

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@workingincanada.gc.ca

Labour Force Trends

Employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region decreased by 9,800 from March 2010 to March 2011. The majority of job losses were in full-time employment (-8,500). During this period, fewer people looked for work leading to a decline in the size of the labour force (-7,900) and a drop in the participation rate by 4.3 percentage points to 58.8%. An increase in the number of unemployed people (+1,900) caused the unemployment rate to increase by 2.4 percentage points from 7.4% in March 2010 to 9.8% in March 2011. This was the second highest unemployment rate among all eleven economic regions in Ontario. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 9.2% to 8.2%.

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

Construction

FedNor announced more than \$3 million in funding to communities in Northwestern Ontario for economic development and small business growth. Included in this announcement is a \$250,000 investment towards the construction of a small business centre in Kingfisher Lake First Nation and \$500,000 for the Municipality of Red

Lake to expand the parking lot and extend a service road at the airport in Balmertown.

<http://ic.gc.ca/FedNor>

Education Services

The Hudson Public School, west of Sioux Lookout, is set to close at the end of the school year in June. The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board cites declining enrolment for the closure.

Forestry

The province of Ontario announced four more successful proposals of the Stage II: Provincial Wood Supply Competitive Process, including two businesses in Northwestern Ontario: Long Lake Forest Products Inc. in Longlac and Nakina Forest Products Ltd. located in Nakina. The four offers will create 38 new jobs and bring back over 250 workers.

http://www.mndmf.gov.on.ca/forestry/crown_wood_e.asp

Manufacturing

A contract between Bombardier Inc. and Metrolinx for 50 new passenger rail coaches will keep about 250 jobs at Bombardier's facility in Thunder Bay. Production is expected to begin in June of this year.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Activation Laboratories Ltd. is expanding its mineral and analytical services in Northern Ontario resulting in approximately 80 new jobs. With a \$1-million grant from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), the company will expand its Thunder Bay office and build two new facilities in Red Lake and Timmins.

Trade, Wholesale and Retail

The Sears catalogue and retail store in Red Lake closed at the beginning of March.

Transportation and Warehousing

Porter Airlines Inc. announced it is increasing flight service between Thunder Bay and Toronto at the end of May. The airline will offer five

round-trip flights each weekday, four on Sundays and two on Saturdays.

Air Canada is eliminating its Thunder Bay to Ottawa flights at the beginning of May. The company cites high fuel costs for the decision.

Utilities

AbitibiBowater Inc. is increasing biomass-fuelled electricity generation capacity by 40 megawatts at its facility in Thunder Bay, which will result in an additional 56 permanent jobs. Supported by a \$9.6-million grant from Ontario's Forest Sector Prosperity Fund, the \$51-million project will allow the company to supply about 60% of its own power needs. Construction is expected to create another 45 jobs and will be completed by the end of 2012.

Canadian Solar Inc. and SkyPower Ltd. announced plans to build a 10.5 megawatt solar energy park in Thunder Bay. Construction is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2011.

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.

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