

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO'S  
BUSINESS PUBLICATION

SERVING OUR REGION SINCE 1984

April 2026

[www.ThunderBayBusiness.ca](http://www.ThunderBayBusiness.ca)

# THUNDER BAY BUSINESS

## 4th Aviation Day at Confederation College!



### INSIDE

Good Economic Signs in  
Thunder Bay!

23rd year of the First  
Nations Housing  
Conference

Debunking Five  
Common Misconceptions  
About Joining the Trades

 [NorthSuperiorPublishing](https://www.facebook.com/NorthSuperiorPublishing)

 [@tbay25](https://twitter.com/tbay25)  [@Scott Sumner](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ScottSumner)

Publication Mail Reg. # 40050324

# Debunking Five Common Misconceptions About Joining the Trades

A career in construction gave Jessie Cook the variety she craved and the travel she loves. Jessie is a heavy equipment operator who has worked on job sites across Canada, from a gold mine at an Alamos Gold site in Northern Ontario, to Site C in Northern B.C., to the Calgary Ring Road, and projects in Fort McMurray, Alberta.

For many women, entering the trades without a parent, friend, or mentor in the industry can feel intimidating. Jessie knows that feeling. She has heard the same worries and assumptions over and over from women who are thinking about a construction career.

Here are Jessie's top five misconceptions about getting into the trades, and

what she wants women to know instead.

1) "I don't have any experience. I don't know what I can do."

With the amount of online resources available today, this should never stop you.

Between government programs, schools, unions like CLAC, and companies, there are so many ways to learn what the trades are really like. If you have even the smallest interest in the trades, a willingness to work with your brain and your body, and you can show up every day and be consistent, a trade might be a great fit for you.

You do not need perfect grades, a trust fund, or even experience to get started. Sometimes the simplest first step is applying for an entry-level job. You can learn a lot just by getting your foot in the door.

2) "I don't know which trade is right for me."

Picking a trade can feel overwhelming, whether you are fresh out of high school, returning to work after motherhood, or looking for a full career change.

The good news is there are tools that can help. Many organizations like CLAC's Supporting Women In Construction program, offer online quizzes or assessments tools to help you narrow down the trade you might be suited for. There are also programs where you can try different trades before committing, like high school samplers or events like Jill of All Trades.

If none of those options are available where you live, Jessie recommends something simple and practical: get an entry-level job on a construction site. You will get paid while being exposed to multiple trades, and you will learn what each one actually looks like day-to-day.

In many cases, employers provide entry-level training, including construction site safety- and basic orientation. They often provide the site-specific courses you need to start.

3) "It's too hard for women."

If you are thinking a trade might be too hard physically, Jessie wants you to know this is not true.

Many employers offer basic training courses to help you build skills and confidence. There are also health and safety rules around lifting limits and working alone that apply to everyone on the construction site. You learn on the job at your own pace, based on your own physical and mental capacity.

If you want to prepare more, there are plenty of online programs and training options available for anyone who wants to build strength and skills before starting, including CLAC's Kickstart Your Construction program.

4) "My coworkers are going to be rude or judgmental."

Jessie is honest here. In construction, thick skin helps. But in many cases, you find someone who helps you through those early days. A good mentor can make all the difference, especially when you are new and unsure what questions to ask.

Everyone has had a first day. No job site is the same. And the only stupid questions are the ones you do not ask.

Jessie also points out something people forget. We often spend more time with our coworkers than we do with our own families. Jobsites can create lifelong friendships and support systems. Sometimes the person you think you will never get along with ends up being your go-to person, your "work dad," or the one who always has your back.

And if issues do arise, Jessie highlights one important point. Unionized workplaces have clear processes and protections. Harassment and bullying are not acceptable. If there is ever a serious issue, unions can help hold companies accountable and support workers through the process.

5) "Working conditions and gear are going to be a problem."

Jessie says that today, working conditions should not be a barrier, especially in unionized environments where employers are expected to meet safety standards and provide proper PPE.

