

Economic and tourism support Facebook live update: March 10, 2021

>> Good afternoon and thank you for joining a today for an update on economic tourism support in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are joined today by deputy premier and Minister of economic and tourism and culture.

Our sign language interpretation is being provided by Marian.

Following the speakers will go to the media for around questions, I will call you by name in each have one question and one follow-up, before we begin I would like to note that the legislative assembly is currently in session, Mr Pillai may be required to vote in the assembly which means we might need to pause or conclude the press conference.

I want to thank you in advance for understanding.

Lastly, if any of the reporters are having a problem hearing us, please e-mail

>> Thank you Doctor Cameron and for those following along with us today, apologies if we are interrupted, my colleague and I will go and take response ability and get our vote in and be able to come back and continue with any questions you may have.

Folks, good afternoon and I would like to acknowledge that were on the traditional territories of the first nations.

It's been a year of unprecedented challenges for a territory and

we've all experienced disruption whether it be social or economic, this pandemic has taken its toll.

One in five Yukon businesses laid off staff, approximately 18 percent of businesses cancelled or delayed their planning hiring due to the pandemic.

And the accommodation and food services sector reported that 63 percent of the workforce was laid off.

I am mindful of the fact that the jurisdiction has fared better than most, however, we remain fortunate to have maintained a low Covid-19 case count.

This is thanks to our citizens who do their part by following public health advice and contributing to this effort.

The vaccine rollout continues at a brisk pace with this being the second week of the general clinic here in Whitehorse and our mobile teams travelling to the communities to provide the second shot.

Widespread immunization is the best way to protect ourselves and I'm pleased to see everyone stepping up.

The government of Yukon responded to the pandemic by rapidly deploying economic supports to stabilize our economy and maintain the health and safety of all you Connors.

We coordinated support with the government of Canada and continue to work closely with the Canadian at Northern economic development agency to ensure businesses have flexible supports.

Today we have allocated more than 44 \$8 million across government to support everyone here.

This funding has enabled us to provide more than 40 individual -- individual initiative to support you Connors and their businesses.

This includes direct programs and initiatives and direct supports, revelatory supports and infrastructure supports.

It included rapid deployment of programs and initiatives in early days of the pandemic such as the quick formation of the business advisory Council to ensure the needs of Yukon's business community were hurt.

The tourism accommodation sector supplement the elevate business mentoring program, the relief program and the temporary support for events, funding program.

We also have been monitoring the economy and adjusting our programming as needed.

To provide Yukon's business and community with additional support we recently announced a number of Covid-19 economic program extensions.

We renewed the Yukon business relief program and the paid sick leave rebate and extended both until both programs until September 30th.

Renewing these programs means that if you already use the program and maxed out you will be able to reapply as of April first.

We also announce the extension of a number of supports through our \$15,000,000.3 years tourism relief and recovery plan and I'm very happy to be here with Minister McLean and will touch on a second on the approach on tourism.

Though supports include the extension of the four million-dollar tourism accommodation and nonaccommodation sector supplements to September 30th, 2021.

450,000-dollar contribution to the elevate program which provides Yukon tourism businesses, mentorship training, funding for implement a recovery which I know is highly successful.

And also a program that I think was oversubscribed and I know tourism stepped out to make sure which is great.

And a three and a thousand dollar enhancement to the tourism Cooperative marketing fund bring the total to \$1 million.

For Yukon restaurants and other businesses with a liquor license, eligible businesses most in need will continue to receive 25 percent discount on purchases, again a reduction in price for the vendors but again so they can have a better sense of the bottom line in trying to support hospitality.

We also announced a new regional relief loan program for businesses which covers costs that help businesses to stabilize and adapt.

>> Sorry to interrupt you, the bells are going off which means the vote is required in the assembly.

I apologize but will have to take a brief break so the ministers can participate in their democratic duties.

Please stand by.

>> Welcome back and thank you for your patience, the vote has now concluded under speakers her back.

Minister Pillai thank you.

