

## **Problem unto opportunity**

# **Manitoba station helps native people**

A true test of an organization's abilities comes with the challenge of turning a problem into an opportunity. If anything the current aura of restraint coupled with the need to implement highly desirable affirmative action programs certainly presents a formidable challenge to all departments. This type of a challenge was recently met, head-on, in Central Region.

In 1970 a new semi-isolated weather station was opened in northeastern Manitoba at Island Lake. The physical establishment consisted of two staff dwellings, operations building, garage and storage buildings. Two staff assigned to the station, along with the MARS II, maintained a round the clock vigil on weather conditions.

Unfortunately costs associated with operating stations like Island Lake have reached a level which have placed unproportionate demands on AES's precious and dwindling resources. Yet the need for timely and accurate weather information from the community was, if anything, becoming more important. Under these circumstances other alternatives of conducting an observing program had to be found.

Through negotiations with the provincial government it was determined that there were benefits to both levels of government through the combination of our resources and efforts. The Manitoba Highways Department, while operating the Island Lake Airport, also provides a UNICOM service to support burgeoning aviation traffic in the community. Those employees who operate the UNICOM service were found to be ideal candidates for weather observing roles.

The final result was the termination of the AES Weather Station, WGB, on April 1st and the inauguration of an AES supported

Manitoba Airports Weather Observing Station, YIV, 2 kilometres away. The new station will employ six AES-trained and certified provincial airport staff under a Manitoba Government administered contract. They will conduct an increased manned program of 24 hourlies and 4 synoptics, as well as PIBALS and other supplementary observations. Of significance to AES is an increased observing program with substantial overall cost reductions.

Another important benefit of the program change is the employment of an observing staff who are all local indigenous residents of the community. Their participation in this observing program represents another major milestone in AES's Affirmative Action Program through the provision of employment opportunities for native peoples, particularly in northern or remote communities.

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