficult as chain stores are cutting back on the size of the inventory they have on hand. Caribou artists are more likely to be found in "Mom and Pop" stores and speciality stores. The website is another tool to overcoming this distribution challenge. However, bringing people to the site is an added challenge. One way is to get the DJs to announce it when they play a song. This is a common approach in Australia and the payoff can be seen in the sales on the website. David highlighted that time and money are both limitations to Caribou's growth. Maintaining an inventory and making a new recording requires a substantial financial investment. However, banks do not consider a large inventory of recordings to be adequate collateral for loans. "High risk" loans from non-chartered banks (e.g. Dana Naye Vanture or Business Development Canada) involve high fees and interest rates so they are not worth pursuing.

What others could do to help the business: In the past, a government loan program helped Caribou get started. The loan was repaid but the program is no longer available so Caribou finds its growth limited. David noted that the previous Trade and Investment Fund also helped Caribou establish a website and attend trade shows but this program is also no longer available. In the music industry, there is about an 18-month window of opportunity to market a recording and arranging the upfront investment of sending out 300-400 CDs to get airplay is challenging. Government could share in the risk of marketing the product as Yukon musicians do so much more than just market their music. Tourism Yukon staff told David that one Globe and Mail article on a Caribou recording artist was equivalent to tens of thousands of dollars of advertising space.

Government has to recognize that sound recording is a cultural industry and an economic generator. The potential behind this industry is significant and it provides high-skilled jobs on a number of

levels, with many spin-offs. It is a product that is primarily exported and the sales from recordings provide income for many years. Further, support of cultural industries also supports a quality of life for the community that makes the community an attractive place to live and to visit. The level of investment government needs to make to be a catalyst in this industry is very small, yet critical.

Future Outlook: In the coming month, Caribou Records will be doing a 2-3 year planning process to decide where it wants to go. The options are to wind it down, maintain the status quo, or secure new investors to help it expand 3-5 times its current operations. In the meantime, it is also setting up a showcase of three Yukon artists in February at the Canadian embassy in London which will be followed by a tour. Although it didn't do music videos as planned three years ago, Caribou Records will be doing "electronic press kits", CDs that provide samplers, biographies, live performance, and interviews with the artist.

Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations

Contact: Kenny and Patti Tetlich

Location: Old Crow

Started: 1994

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations has five rooms and two shared kitchens. In addition to the owners who do the bookings, pick guests up at the airport, and manage the finances, there is one part-time employee who cleans the rooms.

Changes since 1999: There have been few changes for Ch'oo Deenjik since 1999. The business is now run by the two owners without any assistance from employees. Their clientele continues to be primarily government employees, technicians and trades people, with a small increase in tourists. Recently a new bed and breakfast opened in Old Crow which means Ch'oo Deenjik is competing for a very limited clientele base.

Keys to success: Continued shuttling of clients to and from the airport and keeping the rooms clean helps Ch'oo Deenjik maintain its clients. Kenny and Patti have also placed ads in a few tourism guides although the degree of effectiveness of these ads is still uncertain. A new computer has been purchased to help with email bookings and an eventual website.

Challenges: The September opening of a new bed and breakfast in town has been the newest challenge for Ch'oo Deenjik. In addition to offering breakfast again, Kenny and Patti also decided to drop their rate to be more competitive. The other significant and ongoing challenge is that the number of tourists coming to Old Crow is very limited and the town needs something to attract more visitors. Kenny would like to offer boating trips on the Porcupine as one attraction but insurance rates are a significant barrier to starting this aspect of the business. An additional challenge to growing the business is the difficulty

in securing financing (e.g. for renovations or upgrading) as Ch'oo Deenjik is on band land so they don't hold title to it. Dana Naye Ventures is their only real option but it would be helpful to have competition in this area.

What others could do to help the business:

There needs to be a collective effort to draw more tourists to Old Crow. For example, the Vuntut Gwitch'in First Nation (VGFN) and its development corporation can help to promote more tourism. VGFN is putting up a website that will advertise all local businesses and this will be helpful. Air North is also doing some marketing to get tourists to come up which should create positive spin-offs.

Future Outlook: Ch'oo Deenjik's future plans include increased marketing through a new website and pamphlet for the tourism market.

There are no plans for expansion although Kenny is still interested in building the outfitting side of the business (e.g. dog sledding and boat trips).

Dakwakada Forest Products

Contact: Jackie McBride-Dickson

Location: Haines Junction

Started: Truss plant was started about ten years ago. Dakwakada Forest Products started in January 1999.

Status: Closed

Description in 1999: Owned by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, the truss plant in the Junction manufactures floor and roof trusses for the Yukon, Haines and Skagway markets. The First Nation recently set up Dakwakada Forest Products (DFP) to log, process and manufacture Yukon timber. DFP employs 28 people, including the plant which now falls under its umbrella. DFP is logging about 15,000 cubic meters this year and buying another 15-20,000 cubic metres from other Yukon loggers.

Changes since 1999: Dakwakada Forest Products (and the truss plant) stopped operating in June 2001 and officially closed in April 2002. DFP had manufactured some flooring and “northern lights” siding using the beetle killed wood. These popular items sold until 2001. The people in the community also learned a lot about logging and one became a qualified grader (DFP had the first graded lumber in the Yukon). There is still a planer mill, saw mill and kiln in Haines Junction.

Reason for closure: The lack of access to wood led to DFP’s closure. Although forest management planning had been done for the area, the federal government never followed through on commitments to provide long-term tenure which DFP needed in order to secure financing, investors and markets. Additionally, even shorter term Commercial Timber Permits were slow to be issued and often came at the wrong time of the year. DFP needed a guaranteed supply of raw materials, at enough volume, before they could guarantee suppliers in the south the product. A predictable supply was the only way DFP could plan for the future.

Lessons: Jackie McBride-Dickson feels it is not always the best for business to put things out for consultation to the community. If you are going to empower people to do a professional forest management plan, you must have time to educate

people. She felt that, as the wood was going to waste from the beetle kill, there was not time for this education in the Haines Junction area. However, she also feels government placed blame on the environmental community for its inability to issue tenure and she is uncertain about the validity of this claim. Her lesson has been to not “believe it until you have it in writing”.

What others could have done to help the business: The federal government needed to make long-term tenure available for the forest industry.

Future prospects: If tenure is made available Jackie said Dakwakada may look at starting up again. There is a possible proposal to sell back energy to Yukon Energy from a wood chip waste generator which would help to fund a mill. Additionally, DFP’s earlier market research shows there is still a market in Alaska for finished lumber, primary cants and packaged homes. Packaged homes from Ft. Nelson go by Haines Junction’s door on their way to Alaska and this is a market Jackie feels DFP could tap into. Additionally, China is seen as an open market but accessing it would require a substantial volume of supply. However, Jackie believes the quality of the beetle-killed wood in the area has deteriorated so much that access to green wood would be needed to supplement the harvesting of the dead wood.

Dawson Peaks Resort

Contact: David Hett and Carolyn Allen

Location: East of Teslin

Started: 1988

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Located seven miles east of Teslin, on Morley Bay, Dawson Peaks Resort has a 72 seat restaurant, 3 cabins, 2 wall tents, 26 campsites and a gift shop. It also provides canoe and boat rentals and fishing charters. Next door is a gas station which the Dawson Peaks owners run on a low key basis. In addition to David and Carolyn, the resort keeps four staff busy in the summer.

Changes since 1999: In the last three years, Dawson Peaks owners David and Carolyn have increased the scope of their business by adding an eight unit motel, putting satellite TV in the cabins and arranging entertainment every second Saturday in the main lodge. Growth of the business has exceeded expectations and they now have the equivalent of 5.5 staff, including themselves.

Keys to success: The success of Dawson Peaks is largely based on the welcoming personalities of the owners who continue to meet virtually everyone who visits the resort. David and Carolyn have invested their hearts in the place and they work to ensure people have a friendly and memorable visit. Their reputation for good service and good food has increased along the Alaska Highway and customers who stay on their way north generally stop again on their way south. They also have customers return year to year. A notable boost to their profile occurred when their mystery writer Sue Henry, a personal friend, wrote a novel that features Dawson Peaks and its owners (using their real names) in the concluding chapters. Last summer they sold 192 copies of "Dead North", many of which they were requested to autograph. Knowing they will get a good story, other travel writers have also stayed at Dawson Peaks. David and Carolyn also hosted one of the annual Visitor Reception Centre staff retreats at the opening of the season. Showing

these staff a good time – including other attractions in Teslin – helped increase the likelihood that these front-line tourism staff would recommend Teslin's local opportunities to travellers.

Challenges: The greatest challenge David and Carolyn face is finding reliable staff who will stick with the business. David is considering approaching Yukon College to see about setting up a practicum to provide tourism and culinary program students with the opportunity to get some practical experience. The downturn in the tourism market has also been a bit of a challenge. To address this issue, David said they are looking at drawing more on the Whitehorse market – both for weekend getaway packages and as a place for hosting meetings and workshops.

What others could do to help the business: The significant increase in propane prices is a burden for small businesses and is out of proportion to prices in northern BC towns. The higher Yukon prices cannot be attributed to transportation costs. Government subsidies or other financing mechanisms should be explored. On the positive side, government business has been a benefit for Dawson Peaks as government staff travelling to the communities may stay or eat at the resort and last year a road crew spent over two weeks at their place. This business is an important source of income.

Future Outlook: There are no plans for further expansion at the resort; the focus will be on finishing and upgrading their existing facilities. The recent addition of a motel unit means that Dawson Peaks now has enough beds to host a bus tour overnight and they expect their first next season. However, David and Carolyn's marketing focus will be on increasing the number of Whitehorse visitors and to promote the use of the resort for conferences and workshops. A trip to Europe this spring to visit friends will also be

used as an opportunity to promote Dawson Peaks as a destination to a few tour wholesalers. Although David and Carolyn can currently serve beer and wine with meals, they are considering getting a liquor license which would allow them to have a small bar. This would work well with their music nights. Next year they will be getting a phone line to the resort which will save both the owners and visitors a trip to town to make a calls, receive faxes, and check email.