>> As we've had to deal with the economy and support the economy we've had a monitor in adaptive response like today, getting into some of our supports.

Again, looking back at the last year and we just announced a new regional relief loan program for businesses which covers costs that help businesses stabilize and adapt.

Each business with this program can receive up to \$100,000 in loans including the other loan programs offered by the government of Canada.

These loans are interest-free through to December 31st, 2022.

With principal payments deferred until then.

If the applicant repays a 75 percent of the principal amount off the loan by December 31st, 2022, the balance equal to 25 percent of the loan will be forgiven.

Applications are being accepted till March 31st 2021.

We also have me -- made it delivered and thoughtful efforts to address unique sectors of our economy.

Today I'm pleased to announce details of Yukon's economic resilience plan.

Our plan to return -- Yukon's economy back to pre-pandemic levels and chart a path forward.

When we launched our response programs we promise that we would monitor, adapt and respond.

This plan reflects that commitment.

And details our initial pandemic response, the economic situation and how our response aligns with the government's priorities and programs.

Our plan identifies five key pillars where we will focus our efforts to ensure Yukon's economy rebounds with the response of this and adaptability that all residents remain safe and healthy.

The key pillars were focusing on with our plan is people, jobs, business supports, infrastructure development, and economic diversification.

We recognize that we must meet a range of needs and we are making deliberate and thoughtful efforts to respond to the unique challenges faced by different sectors.

By focusing on these five pillars we will support Yukon's economic adaptation and growth.

The first area is people.

We recognize that families must be able to meet their critical needs in order to participate in the workforce.

That is why will be focusing our efforts on universal affordable childcare, healthcare system with an integrated collaborative and person centered approach and greater access to affordable housing.

Ensuring that resident needs are addressed will improve health and wellness outcomes and position residents to be active participants in building economic resilience and we will continue to put people first.

I cannot be more excited, myself and Mr McLean with our colleagues and announcing that that for folks when you talk about economic impact an individual family focused -- folks who have two children that are in daycare as of that period this spring, having up to \$1,400 of income that you can now use to support your family, to may be look at home purchases, all these amazing opportunities that come with that.

Again, at such a foundational piece, next is dropped.

Building upon a foundation of people, jobs is the next focus.

Jobs will support the well-being of families and communities here in Yukon, in order for everyone to benefit.

They need the right skills and access to good jobs.

Programs are being adapted to help workers develop fundamental skills to seize new opportunities.

We are helping employers find and retain personnel and helping to connect jobseekers with employers.

Programs such as the staffing up, building up and working up programs are being adapted and will support skill development and employment support.

Are third is business supports.

We've already rolled out a number of funding programs to support local businesses.

As an example, businesses across many sectors that are still facing hardship can continue to access the funding through the Yukon business relief program.

We responded quickly during the initial pandemic and we will continue to monitor continuously and adapter programs were needed to address any gaps.

Resilience means something different for each business.

In addition to funding we are providing assistance to local businesses address the unique challenges.

For example, as many of you know, the tourism and creative cultural industries were hit hard by the pandemic.

Strategies for these industries were being developed prior to the pandemic and I commend Minister McLean, I know this was important work beyond the tourism strategy that had not been acted in ten years, this is other work that was undertaken.

Again, being developed prior to the pandemic and of course will be more important than ever as we support this key area of the economy on the path to resilience.

Fourth pillar is a focus on infrastructure development.

Infrastructure develop at projects represent investment in the future prosperity in the focused on long-term benefits.

These projects make it easier to access resources, do business in the Yukon and pave the way for economic diversification.

We already initiated several infrastructure projects prior to the pandemic such as that dumpster fire project, and the Yukon

Gateway program which is underway in many sections of that program as well as the energy projects here and our work in northern BC.

It'll provide greater certainty for commercial activities especially in the emerging innovation and knowledge sectors.

This work is currently underway in teams have been clearing brush this past year on the route.

Similarly the Yukon gateway program and energy project support long-term growth in the communities and provide a platform for other clean low carbon initiatives across the territory.