Another change she has seen is better workwear options for women. More women-focused gear companies have emerged recently, and there are now more choices for boots, vests, coveralls, and PPE that actually fit.

Jessie also notes that many remote job sites have improved their camps and facilities over the years. Since workers spend so much time there, sites often offer better amenities and more variety in food options. It can make camp life much more comfortable than people expect.

## Final Thoughts From Jessie

If you are thinking about stepping into the world of hard hats, scuffed boots, and yellow tape, do not stress. The journey can be easier than you think, especially when you lean on the resources available and ask questions along the way.

There are more supports out there now than ever before. You just have to take the first step.

## About Jessie Cook

Jessie Cook is a CLAC member, a heavy equipment operator and a long-time advocate for women in construction. She has worked on job sites across Canada, including Northern Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta. Jessie continues to support women entering the trades by sharing real, practical insight into what the work is actually like, and encouraging women to take the leap when they are ready.

Are you interested in learning about the trades but not sure where to start? Let us help you on your journey. Visit [clac.ca/swic](http://clac.ca/swic)

Everything you need to launch your new website this summer!

- ☰ Web Hosting
- ✂ Graphics & Design
- Ⓜ Accessibility Compliance
- ⚡ Custom Development
- ✓ Located in Thunder Bay
- 👤 + Really Great Support!

**Sencia**  
do more, worry less

🌐 [sencia.ca](http://sencia.ca) 📞 807.768.6603

**Publisher's  
Note  
Scott  
Sumner**



**You can look at the positive!**

We're living in a world in 2026 that has a lot of negative activity going on. I mean the war in Ukraine continues with no end in sight, there is tension in the Gaza strip, a new war in Iran and tensions in the entire Middle East, change of leadership in Venezuela, tension between the US and Cuba etc. etc.

Canada has had recent job losses and difficulty in our trading relationships with our American neighbors. Energy prices are rising.

However, when you look around Thunder Bay you see that there is positive activity happening. For instance driving down the Golf Lakes Road towards the hospital you see a brand new Hyatt House Hotel almost open. When I drive to the college down the Harbor Expressway I see a massive

# Good Economic Signs in Thunder Bay!



clearing of trees etc happening making way for a new retail development by Forum Properties. Immediately to the south of that is another area, which is rumored to have a large retail outlet, Costco, that has been contemplating

The housing market seems to be quite strong in Thunder Bay. For instance, there are very few listings, around 100, and the average house price is rising in Thunder Bay. The cost to

of the property which hasn't happened for many years. Retail seems to be on the up tick as well.

So basically, there's lots of positives happening in Thunder Bay, Ontario



coming to Thunder Bay for many years.

There are many apartment projects underway, including at the Thunder Bay Country Club property, which has a large development underway by Bruno's Contracting.

There is a word that at least two more hotels are applying for permits looking to get the zoning underway for their projects near the airport and near the hospital location.

build homes is high, some say as high as \$400 per square foot plus land, and that I think is creating an up trend in all home prices. Also, there is quite a demand for housing which makes me think that there's many people moving into the area or planning to stay in the area.

Retail development is also quite strong with recent reports at the Intercity Shopping Center of 50,000 ft. being redeveloped to the southern part

Canada even in a volatile world setting.

We do have strong governments in place that are doing what they can do to work with the current environment and make things better.

What we can we do as individuals and business entities to further that progress?

## THUNDER BAY BUSINESS

[www.thunderbaybusiness.ca](http://www.thunderbaybusiness.ca)

**PRESIDENT** Scott A. Sumner

**ADVERTISING:**

Sylvia Gomez: (807) 629-7599

Office: (807) 623-2348

**AD DESIGNER**

Miranda van den Berg

*Thunder Bay Business is published monthly by:*

**NORTH SUPERIOR PUBLISHING INC.**

tel: (807) 623-2348 fax: (807) 623-7515

email: [nspinc@tbaytel.net](mailto:nspinc@tbaytel.net)

Contents of this publication are protected by copyright. Reproduction of this in any form is strictly prohibited. While due care and diligence is used in proofreading advertising copy for accuracy, the publisher and advertiser are not responsible for misprints, mistakes or typographical errors.