Day Star Construction

Contact: Dan Reams

Location: Watson Lake

Started: 1983

Status: Dormant

Description in 1999: Day Star's speciality is building custom, hand scribed, log homes. In addition to constructing local homes, Day Star builds and ships log homes to places in North BC and to Whitehorse. The company also does traditional frame construction. Owner Dan Reams hires 1-4 employees seasonally, depending on the market.

Changes since 1999: Day Star's last log home was constructed in 1999 and owner Dan Reams has had to put the business on the back burner, possibly on a permanent basis. Although he has done a few construction-related contracts in the last few years, Dan has mostly worked for others both in and out of the Yukon in order to make a living. Dan sold off his crane and band saw mill, keeping only the hand tools. However, Dan is again working in the log building field. He taught a log building course for Liard First Nation in February 2002 and is now managing LFN's log home building company and training its employees.

Reasons for Closure: The lack of access to building logs, due to government forest management practices, and the downturn in the housing market led to the closure of Day Star. The frustration of dealing with the government permitting and management practices contributed to Dan's decision.

Lessons: Dan misses the opportunity of involving his children in his work as he believes they learned important work habits and skills. However, he is enjoying the new niche of working as a trainer and sees future opportunities in this area. Although training additional log builders and helping to develop someone else's log building company could be seen as working against the

option of reopening Day Star, Dan doesn't see it that way. He described the example of how Prince George became well-known as a source of quality log built homes simply because an author of a renowned log building book resided there. Other log builders sought him out and started moving to the area. The log building reputation of the region grew which drew both builders and clients to the area. He believes that Watson Lake could develop a similar reputation given the chance. Dan noted Yukon wood is good to work with and log homes are a very value added product, creating many more jobs per tree than a mill. Competition also results in a high quality product and should be viewed as a benefit, not a detriment.

What others could have done to help the business: The most important steps government can take to help his business and others is to provide certain and consistent access to quality logs and to stop exporting raw logs. He hopes that devolution will help achieve this as he believes that everyone supports value-added forestry at some scale. It should be a priority to provide access to logs to value-added manufacturers. Additionally, Dan sees a need to resolve land claims to provide certainty and add a level of confidence to the forest industry. Finally, in BC log building has become a recognized trade and Dan has been talking to the apprenticeship branch in the Yukon's Department of Education about

doing the same for the Yukon as he believes it would make the industry more professional and build its credibility.

Future Outlook: Dan sees a couple of options for the future. One is to continue to his work in the field as an instructor as other Yukon and BC First Nations have expressed an interest in training their members. If log building becomes a trade here, he would also work to get his journeyman ticket. However, if opportunities to do more teaching don't develop, Dan is also considering

restarting Day Star as it is possible to get logs in the area again. He would have to line up a house buyer or two before making this commitment and he is uncertain if the local market is currently there. He believes there is a significant market in Alaska and overseas but it would take time and resources to link into this potential. Additionally, it is also difficult to financially take this step as the logging has to be done many months before a home will be constructed. He needs logs on hand to secure a client which means spending money long before any will be made.

Fresh From the Yukon

Contact: Werner and Maria Walcher

Location: Whitehorse (rural)

Started: 1996

Status: Active, but completely changed

Description in 1999: Fresh from the Yukon is an organic sprout growing business. The two owners and one part time employee harvest sprouts twice a week and sell the eight different types of sprouts to restaurants and grocery stores in Whitehorse.

Changes since 1999: The only thing the same about this business is its name and its owners. About three years ago, a scare about harmful bacteria in sprouts in southern markets led to a drop in sales and a change in regulations. These changes required the organic sprout seeds to be soaked in chlorine for 10 minutes and for the product and water to be tested regularly. After a long hard look at reality, the Walchers decided the sprout business was no longer viable. They decided to keep the business name but turned their video and photography hobby into their business. They now produce media for websites and promotional videos for different organizations. They also produce videos for the public market such as a documentary video about the Carcross to Atlin mail run by dog sled. Additionally, they sell Yukon film footage to buyers both in and out of the territory. About 20% of their current market is for export.

Keys to success: The Walchers continue to apply many of the same keys to success that helped them in their sprout business. The important part is to serve the clients and respond to what they like. Initially, Werner acknowledges that they came out too fast with their product, before they had sufficient knowledge of their clients' needs. Courses offered by the Yukon Film Commission have helped them tackle the steep learning curve and, in addition to drawing on the expertise of the instructors, the courses have helped Werner and Maria build connections with people working

locally in this field. They find the local film community willing to share both time and knowledge. This has been critical as the Walchers learn the ropes and develop their business.

Challenges: In this industry, Werner explained that you need to know all of the stages, from taking pictures to editing to sound, before your product can come together. And you need to find a market. Fresh from the Yukon specializes in winter footage which gives it an edge as few competitors are willing to spend the time camping and filming in the cold. An additional challenge is that most local organizations do not have the financial resources to pay for video production. At times, the Walchers have exchanged services instead of money for their product. Werner described how they once provided a short video to a winter event in exchange for use of helicopter time during the event. The organization got a promotional video and Fresh from the Yukon got other footage they can sell elsewhere.

What others could do to help the business: Government support of promotional activities for other initiatives has positive spin-offs for Fresh from the Yukon as it provides them with potential clients. For example, the Walchers worked on promotional materials for the Peters Drury Trio. Dawson's short film festival is another example of how a government-supported activity has provided their business with useful exposure.

Future Outlook: The owners of Fresh from the Yukon see a lot of potential growth for the future in both commercial production and the art side of the business. They plan on doing more CD production, media for websites and eventually DVDs. As they grow, they may contract out some of the aspects of production, such as editing, but they do not anticipate hiring staff directly. They may also need some financing in the future to

purchase more equipment as this high tech industry requires high cost equipment. The Walchers see the export side of the business increasing as the interest in dog sledding and snowmobiling is large, particularly in Europe where it is considered exotic. These markets will eventually be able to access Fresh from the Yukon footage through a website.

Go Wild

Contact: Darielle Talarico

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1998

Status: Closed

Description in 1999: Go Wild provides two services. It delivers soft adventure eco-tourism activities such as day trips in the Whitehorse area or heli-hiking trips. Go Wild also acts as a booking agent for tour operators which typically involves designing and selling a package of activities provided by other tourism businesses. The business covers the Yukon, Western Arctic and Southeast Alaska. It has a storefront in downtown Whitehorse which provides a starting point for walking tours and a retail outlet for t-shirts and other northern products. In the summer, in addition to the owner, Darielle Talarico, Go Wild employs about 3 people. In the winter one part-time employee helps Darielle keep the business going.

Changes since 1999: Go Wild closed its doors at the end of the summer of 2000. Owner Darielle Talarico said the business was not making enough money to make it sustainable.

Reasons for closure: Darielle realized that there was not enough volume of business at the time to make it work. Being off of Main Street made it hard to draw in customers for the retail portion of the business. Additionally, the 10-15% booking fee Go Wild charged for the tour packages it designed and/or delivered was not enough given the number of bookings. Darielle did not attempt to sell the business. She believed the business was not viable at the time without the additional subsidies and resources a non-profit could raise. She approached a group that already organized daily hikes in the Whitehorse area to suggest they take it on. However, the group chose not to do this.

Lessons: Darielle felt that the tourist market was not developed enough at the time for the service she was offering. In part, this is because Whitehorse is not seen as a destination so people tend to pass through and do not access day tour packages. She believes there needs to be more marketing to position Whitehorse as a place to explore; there also needs to be enough services

and products to draw people in. She even supports government promoting bookings with individual tour owners as government has the resources to help Whitehorse develop into a destination. At this time she feels that the tourism sector needs to be more visionary and worry less about internal competition.

What others could have done to help the business: Darielle noted that when she went to seek business advice it was unclear where to go. However, she said that she needed people with sound business advice to help her think straight and believes a lot of other businesses are in the same boat. An opportunity to have a one or two day "sit down" with knowledgeable people in their sector would be very helpful for small businesses. She also noted her business would have benefited from the revitalization of the waterfront. Instead of being a tourist draw, she views the White Pass building as a dead zone as it contains non-profit organizations that do not draw people to the river area. Filling it and the neighbouring fire hall with craft stores, boutiques, entertainment activities and/or a restaurant would make it active and alive. Government needs to change its policy about who it will rent space to in all of the waterfront buildings to allow for commercial use.

Future Prospects: Darielle is applying her knowledge of the tourism sector in her position as a strategist with the Department of Business, Tourism and Culture. Her private and public sector experience leads her to believe that the market for the services Go Wild once offered will increase as there will be more independent travellers. Although she thinks similar businesses will be viable, and she just tried it too early, she has no plans to reopen Go Wild.

Harper Street Publishing

Contact: Greg Karias

Location: Dawson/Whitehorse

Started: 1994

Status: Active

Description in 1999: The main focus of Harper Street Publishing is the annual publication of the tourism-oriented newspaper, *Guide to the Goldfields*. The *Goldfields* combines advertising with stories and information on northern wilderness, wildlife, history and modern living. The distribution and market area includes Northern B.C., Yukon Territory, Western Arctic, and Alaska. Harper Street also has several smaller publishing contracts and it publishes the *Dawson City Insider* seasonally (it also used to publish the *Horse's Mouth*). Anywhere from three to seven employees work for the company. As its owner, Greg Karias, is moving from Dawson to Whitehorse so is the main office of Harper Street Publishing.