Last week the government signed the sixth project agreement with the Yukon gateway program with the first nation.

The project agreement provides funding for planning, design, regulatory processes and construction activities.

All these infrastructure projects aligned well with our current efforts to stimulate economic growth and diversification which is our fifth pillar for this plan.

A well diversified economy creates a stable environment for activity, investment and growth.

We will concentrate our efforts on investments that support entrepreneurship in the knowledge economy.

We are creating a broad innovation plan and recently concluded the public engagement on that plan.

Some other areas to focus on economic diversification will include renewable energy, biomass and aquaculture.

Renewable energy is particularly offers numerous economic growth and diversification opportunities for communities and first Nations.

Yukon's road ahead is our opportunity to drive progress on our climate commitments and continue our transition to a low carbon economy.

Yukon's climate change strategy, claim feature details a plan to create immediate and long-term economic benefits which include employment opportunities and spurring investment in local economies.

We are committed to supporting all residents, businesses and communities.

We will continuously monitor again, adapt and respond as needed and as we move forward, part of the key work has been both myself and my colleague having continuous conversations with the private sector to understand the reality day-to-day and again going back and working with her teams to make sure that our programs are meeting the needs of those folks in the private sector.

Economic resilience is not a single action or policy or program.

Is a range of efforts with varying impacts that converges to achieve this goal.

Where gaps are identified we will move swiftly to address them to maximize recovery.

Moving forward we are working to ensure that the Yukon's economy rebounds with response of this and adaptability, Yukon communities recover and are resilient, are partnerships with first nations are strengthened and everyone including vulnerable citizens are safe and healthy.

In closing I would like to thank all the Yukon for their support, we note the difficult path and would be doing a disservice to assume the worst is behind us.

The negative impacts of this pandemic are compounded by the lack of certainty every individual and business is experiencing, lack of insurgency.

Today's announcement is good news for the territory and is a step forward for economic response, I understand market realities.

I encourage all business owners and operators to reach out to the government of Yukon for help with they needed and I encourage all of Yukon to by local, support local and shop local.

Again, we will continue to listen and adjust as needed.

Before I turn over to my colleague I know we can answer questions on the plan and will have that plan hosted today online, we brought copies for media that are here, I have to take a moment to think the folks at economic development, folks here with us today, they've done a term and a cement of work, working across government and with departments really tireless work.

That's the way they took this challenge on the spring and that is

continued on and certainly with this particular plan they put an incredible amount of work in, folks have spent a lot of time away from their families doing this work, they are extremely talented and they know how important it is that we have a proper plan going forward and back while, do we have a town to group of people.

Whether by programs are this plan which they've developed for us this is work again that is leading the country in that is why we are seeing the results that we are, although we still have challenges to overcome.

I want to thank folks, and I hope folks at economic develop and are proud of their accomplishments over this last year.

All handed over to my colleague Mr McLean.

>> Thank you very much.

It's very great to stand shoulder to shoulder with my colleague today.

As I stand here I envision all her partner standing shoulder to shoulder, departments, this has not been only a government response, it certainly a hue well -- whole Yukon response and I feel very proud about that.

I too want to acknowledge the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun and first nation and CEMA teen counsel.

It's been a year since the pandemic began to impact our territories and so much has changed.

I believe that we will forever be changed and I want to reflect on the resilience plan and one of the things I've been thinking about lately is that resilience is as going back to exactly the way things were.

I 100 percent believe that we will move beyond resilience, beyond resilient.

That is what we are and that is what we've shown throughout this pandemic.

With been tested and we will come out stronger.

We are now in the middle of extremely successful vaccination program and following the news this morning we know that brighter days are on the horizon.

I was very pleased to listen to our premier and Doctor Hanley this morning to update Yukon about that light at the end of the tunnel.

Late last year we released the recovery plan as our guiding document to help the tourism sector survived the pandemic and prepare for a strong recovery and I want to thank my Department of tourism and culture, staff and again all the partners for all their hard work that they put into this.

