

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

On January 28, 2011, Statistics Canada released revised estimates for the Labour Force Survey. Some of these modifications include the adjustment of all historical Labour Force Survey estimates to reflect population counts based on the 2006 Census and updates to industry, occupation and geography classification systems. Based on the revised data, employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region decreased by 8,300 from January 2010 to January 2011. All job losses were in full-time employment (-8,800). During this period, fewer people looked for work leading to a decline in the size of the labour force (-7,200) and a drop in the participation rate by 3.9 percentage points to 59.4%. An increase in the number of unemployed people caused the unemployment rate to increase by 1.5 percentage points from 6.3% in January 2010 to 7.8% in January 2011. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate declined from 8.6% to 7.6%.

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

Accommodation and Food Services

Attawapiskat Catering Limited Partnership secured a contract with the De Beers Canada Victor Mine for catering and operational

services. The service company is First Nation owned and operated and will draw employees from the surrounding communities should additional staffing requirements need to be met.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) is investing \$208,500 in facility upgrades to Redden's Camp, a Longbow Lake resort. The money will be used to expand the existing full-service campground, marina development, and construction of a food service building and winter downhill tubing facility. The improvements are expected to create five permanent jobs.

Construction

Tom Jones Construction Ltd. was awarded with the contract for development of the new emergency medical services (EMS) headquarters in Thunder Bay. The \$9-million building will house local paramedics and be equipped with additional space for community groups.

Building permits in Thunder Bay totalled \$4.3 million for December 2010, an increase of 31.1% over December 2009.

Education Services

Confederation College is expanding the existing apprenticeship program with \$185,000 and \$189,000 in provincial funding for the addition of the culinary management and the instrumentation engineering technician programs respectively. Beginning in the fall, this funding will allow students to earn a college diploma alongside a certificate of qualification in a skilled trade through the Co-op Diploma Apprenticeship Program. A total of 22 students are expected to benefit from the two new programs.

St. Michael's School in Fort Frances has been approved for \$622,756 in funding for building renovations to accommodate the start of full-day junior kindergarten in the fall. The extended program will employ a certified teacher and a registered early childhood educator at the start of the 2011-12 school year.

Lakehead University and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine received a total of \$235,000 from Barrick Gold Corp. and the Ontario Trust for Student Support. The funds will be used towards health care advancement in Marathon as well as a bursary awarded to a graduate student focusing on mining, with preference given to persons of Aboriginal heritage.

Forestry

Atikokan Renewable Fuels has accepted an offer of 179,000 cubic metres per year of poplar and birch fibre from the provincial Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. This offer is in addition to the existing 100,000 cubic metres the company already receives each year. It is expected that up to 95 jobs will be created. The company specializes in wood-pellet production for both domestic and international customers.

Raleigh Falls Timber/Ricci's Trucking bought out the majority of Kirouac Contracting, resulting in continued employment of about 45 staff between the two companies in the Dryden area. The company specializes in forest product contracting.

Northern Sawmills and Atikokan Forest Products, two of four idled sawmills belonging to Buchanan Forest Products, are in receivership while Northern Hardwoods and Great West Timber have been placed under a bankruptcy trustee.

Health Care and Social Services

Sandy Lake First Nation will receive \$1 million in funding from NOHFC to construct an early childhood development centre. Once complete, the centre will offer a range of prenatal and early childhood health promotion programs. It is expected that five new permanent jobs will be created.

Northwest Local Integration Health Network has committed \$120,000 in annual funds to hire support workers for Riverview Manor in Rainy River, who can assist 10 seniors with meal preparation and other day-to-day tasks. An additional \$240,000 for 20 residents in Kenora and \$60,000 for five residents in Dryden has also been allocated for the hiring of support workers.

Agnew & Chapman Optometric Services in Kenora has relocated to a larger building with new equipment and modern examination rooms. NOHFC contributed close to \$300,000 in grants and loans towards the expansion. It is expected that up to five new jobs will be created.

