

North Superior Training Board

Summary Labour Market Information Profile



Please find below a brief summary *Local Board Area Profile* with labour market information that has been gathered to assist you in understanding our local labour issues.

The District of Thunder Bay (Local Training Board Area #24) has a population of 151,300, or 0.013 % of the population of the province of Ontario - 49% was male, and 51% female. The geographic area covers approximately 136,000 square kilometres and ranges from English River in the west up to Marathon and Manitouwadge in the east, and encompasses all of Northern Aboriginal communities up to Webequie. Within a one day drive from Thunder Bay there are a number of major Canadian and American population centres – the total population within a 1,000 km radius is 48 million. The largest city in the district is Thunder Bay with a population of 109,015 followed by the municipality of Greenstone with 5,662 and Marathon with 4,416. There has been a 5.6% decrease in the population of the area since 1996 – nearly 5,000 people left the city of Thunder Bay between 1996 and 2001.

The region's economy has depended on the primary industries common to Northwestern Ontario: Logging and Forestry; Pulp and Paper manufacturing; and Mining. In recent years, forestry, mining and construction jobs have been hard hit and show the highest job losses. There are many challenges for the economy and workforce development in our region and as such, new knowledge-based industries are being explored which show great promise for economic growth.

Workforce Trends

Declining Population

While the population of Ontario increased by 6.1% from 1996 to 2001 (4% for Canada), the population of the Thunder Bay Census Management Area decreased by 5.6%. The decrease in population is concentrated in the younger age groups. At the same time, the older age groups (45+) have increased in this period. A declining population has serious implications for the area's economy and shortages in the labour force.

Aging and Skill Shortages

The combined result of a slow population growth, a lack of new immigrants, and continued youth out-migration has resulted in the population in this region aging more rapidly than the nation or the province as a whole. Most occupations in the local board area experienced an increase in the share of all workers aged 45 and older. 15 out of 26 occupations experienced an increase in the proportion of workers aged 55 years and older between 1996 and 2001. Sectors most likely to be affected are the health sector, the education sector and the pulp and paper industry.

Education and Literacy Levels

As of 2001 the North Superior workforce was slightly less concentrated in the higher educational attainment categories than was Ontario's. In 2001 the share of the local board's area employed labour force showing "university" as the highest level of education was 25.3% vs. the same share for Ontario at 32.5%. Visible minorities, Aboriginals, Francophones and immigrants are over-represented in the "less than grade 9 category" although this is decreasing over time. The percentage of people without a high school diploma (2001 census) was 33.5% vs. 29.7% for Ontario. The percentage of people with a trades certificate or diploma is higher in the District (13.2%) than in Ontario (9.4%). The local board area economy since 1991 has consistently been less heavily invested in the knowledge-based occupations.

Youth Out-migration

Youth out-migration for the Board area is 14.1% with the City of Thunder Bay at 12.4%. The 15 to 29 year old age group shows the largest decrease in size. The trend continues and current rates of youth out-migration are the highest ever recorded. This outward migration of youths to major urban centres speaks to the need to develop policies and programs that will provide labour market opportunities for young people.

In-Migration

The Local Board area at 9.9% has the lowest migration rate in Northern Ontario. Immigrants recently arrived to the local board area in 2001 exhibited a high unemployment rate of 14%, compared to 9 percent for the overall employed labour force. Fewer and fewer migrants from outside Canada are choosing to come to our area. The inability of the region to attract new immigrants adds to the potential for possible labour shortages in the future.

Weak Labour Market Conditions

"Conditions in Thunder Bay continue to weaken; unemployment rate reaches two-year high". January-March 2004. The unemployment rate in the local board area has consistently exceeded that for the rest of Ontario and is higher in 2001 than 1996. The lowest employment participation rate since 2002 was recorded in the last quarter of 2003 with more than two-thirds of the jobs lost during the quarter being full-time. Fifty-five hundred jobs have been lost in Northwestern Ontario since the first quarter of 2003. Youths and Aboriginals have a significantly higher rate of unemployment in the District Labour Force (18 percent and 22 percent respectively).