# 23rd year of the First Nations Housing Conference

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER  
**Thunder Bay BUSINESS**

I talked to Clarence Meekis, Public Works Manager with the Northern Chiefs Council member communities all over NW Ontario, recently at the First Nations Housing Conference.

“ This is the 23rd year of our First Nations Housing Conference and it keeps growing and getting bigger and hopefully better. We have the most delegates ever, most trade show participation as well.” said Clarence Meekis. “ Today was our busiest day of the event because of the trade show, builders challenge and the awareness in the city. We had 480 people signed up to be here and others come and visit with



**Clarence Meekis, Public Works Manager**

people from right across the country and one territory, so it is great.”

**What is the goal of this event?**

“ The goal is to have this as a forum

for people to get together- community members, builders maintenance workers, community leadership, industry leaders, suppliers, consultants . Everybody can gather, share information, learn from each other and help our communities build stronger homes. Our theme is Stronger Alliances Stronger Homes so we believe working together helps us to do that for our communities.”

**How many homes do you build in a year?**

“ The number of homes we build per year varies based on government funding abilities programs both provincial or federal. Some of our communities will build a couple dozens homes in a



year whether it is through construction or through manufactured homes being purchased and delivered. It is a wide variety.”

**How has the event progressed and evolved over the years and what are current challenges you face?**

“ When we first did this event it was a few dozen people involved- select communities with the same goal. Learning lessons from each other rather than everyone making their own mistakes.”

**Continued**

 CLAC  
SUPPORTING  
WOMEN IN  
CONSTRUCTION

 CLAC  
a union that works

## BUILD A CAREER IN THE TRADES

*WE'LL HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY*

Connect with us today!  
[clac.ca/swic](http://clac.ca/swic)



# 23rd year of the First Nations Housing Conference

Continued

“ It is a challenge building homes in our communities whether it be funding, resources, even skill at the communities. If they aren’t able to focus on skills development, in some years they can have challenges.”

“ Today is the builders challenge where we kind of focus on a type of construction. Today it is siding and flashing, sealing on the outside of the houses. We have a youth aspect this year. There are five different teams throughout the day.”



“ There are always challenges and we have to be ready to learn new ways of doing things. One thing is accessing funding opportunities. If the Federal government has announced various programs often there is not First Nation carve outs so we are competing with municipalities and cities across

“ Climate change is also a factor in getting things moved around the country. My own communities are all remote and count on winter roads access and we have had very shortened seasons. This is shaping up to be a better year as we have cold weather for an extended period. This is critical as we



the whole country for similar building opportunities. We have to pivot and respond.”

have large projects which needed supplies”.

**Badanai**  
THUNDER BAY



## 2026 Colorado's



**\* Low Finance Rates \***  
**\* Ask About Offers Available \***

399 Memorial Avenue  
Thunder Bay, On  
P7B 3Y4

Tel: (807) 683-4900  
Fax: (807) 345-8005  
Toll Free: 1-800-465-3915

# Trillium Mutual Insurance Company Make 25K donation to RFDA

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER  
**Thunder Bay BUSINESS**

Pat Bushby is the Chair of the Board of Trillium Mutual Insurance Company, a P&C insurer from southwestern Ontario with a focus on farm, agriculture and rural communities. He recently made a presentation of a 25K donation to the RFDA Capital Campaign.

“Thunder Bay has been on our radar screen for future business development.

Trillium Mutual began as farmers who banded together to protect each others assets from loss due to fire. Today the P&C Insurer services large farms and agricultural operations as well as commercial and personal lines. The key in the mutual space is that the Company is owned by the policyholders and we continue to focus on protecting each other. Trillium also has a strong focus on Corporate Social Responsibility through its internal Roots foundation. Roots supports the success of communities and people with a focus on



sustainable agricultural, food security health and culture.”said Pat Bushby. “Trillium Mutual wanted to support the RFDA because it is a great fit for us. The ROOTS foundation looks at projects that match our vision supporting rural communities, agriculture and a sustainable food future. We look for these opportunities and review hundreds of applications. The RFDA applied and their proposal was really well received and I was glad to help make the connection.”

