

The Labour Market Monitor is an overview of labour market information for the **Northwest Ontario Economic Region** which includes the districts of Thunder Bay, Rainy River and Kenora. The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report focusing on labour market information produced by Ontario Region, Service Canada Labour Market and Socio-Economic Information Directorate. For further information contact us at: [lmi-imt@servicecanada.gc.ca](mailto:lmi-imt@servicecanada.gc.ca)

### **Labour Force Trends**

Employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region decreased by 4,600 from December 2009 to December 2010. All job losses were in full-time employment (-5,100) slightly offset by part-time employment gains (+500). During this period, fewer people looked for work leading to a decline in the size of the labour force (-5,200). This, combined with a slight decrease in the number of unemployed people, caused the unemployment rate to drop by 0.2 percentage points from 6.5% in December 2009 to 6.3% in December 2010. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 8.3% to 7.5%

For more information, please visit the Statistics Canada website at:  
<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfss05d-eng.htm>

### **Labour Market News by Industry**

#### **Accommodation & Food Services**

A new restaurant, The Kitchen Table, opened its doors in the downtown area of Fort Frances.

The Royal Bank of Canada and Special Olympics Ontario announced their partnership for the January 2011 Special Olympics in Thunder Bay. The financial institution also committed \$40,000 in direct funding to the Special Olympics Committee to reduce

accommodation costs for over 400 athletes and their families.

#### **Construction**

The Ontario Aboriginal Housing Service is transforming the old Weyerhaeuser Learning Centre in Dryden into an 18-unit rental housing structure for off-reserve elders, families, and individuals. An additional 12 units will be constructed in new buildings behind the former Centre. Construction will begin in 2011 and is expected to be completed by fall 2011.

The Ontario government allocated \$4.5 million in winter road funding for the development and maintenance of a 3,000 kilometre network of temporary roads for the 2010-2011 season. The temporary roads, built over frozen ground and waterways, will seasonally connect 31 remote First Nation communities to highways and railways in the North.

The Kenora Trails Committee received \$68,000 in funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to upgrade the Rotary Trail. Construction on a fully accessible, paved loop extension trail is set to begin in early spring.

The Northern Communities Investment Readiness (NCIR) program allocated \$33,750 in support of a Township of Nipigon initiative to study the feasibility of transforming an abandoned rail line into a multi-use recreational trail system for tourists. Project partners include the townships of Dorion, Red Rock, and Shuniah, as well as the City of Thunder Bay.

Building permits in Thunder Bay totalled \$4.1 million for November 2010, a decrease of 38% over November 2009.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) announced 13 housing starts in Thunder Bay for December 2010 compared to 8 in December 2009. [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

#### **Education Services**

The latest expansion project at Confederation College is nearing completion. The \$22.4 million

Regional Education Alliance for Community Health (REACH) will house state-of-the-art amenities that will include a fully equipped dental clinic, labs and simulation learning environments. This three-storey, 47,000 square foot facility will be completed in March 2011 and open for classes in September.

Confederation College also announced that they have expanded their regional network to include Red Lake. The campus will offer a variety of full-time programs in Office Administration, Construction Techniques and Mining Techniques beginning in February 2011.

#### **Finance, Insurance & Real Estate & Leasing**

The Royal Bank of Canada will close its banking outlet in Keewatin and centralize its services in Kenora. Service in Keewatin will be replaced by an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) as well as mobile employees performing house calls. The bank cites low volumes for its closure.

#### **Mining**

Osisko Hammond Reef Gold Ltd., the Fort Frances Chiefs Secretariat and Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation signed a resource-sharing agreement in December. The agreement outlines the potential for employment and training opportunities for the First Nations communities. The parties also agree to form committees to ensure transparency and facilitate discussion during the mining project. The Hammond Reef gold project is located northeast of Atikokan.

Stillwater Mining Company acquired Benton Resources Corp's 'Bermuda' property outside of Marathon for \$14 million. The property is next to the former Marathon PGM Corp. property, which Stillwater recently acquired for US\$118 million. Development on a new copper and palladium mine in the area is ongoing.

Manitou Gold Inc. announced favourable test results of gold anomalies during a second phase drill program at the company's Sherridon property located in the Upper Manitou Lake area of the Kenora Mining Division.

Noront Resources Ltd. secured \$10 million in equity financing to continue development at the McFauld's Lake property in the Ring of Fire area of the James Bay lowlands. The company also announced elevated platinum, palladium and

gold assay results at both the Eagle's Nest and Blackstone zones within the area.

TerraX Minerals Inc. began core drilling at its Blackfly property outside of Atikokan after favourable gold results earlier this year. The company also announced it has raised over \$1.4 million through a private placement of 4.7 million flow-through units. A portion of the proceeds will be used to fund gold exploration projects at the Atikokan area gold properties.

#### **Other Services**

Fort Frances has a new salon, Simplicity, located in the Rainy Lake Plaza on King's Highway. Currently, the salon offers all hair and waxing services but will seek additional stylists and body care professionals in early 2011.

#### **Professional, Scientific & Technical Services**

Warnex Pro-DNA Services Inc. in Thunder Bay received international accreditation for forensic science testing. At present, the lab employs six people but expects to increase in size as work picks up. The lab specializes in mitochondrial DNA testing, and has recently signed a funding agreement with the National Research Council of Canada to further develop capabilities in Touch DNA analysis.

Lakehead Employment Services in Thunder Bay announced the opening of a new drop-in resource centre on Park Avenue. The centre provides free services including access to printing and Internet, faxing and photocopying, resume writing, job search assistance and employment listings, as well as workshops on computer basics for job seekers.

The Terrace Bay – Schreiber Action Centre has closed in response to the restart of Terrace Bay Pulp. The employment assistance centre once offered services to about 500 people but experienced a rapid decline in clientele when the pulp mill workers were recalled late September.

#### **Public Administration**

The Kenora Fire and Emergency Services and Regional Training Centre opened on Barsky's Hill. The \$5.9-million fire hall, supported in part by a \$1-million grant from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, is an energy efficient facility that will be home base to 13 career and 45 volunteer firefighters.

Tourism Kenora will receive a \$150,000 grant from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture through the Regional Tourism Organization. The first project is a \$50,000 marketing campaign in a partnership between Kenora and Sioux Narrows/Nestor Falls to attract return visitors from the United States. The second project, budgeted at \$110,000, is for the promotion of winter tourism in Northwestern Ontario and includes contributions from participating municipalities.

#### **Trade, Wholesale & Retail**

Injunuity, a family-run business specializing in native crafts and supplies, opened a new location in Emo.

Dryden Municipal Telephone System (DMTS) opened an outlet for telephones, accessories, and information on cell phone service at Swiftcash in Fort Frances. The DMTS expects to offer service to the Rainy River area and east from Atikokan to Shebandowan.

#### **Utilities**

SkyPower Limited is preparing to begin construction on a new 8.5-megawatt solar park project on lands within the Thunder Bay International Airport in early 2011. The solar park project is expected to create almost 100 direct clean energy jobs during peak construction, and potentially more indirect jobs throughout the local region. It is anticipated that the park will initially produce enough clean energy to power roughly 1,000 homes and up to 15,000 homes over 20 years.

*Note: In preparing this bulletin, Service Canada has taken care to provide clients with labour market information from reliable sources that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since the bulletin was published. Readers are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this bulletin does not necessarily reflect official policies of Service Canada.*