

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Northern Frontier Visitor Centre**  
**Committee of the Whole—2017-2018 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Industry, Tourism and Investment—February 16, 2017**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'm just wondering, can the Minister tell us whether there's any core funding or other kinds of funding that are provided through the budget to the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The money that you see on line 3 on page 211, the \$161,000 is what we give the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre. That would be excluding any other SEED money or something we're doing right now to do the evaluation on the centre. Thank you. Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you. Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So is there any possibility of increasing that funding say one time to help with the infrastructure at the visitor centre within the O and M budget so that it wouldn't necessarily appear in capital? Is that a possibility, Mr. Chair? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that'd be a little premature until we get all these studies back. I believe also the City of Yellowknife is having a different look at their strategy on how they're going to involve tourism and the City of Yellowknife in the downtown core. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I understand the study is probably going to be available in a matter of weeks, so I really look forward to talking to the Minister again about what additional support we can provide for the centre, but in his opening remarks he talked a lot about the new initiatives that the department's doing. One of them was \$132,000 for a full-time tourism development officer position for the North Slave region. Can the Minister just explain a little bit more about what this position is going to do and whether that individual is going to be in a position to offer support to the visitor centre here in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. This initiative was brought forward just based on the success of tourism specifically in the North Slave of the number of tourism operators and licensees that are approaching the Government of the Northwest Territories to get licences up. The uptake has been significant, and we need to increase our staff on the ground to deal with this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Schumann. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister, but it didn't really answer my question. So is this individual going to be coordinating in any way or assisting the Northern Frontier Visitor Centre with their workload? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, this position is strictly for the operators. Thank you, Mr. Chair...

... **MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitment by the Minister, and just so that he understands, I'm glad that the department is getting ready and they're responding to a growing tourism industry here. That's a good thing. I just want to understand a little bit better about what exactly this positions going to do. I'll give you an example. I was over at the Frontier Visitors Centre a week and a half ago; I was there for about 45 minutes, they had, like, five staff on. Probably 50 people came through the doors and were buying things. The place was crazy, quite frankly. So those people are overworked and they need some additional support, and if there's a way that this new position can help them with their growing workload, that would be great, but I look forward to getting the information from the Minister and I thank him for his efforts in this regard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Schumann.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess the one thing I want to make clear, though, is the Northern Frontier Visitors' Centre is not a GNWT asset. It is a non-profit organization. I understand the Member's comments. They are a victim of their own success, basically, with the amount of tourism increasing in the Northwest Territories. We will continue to reach out and try to help them as much as we can, but it is also the City of Yellowknife's responsibility to probably help them as much as they can, too. Thank you, Mr. Chair.