The 25K donation will go towards the RFDA capital campaign.

“The RFDA has built an excellent facility. We especially appreciate the kitchen facilities and the vision of what they are going to do with it. We really need to build food security, and sustainability in the North including teaching people how to prepare and preserve for self sufficiency.”

## Grace Place Coldest Night of the Year Great Success!



hot meal.

The Grace Place Coldest Night of the year walk has raised over \$1 million in 14 years. This years top fundraiser was over \$3600.

Grace Place has been operating for 14 years now. They couldn't do it without the help of Summit Church, Redwood Church, Transformation Church, Saalem Church, Grassroots Church, Calgary Lutheran and St. Margaret's Church.

Kim Stajkowski was the top fundraiser this year. She also volunteers at Grace Place. Grace Place went above their goal with 47 teams, 435 people walking, 80 volunteers helped and 489 bowls of chili were served. Melanie and Gary of Grace Place are totally dedicated to helping the less fortunate.

Next years walk is on February 27th, 2027

GET THAT **Honda** FEELING

\$0 DOWN PAYMENT



Introducing the 2026 **CR-V** IN STOCK NOW



Real Time AWD



Two-motor Hybrid Powertrain



One Touch Power Moonroof



9" Display, 8 Speaker Audio

QUALIFIED HONDA OWNERS  
**\$1,500**  
GET A LOYALTY BONUS<sup>+</sup>

SHOP ONLINE | (807) 345-0902 | 361 MEMORIAL AVE | [goremotors.com](http://goremotors.com) | GORE MOTORS | HONDA

Grace Place began in the downtown south core to provide a safe haven for those facing homelessness by offering a warm place to gather, safe place to sleep and a

# Transportation

-April Feature

NORTH SUPERIOR  
PUBLISHING

THUNDER BAY  
BUSINESS

## 4th Aviation Day at Confederation College

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER  
*Thunder Bay BUSINESS*

Confederation College held Aviation Day, an annual event that brings aviation industry partners together with students from the College's Aviation – Flight Management and Aviation Technician programs. The event provided an opportunity for students to connect with employers, explore career



pathways, and learn about opportunities in Canada's aviation sector.

Employers from across the industry were on site to meet with students, discuss career opportunities, and highlight work force needs in aviation.

**I asked Matt Bunn, Associate Dean of Aviation in the School of Aviation at Confederation College some questions.**

**What is Aviation Day all about?**

“ We are having our 4th Annual Aviation Day that we open up to industry to come in and meet with our students, some soon to be graduates. We also have a open house portion where we invite members of the community to come out and learn more about careers in aviation and the jobs available and the pathways they can choose to get there.”

“ We have two programs here - Aircraft Maintenance Aviation Technician where graduates earn 21 months towards the 48 months they need to get there AME license. Also Aviation Flight Management program where students graduate with a commercial pilots license where they can use that to get to be a pilot.”

“ This year we have 25 employers coming that are actively hiring as well as three not for profits and some col-



lege departments. “



**How are the employment opportunities for your graduates?**

“ The employment opportunities are excellent- there is a current pilot and AME shortage in Canada and word wide. Our graduates don't have any trouble getting jobs. Some of the companies are also hiring general aviation positions like ground handlers, fuelers and flight dispatchers and followers so there are many opportunities. We graduate anywhere from to 60 to 80 students per year.”

“ I am an alumni of both programs here and it is great to see our alumni come back for this day. Our college offers a smaller program compared to other colleges, but that allows us to offer more hands on personalized approach. We are proud of our graduates. Our students are from all over the

province and outside. This event is a signal to me of the shortage of pilots and mechanics. All these employers here speaks volumes to where we are at and the great relationships we have with the industry.”