Changes since 1999: In the spring of 2001, Greg Karias decided, for personal and lifestyle reasons, to reduce his business by about half. He stopped the desktop publishing and office service portion of his business, closing the Dawson office and selling the electronic files and equipment. He continued on, however, with the publication of a travel guide. Previously known as the *Guide to the Goldfields*, Greg publishes the *AlaskaYukon.com Travel Guides* in both English and German (about 135,000 were published last year in total). Last winter, Harper Street also published its first Japanese language guide (15,000 copies) which has helped to position it as a multilingual publisher. After a hiatus, Greg published the *Dawson City Insider* again for about a year but stopped due to a lack of time and motivation. Harper Street has two people working on commission to sell advertising and contracts out bookkeeping and the writing as needed. The owner spends much of his time on the road building his market and distributing the guides. In 2002 he covered about 57,000 km. in his car.

Keys to success: Greg believes that selling off part of his business was a positive move as it allowed him to focus his time and energies on the travel guide. His product and sales have both improved as a result. He expects next year's sales

to be about 30% higher than last year's, mostly in Alaska. Harper Street is also starting to distribute the guides in RV stores and a backpacker-oriented store in Oregon and Washington. Distribution in these new venues opens up advertising sales to a new set of businesses. Greg also has a website which includes a substantial amount of information on both the Yukon and Alaska (in German, Japanese and English). This information primarily helps with ad sales in Alaska as people can see what he has to offer.

Challenges: In addition to downsizing so he could enjoy life more, Greg has also started using a bookkeeper to deal with his financial records as he acknowledges he was terrible at it. As with many other tourist-oriented businesses, September 11th was a blow to the travel guide business. Greg stopped advertising sales and decided to take the winter off, starting up again the following spring.

What others could do to help the business: Greg would like to see the Yukon government stop publishing "On Yukon Time" as it is direct competition to *AlaskaYukon.com Travel Guides*. The government tourist publication provides the same type of content, free listings for businesses, and has a similar distribution. In the past, Harper Street used the Trade and Investment Fund to

assist with translation costs which was a great help. Greg would like to see the fund restarted, perhaps with some tightening of the rules. He would also like to see government buy more advertising as they have in the past. In the last season, the only YTG ad was placed by the Yukon Liquor Corporation.

Future Outlook: In three years, Greg expects the circulation for his English guide to increase to about 150,000. He still has plans to publish a high-end publication for the German market and needs to find someone there to work with. The

market for the Japanese guide is still uncertain. Airlines are exploring direct flights from Fairbanks to Japan which would help with sales but he will also need a solid number of businesses to invest in advertising. In the future, he hopes to have others doing the distribution so that he can travel less – and then only for sales, not distribution. He would like to go to North American trade shows to sell own publication, and to promote other businesses while there. Finally, Harper Street may go to a full-colour publication to help deal with the competition.

Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network

Contact: Jane Vincent and Trevor Braun

Location: Whitehorse (rural)

Started: 1998

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network is really a number of businesses under one umbrella. In the winter, the "Huski Joring" side of the business involves skijoring (skiing with dogs) tours and instruction. In the summer, the "Yukan Canoe School" offers canoeing courses and trips. Located on the Annie Lake Road, Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network also designs and manufactures skijoring and mushing equipment. From time to time the duo works with some of the Outdoor Education courses in the schools.

Changes since 1999: Overall, business for Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network has grown in the last three years. Their "Yukan Canoe School", which represents about 60% of their income, has been very busy. The last season for the school was double the pace of the two previous years. Jane and Trevor's move to their own property at Mendenhall subdivision has helped the canoe side of the business as they are now much closer to the Takhini River where most canoe courses take place. Sales of their mushing and skijoring equipment has slowly increased, particularly in Alaska. However, the ski joring side of the business has mostly been on the back burner as Trevor has been working with a dog sledding tour company the last few winters. Time limits have also prevented him from doing outdoor education classes.

Keys to success: The Yukan Canoe School gets a lot of new and repeat customers largely based on their reputation for providing a personable and high quality service. Word of mouth continues to be their best advertising. Jane and Trevor also hand out questionnaires at the end of each course to ensure they keep on top of client needs and learn of any concerns. Trevor noted that the Adventure Network is finding a niche in the mushing equipment business as they supply a few products that are not readily available elsewhere.

Their comparatively low mark-up and low Canadian dollar also help in their sales. They have sent emails to Iditarod and Quest mushers to raise the profile of their equipment business.

Challenges: Limited time due to house building, a growing young family and employment elsewhere has been the biggest challenge to growing the business. Like many home-based businesses, balancing work and family life is also an ongoing challenge. Dealing with the import and export of supplies and equipment is another challenge as transportation and shipping costs are outrageously expensive and the paperwork is extensive. Jane and Trevor had planned on doing a website and video with support from the now defunct government's marketing fund. However, they felt pressured by government to do a marketing plan and ended up spending the funding on a contractor whose plan was incomplete and did not address the business' needs.

What others could do to help the business: Tourism Yukon's marketing needs to showcase the Yukon environment and its uniqueness in a down-to-earth manner, without getting into the gloss. Trevor finds the department unwelcoming unless you are an operator with large volumes and a flashy product. He would like to see them provide one-on-one support to small businesses to

help them with their marketing plans and other business concerns. The Adventure Network had two programs advertised last season on the Tourism's kiosks but the ads didn't generate any queries. Trevor thinks the kiosks might need revamping and perhaps might be better off being in locations outside of the visitor reception centres.

Future Outlook: The Adventure Network expects continued growth and the owners may hire another part-time staff to help them out next season (in the past, other instructors have been hired as needed). Jane and Trevor are considering looking for partners like Air North to offer a packaged canoe school product to people in

Alberta and Yellowknife. They are also trying to get an innovation grant to help develop a unique headlamp for mushers. In a winter or two, ski joring tours and instruction might be offered again if Jane and Trevor can build up adequate resources and clientele. Keeping in better contact with past clients is also in the plans. Jane and Trevor tried a free paddle day and barbecue for clients at the end of one season but the last minute organization resulted in a low turnout. They will put more planning into the next one and will also be sending out an electronic newsletter and other bulletins to past clients.

Jarand Building Products Ltd.

Contact: David Kalles
Location: Watson Lake
Started: 1976
Status: Active

Description in 1999: Jarand Building Products currently has three main areas of business. It sells and installs sealed glass units, manufactures trusses, and makes lathe and dunnage. The lathe, or “stickers” as they are also called, are thin strips of wood that are usually placed between every few rows of lumber in a stack. Dunnage, which is used under the lift of lumber, is a 2 x 4 with a groove to hold metal strapping. Although they are the newest part of the business, the lathe and dunnage now represent about 70% of its cash flow. In addition to owners David and Alice Kalles, Jarand Building Products employs 2-3 employees on an as needed basis. Tom Cove is also working in partnership with Jarand on the lathe and dunnage part of the business.

Changes since 1999: Jarand Building Products continues to provide the same products it did in 1999 with the exception of the dunnage (due to the closure of the local mill). David is selling lathe on his own as the planned partnership did not come to fruition. The lathe is now sold in bulk to an outlet in Whitehorse and these sales represent about a third of Jarand’s business. Custom cut glass and trusses continue to be supplied to the local market in Watson Lake. However, a slow local economy means Jarand only employs one or two people periodically, primarily in the summer. Currently, the owners are not drawing a salary from the business.

Keys to success: Keeping a careful handle on the finances, and being realistic about cash flow, is what keeps Jarand Building Products in business. David believes keeping an eye on how he can meet local needs is also another key. For example, he will be expanding his glass business to include windshield crack and chip repairs as he believes here is a notable potential for this locally.

Challenges: Previously, it was easy for the business to get the fibre it needed to produce lathe as it came directly from the mill Jarand was contracted to supply. Once the mill closed, David

bought left over wood from Dawakada Forest Products which had also closed in Haines Junction. This has given him a supply source, but he also needs to move the lathe to recoup the up front cost of the wood. David has been to Alaska a few times to investigate sales opportunities there. He sees the border as a big barrier, particularly with soft lumber as there is now a duty of 28%. However, even with the duty and transportation costs, he believes he can provide a competitively priced product to Alaska.

What others could do to help the business: David sees government’s main role as helping local, value-added manufacturers secure markets for their products. He would have liked to have been on the last trade mission to Alaska and hopes that there will be another opportunity to do this in the future.

Future Outlook: In addition to his plans to expand lathe sales into Alaska, David will soon be taking a short course on how to repair windshield cracks and chips. He has purchased the necessary materials and will be offering this new service in the spring of 2003.

Keno City Snackbar

Contact: Mike Mancini

Location: Keno City

Started: 1996

Status: Dormant

Description in 1999: The seasonally run snackbar is located across from the Keno City Museum. Its owner is the sole staff for the restaurant, although he gets occasional help from family.

Changes since 1999: The last three years have been slow for the Keno City Snackbar due to both a slow down in tourist traffic and the start up of other eating places in the area. He did not get a liquor license as intended as the hotel opened a beer parlour. Additionally, owner Mike Mancini would have had to upgrade his own building. Financial losses are leading Mike to reassess whether or not he will open next summer.

Keys to success: Mike worked to draw in more people from Mayo by offering specials. His pizza has been a good draw although now another restaurant in Mayo is offering pizza as well. The snackbar had put on a buffet for Visitor Reception Centre staff who visited Keno which helped strengthen the word of mouth advertising that the snackbar relies on. Mike also expanded his menu by adding baked goods. However a new bakery in Keno is providing stiff competition in this area.

Challenges: The presence of new competitors in the area has been Mike's biggest challenge. He has also been unable to invest his scarce resources in the necessary advertising or highway signage. However, if people make it to Keno they often come in to his business.

What others could do to help the business:

Increased government marketing of Keno as a tourist destination would be helpful. Mike would also like to see the tourism marketing fund reinstated. Finally, road maintenance last year between Mayo and Keno was the worse Mike has seen in years and caused some tourists to head back south after they got to Mayo. The road should be maintained full-time to help the community.