And the many many hours that they have worked to ensure that we have the right response for Yukon.

Developed in collaboration with the Yukon tourism invites reboard and other tourism stakeholders, the relief and recovery plan is a three year, 15 million investment to help the sector.

This funding is in addition to our main tourism budget of \$13 million.

Because this sector is vital.

It's absolutely vital to our economy, the plan is based on values and pillars of the Yukon tourism develop and strategy and is flexible and responsive to ensure supports for relief and recovery meet the needs of the sector.

This year we are investing 6.5 million to support our tourism sector and I know minister play when over those numbers but I want to say again, 4 million is dedicated to tourism relief programs and to support operators.

The continuation of the tourism accommodation sector and the tourism not accommodation sector supplement delivered in concert with the Yukon business relief program our key programs that will ensure tourism businesses survive until travel can resume in a normal way.

In anticipation of trouble resuming this summer, 225,000 will help rebuild confidence in the industry including support for the adoption of the standardized safe travel protocols.

For the protection of visitors and residents.

I wanted to say something specific to businesses around this that this is being hosted, this initiative by the tourism Association of Yukon and folks are going to be looking for that certification and as we go forward.

Please businesses get your certification done and residents, were also monitoring resident perception of tourism and community support for tourism.

We are working with the tourism industry Association as I've said on a suite of initiatives to restore confidence and to ensure the industry can return on a way that protects the health and safety of Yukon or and visitors.

I want to just elaborate a little bit on the 450,000 that will support -- support the elevate program this year.

Last year were fully subscribed.

We had 97 adaptation projects which totaled 1.482 million businesses saw professional advice which was about 415,000.

This popular program has had significant uptake from the sector and we will again be contributing the 14,000 this year and be working towards partnership with Canada as we prepare for recovery, 300,000 will go towards the Covid-19 -- sorry Toshi tourism Cooperative marketing fund that will bring this fund up to \$1 million.

This program will help support Yukon's tourism related businesses, promote themselves locally, nationally and globally.

And other 500,000 will be invested into innovative place brand or Yukon known as the Yukon story being developed in partnership with the Yukon first nation Chamber of Commerce, we are working hard to ensure Yukon continues to be seen as a world-class tourism destination as people around the world start to think about travelling again.

The territory has a lot to offer and I think the values have shone through in this last year and when we developed the tourism development strategy we absolutely got those values right.

This is just the place the world wants to be its a place the world needs to be and we have that to offer.

We will also be investing 250,000 in enhanced explore your Yukon campaign to again encourage you or Connors to travel throughout the territories this summer and to support our important tourism sector, explore your Yukon will raise awareness of all the wonderful things to see and do and encourage you Connors to rediscover their own backyard and the incredible experiences offered by tourism industry, I am also pleased to share that will be committing over \$50,000 to a Covid-19 adapted version of the popular Yukon explores Gold passport contest this summer.

This beloved program is open to Yukon and will encourage us to learn more about our territories history and explore the museums, cultural centres and historical sites.

The program this year will be moving online to better comply with Covid-19 health and safety guidelines.

Prizes will include real Yukon gold and much more, stay tuned for that one.

Our territory has so much to share and I know there are many people and families living in our territory and this will be a great opportunity for them to see our many attractions this summer, this morning's news was very hopeful as I said earlier and it was great to hear premier silver and Doctor Hanley share their optimism about lifting restrictions.

That is as the vaccine rollout continues we could be ready to welcome visitors again in just a couple of months.

That is as we look to travel bubbles with other jurisdictions, after the year we've had that is exciting news.

I know for myself, my husband, son and his wife had a baby in December and we have not been able to see that little baby and so really looking forward to that.

I want to encourage all citizens to do their part by getting immunized and continue practising the safe six plus one, I know I'm scheduled to get my vaccination, my first shot tomorrow morning and I'm looking forward to that.

We've a lot to look forward to and we will get there together.

