

Airport workers learn to test runways

Boeing delivers training course on maintaining runway firmness

by Paul Bickford from the NWT, the Yukon Northern News Services
Hay River Two representatives of Boeing, the world's largest aerospace company, were in Hay River on Oct. 14 to deliver a training session. The training was for people

from the NWT, the Yukon and Nunavut on how to use a machine to test the load-bearing capacity of gravel runways. "That's how they test the strength of runways and the size of planes it can hold up," said Kelly O'Connor, the manager of the Hay River Airport.

The training is necessary because the three territorial governments are moving to a system under which they will test the runways with their own equipment, as opposed to air carriers doing the work themselves or contracting it out.

"We are doing it because it's good industry practice to have this data available for the airport operators and the airlines, and it's recommended by Transport Canada," said O'Connor.

In addition, he said, such information contributes to the safe operation of airports, along with more economical use of aircraft by air carriers because the right plane can be chosen to fly into an airport.

"These tests are necessary to determine the suitability of a gravel runway to land various types of aircraft," said Stephen Nourse, executive director of the Northern Air Transport Association (NATA). "Obviously, the larger the aircraft, the firmer the runway you have to have."

Nourse said the airports and the territorial Departments of Transportation haven't had the in-house capability to do the testing, which results in

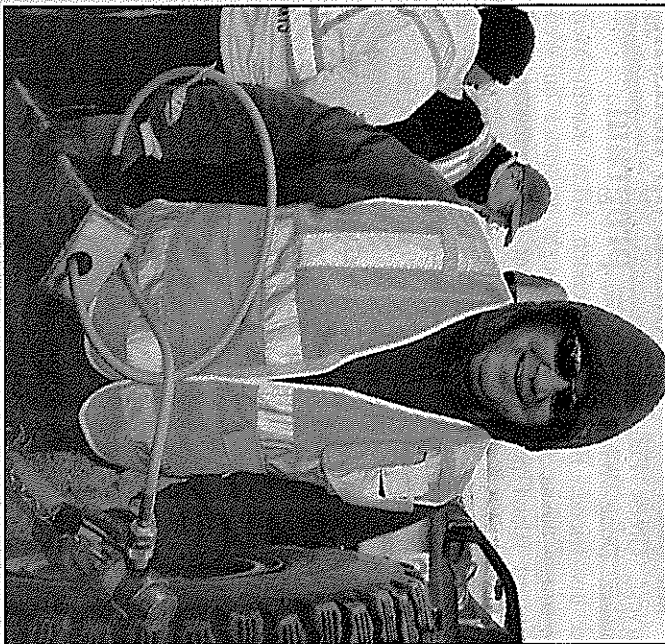
the "silly situation" of perhaps three carriers going to an airport in succession to conduct tests.

"For a long time, we've been saying this is wrong," he said. "Shouldn't this be something that an airport operator would publish?"

Hay River was chosen for the training because, in addition to its paved runway, it has a gravel runway.

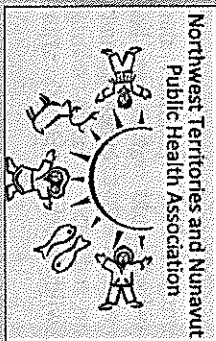
There were about 30 people at the training session — including representatives of the GNWT, Nunavut and the Yukon and the Department of National Defence.

The Boeing representatives came from Seattle, Washington. O'Connor said the testing instrument on which the participants were trained is called a penetrometer, which was cre-



Paul Bickford/ANS, photo

Orest Shepson, a Boeing representative from Seattle, Washington, holds a piece of equipment used to test the firmness of a gravel runway during an Oct. 14 training session in Hay River.



Northwest Territories and Nunavut Public Health Association

AGTM

Please attend the annual general meeting and education session

Date: Thursday, October 28 • **Time:** 4:00 MT (6:00 ET)

Yellowknife Location:

Jan Stirling Building,

2nd Floor Boardroom (use 47 St. Entrance)

Iqaluit Location:

Public Health Building #155

Guest Speakers: Jim Charvin & Greg Penney, Canadian Public Health Association

Topic: Strengthening Our Public Health Association

Light meal provided.

Taleconference is available • Contact Marnie Bell at mbell@theedge.ca for dial-in information.