Future Outlook: Mike is doubtful he will open next summer although he is not ready to call it quits altogether. In the future, he might open for a shorter season, just at the peak times. He may still pursue getting a beer and wine license as this would draw in people from Mayo for a relaxed evening. He also finds European tourists expect this service. Mike believes the area has a great potential as a playground for Yukoners as well as tourists and he has considered the idea of doing a Bed and Breakfast instead of the snackbar. He is not currently interested in selling the place as it is his home as well as business.

Kwaday Dän Kenji (Long Ago People's Place)

Contact: Harold Johnson and Meta Williams

Location: Champagne area

Started: 1995

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Located on the highway between Whitehorse and Haines Junction, Kwaday Dän Kenji provides interpretive tours through a "live" outdoor museum made up of First Nation pre-contact shelters, caches, hunting traps and a post-contact trapper's cabin. Fees are charged for the tours. Tea, bannock and crafts are sold to raise further revenues. The camp is run by Harold and Meta, with occasional help from their daughter. Other staff are also hired for special events held at the site.

Changes since 1999: Meta and Harold have been steadily expanding the number of buildings and services at Kwaday Dän Kenji (Long Ago People's Place). A long house has been completed and bus or tour operators can now pre-book special traditional meals for their clients. They also have a new traditional shelter which people can camp in overnight. A meadow area is being developed into a camping area as they get a number of cycle tours, as well as individual cyclists, staying there. They have also added an A-frame to house staff who are hired for special dinners and events. Harold has also guided some overnight hikes in the area. Finally, they have a portable camp (such as a pole house, deadfall trap and fish trap) which they have taken to other special events as an extension of the business.

Keys to success: The increasing focus on pre-booked tours is helping the business as the drive-by traffic has been an unreliable source of clients. The main thing, according to Harold, is that you have to be enthusiastic about what you are doing and persevere. He and Meta both have a passion for the history and culture they are learning about and sharing. This is what keeps them going.

Challenges: Road construction on their doorstep last year caused a significant drop in business. The relocation of the Alaska highway means the site will be five miles off of the highway starting

next year. Harold figures that as people are already coming from miles away, a few more miles won't make a difference. However, he plans on putting up more signs to direct highway travellers to Kwaday Dän Kenji. Another challenge in the area comes from the dump which is a mile from their site. It attracts wildlife and they end up spreading garbage into the woods (the electric fence is not running). Two break-ins last year have also caused headaches for Harold and Meta as they must now pack up everything of value at the end of the year and bring it back for the new season. They would like to do more marketing but both time and money are currently limited.

What others could do to help the business: Government used to host "Fam" tours for agents in the tourist industry which work well and Harold would like to see more of these happen as they are good exposure for small business. He would also like to see government implement a campaign to get tourists to slow down and spend more quality time. Finally, he wants the dump moved further from their place particularly as the number of users have increased dramatically in the last few years and the garbage situation is getting worse.

Future Outlook: Harold recently secured a trapline not far from Kwaday Dän Kenji. They are planning on linking the two together to provide

interpretive hikes and winter excursions along the trapline, using Kwaday Dän Kenji as a base. They would also like to use their business to host special events and workshops on specific topics. They need to increase their client base. In addition to developing a website, Harold and Meta will be

contacting Holland America to try to get their buses to visit Kwaday Dän Kenji. Harold has some smaller items he still plans to build for the site such as a skin boat, a grouse snare, bows and spears.

Madley's General Store

Contact: JC Mitchell, Manager

Location: Haines Junction

Started: 1986

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Madley's General Store is a full service grocery and hardware store. In addition to a range of groceries, including a deli, fresh meat, and fresh produce, Madley's is home to the post office and CIBC banking services. It is also the local agent for NorthwTel and cablevision services. Madley's also produces and sells smoked salmon and will custom smoke fish for people who have been successful in their fishing. The winter staff of 12 people expands to 18 or so in the summer season.

Changes since 1999: The main change for Madley's came in June 2002 as the owner moved out of the territory and a new manager came on. However, business continues to operate along the same lines, selling hardware and groceries. As cablevision is not available in the community, Madley's no longer acts as an agent in this area. A change in packaging regulations has impacted the smoked salmon sales as they can no longer use vacuum sealed packages. This limits Madley's ability to sell this product outside the territory.

Keys to success: JC said their main focus is to be consistent for the community. Although the tourist traffic in the summer is important to their business, it is the year round clientele they need to service. Accordingly, Madley's is focusing more on building a loyal community by supporting local activities through donations and sponsorships. JC has also had to get winter staff to diversify their activities as they cannot afford to have people who only work in one part of the store (e.g. bakery or deli). His staff are keen which is important to making the business work. He is looking at implementing a benefit plan, through the local Chamber of Commerce, to help keep staff. JC also goes to annual showcases hosted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers to keep up on trends in the industry and to find new items for attracting customers. Madley's

has upgraded their scanning equipment to keep up with customers' expectations for quick service.

Challenges: On ongoing challenge of running the business is dealing with increasing overhead costs, namely heat and electricity. At the same time, the new Walmart (and anticipated new Superstore) are affecting Madley's as people are buying more of their bulk products in Whitehorse and using Madley's as more of a convenience store for fresh goods. JC is being more careful in his buying and merchandising to help deal with this change. He says he has to be sure what the customer wants is available and also to provide good service, cleanliness, and consistency. He has also cut back on advertising to save money.

What others could do to help the business: JC would like to see the winter tourism market increase and knows that Klwane Park and the Chamber of Commerce recognize this as well. Government can help the village and Chamber to "beautify" the town to help draw in people. Any economic growth that the Yukon government can promote will be beneficial for their business.

Future Outlook: There are no short-term changes planned at Madley's. JC believes the hardware portion of the store needs more focus and offers the greatest potential for future growth especially if the population starts to grow.

Midnight Sun Plant Food

Contact: Herbie Croteau

Location: Faro

Started: 1993

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Midnight Sun Plant Food manufactures a plant food supplement for indoor and outdoor plants and gardens. The business is currently developing a product to help lawn growth. The main force in this family run business is its president and CEO, Herbie Croteau. Until her death in June 1999, Joan McCurry was Vice President and 49% shareholder in the business.

Changes since 1999: The last three years have seen Midnight Sun Plant Food fluctuate in size. At its peak, the company had nine employees, including Herbie's two sons, working in the warehouse, bottling plant and office. At the moment, the operation is back down to just its owner although Herbie anticipates bringing on another 5-7 people in the new year to gear up for next season's orders. The number of outlets selling the plant food has increased significantly and it is now carried in a number of Canadian chain stores. It is also in Fred Meyers in Washington and Oregon on a test basis. Catalogues of many of these chain stores also advertise Herbie's product. In January 2001, the plant food was certified as organic. Herbie has also successfully tested it on lawns and now markets it as a food for lawns well as for plants and gardens.

Keys to success: Getting free coverage on a number of national CBC television programs such as *Venture* and *Country Canada* has really helped to raise the profile of Midnight Sun Plant Food. Herbie also continues to spend a lot of time working the phone and making personal contacts to help increase the number of outlets that carry his product. Perseverance has been key to his survival. He also believes it is important to respond to customer feedback. For example, in response to comments, he redesigned the plant food bottle, improving the label and adding a

measuring cup. Although he offers to reimburse dissatisfied customers, he has never had a return. A new bottle filling machine and other improvements to equipment has more than tripled his daily production capacity.

Challenges: Last year, sales were well below target due to poor weather for gardening across the country. Instead of selling an anticipated 40 pallets, only 14 were sold. Herbie also ran into some difficulties with promoters from Edmonton who made big promises about finding shareholders to back him. However, after spending money on corporate lawyers to review the proposal, he realized it was a bit of a scam and did not proceed. Marketing his product is also a challenge as he doesn't have the resources to do this. He tries to get free media coverage where possible and uses his website to help with sales. Getting organic certification was also a time consuming process which took nine months and a lot of paperwork. After passing a \$1200 test, however, the product was certified and Herbie hopes this helps sales.

What others could do to help the business: Herbie supports the government providing grants for things like marketing and would prefer continuation of grant programs rather than tax cuts. He received government support in 1993 and 1994 to help him attend a trade show and drum up business in north BC and Alberta. He

continues to need assistance to help him increase his marketing.

Future Outlook: Herbie believes the market for Midnight Sun Plant Food will continue to expand. If the test goes well with the product in selected Fred Meyers stores, then sales will be expanded into other states. He also has 24 salespeople from Excel Garden Products marketing his product in the US and is in the process of trying to expand into the Japanese market by working with the Japanese External Trade Organization (JETRO). Three Japanese businesses have indicated to

JETRO that they are interested in ordering and selling Midnight Sun Plant Food. Herbie is also looking at the Chinese market after a Chinese businessman contacted him about expanding into that country. The businessman learned about Midnight Sun Plant Food through a *Forbes ASAP* magazine story about the Yukon business. In the next few years, Herbie would like to offer larger bottles for his product for the lawn and garden market. However, he needs to increase his sales before he can invest in the production of a new bottle.

Minto Resorts Ltd.

Contact: Pat Mitander

Location: Minto

Started: 1987

Status: Active

Description in 1999: The main focus of Minto Resorts is its bus tour lunch facility, a six-sided gazebo that sits 100 people. A cold buffet with hot soup is served in the gazebo to many of the bus tours traveling the north Klondike Highway. The resort also has a 30 site campground, an RV dumping station and a small office building. Numerous RV caravans make Minto one of their stopovers. The business is now wholly owned by the Selkirk First Nation.

