



## News Release

### Search and Rescue Volunteers Gather to Improve Skills

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (December 5, 2005)** – As many as 40 volunteer search and rescue workers from Nunavut communities will gather in Iqaluit this week to focus on ways to expand their capabilities to help Nunavummiut.

“This event enables us to both acknowledge the experience and professionalism of our volunteers and how to increase the coordination of our search and rescue capabilities,” said Community and Government Services Minister Levinia Brown.

Best practices and experience will be shared at a conference, to be held from Dec. 6 to Dec. 8. It is being hosted by the Department of Community and Government Services. The conference will also be attended by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Forces, and Canadian Coast Guard.

The intent of the conference is to improve search and rescue capabilities through consultation with front-line people. Planned workshops will teach effective assessment and review techniques, which will allow community search and rescue (SAR) teams to better prepare for a search and benefit from lessons learned. Understanding and mitigating risk is a key element as is SAR prevention.

“Our hunters are out in one of the harshest environments and sometimes search and rescue workers have to go out to search, putting their own lives at risk. Reducing that risk and remaining effective is one of the key items at this conference and I look forward to the results,” said Brown.

Long term effectiveness of any service, volunteer or professional, is dependant upon training to ensure skills are current. Search and rescue training is critical to development and the conference will affirm ways to move forward.

Cabinet recently identified funds to be used specifically to enhance community search and rescue. These funds have been used to develop this conference as well as the purchase of devices such as satellite telephones, GPS, binoculars, and first aid kits for the community teams.

The Minister will present the first kit during the conference and will also unveil a safety-first poster that is intended to remind Nunavummiut that it is up to them to always be adequately prepared and take responsibility for their own safety on the land.

“We must all realize that failure to prepare for a trip on the land can place both themselves and our search and rescue teams at risk,” said Brown.

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