Occupational Structure

In the Local Board Area, over half of all employment is found in three occupational groups: *Business, finance and administration (includes both professional and clerical positions in business; Sales and Service Occupations; and Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations (includes all construction trades, mechanics and truck drivers)*. Relative to Ontario as a whole, the local board is more heavily concentrated in skilled occupations (primary industry, trades and skilled transport operators) and less concentrated in higher-skilled occupations (middle management, business, finance and arts and culture).

Employment by Industry

In the Local Board Area the largest employers were health care and social assistance which accounted for 13 percent of all jobs in the region. This was followed by Manufacturing at 12.6% - this compares to 8.9% for the province and 9.7% nationally. These are followed by: Retail Trade (11.6%); Educational Services (9.8%) and Accommodation and Food Services (7.7%). These five industries account for more than 50% of all employment in the local board area. The top five “specialized” industries are: mining and oil and gas extraction (4.5); administrative support, waste management and remediation services (3.5); real estate and rental and leasing (1.8); retail trade (1.8) and educational services (1.7). Because paper mills and sawmills are found in Manufacturing industry, most of the communities along the north shore had a higher percentage of employment in that industry than is found in the provincial or national profile. In Marathon and Manitowadge, mining, oil and gas extraction holds the highest percentage of employment.

Aboriginal Labour Force Growth

The percentage of Aboriginals found in the Local Board area is 6.9% and this is higher than the provincial and national levels. Among the North Shore communities, Nipigon (18.7%) and Greenstone (15.3%) have the highest percentage of Aboriginal residents. Aboriginal communities have the highest population growth, highest percentage of youth yet their labour force participation rates (59% in 2001) and employment rates (45%) are lower than for the region as a whole. Aboriginals have the highest unemployment rate at 23%. The average income of individuals in Aboriginal communities in Northern Ontario is lower than the regional and provincial average.

Income Levels

The average income of individuals and families is lower than the provincial average and the differences in levels of income between Northern Ontario and Ontario is increasing. Resource dependent communities have the highest levels of income. The median income in our area is 15.6% less than the provincial average. The Local Board area has a higher percentage of part-time workers than in Ontario as a whole.

Women in the Workforce

Women in the Local Board area have lower labour force participation and self-employment rates than men. As of 2001, women are overrepresented in skilled administrative and business occupations i.e. bookkeepers, clerical occupation; professional/technical occupations in health; and in sales and service. Women are under-represented in middle and other management occupations, professional occupations in applied science, Trades and skilled occupations. A positive trend is that from 1996 to 2001 unemployment rates for women in the Board area decreased by 4%.

Resources

- A Profile of the Labour Market in the North Superior Training Board, April 2004. Regional Analytics.
- Thunder Bay HRCC Community Profile and Labour Market Bulletins, HRCC Thunder Bay. 1996- 2004.
- BDO Dunwoody, BCIP STEP: 1: Regional Innovation Profile for Thunder Bay/Northwestern Ontario. Thunder Bay, February 2004.
- DiMatteo, L. An Assessment of the Economic Impact of an Aging Workforce in Northwestern Ontario Using Survey Based Data, Thunder Bay, January 2004.
- Fast Forward Thunder Bay*. Innovation Planning for Northwestern Ontario, Thunder Bay, 2004.
- Global Trends – Economic Opportunities for Resource Based Communities. D. Leslie Consultants, October 2003.
- Mayor’s Economic Summit Thunder Bay, September 2003.
- North Superior Training Board, Environmental Scans and Local Area Plans.
- Northwestern Ontario District Health Council. Northwestern Ontario Health Human Resources Study Final Report 2002. Thunder Bay, September 2002.
- Northwestern Ontario Smart Growth Panel. Shape the Future, Northwestern Ontario Smart Growth Panel Final Report. Thunder Bay, May 2003.
- Southcott, Chris. 2001 Census Research Paper Series 1- 11, Training Boards of Northern Ontario
- Southcott, Chris. The Effect of an Aging Workforce on Future Skill Shortages in Northwestern Ontario, NSTB and NTAB, Thunder Bay, January 2004.

Numerous Statistics Canada data tables; newspaper articles; journals and research papers; municipal websites et.al