Changes since 1999: Starting in 2000, Minto Resorts has been leased from Selkirk First Nation by Pat Mitander. However, little else about the business has changed in the last 2-3 years as the new operators have focused on learning the ropes. For the first month, the outgoing manager stayed on to provide training. More recently, Pat Mitander has tested the market for cabin rentals by fixing up an existing one on the property for overnight guests. Although Holland America initially cancelled its contract with Minto, due to the uncertainty of who would be running it, these tour buses are again the mainstay of the business. However, business was down by about 30% last year due to a corresponding drop in the number of buses.

Keys to success: Pat has had a steep learning curve and has benefited from sticking to what was working for the past owner and manager. This has allowed her to get a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges. She is also learns from other tour operators who come to Minto by bouncing ideas off of them. The Milepost is her only paid display advertising although she also invested in some rack cards in her first year of operation. Providing quality food to a lot of people in a short time is what keeps Holland America coming back.

Challenges: The greatest challenge for the new operator has been the uncertainty of the lease with

Selkirk First Nation. Currently, it is renewed on an annual basis, often late in the year, which makes it hard to plan for the next season or to invest resources in long-term improvements to the site. Pat is negotiating a ten-year lease with the First Nation in order to provide the certainty she needs to make the business grow. A lease is also needed to get a liquor license which would help attract the European market and likely interest bus tour passengers as well (an earlier liquor license lapsed in the transition between operators). Pat has had some struggles with Holland America initially as the company made their passengers pay for their own lunch and many chose not to buy anything. Now the bus company buys lunch for each passenger which makes meal planning easier. However, there can be a significant delay in payment for these meals, a hardship for Minto's cash flow. Additionally, there is uncertainty in the number of buses that will come each year. Last season, numbers dropped significantly and Pat found she had hired too many staff. Communications need to be improved to avoid this in the future.

What others could do to help the business: Pat would like to see government do more to prevent people from camping outside of organized campgrounds (such as chain off gravel pits, post signs about fines for illegal camping and provide enforcement). She has seen anywhere from 5-35 people staying in two places near Minto. One of

these sites is owned by Selkirk First Nation and the proposed ten-year lease gives Pat the right to enforce no camping at the nearby Minto landing or to make people pay a campground fee.

Future Outlook: If a ten-year lease is signed, Pat has a number of ideas for expansion she will begin to explore. She would like to get away from being so dependent on Holland Americas business. The success of renting the one cabin – 12 nights in the first season without any advertising – has encouraged her to plan on fixing

up other cabins on the property. Pat sees potential growth in the European market and would like to give them more to do when they are here. She thinks there is room in their schedules to add in other activities such as four-wheeler tours on the nearby historic Dawson Trail or by taking the boat tour to Fort Selkirk which another business runs from the campground. This might encourage people to stay an extra night. Pat also plans to get a website up and running once the lease is secured.

Northern Windows

Contact: David Borud

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1985

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Northern manufacturers windows, doors and hermetically sealed glass units. Unlike most window manufacturers in other jurisdictions, Northern is also involved in retail sales of its products and installation. The business employs 15-17 people on average.

Changes since 1999: In the last three years, Northern Windows has seen a steady increase in sales and now employ 20-21 people. This wholly owned First Nation business continues to produce a range of window products and has adopted new technology and equipment designed for efficiency.

Keys to success: Manager David Borud attributes the increase in sales to a number of factors. Yukon Housing's Green Mortgage program has led to an increase in demand for energy efficient doors and windows. Northern has also benefited from a number of energy efficiency upgrades in larger buildings in Yukon communities (e.g. schools, administration buildings, health centres). A notable factor has been the economic boom in Inuvik and Southeast Alaska. Northern is always keeping on top of the changes in technology in the industry and improving its product accordingly. For example, new equipment optimizes glass usage to create less waste when sheets are cut for window production.

Challenges: David is optimistic about the future of the Yukon economy the role Northern will play in the supply of energy efficient building products. He did not identify any current challenges.

What others could do to help the business:

David would like to see Yukon Housing adopt the Yukon government's local Business Incentive Program. Currently this program provides eligible Yukon businesses with a 15% rebate at the end of a project that has been identified as a Business Incentive Project. Although NWT's housing corporation implements a similar incentive program for its projects, Yukon Housing currently does not.

Future Outlook: Northern's operation in Anchorage is about to move into a building three times its current space and they may need to expand the Whitehorse facility to accommodate expected continued growth. David sees investor confidence in the Yukon strengthening and believes there will be more investment in the resource sector in the future. The resulting new housing starts will be beneficial for Northern's door and window business. Northern will also continue to focus on the renovation market and aging housing stock in the territory.

OPpEN HOUSE

Contact: Diane Oppen Farynowski

Location: Haines Junction

Started: 1993

Status: Active

Description in 1999: OPpEN HOUSE retails adult and teen clothing. Its main outlet has been the garage of Diane Oppen's home but she occasionally goes on the road to sell her clothes at festivals and from halls or homes in other communities. Last summer, Diane also sold her clothes through the Raven Hotel shop, "Raven Memories."

Changes since 1999: Summer sales of OPpEN HOUSE clothing have increased through the store at the Raven Hotel. This has allowed Diane to cut back on the hours of sales from her home outlet during the summer months. For the rest of the season, she is open on weekends or by appointment. As she now works part-time, Diane is unable to get away for road trips to the communities. However, the sales at Raven have replaced the sales she used to make from visiting other communities. Nonetheless, she does sell to many outside of Haines Junction as her client base is loyal and, once they've shopped at her place, they often continue to order from her. Diane finds herself becoming a more personalized shopping outlet as people call her requesting specific items and her buying is increasingly aimed at suiting some of her individual customer's styles and sizes.

Keys to success: Diane's taste in clothes is fundamental to the success of her business. Her products tend to be unique and are personally handpicked. She also brings in a variety of items – from high-end sweaters or dresses to more casual and less expensive items. The variety and constant change in stock keeps people coming back. She tries to stay away from fads and goes for classic styles with sizes that will fit a broader range of people. The flexibility of her hours and the personalized service also help to build a loyal clientele. Some Yukoners have continued to order

clothes by email from OPpEN HOUSE or, after talking with these clients, Diane will package up a box of clothes she thinks they will like and send it off. They return the items they don't want but inevitably keep many others. Digital photos have been a great tool for making sales to clients in Alaska and the south. Diane is considering doing youth fashion shows again in the community as they are a good way to get local exposure and make sales.

Challenges: Stocking enough sizes is likely the biggest challenge for Diane. As she is a small buyer from a rural community, some of the agents allow her to buy only one or two items. This allows her to have the variety; however, it is not worth her while to stock a full range of sizes for each item. If a customer wants a certain article in a different size, Diane will try to get it. Often she is successful, but many wholesalers only stock a set amount early in the season and may be out of the product by the time she tries to order more.

What others could do to help the business: Diane would like to see the Chamber of Commerce encourage or remind people about the importance of small speciality businesses and how they can only survive if they are supported on a regular basis. People like having diverse products available in their community but these businesses need ongoing support in order to survive. Additionally, she would like government to focus

more on supporting the community they are in, not just the Yukon. For example, bringing donuts from Whitehorse for a meeting in the Junction does nothing to support community-based businesses.

Future Outlook: Diane has no plans to expand OPpEN HOUSE as she wants to keep it to a manageable size. However, based on the growing

popularity of her personalized approach, Diane is toying with the idea of broadening the service she offers to include advising on “wardrobe makeovers” (i.e. telling someone what they should keep, discard, and add).

Penny's Place

Contact: Sandy Trerice

Location: Pelly

Started: 1997

Description in 1999: Located half way between Whitehorse and Dawson on the North Klondike Highway, Penny's Place is a take-out restaurant and a gift shop called "Neat Stuff". The popular stop, named after the owner's dog, provides ice cream, hamburgers, fries, hotdogs, milkshakes, espresso drinks, unique gifts and more to both regular and one-time road travellers. The outside eating tables are surrounded by imaginative flower pots and decorations. In addition to the owner, Penny's employs two full-time and two part-time staff from May to September.

Changes since 1999: Although her business has grown steadily, the number of staff at Penny's has remained the same and Penny's owner, Sandy Trerice, also works full-time at the nearby Selkirk First Nation store. However, operations have become more efficient over the years. A couple of years ago, a 50-seat outdoor gazebo was built at Penny's Place to help draw in bus tours. A website has also been developed although Sandy doesn't think it has helped her business and she has not had the time to keep it updated.

Keys to success: Sandy tries to keep the same staff from year to year and notes everyone has become more efficient as they learn new approaches. For example, she has learned a few tricks of the trade for making stuff ahead of time so they can fill orders more quickly. Staff are also better at anticipating the time of day and week that they might be busy and they prepare ahead for these peaks. Much of her advertising is based on word of mouth and Sandy works to build good connections with the bus drivers as they talk to each other about the services along the highway. She also advertises in the Milepost. One year her ad asked readers "Who is Penny?" Sandy realized that her money was being well spent as the question came up frequently that summer. Her location halfway between Dawson and Whitehorse, good food, and her funky décor at the site continue to be central to her success.

Challenges: Although she has had many good staff, one of her biggest challenges is finding people who will put in the necessary time and effort. She hires from outside of the community, which draws local criticism, but her business comes first. Like many small business owners, the bookkeeping and financial management aspects have also been a challenge. Sandy believes she has learned what she now needs to know but, if she could have afforded it, she would have hired someone earlier on who had the bookkeeping knowledge and desire.

What others could do to help the business: Sandy has not accessed any government funding to help develop Penny's Place. The only support she might like to see in the future is improved marketing of Dawson as a destination as this would help her roadside business.

Future Outlook: Sandy has many ideas for how Penny's Place could be further developed. However, she is trying to sell the business as she is ready for a change. She sees lots of potential for growth but will let future owners bring the necessary new energy and commitment to the business.

