

*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 8,800 from May 2010 to May 2011. The majority of job losses were in full-time employment (-5,800). During this period, the labour force participation rate declined to 59.4%, the lowest among the eleven economic regions in Ontario. The decrease in the labour force (-8,300) combined with an increase in the number of unemployed people (+600) caused the unemployment rate to increase from 7.7% in May 2010 to 8.9% in May 2011. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 9.2% to 8.3%.

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

Construction on a new Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment is underway in Dryden. The new facility will provide 14,550 square feet of space. The project is expected to create about 50 construction jobs and is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2012.

Construction is also underway on a new OPP forensic identification unit in Kenora. The new facility will include a lab area with three bio-hazard suites, a high density fingerprint storage

system, and space for pattern analysis cases, academic research, a multi-media and photo studio, a chemical room, as well as a boardroom for training and meetings. The project is expected to create 50 local construction jobs and is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2012.

Forestry

Wagner Forest Management Ltd. was awarded a wood supply of 133,500 cubic metres per year from the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry through the Stage II: Provincial Wood Supply Competitive Process. The wood will be used to build a wood pellet manufacturing plant in Ignace and is expected to create 20 new jobs at the plant and an additional 50 positions in woodlands operations by October 2013.

Domtar Inc. was awarded 626,000 cubic metres per year under the same wood supply competitive process. The wood will be used for full-time softwood pulp production and to generate electricity in Dryden, protecting 331 existing jobs.

AbitibiBowater Inc. has been awarded 220,000 cubic metres of wood through the Province's wood supply competition and as a result will be upgrading its Thunder Bay sawmill. The upgrades, which are expected to be completed in 2013, include the addition of a new deplaner, a dry kiln and debarker. Approximately 50 new jobs at the plant and 100 direct jobs in woodlands operations will be created in the Thunder Bay community.

Health Care and Social Services

The Lake Superior Centre for Regenerative Medicine (RegenMed) in Thunder Bay received provincial designation from the Ministry of Health and the Trillium Gift of Life Network to operate as a Class D bone and tissue bank. The designation will allow RegenMed to retrieve and process tissue and bone from Ontario donors by creating a local donor processing and recovery program. The facility is capable of processing up to 200 donors annually and will be looking to

add up to 18 additional staff to their existing seven.

Manufacturing

Global Sticks, Inc. is now open for business in the Township of Oliver Paipoonge, located west of Thunder Bay. The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) invested \$1.32 million in the project and the Province's Forest Sector Prosperity Fund provided an additional \$787,000. The plant will produce wooden sticks used for ice cream bars, corn dogs, medical tongue depressors and paint paddles, creating 130 manufacturing jobs in the Thunder Bay area.

Stormax International, a company that specializes in manufacturing machinery for the production of wooden sticks, will operate out of the new Global Sticks plant and hopes to add 15 jobs to its existing 10-person staff in the near future.

Other Services

Naicatchewenin Development Corp. (NDC), in partnership with Kingfisher Lake and Wunnumin Lake First Nations in the Treaty #9 area, along with Canadian Security Management, has formed Synterra Security Solutions to offer security services for mining operations. Synterra is planning to create a pool of trained and qualified staff within Naicatchewenin and the surrounding communities.

Trade, Wholesale and Retail

Target Corporation plans to convert the Intercity Shopping Centre Zellers location into a Target Retail store as part of its \$1.8-billion acquisition of more than 200 Zellers Inc. locations across Canada. Site renovations are expected to create

a large number of jobs. The store location is expected to open in early 2013.

Transportation and Warehousing

V. Kelner Helicopters Inc. announced a partnership with Wasaya Group Inc. and 20 First Nations communities, providing helicopter service to mining companies in Northern Ontario. There are currently three Eurocopter AS350B3 helicopters in service, but a fourth will be added by the end of the year. The partners plan to hire pilots from within the community.

Utilities

Confederation College is set to begin construction on a bioenergy plant and research centre at its Thunder Bay campus. The NOHFC provided \$1 million to the project under its Infrastructure and Community Development Program. By late fall, the new bioenergy plant is expected to heat the college's Shuniah building and the Regional Education Alliance for Community Health (REACH) facility. Six new jobs will be created in the Thunder Bay area.

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.