

*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 increased by 3,400 from April 2009 to April 2010 with almost all job gains in full-time employment (+3,300). This employment growth combined with a decline in the population aged 15 and over (-1,900) caused the employment rate to increase by 2.6 percentage points to 58.5%. The decrease in the number of people unemployed (-5,000) caused the unemployment rate to drop by 4.4 percentage points to 7.5% in April 2010, the second lowest rate among all Ontario Economic Regions. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 9.1% to 9.0%. 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**

#### **Arts, Entertainment & Recreation**

Construction funded by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation is complete at The Rural 60 Plus Centre, which expanded to include a woodworking and crafts room. The centre, located in the Oliver-Paipoonge Township, provides programs and activities to seniors.

#### **Construction**

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

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) announced four housing starts in Thunder Bay for March 2010 compared to none in March 2009. [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)

Building permits in Thunder Bay totalled \$3.6 million for February 2010, a decrease of 27.3% over February 2009.

Construction to replace the Steel River Bridge near Terrace Bay will begin this spring and is expected to be completed in August 2010. The project is part of the Open Ontario plan and will create approximately 70 jobs.

Construction of Rainy River District School Board's new Robert Moore School in Fort Frances continues on schedule. The total cost of construction is \$13.5 million. The 51,000 sq. foot school, which will accommodate 480 students, will be complete for the fall of 2010.

Stimulus spending of \$3.54 million in joint federal and provincial funding will be used to improve 13 kilometres of Highway 11/17 in the Thunder Bay district. The project is scheduled to be completed at the end of this year.

#### **Health Care & Social Services**

St Joseph's Care Group in Thunder Bay will close the Frank Murphy Community Centre on July 1, 2010. The shutdown will affect three full-time and about 42 part-time workers. The organization cites increasing operating costs and shrinking revenue sources for the closure of the aquatics and wellness centre.

#### **Manufacturing**

The McKenzie Forest Products sawmill in Hudson will reopen on May 31, 2010. The mill has been shut down since October 2008. Approximately 75 to 80 laid-off workers will be rehired for one shift. Additional shifts may be required depending on production.

#### **Mining**

Barrick Gold Corporation announced that the David Bell underground mine in Hemlo, originally slated for closure later this year, will

remain open until 2014. Approximately 120 mining positions will be maintained.

Lac Seul First Nation, northwest of Sioux Lookout, signed two partnership agreements this month, which should provide employment and training opportunities for its members. The agreement with Ackewance Exploration and Services will allow the partners to offer services to exploration companies within the First Nation's traditional lands. The other agreement with Moncrief Construction Limited, creates a new company, Obish Construction Limited. Its business will include road construction for mineral exploration companies. Lac Seul will own 51% of these companies.

### **Public Administration**

The Municipality of Greenstone announced the construction of a multi-purpose centre in Beardmore. The centre, which is expected to open in March 2011, will hold a municipal office, a public library, community meeting rooms, a tourist information centre, and office space for lease. Approximately 30 construction jobs will be created. The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation will invest \$655,000 in this project.

The municipality of Sioux Lookout received \$650,000 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) for the construction of the Sioux Lookout Cultural Centre for Youth and the Arts. The centre is expected to open in the spring of 2011 and will create 13 jobs.

The job action centre in Marathon will stay open until October 2010. The centre's funding, originally slated to end this month, was extended by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU).

Three Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) Action

Centres in Thunder Bay will be closing at the end of August. These include the Amber Drive Action Centre, Red Rock Action Centre and the action centre located on High Street.

The Dryden Development Corporation and Community Matters began a pilot project with TecVana Corporation Incorporated aimed at increasing tourism in Dryden. TecVana is a social media marketing program targeted towards engaging youth in outdoor recreation and adventure. Other partners in the project include Fanshawe College, University of Toronto Queen's University, Ivey, Izumi and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism.

### **Utilities**

Renewable Energy Systems Canada Incorporated (RES Canada) awarded Siemens Energy the contract to deliver and install 43 wind turbines for the Greenwich Windfarm near the township of Dorion. The project is jointly owned by Enbridge Incorporated and RES Canada. The companies expect to create up to 300 construction jobs on this project. Excavation work will start in the summer of 2010 and the windmills are expected to be installed in spring 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.*