Pine Valley Motel & Cafe

Contact: Carmen Hinson

Location: South of Beaver Creek

Started: Bought business in 1989

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Located north of Burwash Landing, the Pine Valley Motel and Café has a dining room, café, bakery, lounge, gift shop, gas station, RV park, cabins, motel rooms and even an overnight corral for horses. It is open 24 hours a day in the summer season. Fresh baked goods, tire repairs and good fishing on nearby Edith Creek are all part of the draw.

Changes since 1999: Little has changed at Pine Valley in the last three years except for an expansion of the RV park area. However, as Carmen wanted a year round business, she recently opened “Buckshot Betty’s”, a new business in Beaver Creek which includes a restaurant, five cabins, a small store, and gas and diesel sales. Carmen has decided to put Pine Valley Motel and Café up for sale so she can focus on this new business.

Keys to success: Carmen believes success in a business depends on what you put into it – and she puts long hard days into both of her businesses. She has had Pine Valley for 14 years and has built it into a good business. Being as self-sufficient as possible has helped her succeed. For example, she has hauled her own firewood, fixed her own equipment and even built the tables for her new business.

Challenges: Finding responsible and reliable staff to maintain the business when she isn’t on site is one of the biggest challenges for Carmen. People don’t work as hard as she believes they should and she has had some employees steal from her. In addition to paying a decent wage to attract staff to the North Alaska Highway, she must also feed and board them (this is something businesses in Whitehorse do not have to deal with).

Furthermore, she has had to open her own home to house staff as little is available in Beaver Creek.

What others could do to help the business:

Carmen would like to see government subsidize housing costs for remote communities that have limited options. Helping businesses overcome this expensive challenge would support much needed regional economic development

Future Outlook: Carmen has no plans for expanding Pine Valley as she intends on selling it and putting all of her time and energy into Buckshot Betty’s. If she can’t sell the business this year, she will look at leasing it out. However, she is uncertain what business will be like on the highway this coming summer given the possibility of war.

Second Time Around Sports

Contact: Beth Ellis

Location: Whitehorse

Started: Bought in 1994

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Second Time Around Sports, located in Riverdale, is a consignment store for used sporting goods such as hockey skates and pads, bicycles and helmets, skis and ski poles. The store also carries some new equipment to help complete the range of available goods. Recently, owner Beth Ellis added a line of new Raleigh bikes and Chariot Carrier bike trailers. Beth works at the business full time with some part time help from her daughter and, less often, from other students. Although the store is only open 25 hours a week, the cleaning, fixing and pricing equipment, as well as bookkeeping and other paper work, keep Beth busy full-time.

Changes since 1999: Little has changed at Second Time Around Sports in the last three years, something owner Beth Ellis is content with. On Saturdays, she has one employee come in the but the rest of the time she runs it by herself. She continues to keep limited store hours to allow her time for the rest of the business. While the new Chariot bike trailers have been popular, she decided to stop selling new Raleigh bicycles as she couldn't compete with prices offered at chain stores in town.

Keys to success: Personalized, quality service has helped to build a loyal clientele and a good reputation. Beth provides valuable advice to parents who might know nothing about the sport their child is entering. This personal connection with many customers is something that bigger businesses cannot provide. Word of mouth and advertising on CHON-FM, have helped to draw in out of town visitors from the Inuvik area, other Yukon communities and some SE Alaska towns. Beth provides donations to community groups which also results in positive publicity. In addition to being a source of inexpensive but quality sports items, she believes many of her customers appreciate the recycling aspect of her business. Finally, over the years, Beth has seen new tenants

with a strong recreation and sports focus move into the Riverdale mall she is located in. This helps bring the right kind of customer base to her doorstep.

Challenges: Beth has found it a challenge to compete in some areas with the larger chain stores such as Walmart and Canadian Tire as they can bring in inexpensive equipment in bulk. In particular, she has found it difficult to compete in the summer sports stock (biking and soccer gear). She deals with this challenge by watching the market constantly and changing accordingly. She visits her competitors to get a good sense of the prices they are offering. She is also careful to only take on quality, brand name used equipment as it is not worth the time it takes to clean and repair lower end "throw away" items. She also tries to stock smaller speciality items and locally appropriate items that chains stores might not stock (e.g. one southern supplied store only brings in "no wax" skis which are not appropriate for Yukon snow conditions). Beth added that small businesses are responsive to local needs and often provide better selection by stocking unique and hard to find items.

What others could do to help the business: Beth strongly supports Sports Yukon's recreation fund which helps low income kids buy sports equipment or pay for registration fees. She has benefited from the spin-offs of these expenditures and has seen the positive impact it has had on kids.

Future Outlook: There are no changes planned for Second Time Around Sports as the current pace and success of the business satisfies the

owner. Beth will continue to adapt her products as needed and she is looking at stocking a few new items like ski poles and ski waxes to ensure customers have the full range of ski equipment they need in one place. These accessories also help the store look more complete.

Shane Wilson Sculpture

Contact: Shane Wilson

Location: Faro

Started: 1994

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Shane Wilson makes “high end” sculptures of moose and caribou antler, sheep horn and mammoth ivory. He sells his sculptures throughout Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

Changes since 1999: Shane’s business has grown steadily in the last three years. His marketing of his work has been so successful that he stopped his own advertising in 2000 so he could complete the commissions he had already lined up. Others, however, have provided him with free advertising as they have published images of his work (*Ice Floe*, a circumpolar journal of poetry, put images of his work on the cover of two issues and Up Here magazine ran an article on him in Sept 2002). Although Shane marketed his original works, his primary focus in the last few years has been on fulfilling commissions. About 90% of his sculptures are sold outside of the territory.

Keys to success: The success of Shane’s marketing was partly based on the fact he marketed his own work instead of relying on galleries. He worked with an arts consultant at the outset who provided valuable marketing advice. However, in the long-term, Shane found his own marketing efforts more productive and consistent. He believes no one cares about a piece as much as an artist does and the personal contact with the artist works well for sales. He continues to use his website primarily to post images of the commissions he is working on for his clients to review. Shane realizes that the business plan he worked on years ago forced him to talk to potential clients and assess the value of the product. This saved him years of going down blind alleys.

Challenges: Completing multiple commissions in a timely fashion has been the greatest challenge for Shane. While most are willing to wait for high quality work, about 10% of his clients have withdrawn their commissions due to the delays. He is planning on taking a bronze casting course which will allow him to produce multiple copies of selected works. This will broaden his market and enable him to meet some of the demand for lower priced work. Shane had thought at the outset that he would be able to market more of his original work but 80% of his time has been spent on commissions. Although he finds this artistically restrictive, as people have their own vision of what the art should be like, it has also made him stretch and learn new things. However, he wants more time to work on his own ideas. He realizes that if you want to create something new and original, you have to do it on your own dollar and wait for people to start recognizing the style and feel comfortable buying it. Initially, people are less sure about the value of new body of work.

What others could do to help the business: Shane suggested that the Yukon government could involve representatives from the arts community in future trade missions as often the identity of a place comes through its art as well as its businesses and environment. He spoke highly of the Yukon government’s past marketing fund, which he used to top up his own marketing resources to pay for brochures, advertising and travel to shows to market his work. This seed money for new entrepreneurs went a long way to

helping him and other businesses. Shane argues that giving money to individual businesses should not be seen as just a hand out. He believes that funds like the marketing one spark new economic growth. Furthermore, if a business successfully takes root, other businesses start to pop up around it. He highlighted how in recent years Faro has grown from having two successful artists to having 10-12 doing different things to earn income. He suggests government and the business community should look at what is successful here now and strive to enhance these sectors. They should market businesses that are doing well as it will attract other similar businesses. The emphasis, he adds, should be on supporting small growth of many businesses, not growth of one big one.

Future Outlook: Shane is shifting his focus from commissions to original work. He does not plan on taking on any commissions for the foreseeable future, unless it fits into the body of work that he is now doing. People will be able to pre-buy a piece of his original work but they will not be able to influence its design. He sees himself as moving more into the model of being an inventor as he invests time, energy and money into a product that he hopes people will buy in the end. Shane sees a large market for high end, quality artwork. However, he will make bronze casts of some work, after he takes a casting course this year, which will help to finance the creation of the larger body of work. He anticipates that the new body of work he wants to complete will take about five years and then he will take it out on show.

Shannon & Mikey's Plants and Eggs

Contact: Shannon Blahitka

Location: Destruction Bay

Started: 1997

Status: Closed

Description in 1999: This young sister and brother team sells eggs, hanging baskets, vegetable and flower bedding plants, and flower pots. They sell their products mostly in Destruction Bay and along the North Alaska highway but have also have customers in Whitehorse and beyond. Individuals, local campgrounds, lodges, and the Kluane Museum all purchase plants or eggs from Shannon and Mikey's.

Changes since 1999: Shannon and Mikey shut down their business after culling their chickens late in 1999.

Reasons for closure: A jump in the costs of running the business made Shannon review whether or not to continue on after they culled their chickens in 1999. Chicken feed prices had jumped and winter heating costs for the chickens were also hefty. In addition, her family liked to travel which they couldn't easily do when there were chickens to feed and plants to water. Shannon, aged 13 at the time she closed the business, also wanted to focus more dog racing.

Lessons: Shannon is proud of what she accomplished in the three years the business operated and learned a lot. For example, she learned the importance of earning trust and respect which helped her in later work as a chambermaid, waitress and housesitter. Her experience also gave her an edge in recent high school correspondence courses she took in business and agriculture.

What others could have done to help the business: Shannon said they could have perhaps lined up help with feeding chickens and watering plants when the family went away but it wouldn't have been worth it in the long run.

Future Prospects: Shannon plans on focusing on her education and will soon be moving to Whitehorse to complete grade 11. In the longer term, she intends to go to university to study anything in sciences, writing and photography. Shannon continues to hold onto the dream of having cabins, and maybe a petting zoo, on her family's property in Destruction Bay.