We are almost there, I want to thank the staff at economic develop and an tourism and culture for all their hard work and this is I think it captures what the vision is for our Yukon as we go forward in this area.

We've a lot of work to do and thank you so much for tuning in and for hearing our messages today.

>> Thank you.

We will now go to our phone line to take questions from media.

We will start with John.

>> Reporter: Hello, no question, thank you.

>> Thank you.

We will move to Steve with CBC.

>> SPEAKER-05: This question is for minister McLean.

Cut out a little bit.

Maybe you said it but I didn't hear it they are any of the things that you mentioned actually you or are they being announced today or are they going to be announced.

I'm trying to find what is new about the plan.

>> We released the tourism relief and recovery plan back in -- at the end of the year.

And the minister and I want to put the picture together for everyone to hear the whole plan and this sector particularly tourism has been the first hit, hardest hit and will have the longest recovery of all the other sectors so, yes, I have talked somewhat about these in the captured 19 actions within the relief and recovery but I've not talked publicly about the amounts for this year which we table that main estimate in the legislature last Thursday.

I thought it was important to talk to Yukon about what is contained out of the 15 million that we allocated for relief and recovery for the tourism sector, what is, and I did talk about a new initiative around the travel local and explore our Yukon campaign and some of the new dollars that are being allocated there.

Yes, there are some repeats but this again is about putting together our whole view of our economic recovery, thank you.

>> Do you have a follow-up?

>> Yes, this will be for the other minister.

I believe you said something about affordable housing, do you have any specific numbers in mind?

I'm making this up but next year we hope we have 100 more affordable housing units in Yukon, something like that, something specific or numbers you can share?

>> Thank you.

When you go through the document and of course I am more than willing to have a conversation with you.

What we've done is that we've broken down -- it's a pretty extensive plan that looks at all sectors.

Of course on those five pieces.

If you would give me a moment I will share couple things with you.

First of all, as folks might see online.

I'm going to refer to this.

You'll see the essential areas where we have specific programs that accompany the overall plan and again looking at these numbers of actions.

One specific point that you're speaking to is around affordable housing and that falls under our pillar that focuses on people.

When you go through the plan you'll have an opportunity to take a look at the work that was done around the Yukon Housing Corporation and pivoting from a short-term Covid-19 wrench program that we had in place and then again moving towards the program that we then adapted from Yukon to the Canada housing benefit which began in November, 2020.

The specifics around different programs we had to help people through this last year but that's not it, when you take a look at our budget that got tabled last week and the commitment they are to a number of units at being built, over and above that is our commitment to infrastructure spent so part of the reason for us being able to speak to this work this week is the fact that we have two really important things that we needed to have in place and one was, as the minister mentioned, we have had our budget tabled and that was last Thursday.

As well with that budget came updated economic outlook, we have been working on this plan for quite a while and again adapting as we monitored what is played out in the economy here in the Yukon.

Then of course culminating with this.

Steve, I would say, the numbers that are identified in this year's budget under housing, under lot development, under build outs of new housing, all of that work is part of the overall strategy that helps us with affordable housing.

That is one pillar, when you do have an opportunity later today to look at the plan you could really focus on page 12 and I think it does a good job at illustrating all the different things that are coming under this.

The other point I would make is that what I appreciate about this it's not just a plan with a series of items that are not grounded in the priorities the government -- we've been solid on our priorities throughout this and we listen to everyone to pull that together.

Then from there the balance and values we've identified which is a balanced approach.

Inclusive, coordinated, responsive and adaptive and then from there the pillars.

This is a very comprehensive approach of holistic approach to long-term success in our economy.

>> Thank you, we will now go to Haley, Yukon use.

>> No questions, thank you.

>> Thank you.

Next we have radio Canada.

>> Is this to someone up, given that you're presenting this plan which is amalgamating everything that's been done so far, saying that what you're approach has been so far is the right approach to keep going, so you are staying on the same path that you have embarked on as far as economic recovery is concerned, is that what I'm understanding this plan?

>> I'll start then handed over.

I think we can say that we are confident in the early programs.

