

**Edmonton Sun – January 18, 2004**

## **Yellowknife looks to Ottawa**

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Yellowknife residents hope the federal government comes through tomorrow with \$3 million in funding needed to build a bridge across the Mackenzie River.

Bridge project manager Andrew Gamble said the money is key to locking in financing for the \$57-million project.

"If it's delayed, we can't finalize the agreement to start work. There's several ducks to line up, and that's a key one," said Gamble. "We need a commitment before spring, and the sooner the better."

Indian and Northern Affairs is expected to make a decision on the \$3-million grant tomorrow, but there's some concern the new federal cabinet might see it delayed, Gamble said.

Still, Gamble said project organizers aren't too worried. "It meets the criteria, it's good for the environment, it's good for the public, it's good for the government. We can't see it wouldn't be approved."

The bridge would span the Mackenzie River at Fort Providence, N.W.T., 1154 km northwest of Edmonton. Use of the ice road across the river is unpredictable during the spring and fall. Building supplies and fuel have to either be airlifted to or hoarded in northern communities in that period, he said. "It's a worry for the general public, it's a worry for the trucking industry and it's a worry for retailers," said Gamble.

Yellowknife Coun. Wendy Bisaro said a year-round road link is important to the people of the region. "It's going to make it easier for us to get all kinds of goods. It is something that's going to benefit not only Yellowknife, but also other northern communities as well."

The possibility of a toll on the road remains controversial, she said.