Sportees Active Wear

Contact: Andrea Roger

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1984

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Sportees Active Wear manufactures and retails sportswear stretch clothing and polar fleece products. The business is run out of Andrea Rodger's home in Hillcrest. Customers are provided with a wide range of colour choice, product styles and custom items made to fit. In addition to Andrea, who works full-time running the business, Sportees has one part-time employee.

Changes since 1999: In the last few years, Sportees sales have continued to grow. Andrea now does all of the accounting and, in addition to her one part-time employee, she has one person in training. Part of the business' growth has occurred through orders on its new website. The bulk of these orders go to the US. However, other parts of Canada, and places like Hong Kong, Sweden, and England, have also received Sportees' northern clothing. Sportees used to produce photo cards to market its wares but the website has replaced the cards as Andrea finds the site to be a far more flexible marketing tool.

Keys to success: Having a quality product and a reputation for good service is still key to the success of the business. Andrea also continues to sponsor or donate to local activities such as running and skiing races. This support gives people a chance to see Sportees' products in action and helps build a loyal clientele. The website has also contributed to her success. The complex site was developed by Andrea and students from the Yukon Entrepreneurship Centre and funded by the Trade and Investment Fund. As Andrea does her own updates to the website, she is able to add or delete fabrics, colours and styles as needed so people are not disappointed when it comes time to order. In the fall of 2002, Andrea helped to found the Yukon Apparel Design Association (YADA). This new organization has highlighted how many people in the Yukon are

involved in manufacturing and designing apparel. It is also a place for people to share experiences on what works and doesn't.

Challenges: The greatest challenge for Andrea is separating her work and personal life. Bulky fabrics are stored in other parts of the house, and long hours, particularly those leading up to Christmas, are spent at work. Zoning limitations for a home-based business mean that she is only allowed to have one employee which makes expansion very difficult. Although she would like to see this restriction changed, she is considering the options for moving her business away from her house. However, such a move would mean a notable increase in monthly expenses for the business.

What others could do to help the business:

Andrea would like to see a space for small boutiques and art stores – a “Granville Island” like market – developed on Whitehorse's waterfront. She also sees an opportunity for the recently formed Yukon Apparel Design Association to develop a collective store to retail its members' products. She would like to see Yukoners and their governments stop buying outside products and look to Yukon people first. For example, many large events order in hats, T-shirts or jackets from outside suppliers. If local suppliers were given more opportunity to gear up – or partner up – for large orders like these they could meet the

demand and keep the dollars in the territory. In November 2002, YTG supported a Yukon wholesalers market which allowed buyers to review available products. Andrea would like to see more initiatives like this and believes they should involve more buyers from outside the territory. Finally, Andrea sees a need for more skilled workers in the apparel industry. She is supportive of Skills Canada funding for fashion design and would like to see more trade programs like this integrated into the school system. She argues there are many employment opportunities in the fashion industry (e.g. costumes, retail, theatre and film, high fashion) and youth need the chance to learn the required skills.

Future Outlook: The future will likely see Sportees moving downtown, hopefully to the waterfront and perhaps in a shared space with other clothing people or artisans. Andrea also sees continued growth in her exports, to the US in particular. Once her business expands and she has staff that can cover the bases, Andrea would like to attend trade shows outside the territory to market her wares. This could also be done in collaboration with other apparel manufactures under YADA's umbrella.

Swiss Bakery

Contact: Urs and Rebecca Schirmer

Location: Whitehorse (rural)

Started: 1998

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Owned by husband and wife, Urs and Rebecca Schirmer, the Swiss Bakery has no storefront. Baking of breads and pastries is done from the couple's home and delivered throughout town - to restaurants and private homes - in a van. Much like an ice cream truck, the Swiss Bakery travels regular routes and music is piped out of the van in residential neighbourhoods to attract customers of all ages. This approach has helped create a list of customers it regularly delivers to.

Changes since 1999: Business for the Swiss Bakery has continued to expand although it remains a home-based business. More sales of baked goods are being made to businesses in Whitehorse such as Food Fair and the Deli. However, no employees have been hired yet to help with the growing business. Owner Urs Schirmer, who had been trained in Switzerland as a chocolate maker, added his own Swiss chocolates to his product line a couple of years ago. His main market for the chocolate bunnies, figures and pellets has been outside of the territory, with sales all over Canada and Alaska. Primarily, these sales are to private individuals although he does have a wholesaler in Calgary. About 70% of his business is baking and the other 30% is chocolate.

Keys to success: Drawing on friends and contacts has been invaluable to Urs as he builds the chocolate side of his business. A friend in Calgary has acted as his salesman, showing the chocolates to potential buyers in that city. He has also used his contacts in Switzerland to help him find the right chocolate supplies in Canada. He has gone to local shows to market his products and went to a trade show for baking in Toronto where he had a chocolate booth. This helped him build contacts, especially with wholesalers, and learn about what is new in this field in Canada. For now, the baking

side of his business finances the development of the chocolate portion of the business.

Challenges: Although Urs has had frequent discussions with local wholesalers about their high costs, he finds it difficult to buy locally as the mark-up is too high. Urs has worked to find good wholesalers elsewhere so that he can get a quality product at a decent price. However, he believes the recent competition from others businesses, such as Walmart, is causing some local suppliers to drop their prices. Because of its rural location, the Swiss Bakery has also been unable to have an internet connection which has made marketing outside the territory difficult. However, new lines have just been made available in his area so he will soon join the world of internet marketing and sales.

What others could do to help the business: Urs recently visited friends in China and believes there is great potential for expanding his chocolate sales in that country. However, to help with this effort, he would like to see a loan program for marketing and staff assistance to help with building contacts. It would be helpful for government to have someone that small businesses could work with. He currently finds he is "bumped about" when he calls with questions.

Future Outlook: To help the Swiss Bakery access the market in China and other places, Urs plans on making chocolate bars and working on labelling requirements. Equipment to make the bars will require him to get financing but he is confident he will be able to do this based on his proven track record. He also anticipates hiring

staff and wants to produce a website and a CD to show how the chocolate is made. The baking side of the Swiss Bakery will continue on and he might start making pretzels or puff pastry dough for export. Overall, he sees continued growth in the future, particularly in the export side of the business.

Treeline Woodworks Ltd.

Contact: Jim Quinsey

Location: Whitehorse

Started: 1984

Status: Active

Description in 1999: Treeline Woodworks is a full service furniture and cabinet business that provides all steps from initial design through to delivery of the final product. Most of Treeline's work is for businesses and governments (e.g. boardroom and reception area furniture) but it also provides kitchens and furniture for private homes. One of the two owners works at the business full time, along with two full-time and one part-time staff.

Changes since 1999: Treeline is now solely owned by Jim Quinsey. It currently employs another three time full-time people although they had seven at one time last year to help fill contracts for the extended care facility and a Juneau project. Sales to Alaska have increased, primarily in Juneau, and now equal about 20% of Treeline's business.

Keys to success: Jim is always checking out sales of similar furniture and cabinets in other cities to keep on top of pricing. Jim went on a marketing trip to Anchorage last fall and made some new contacts. No sales have come from this trip yet, but Jim says the access to the Alaskan market is good and his pricing is competitive. To help with his marketing, he produced a CD which highlights the quality and diversity of Treeline's products.

Challenges: The downturn in the local economy has made cash flow tight and Treeline may have to downsize. Political changes in Alaska have also slowed spending in that market, both public and private. Jim recognizes that he needs to continue his marketing effort, particularly in a downturn, but it is difficult to find the resources.

What others could do to help the business: Jim would like to see the government reinstate economic development funds, particularly to assist with marketing initiatives. Preference

should be given to small businesses that can demonstrate a need. Government also needs to be supportive of small local businesses by buying their products and services. Jim would like to see the tendering process changed so that cost is not the only criteria for assessing bids on goods. Higher quality goods may cost more at the outset but they last longer and do not need repairs or refinishing nearly as often. This balance of costs over time needs to be accounted for in the tendering process.

Future Outlook: No significant changes are planned for Treeline's immediate future. A website is being developed to give people an opportunity to check out products and prices. Jim would also like to develop a brochure in the next year to distribute, along with his CDs, on business trips. A long-term goal is to develop a line of Yukon pine furniture and Jim sees a large market for this overseas. However, such an initiative would require new financial resources. For the Yukon market, Jim is considering approaching local furniture stores to arrange for a display of regular items such as computer desks and other common products. On trips to southern Canadian cities, Jim's review of market prices has highlighted that he could easily compete with the quality and pricing there. For his high-end items, Jim knows he needs to take advantage of the market these cities offer.

Wild n Wooly

Contact: Romy Jensen
Location: Dawson City
Started: 1989
Status: Active

Description in 1999: Wild n Wooly is a unique boutique that sells clothing and accessories, everything from t-shirts to very expensive dresses. In addition to the two owners, the store has five employees in the summer and one in the winter. The owners estimate that about 90% of their sales are to tourists and 10% to Yukoners.

Changes since 1999: After three years, business is pretty much the same at Wild n Wooly, although there has been a few shifts in focus. Anticipating a downturn in spending after September 11th, Romy Jensen decided to cancel orders for some of her more luxury items. After a break-in at the store, where youth stole over \$110,000 in clothes and gold jewellery, she chose to carry fewer youth products. Romy has also been making and selling her own gold jewellery in the store. These sales represented about half of her business last year and she has cut back her winter hours at the store so that she can focus more on her jewellery making.

Keys to success: Romy believes her continued success is based, in part, on her ability to adapt to changing circumstances. She believes it is important to always keep an eye on market trends and adjust inventory accordingly. For example, she has increased her emphasis on her gold jewellery as she feels, in uncertain times, people will buy gold as it generally retains its value. They buy it so they can take home part of the Yukon but also to have something of lasting value. The greatest key to success, however, continues to be her very personal service in the store. Shopping at Wild n Wooly is a fun experience and Romy notes that she has Europeans who come back to her store every time they are in the Yukon to visit for the day. Success in the North is also based on a lot

of hard work to help overcome shipping costs, small populations and high bills. Romy's summer seasons are full of 12-14 hour days, seven days a week.

