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AVENS Pavilion Groundbreaking Ceremony

What started as a needs study in 2019, has now turned into a formal affordable housing project for the community of Yellowknife and for seniors across the NWT...the rest is now history.

“We welcome you here today to celebrate, with our community, the official groundbreaking ceremony of AVENS affordable housing project,

The Pavilion”

AVENS President/CEO, Daryl Dolynny

It was perfect May 24th, 2022 day where the weather was not wet or too cold. The subcontractors on site took a bit of break from

their rock removal so that a group of about 50 dignitaries, politicians, AVENS board and staff could come down to the actual Pavilion site to celebrate with a ceremonial shovel ceremony or what we have coined as the groundbreaking ceremony



(L to R) MP, Michael McLeod, AVENS Board Chair Matthew Spence, Minister Julie Green and AVENS President & CEO, Daryl Dolynny



I would like to walk you down on a brief journey on the evolution of this project and where our path forward will take us.

AVENS previously known as YACCS, was incorporated in 1983 by a group of citizens lobbying the government to establish programs and services for seniors not only for Yellowknife, but for seniors across the NWT.

Soon after, the Avens Manor was constructed in 1987

Avens Court in 1992

Baker Community Center in 1995

Avens Ridge in 2007

And finally, Avens NWT Dementia Cottages in 2010



In early 2013 the concept of a 90-bed long term care facility was considered, however, after some work was undertaken to blast the current area where now sits the Pavilion, the project was put on hold.



Getting ready for the big day, Director of Operations, Steven Nicholas is on site

When the 18th NWT Legislative Assembly renewed their commitments to take action, so that seniors could “Age in Place”, so too was

their commitment for a vision of additional long term care beds for the NWT, including the soon to be opened Stanton Legacy project.



This prompted the AVENS Board and my office to rethink our original long-term care design, and complete a needs study in 2019. What we uncovered was that there was a significant lack of adequate, accessible, and affordable housing available to NWT seniors.



Therefore, in order to best meet the GNWT's goals, AVENS decided it would focus instead on high demand independent and supportive living options for NWT seniors.

So with the secured financial support of the Government of Canada CMHC's Co-Investment Fund and the GNWT's supplementary Kitchen and Laundry funding, AVENS Pavilion project was born, thus providing NWT seniors with 92 one bedroom and 10 two bedroom unit options.

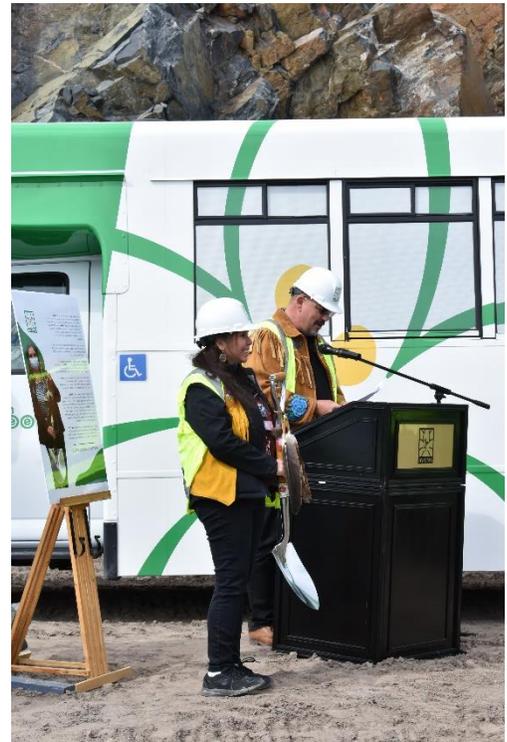


(L to R) AVENS President and CEO, Daryl Dolynny, MP Michael McLeod, Minister Chinna, Minister Green, AVENS Board Chair, Matthew Spence, Minister Thompson

These units will be affordable with many having barrier free design.

And finally, with future support services on the drawing board, seniors will be able to move seamlessly through the various levels of housing and care without ever having to leave the AVENS Community.

A community, where NWT seniors will soon have a new place to call home in the fall of 2023.



(L to R) AVENS Health and Wellness Supervisor, Carol Norwegian and AVENS President and CEO, Daryl Dolynny

AVENS was proud to unveil our Pavilion Ceremonial Cultural shovel, which was handcrafted by a proud Gwich'in member and AVENS own supervisor of Health and Wellness, Carol Norwegian.

This shovel itself has significant symbolic meaning to AVENS, as it was the same shovel used in the Territorial Dementia Cottage groundbreaking ceremony over 10 years ago

Today, this shovel was retrofitted to include beautiful traditional beadwork, eagle feathers, fur and hide from both Dene and Metis cultures representing our land.

AVENS Pavilion project is symbolized by the shovels use of the two eagle feathers. The eagle considered one of the strongest and bravest of birds, much like our elders are viewed is

represented by the older eagle feather. While our youth in our community is supported by the young eagle feather. Together, youth and wisdom are joined at the handle, as one.



AVENS is proud to unveil our Pavilion Ceremonial Cultural Shovel that will be used in our groundbreaking ceremony on May 24th, 2022 at the new **AVENS** Pavilion site, which is proudly located on Chief Drygeese Territory in the Akaitcho region, the traditional territory of the Yellowknife's Dene First Nation.

This shovel has been handcrafted by a proud Gwich'in member and **AVENS** own Supervisor of Recreation and Wellness, Carol Norwegian and her entire family.

The shovel itself has significant symbolic meaning to **AVENS**, as it was the same shovel used in the Territorial Dementia Cottages groundbreaking ceremony over 10 years ago.

Today, the shovel has been retrofitted to include beautiful beadwork, eagle feathers, fur and a hide from both the Dene and Metis cultures representing this land.

AVENS future expansion project is symbolized by the shovels' use of the two eagle feathers. The eagle, considered one of the strongest and bravest of birds, much like our elders are viewed, is represented by the older eagle feather. While our youth in our community is supported by the young eagle feather. Together, youth and wisdom are joined at the handle, as one.

AVENS Ceremonial Cultural Shovel is on a journey throughout our communities, as it's spirit of good will touches and reaches out to our many elders and community members.

AVENS-A COMMUNITY FOR SENIORS

This AVEN Ceremonial shovel was recently on a journey throughout our community, as its spirit of good will reached out to many of our elders and community members.

With a fill of coffee and donuts and when all the speeches were done, everyone loaded up back onto the AVENS bus, for a short ride from the construction site to AVENS main administration area.

Everyone had a great time, and everyone received a better understanding and appreciation for the magnitude of the project.



Some of our VIP guests enjoying our AVENS Care on Wheels service from the Pavilion site back to our main campus

