

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

Labour Force Trends

Employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region decreased by 3,900 from September 2009 to September 2010 with almost all job losses in part-time employment (-3,800). Fewer people looked for work leading to a decline in the size of the labour force. This, combined with a decrease in the number of unemployed people, caused the unemployment rate to drop by 0.7 percentage points from 8.4% in September 2009 to 7.7% in September 2010. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 9.6% to 9.2%. 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

Business, Building & Support Services

Webb's Power Shack is renovating an old building to house a new Polaris dealership and service centre in Fort Frances. Once completed, the building will contain a service shop, parts department and showroom for the recreational vehicles and will create up to five new jobs. The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) is contributing \$125,000 through the Northern Ontario Entrepreneur Program.

Ken Dessere Jr. Trucking received funding in September to start a snow removal service in Nestor Falls. The NOHFC is providing \$45,000

for plowing and sanding equipment for winter maintenance of local highways. The business is expected to create six jobs.

Construction

Several highway construction projects funded through the Open Ontario plan are either underway or will begin shortly in Northwestern Ontario:

- A major expansion project of Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon is expected to create over 400 construction jobs. Bot Construction Group was awarded the \$62 million project, which will see a 14 kilometre section of the highway expanded to four lanes. The project is underway and expected to be completed in 2013.
- Another major expansion project of Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon will create approximately 300 new construction jobs. Teranorth Construction & Engineering Ltd. was awarded the \$41.9 million contract, which is expected to be completed in 2013.
- A section of Highway 11 east of Longlac is undergoing resurfacing by Pioneer Construction Inc. About 40 positions are being created.

Building permits in Thunder Bay totalled \$16 million for August 2010, an increase of 182.5% over August 2009.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) announced 39 housing starts in Thunder Bay for August 2010 compared to 20 in August 2009. www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Education Services

The Rainy River District School Board announced the new Robert Moore Public School opened its doors to its students in September. The 51,000 square foot facility can accommodate approximately 480 students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. The school replaces the F.H. Huffman Public School and the old Robert Moore Public School.

Health Care & Social Services

The Jeremiah McKay Kabayshewekamik, operated by the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, opened in Sioux Lookout. The \$14 million hostel accommodates 100 beds for patients from rural First Nations communities requiring accommodations while accessing health care in town.

Manufacturing

Venshore Mechanical Ltd. expanded its facility in Thunder Bay to include additional production equipment for pipe fabrication. The new equipment was purchased with support from the NOHFC's Enterprises North Job Creation Program. The expansion is expected to create up to 20 new positions.

Workers at the iLevel plant in Kenora have returned to work after a week-long shutdown. The company cites unfavourable market conditions for the downtime, which affected approximately 160 workers.

Terrace Bay Pulp Inc. announced in September that it is officially out of creditor protection after securing a \$30 million loan from the investment firm Callidus Capital Corp. and receiving a \$25 million conditional loan through the provincial government's Open Ontario plan. Approximately 350 workers were recalled by the end of September.

Mining

The Ontario government signed a Letter of Intent with two First Nations close to the Ring of Fire chromite deposit. The letter, which is the first step towards a Memorandum of Cooperation, outlines the commitment between the province, Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation in regards to mineral development in the McFaulds Lake area. The two First Nations also signed a Relationship Protocol with each other to establish collaborative economic planning with regards to the Ring of Fire.

Public Administration

The Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services is funding 45 housing units in Northwestern Ontario through the First Nation, Inuit, Métis Urban & Rural Housing Rental Component Program. The organization approved \$4.8 million in funding to construct 30 units in Dryden and \$2.5 million for 15 units in Sioux Lookout. Conditional approval has also been

granted to construct 10 units in Fort Frances and 110 units in Thunder Bay.

A new Ontario Court of Justice facility in Sioux Lookout will be opening soon. The satellite court house contains a modern courtroom, four holding cells, a motions room, an intake office and a conference room and offers improved accessibility and equipment for people with disabilities. The facility will also provide court services to remote communities in the Northwest. The 17,000 square foot facility is expected to open in October.

The Township of Nipigon signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Red Rock Indian Band in September. The agreement outlines the intent of both parties to work together to develop and strengthen economic opportunities for the communities.

Transportation & Warehousing

Exchange Income Corp. signed a letter of intent in September to acquire Bearskin Airlines. The company agreed to buy the airline for \$32.5 million through a 90% cash and 10% stock transaction. The acquisition is expected to be finalized in the last quarter of 2010. No changes in employment at the company are expected with the sale.

The Thunder Bay International Airports Authority announced record passenger traffic in the month of August. Over 65,900 passengers arrived at and departed from the airport in that month, representing growth rate of 6.6% over August 2009.

Utilities

The Mapleward Renewable Generating Station officially opened in Thunder Bay. The 3.2 megawatt electricity generation station runs on methane gas produced from a nearby landfill and is credited with being the first of its kind in Northwestern Ontario. The station has the capacity to power approximately 3,000 homes per year.

North Spirit Lake First Nation, north of Red Lake, is conducting a feasibility study to determine if a hydroelectric generating station on Flanagan River is viable. The project is supported through a \$100,000 grant under NOHFC's Northern Energy Program.

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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