

For Information Purposes Only:

April 20, 2010

Memo to:       Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce  
                  Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association  
                  Common Voice Northwest

Re:               Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute – Background & Implementation

In 2006, the North Superior Training Board commissioned Dr. Livio Di Matteo, Lakehead University to prepare a report which outlined strategies to assist Northwestern Ontario in pursuing opportunities within the knowledge economy. In this report, it was recommended that consideration be given to creating a Northwestern Ontario Research Institute to analyze business, scientific, economic and social issues and generate information and advice that could be applied to the region's economy.

On January 6, 2007, under the banner of "Forging the Future, an Economic Vision for Northwestern Ontario", the Regional Recovery Committee (the forerunner of Common Voice Northwest) included a recommendation for the creation of a Northwestern Ontario Policy Research Institute. This recommendation was based on the NSTB Dr. Di Matteo report.

The Local Board then commissioned Dr. Di Matteo to further explore this recommendation and in 2007 the Board released "A Policy Institute for Northwestern Ontario: Need, Models and Structure". This report also included a recommendation that an implementation committee consisting of key regional partners be struck to bring about the creation of the Policy Institute and this was done.

Dr. Robert Rosehart's February 2008 "Northwestern Ontario: Preparing for Change – Northwestern Ontario Economic Facilitator Report" also supported the creation of a Policy Institute suggesting that opportunities existed to learn from other jurisdictions in crafting a Northwestern Ontario Policy Institute to help steer the regeneration of our economic and employment future. Common Voice Northwest (CVNW) has also endorsed the creation of a Policy Institute. In their response to the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, CVNW requested that the Northern Ontario Growth Plan be amended to include the establishment of a Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute (NOPPI) in partnership with universities, colleges, Aboriginal organizations, regional and community stakeholders to focus on Pan-Northern public policy issues.

The most recent model and steps to creating a Pan Northern Policy Institute as developed by the Policy Institute Implementation Committee (April 12, 2010) follow.

Marg Scott  
Executive Director  
North Superior Workforce Planning Board

# *Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute*

April, 2010

**Mission:** The Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute conducts independent forward-looking research on business, economic and social issues and generates policy advice that will improve Northern Ontario's standard of living through sound economic and social policies.

**Outcomes:** **As a result of the work of the Northern Ontario Public Policy Institute (NOPPI):**

- Governments, regional organizations and the public will receive policy advice on policy that identifies and meets the needs of Northern Ontario.
- Rigorous, timely, research findings and commentary will be available on key issues such as but not limited to economy, social issues, health, education, housing, energy, climate change, Aboriginal people, demographic change, transportation, business and resource management.
- Resources on regional public policy issues will be available.
- Opportunities will be created for informed discussion of research findings.
- Results of the research will be published and distributed.

*In his report "Northwestern Ontario: Preparing for Change (2008), Dr. Bob Rosehart, NWO Economic Facilitator said,*

*"Having longitudinal, historical information on economic performance and public policy trends is important in order to understand the further evolution of NWO."*

This Policy Institute concept is consistent with Dr. Rosehart's recommendations, applied to all of Northern Ontario.

## **The nature of the work:**

- Solid, independent research and well thought out concepts
- Northern Ontario based
- Proactive and forward looking
- Levels the playing field by bringing attention to this large area of low population.

In addition to commissioning particular pieces of policy investigation work, the Institute could monitor and regularly report on the indicators in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

## **Principles to guide the work:**

- **Non-partisan perspective**, striving for a fair, balanced and impartial assessment of issues, context and implications and a full range of policy options for decision-makers.
- **Practical and applied research** that is relevant and focuses on issues that are historic or current and which have future relevance to Northern Ontario.

- **Collaboration** among researchers and community partners leading to creative and innovative solutions to issues facing the region.
- **Multi-disciplinary approach** to the analysis of public policy problems spanning political, social, economic, fiscal, environmental, educational and administrative issues that impact on Northern Ontario.
- **Stimulation of public dialogue and engagement** by communicating the results of research and promoting discussion of the interests of the region within the provincial, national, continental and global communities.

**Nature of the organization:**

- A freestanding organization with a Pan-northern Board of Directors, (independent thinkers, not Order-in-Council appointees)
- Policy Working Group for Northwestern and Northeastern/Northern Ontario
- An Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant
- Commitment to a collaborative approach in working with regional organizations to determine meaningful research directions and to make use of research findings.

**Mechanisms to support the organization:**

- Operating funds, preferably endowed, provided by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forests, with provision for staff and regular face-to-face meetings of the Board and Working Groups
- Additional project and development funds sought through a wide variety of channels, e.g., Community University Research Alliance, Ontario Trillium Foundation, FedNor, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, etc.

**CREATING A NORTHERN ONTARIO PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE - NOPPI**

**Key steps:**

**Phase I**

1. Create a Pan Northern Body
  - a. Hold a pan-Northern Conference to work out the details
    - i. Engage an organization to co-ordinate (i.e. North Superior Workforce Planning Board)
    - ii. Government to fund conference
  - b. Invitees shall include:
    - i. Existing regional leadership organizations
      1. NGO's
      2. Municipal
      3. **Business /Industry sectors**
      4. Workforce Planning Boards
      5. First Nation Treaty Organizations
      6. Academic/Institution

7. Health Sector
  8. Labour
  9. **Provincial and Federal partners**
  10. **Public policy expertise ex bureaucratic or retired elected MPP**
- c. Examine draft concept document, governance structure and statement of principles “ **PP Program**” **Who, what, where, how, of public policy research** (as developed by NOPPI Implementation Committee)
1. Establish criteria for permanent board members
  2. Conference to select a committee with equal representation from NW and NE to work as an interim implementation committee who in turn will develop the final Board
    - a. Members would have a diverse set of interests and backgrounds
    - b. Commitment to Northern Ontario
    - c. Knowledge on how to shape and construct organizations
    - d. Interest and experience in public policy development
    - e. Ability to check biases at the door
  - d. Discussion on overall mandate of Institute
  - e. **Framework of the Public Policy Research “Program”**
  - f. **The relationship of Pan Northern, NE, NW , decision process for research projects**

## Phase II

Under the guidance of the interim committee the following are addressed: (CRIBE –Centre for Research and Innovation Model will be sent out as an example of implementation strategy)

1. Identify a facilitator (individual or organization)
2. Develop an implementation budget
3. Submit application for funding – start up, operation and endowment
4. **Draft an MOU**
5. **Identify model /partner**
6. Develop the final Board
7. Develop organization
8. **Search for NE NW Think tanks members**
9. Hire executive director