Challenges: The break-in and theft by youth was a huge setback for the business as the gold was not insured and the building also required time and money to repair. However, the biggest blow was to Romy's trust and it led her to her decision to stop selling to the youth market. She acknowledges it is easier overall now as there is less shoplifting but feels badly for the good local youth that used to get the latest styles at her store. To replace the loss of this youth market, Romy has increased her inventory of tourist products and souvenirs. A further challenge is finding good staff in the winter as she cannot offer full time work. People can usually make more money on unemployment insurance.

What others could do to help the business:

Romy would like to see government implement an educational campaign to encourage Yukoners to buy locally – whether the product is manufactured here or not. People believe that everything in the south or on-line is better and cheaper but it isn't. She believes higher costs here are based on freight, not price gouging. Government can help highlight the positive spin-offs of buying locally like access to local service, more local jobs, and

community benefits from business donations and sponsorships. Additionally, Romy would like to see a bridge over the Yukon River in Dawson as it would make the Klondike Highway a more attractive route to Alaska. Although the local market is tight, an increase in quality stores locally could also help make Dawson become more of a draw.

Future Outlook: There are no substantial changes planned for Wild n Wooly. Romy will continue to adapt as needed and be cautious about

her inventory selections. She intends to continue to increase the jewellery side of the business and is working on a website which she anticipates should help with jewellery sales out of the territory. Unless Yukoners start buying locally more, Romy plans on closing completely in the winters except for Christmas and other special events. Not one to shirk a challenge, Romy and her husband Renee are also opening a restaurant in the next couple of months.

Wind River Adventures

Contact: Jack Smith

Location: Mayo

Started: 1987

Status: Closed

Description in 1999: Wind River Adventures offers multiple day saddle and pack horse trips for tourists and youth. They take their clients north of Mayo, into the scenic Wind River valley. For a number of years, the primary focus of the business was running extended trips for young offenders. However, tourists are now the main target for the business. Staff are hired on a trip by trip basis.

Changes since 1999: Wind River Adventures' last season of operation was in 2001.

Reasons for closure: This wilderness guiding business was unable to secure the number of clients it needed to cover its overhead. When the business first started, other work with young offenders in the shoulder seasons helped pay the bills. However, the youth program ended and Wind River had to rely on tourist bookings. The scenic but remote location of their camp required flying in from Mayo and, even when half-booked, Jack often had to pay and feed his staff to stay out there between guided trips. High insurance costs were also a significant barrier. Jack described how, a couple of years ago, they guided a large group of Germans for about 8 hours of a much larger northern expedition. For just that part day, Wind River had to pay about \$1800 for insurance. Significant paperwork and trip reports for the *Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act* also contributed to the decision to shut down Wind River Adventures.

Lessons: Jack felt that marketing of Wind River Adventures was a bit hit and miss and could have benefited from some expert advice. He was told by some of their own clients that they had chosen the wrong magazines to advertise in for the German market and their website only seemed to result in a few bookings. Although his cost per client was very reasonable and part of the draw, he now thinks he could have charged more for his

trips to help cover the overhead and provide a buffer for the down times.

What others could do to help the business: The required trip reports under the new *Wilderness Tourism Licensing Act* could be made easier to fill out or government could send a staff person to the outfitters at the end of the season to help them with the paperwork. Jack had not been aware of funding available for tourism marketing and thinks this could have helped Wind River Adventures. He has also heard outfitters in other jurisdictions can buy into a group insurance plan which he thinks would help here as well.

Future Prospects: Jack said it would take 10-15 years to build up a successful horseback guiding business. He is not into investing this amount of time as he would be retiring just as things got going. However, he sees continued potential in the wilderness guiding business if someone is willing to stick to it. Jack now winters horses for other outfitters, raises and sells horses, and does some small-scale sawmill and road work under the umbrella of his other business, J&B contracting.

Appendix I: Contact List

Interviewed Businesses - Still in operation

Business	Contact	Phone & Fax	Mailing address	Email	Website
Ancient Voices Wilderness Camp	Marge Kormendy	993-5605 993-6532 fax	Box 679 Dawson City, Yukon Y0B 1G0	avwcamp@yukon.net	www.ancientvoices.ca
Aroma Borealis Herb Shop	Bev Gray	667-4372 ph/fax	504B Main Street Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2B9	Aroma@internorth.com	www.yukonherbshop.com
Bean North Specialty Coffee Roasters	Jennifer Groot	667-4145 393-3193 fax	Box 20437 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 7A2	Beannorth@yknet.yk.ca	www.beannorth.com
Birchwood Tours	Lael Lund	633-3509 ph/fax	Box 31720 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 6L3	Lund@birchwoodtours.com	www.birchwoodtours.com www.travelyukon.com
Camp K-9 Pet Daycare	Mary Motley	393-3488	100-116 Galena Road Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2W6	n/a	n/a
Caribou Records	David Petkovich	633-5063 633-4788 fax	Box 31471 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 6K8	Caribou@yknet.ca	www.caribourecords.com
Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations	Kenny & Patti Tetlich	966-3008 966-3424 fax	Box 25 Old Crow, Yukon Y0B 1N0	choodee@yknet.yk.ca	n/a
Dawson Peaks Resort	David Hett & Carolyn Allen	390-2244 ph/fax	Box 80 Teslin, Yukon Y0A 1B0	dpeaks@hotmail.com	www.yukonweb.com/tourism/dawsonpeaks
Day Star Construction	Dan Reams	536-2867	Box 159 Watson Lake, Yukon Y0A 1C0	Dbreams@yknet.ca	n/a
Fresh from the Yukon Inc.	Werner & Maria Walcher	668-2883 668-3275 fax	Box 10287 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 7A1	walcher@yknet.ca	n/a
Harper Street Publishing	Greg Karias	1-888-848-6671 1-866-993-5718 fax	Box 988 Dawson City, Yukon Y0B 1G0	hsp@alaskayukon.com	www.alaskayukon.com
Jane and Trevor's Adventure Network	Jane Vincent & Trevor Braun	456-4225	Box 40080 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 6M6	huski@vt.sympatico.ca	n/a

Business	Contact	Phone & Fax	Mailing address	Email	Website
Jarand Building Products Ltd.	David Kalles	536-7531 536-2035 fax	Box 295 Watson Lake, Yukon Y0A 1C0	dakalles@yknet.yk.ca	n/a
Keno City SnackBar	Mike Mancini	995-2409 ph/fax	Box 3 Keno City, Yukon Y0B 1M0	n/a	n/a
Kwaday Dän Kenji (Long Ago Peoples Place)	Harold Johnson & Meta Williams	634-7047 634-7069 fax	P.O. Box 20701 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 7A2	lww@yknet.ca	n/a
Madley's General Store	JC Mitchell	634-2200 634-2725 fax	Box 5371 Haines Junction, Yukon Y0B 1L0	Madleys@yknet.ca	n/a
Midnight Sun Plant Food	Herbie Croteau	994-2622 ph/fax	Box 445 Faro, Yukon Y0B 1K0	plantfood@yknet.yk.ca	www.herbiesplantfood.com
Minto Resorts Ltd.	Pat Mitander	633-5537	Box 9211 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 4A2	mitander@klondiker.com	n/a
Northern Windows	David Borud	668-5088 668-7472 fax	117 Copper Road Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2Z7	dborud@northern.yk.ca	www.northern.yk.ca
OPpEN HOUSE	Diane Oppen	634-2738 634-2510 fax	Box 2008 Haines Junction, Yukon Y0B 1L0	oppenh@yknet.ca	n/a
Penny's Place	Sandy Trerice	537-3115 537-3926 fax	Box 8 Pelly Crossing, Yukon Y0B 1P0	penny@yknet.yk.ca	n/a
Pine Valley Motel & Cafe	Carmen Hinson	862-7407 (summers) 862-7112 fax	General Delivery Beaver Creek, Yukon Y0B 1A0	carmenhinson@yt.sympati.co.ca	n/a
Second Time Around Sports	Beth Ellis	668-3565 667-6761 fax	95f Lewes Blvd Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3J4	secondtime@polarcom.com	n/a
Shane Wilson Sculpture	Shane Wilson	994-2061 ph/fax	Box 191 Faro, Yukon Y0B 1K0	shane@shanewilson.com	www.shanewilson.com
Sportees Active Wear	Andrea Rodger	668-2691 ph/fax	50 Sunset Drive South, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3G3	andrea@sportees.com	www.sportees.com
Swiss Bakery	Urs Schirmer	393-1938 ph/fax	Box 10168 Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 7A1	n/a	n/a

Business	Contact	Phone & Fax	Mailing address	Email	Website
Treeline Woodworks Ltd.	Jim Quinsey	668-3378 633-5543 fax	16 Denver Road Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5S7	Treeline@yknet.ca	n/a
Wild n Wooly	Romy Jensen	993-5170 ph/fax	Box 785 Dawson City, Yukon Y0B 1G0	rjansen@yknet.yk.ca	n/a

Interviewed Businesses - Closed since 1999

Business	Contact
Dakwakada Forest Products	Jackie McBride-Dickson
Go Wild	Darielle Talarico
Shannon and Mikey's Eggs and Plants	Shannon Blahitka
Wind River Adventures	Jack Smith

Business unavailable for an interview

Business	Contact	Comments
Hyperborean Productions	Bob Nardi	Hyperborean sold to CKRW in the last three years. New managers did not respond to requests for interviews.
Icefield Instruments	Erik Blake	Icefield owner Erik Blake declined an interview. He did indicate that little has changed since 1999.