I think today and again identifies the short-term approach that was put in place and I think, again, we have to be very sensitive to the folks that are under tremendous meta- pressure.

Those that are in specific areas of the economy predominate in the tourism sector.

Other areas of the economy have fared very well so we do believe that we looked at those initial programs, primarily the business relief program, we were in a situation where we had almost 500 clients to begin with.

By September of last year that was down to 125 to 150.

That we saw some really extensive record retail sales in the Yukon in the last quarter of 2020.

Almost \$820 million.

Then we've seen that really robust growth around the residential buildout here in Whitehorse in the community.

I think there are many aspects of the plan that we are very confident in and we believe that we got it right.

Part of this was we looked at thought leaders across the globe, one example would be the management consulting group in Boston who identify strategies for world leaders, this plan was being put together by Yukon government, hard-working public servants.

And many of the goals that were identified for countries to follow were already in this plan and that was the focus on green energy, updating our infrastructure.

There are some pieces that have come together but I also believe the minister can quickly talk about, we'll talk about the tours and peace, there are things like universal child care which is not about to go live until April 1st and we also have one of the largest infrastructure budgets that the territory is ever seen.

That again is new spent on brand-new projects, some that have been announced during the throne speech or continuation of projects and of course this week we announced -- last week we announced the first major energy project in the Yukon and over a decade.

No, I think there is a lot of new items that are here and we are lucky, as Minister McLean has said in the past, some of the really hard work, it may not be the most exotic for folks but when you go out and you listen to folks and you build strategies around climate change, around a green economy, around the next ten years of agriculture, around the next ten years of renewable energy here at Yukon energy and of course as was talked about, I'll leave it to the minister on her strategies, we are in good shape to have fully endorsed blueprints and now we are putting in the funds to execute.

I think overall that's going to lead diversification in a strong economy going forward.

>> Thanks minister, all say a few other points.

I believe this plan, this resiliency plan has been a year in the making.

No one ever thought for one moment that would be governing through a global pandemic three years in.

But that is, in fact, what we've done.

It's been through careful management and working closely through Yukon got us where we are today.

And yes, there are a lot of capturing of what we've done in this and summing it up for Yukon and then adding in what all the other strategies and how they fit together.

I think that's really important and I do want to just touch, I know the ministers talked a little bit about the universal child care and all the work that I've done, all put my women's director had on

for a minute, in order to have real economic recovery we need to have childcare systems that work for women.

And that work for families.

I had the opportunity to be part of federal provincial territorial discussions around how we recover from this and the impact on women in the single most important investment that was recommended to us was universal child care.

And good childcare systems.

It's referred to, there's a term being used, she recovery, that is being used worldwide.

When I was able to share the fact that Yukon is moving towards universal child care, again, a Yukon that leads.

This is absolutely one of the key areas for women in the territory to get back into the workforce and to support young families and to support everyone here.

I also know that we talk about some of the big sectors within our territory like tourism and mining and energy, all these areas but the creative and cultural strategy that the minister was referring to is what we worked on for a couple years and it focuses on this in Yukon.

It's the first one.

I'm proud of the work that we've done with everyone and it's going to shape out the next ten years and really build out what the possibility is for creative and cultural -- that creative and cultural industry in Yukon.

Weighted ten year plan will McCain into the -- we had a ten year plan we came into Covid-19 for tourism develop and in that has guided us.

We are the envy of the country in terms of having a well thought out, value based plan that absolutely fits with where we need to go as a territory.

I'm really proud of all the work, it's not a Yukon government plan its a Yukon plan.

Fully.

I just wanted to say those couple of things.

We are capturing what we've done over the last year and there's no roadmap for this.

And we've created it.

I think at Yukon that leads is what resonates for me as we've gone through this.

>> Do you have a follow-up?

[Laughter]

I do.

Thank you for that lengthy answer.

I hear a lot of keywords and slogans in there.

Given the Bagehot being tabled in some looming elections coming, how much flexibility you think you be able to put into that plan create how much more money could you inject if need be in the coming weeks or months to address the situation?

