



An 'Ice Pilots' plane at twilight

## Notes from the North

By Greg David

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### Deconstructing the innermost workings of the TV industry



Are you getting tired of my past Nuts & Bolts column devoted to *Ice Pilots NWT*, or did you skip my feature on the show, which returned for Season 2 this past Wednesday night? Well, tough — I write about stuff that

interests me and *Ice Pilots* is one show I can't get enough of. Especially since I spent three days in Yellowknife where I experienced things I never have before, like driving on a frozen lake, flying in a Second World War airplane, hiking to the highest point in town and being pulled around by sled dogs.

If you have been reading about my *Ice Pilots* experiences and are interested in doing what I did, this column is for you. Here's how to get the ultimate *Ice Pilots* adventure, and enjoy the rugged beauty of the area as well.

#### Buffalo Airways

The whole reason I was in Yellowknife in the first place is because the crew working at Buffalo (under the vigilant eye of Joe McBryan) are top-notch. We boarded Buffalo's daily flight to Hay River, N.W.T., a trek that goes to and from the two cities, hauling supplies and people. An adult return ticket will run you \$327, with kids and seniors shelling out \$210. Check out Buffalo's [website](#) for more details. Want a taste of what the flight to Hay River is like? I shot some video from inside the cabin:



#### Ptarmigan Inn, Hay River

We bedded down for the night (after an awesome dinner at Joe's daughter's home) in Hay River's Ptarmigan Inn. It's not a swanky joint, but it's close to the airport (actually, everything in Hay River is close to the airport), and the rooms were warm and the bed was comfy.

#### Northern Frontier Visitors Association

Executive director Andy Hutchinson and his staff welcomed us media types like kings, giving us a tour of Yellowknife's wicked Visitors Centre. The building is smack-dab on the way into town from the airport, and boasts impressive and extensive information about the area. From details about hunting and trapping to gold and diamond mining, the centre is a one-stop treasure trove of info. It also features a gift shop with an array of items made by local artisans, T-shirts and ball caps, and a book by a certain *Ice Road Truckler* was available for purchase. Grab an impressive keepsake with a certificate from the Order of Arctic Adventurers, North of 60 Chapter, which proves you trekked in the far north.

#### Explorer Hotel

A modern hotel with everything you need. With spacious rooms and decent wi-fi, the Explorer is right across the street from the Visitors Centre.

#### Beck's Kennels

One of the coolest experiences — literally and figuratively — was the half-hour dog-sled trip we took around Grace Lake. Owner Grant Beck loaded four men onto a sled (I stood up on the runners in the back) and the 14-dog team took us on an energetic circuit of the lake. The boys in the sled were bundled up under blankets and I was toasty enough, too, though my hand went numb while I shot the below video. For those who don't have heavy winter clothing (boots, snow pants, a coat), Beck's will supply them for a fee.

Book your adventure now!



*Ice Pilots NWT* airs Wednesdays at 8 p.m. ET/PT on History Television.

Thoughts? [greg@tvguide.ca](mailto:greg@tvguide.ca) or comment below.

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