Information and Culture

Renovation of St. Martin school into the Terrace Bay Community Centre is complete and the centre has opened. The centre offers computer training, recreational and community activities and is the new site for the Terrace Bay Public Library and the Superior Seniors Club. The centre will employ three new staff to accommodate the operational upgrades. NOHFC funded \$360,000 towards the project.

Manufacturing

Griffiths Country Meats in Oxdrift expanded its existing facilities to include a new smoke house and refrigeration unit with the help of \$45,500 from NOHFC. New services such as sausage processing will also be made available to local farmers and livestock producers. The company, located 15 km west of Dryden, is expected to create two new jobs once the new services are fully introduced.

Mining

North American Palladium Ltd. announced it intends to boost palladium production at the Lac des Iles mine north of Thunder Bay by about 75% in 2011. The company also plans to undertake several projects at the mine and other nearby properties this year, including development work and further exploration.

KWG Resources Inc. began its core-drilling campaign at the Big Daddy chromite deposit in the Ring of Fire. The company also announced it passed initial metallurgical tests for shipping-grade lumpy chromite ore from a previous bulk sample.

Noront Resources Ltd. resumed exploration activities for the winter season at its McFaulds Lake Project in the James Bay Lowlands. A total of 10,000 metres of drilling is planned which includes additional target areas for prospective nickel and copper sulphide mineralization.

PC Gold Inc. announced the discovery of a new gold zone at its Pickle Crow mining property near Pickle Lake. Assay results from the near-surface drilling program indicate multiple high

grade zones. The new discovery, called Central Pat East, is located about two kilometres northwest of the company's Pickle Crow Mine.

Treasury Metals Inc. has begun a 20,000 metre diamond drilling exploration program at its Goliath Gold Project located east of Dryden. The project is aimed at improving the grade of the gold deposit and gaining a better understanding of the gold structures' geometry.

Laurentian Goldfields Ltd. has signed an option agreement to acquire Teck Resources Ltd.'s interest in the Thundercloud Gold project. Laurentian anticipates completing about 4,000 metres of diamond drilling this year, as well as a comprehensive surface program of rock and soil geochemical sampling and structural mapping. The property measures 2,160 hectares and is located 50 kilometres southeast of Dryden.

Premier Gold Mines Ltd. announced plans to begin more than 120,000 metres of diamond drilling and exploration in the coming months. Drilling is underway at the Hardrock Project near Geraldton and is set to commence at the PQ North Project located near the Opapimiskan Lake about 480 km north of Thunder Bay, and Rahill Bonanza, East Bay, Newman-Madsen and Redgold projects located within the Red Lake mining camp.

Zenyatta Ventures Ltd. secured a contract with Cartwright Drilling Inc. to carry out up to 20,000 metres of drilling on the copper, nickel, and PGM's (platinum group of metals) deposits in the Ring of Fire. Drilling is expected to begin this month.

Trade, Wholesale and Retail

Rainy Lake First Nations Pharmacy, a partnership between Rainy Lake Tribal Development Corp. and a local pharmacist, is now open to the community in Fort Frances. The

pharmacy was built as an extension to the Gizhewaadiziwin Health Access Centre and is fully equipped with a security area, preparation and dispensing areas and a counselling office.

Other Labour Market News

Several additional businesses are being supported by the NOHFC, creating a dozen full-time jobs in the Kenora and Fort Frances districts:

- Comfort Table Bakery of Vermilion Bay received \$92,800 to purchase a building.
- Pine River Solar Inc. of Emo received \$38,301 to purchase tools for solar system and sun tracking module assembly.
- Taiga Property Services of Kenora received \$35,897 to purchase a backhoe loader.
- Ontario's North West Doors of Kenora received \$25,000 to purchase a trailer, lift, and other garage installation tools.
- Squeek E Kleen Auto Detail Specialist of Fort Frances received over \$20,000 to go towards leasehold improvements that will allow for additional vehicle cleaning services.

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.