>> I'm going to ask for clarification.

I know we did identify a number of sector specific plans that we have, for verification, you are asking about further investment into the resiliency plan that were tabling today?

>> Yes, you never know, this is a moving situation in the Covid-19 variant happen to not respond well to the vaccine or things could get off track or thanks to look as good, you're presenting a plan that sounds like it's pretty final and that's the plan you're presenting.

Budget is an, elections are going to be called any time, what your flexibility financially to be able to help businesses that may feel this is not enough?

>> I can say that to start on the budget, of course,, as you remember, it has a 50 million-dollar contingency in it which means we are walking in last week with a 3 million-dollar surplus but I think it was smart by folks to make sure we had that.

I'm going to hand it over to Minister McLean to speak to that.

>> In terms of the flexibility around the tourism relief and recovery it was built on that foundation that we knew that we needed to balance relief and recovery as we've gone through this.

It's complete flexibility and we've already had to adjust the last -- from this fiscal year into the next.

We've had to adjust knowing the reality of where we are today because there was absolutely no crystal ball in terms of what we would be facing in March.

But now we are in a situation where Yukon in a situation where we are rolling out the vaccinations.

This is the first in the country to likely reach herd immunity that was built on that basis that as things progress and things improve we will focus more on recovery and those aspects.

There are 19 actions, one of the 19 actions is relief.

The other 18 are recovery.

We built it in that way to create that flexibility and I can say this is been a monumental task for a finance department to work within the parameters over financial acts and to be able to pivot and adjust.

I really think all the finance staff across the whole government because they have done a tremendous job in working with us to ensure that Yukon have what they need.

I know there is lots of talk about the election, pending election, we do have to have an election this year but our focus has been on taking care of everyone here and ensuring things are in place for them and that we have not let out, we've continued to make -- be here every day to respond.

And to ensure that when an election is called, Yukon -- the right programs are in place for them as we go through the process.

>> Thank you we will now move to Tim with the Whitehorse star.

>> Thank you.

I have one question.

A lot of points have been touched on already.

My question is going to be, I'm going to be forgot -- provocative, considering this is a rehash of existing programs and no new funding announcements, what were you hoping to accomplish with this news conference?

>> Let me speak to that one, Tim, I don't know if it's provocative, I don't get accurate.

What we were sharing today, first of all, a series -- a blueprint that puts together both the budget that was just announced, the Minister of tourism identifying a new strategy for local spent in marketing, of course that comes off the heels of the fact that we just, this morning we seen the potential of having restrictions removed in less than two months.

Of course its always difficult and part of the challenge with this is, as other journalist have identified to the it can be a moving target.

Everybody wants certainty but you can only make plans based on the information you have.

We wanted to make sure that we had the updated economic outlook and we needed to make sure that we had our budget in place and then of course now that we are seeing, it's time for us to be ready to expend the dollars that are in place and to ignite the plans that have been worked on and said that is part of what we are sharing today and I think it's permanent -- pertinent information.

I believe there's a number of things that are new weather its some of the initiatives around ensuring that our local economy and/or spend is happening to start, I'm really excited about that work because having been in the private sectors and overseeing a number of operations at once in this community I can tell you it takes time to staff up.

You need to make sure marketing is in place, folks are turning over and getting going again.

Those are all really important signals.

Again, today, the other piece which I think is important is this morning they talked about the clinic which is a walk-in clinic and we can't say enough how important it is that not only you get ready for an opening in the private sector if you're business has been dormant but also that you're in a position -- of one from Minister McLean as in other jurisdictions, please make sure you have strategy to get your staff vaccinated, it'll be important.

Today's a signal that we are getting ready to get this economy moving in full, with the information we have today.

Thank you.

>> I would like to thank everyone for their time today and especially the patience as we had to take a brief pause from the announcement.

As you heard this morning the next Covid-19 update will not be next week it'll be the following week.

Stay tuned for that.

Thank you very much.