



Northwest Ontario Labour Market Monitor

~January 2010~

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. This monthly report is produced by the local area Labour Market Information Analyst. For further information contact:

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Labour Force Trends/Survey

Employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region was unchanged from January 2009 to January 2010. Because the working aged population fell, the employment rate nudged up slightly by 0.6 percentage points to 59.3%. While employment remained unchanged, the labour force however continued to contract in the Northwest economic region. This caused the number of unemployed people to fall (-1,500) reducing the unemployment rate from 7.7% in January 2009 to 6.4% in January 2010. This is considerably lower than the provincial unemployment rate which increased from 7.2% to 8.7% over the same period.

For more information, visit the Statistics Canada website at:

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfs05d-eng.htm>

Labour Market News by Industry

Construction

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout awarded Finn Way General Contractor Incorporated of Thunder Bay a contract to develop a 90-lot residential subdivision. The cost of the project is estimated at \$4 million. Construction is expected to start in the spring of 2010.

Educational Services

Confederation College and Lakehead University will offer a four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in September 2010. The co-managed program will run in Kenora, Fort Frances, Dryden, Sioux Lookout and Red Lake. A total of 32 students will be accepted.

Manufacturing

Due to an anticipated increase in orders, iLevel by Weyerhaeuser announced plans to hire ten new workers at its Kenora plant in March 2010. The timberstrand mill has been operating at half capacity since January 2007 due to a lull in the North American housing market and decreased demand for engineered wood products. The mill currently employs about 150 people.

Rainy River Cereal announced plans to test market their wild rice popped cereal in February 2010. About 5,000 units of the product will be marketed locally, as well as to 15 health food retailers in the Ottawa area. The cereal will be manufactured on the Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation located 40 kilometres east of Fort Frances. It is anticipated that several short-term manufacturing jobs will be created during this phase of the project.

The AbitibiBowater pulp and paper mill in Fort Frances shut down January 19th to 22nd due to problems with its effluent treatment system. The closure affected about 565 employees.

Mining

Goldcorp Incorporated reported record production in 2009, producing over 2.4 million ounces of gold. The Red Lake Mine produced 623,000 ounces and the Musselwhite Mine near Pickle Lake produced 233,000 ounces. Plans for 2010 include further mine development in the Red Lake gold camp and continued exploration at Musselwhite.



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Rubicon Minerals Corporation and Lac Seul First Nation have entered into an Exploration Accommodation Agreement. The agreement covers Rubicon's exploration properties within Lac Seul's traditional territory. The agreement will allow Rubicon to carry out its mining exploration work while providing economic benefits and employment opportunities to the First Nation.

Other Services

StarTek Canada announced it will close its Thunder Bay call centre on March 31, 2010. About 200 people will be laid off. The centre which has been open for four years attributes the closure to a shortage of customers. StarTek is a business process outsourcing company that provides call-in customer care and technical and product support. It has over 20 call centres across North America.

Transportation and Warehousing

Wasaya Airways announced plans to lay off 25 workers at its Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Timmins and Winnipeg operations. Wasaya attributes the layoffs to a reduced demand for services. Northern communities that have traditionally relied on air transportation to transport supplies are now using an improved winter road network. The company also plans to implement a reduced work week over the next

three months. Wasaya employs about 340 people.

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.