

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: karen.koczkodaj@servicecanada.gc.ca

Labour Force Trends

Employment in the Northwest Ontario economic region increased by 1,800 from March 2009 to March 2010 with almost all job gains in full-time employment (+1,600). The size of the population aged 15 and over fell over this period (-1,900). The decrease in the number of people unemployed (-2,600) caused the unemployment rate to drop from 9.6% in March 2009 to 7.3% in March 2010, the second lowest rate among all Ontario Economic Regions. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate rose from 8.9% to 9.2%.

For more information, please visit the Statistics Canada website at:
<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfs05d-eng.htm>

Labour Market News by Industry

Accommodation & Food Services

A new restaurant, Full Belly Deli, opened in Manitouwadge.

Construction

According to Statistics Canada, the value of total building permits in Thunder Bay exceeded \$1.3 million for January 2010, a decrease of 75.7% over January 2009.

Rainy River council awarded Makkinga Contracting and Equipment Rentals the tender to replace water and sewer lines from First Street to Tower Road. The \$1.8 million project

will begin in May and is expected to be completed in September 2010.

Kenora city council approved \$180,000 in upgrades to the Thistle Rink. Originally slated for completion in 2012, renovations on the rink are expected to be completed for the Allan Cup hockey tournament in April 2011.

The Lake of the Woods Historical Society will receive \$300,000 from the provincial and federal governments to renovate the Mather-Walls House in Keewatin. The society expects to have the repairs to the windows, siding and roof of the tourist attraction completed in summer 2010.

Health Care & Social Services

The Enhanced Hearing Centre opened in the Scenic River Mall in Fort Frances. The centre specializes in hearing aid prescriptions, fittings, and maintenance and offers free hearing tests.

Information & Culture

TBayTel announced that the company will build a Third Generation (3G) High Speed Packet Access wireless network across Northern Ontario in conjunction with Rogers Communications Inc. The network will expand 3G services to Thunder Bay, Kenora and Dryden, and along major highways in the region. The network is expected to be completed in late 2010.

Manufacturing

Domtar Corporation announced it will be selling its forest products business to the EACOM Timber Corporation. The acquisition, which is expected to close during the second quarter of 2010, affects seven sawmills in Ontario and Quebec, including a non-operational sawmill in Ear Falls.

Mining

Goldcorp Inc. has begun upgrades to the shaft at the Cochenour site at Red Lake. Construction is also underway for a five kilometre high-speed tram situated on the 5700 level.

Premier Gold Mines Ltd. signed an exploration agreement with Long Lake #58 First Nation

located near Longlac. The agreement secures a working relationship between the two parties on reserve land, which is expected to provide training and employment opportunities for members of the community.

Premier Gold Mines Ltd. also announced that high-grade gold has been found at the Rahill-Bonanza property in Red Lake. The project is a joint venture between Premier Gold Mines Ltd. and Red Lake Gold Mines Ltd.

Canadian Arrow Mines signed an exploration agreement with several First Nations in Northwestern Ontario. The agreement, which affects Big Grassy River, Northwest Angle No. 33, Northwest Angle No. 37, the Ojibways of Onigaming, Naotkamegwanning and Wauzhushk Onigum First Nations, is expected to create employment opportunities in exploration for their members.

Professional, Scientific & Technical Services

Activation Laboratories Inc. (Actlabs) expanded their facilities in Thunder Bay and Geraldton to meet demand from mining and exploration companies. Part of the renovations at the Thunder Bay location includes the addition of new instrumentation to detect materials and trace element analysis. Actlabs expects the 100,000 square foot space to be completed in April. The Geraldton facility will be retrofitted to include a full gold lab. About 15 to 20 new positions will be created at this location.

www.actlabs.com

True Grit Consulting Ltd. (TGCL) acquired Anebeaaki Environmental Inc. (AEI). Based in Sioux Lookout, AEI specializes in assessing and conciliating fuel contaminated sites in northern communities. TGCL is a consulting firm that provides environmental, air, and engineering services. It is expected that approximately ten new positions will be created due to this acquisition. www.tgcl.ca

Public Administration

The Cedarbough Residential Ontario Ranger Camp, located 30 kilometres south of Sioux Lookout in Ojibway Provincial Park, received \$500,000 in provincial and federal stimulus funding. The funds will be used to renovate the dormitory and recreation hall, and to upgrade mechanical and electrical services. Neys Provincial Park Visitors Centre in Terrace Bay also received \$200,000 in stimulus funding to upgrade its facilities. The Cedarbough Ranger Camp and the Visitors Centre projects are expected to be completed by March 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.