

Tulita strike said to be biggest NWT find in decades
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YELLOWKNIFE - There has been a major oil and gas discovery southwest of Tulita that industry officials say will ignite more interest in exploration in the area.

Oil company executives say it's the largest find in decades in the region, 600 kilometers northwest of Yellowknife.

Northrock Resources and its partners made the announcement Wednesday about their Summit Creek well, after testing wrapped up late last week.

Officials say the well produced 10 million cubic feet of natural gas and 3,000 barrels of light crude oil daily during the test. The oil production is about 100 times greater than the average well in Alberta.

Northrock president Dave Pearce says the well, about 55 kilometres from Tulita, isn't commercially viable on its own, but it's a good start.

"It is high-risk, hopefully high-reward drilling, so we were hoping for significant rates like we've seen so we're enthusiastic, and encouraged," says Pearce. "Quite often you can do all this work and come away with a dry hole, which was the most likely outcome so we're very pleased with the production rates we've seen."

Greg Stringham, vice-president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, predicts more exploration in the area as production at the nearby Norman Wells fields wanes.

"People will be interested in seeing that much oil being produced in particular because it's close, relatively close to the existing pipeline infrastructure that has capacity on it," he says.

Rod Hardy, a retired businessman who lives in Tulita, says he's been expecting the big oil discovery in that area for years.

"My grandfather before he died had prophesied that over on that side, in that area there was going to be something much much bigger than Norman Wells," he recalls.

Northrock and its partners have spent \$50 million over the last two winters on exploration.

Northrock is planning additional seismic activity in the summer and more drilling next winter.