**Dave Butler, Director of Non revenue Flight Operations at Air Canada.**

“ At the Aviation Day we are here to represent Air Canada. We feel the northern communities are a huge requirement to support aviation in Canada. As Air Canada, one of the major airlines, we are here to help the younger generation find a pathway for their careers. We are here to pass on what we are looking for and offering possible pathways to get there. This is a great career and this company is fabulous.”

**Continued**

# Transportation

-April Feature



## 4th Aviation Day at Confederation College



### Continued

“I love what I do, starting with college in Sault Ste Marie and then I flew out of Thompson and Rankin Inlet and all through Ontario. In the end I have been at Air Canada with 29 years and a total of 35 years flying. Today I fly the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, my favourite aircraft. I love the technology and thought put into the design of it which is an aircraft well north of a \$100 million.”

**Charles Guillemette , Aviation Flight Management 2nd year from Moonbeam, Ontario near Timmins.**

“Aviation was always a background idea for me and I decided to do this program. The program here is great, probably the best in Canada. I think

more people should consider aviation not just flying, but air traffic control and maintenance as well.”

“I would love to fly float planes. Calm Air and Perimeter answered all of my questions well today.”

**Riddhi Patel, Aviation Technician 2nd year about to graduate from India**

“Today I am talking to the employers that are here and what type of work they do. The college is supporting us well. I think maintenance is underrated compared to say pilots as less people know what we do. This is a great course. I want to get a fulltime job where I can use my skills and gain experience.”



**KEVIN HOLLAND**  
MPP – Thunder Bay-Atikokan



807-623-6702  
kevinhollandmpp.ca

# Transportation

-April Feature



## CSL Receives Fifth Consecutive Top Employer for Young People Award

CSL is proud to be recognized as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People for the fifth year in a row. The distinction reflects CSL's long-standing commitment to developing early-career

mately 50 cadets from recognized Canadian marine colleges, providing hands-on experience aboard vessels operating on the Great Lakes and the East Coast.

the support, development opportunities and trust they need to build rewarding careers and contribute in a meaningful way to the future of the maritime industry."

added. "Being recognized once again as one of Canada's Top Employers for Young People reflects our commitment to developing the next generation of maritime professionals."



talent and fostering an inclusive, growth-oriented workplace across both shipboard and shore-based operations.

Early-career professionals represent approximately 10% of CSL's workforce and are supported through a range of structured entry programs, including paid internships, co-op placements, summer jobs, and a cadet sponsorship program for future seafarers. Each year, CSL employs approxi-

Once hired, young employees benefit from tailored development plans, comprehensive onboarding, training, tuition reimbursement, and clear career advancement pathways.

"Young professionals bring new thinking and momentum that strengthen our organization," said Stéphanie Aubourg, Chief Human Resources Officer. "At CSL, we're committed to giving them

CSL is also deeply committed to internal mobility and leadership development. Annual talent reviews identify high-potential employees, who are then supported through mentoring, special assignments, and exposure to senior leadership.

"Our goal is to provide a supportive, inclusive environment where young people can succeed and envision a long-term career with us," Aubourg

Canada's Top Employers for Young People recognize employers that offer the nation's best workplaces and programs for young people. Evaluation criteria include attraction and retention programs, mentorship and training programs and career management programs.

## SERVING THUNDER BAY - SUPERIOR NORTH



**LISE  
VAUGOIS**

MPP THUNDER BAY - SUPERIOR NORTH

🏠 272 Park Avenue  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 1C5  
☎ (807) 345-3647  
✉ LVaugois-CO@ndp.on.ca



# Transportation

-April Feature

NORTH SUPERIOR PUBLISHING THUNDER BAY BUSINESS

## The highway safety crisis in Northern Ontario

**By Lise Vaugeois, MPP for Thunder Bay-Superior North**

During 10 days in March, members of the northern ONDP caucus undertook a driving tour of highways 11 & 17. Mid tour, we held a Town Hall at the Slovak Legion in Thunder Bay with 100 people in atten-

dance, there to share tragic losses and advocate for safety improvements.

**Infrastructure:** There is no margin of error on two-lane highways with no passing lanes, no rest stops and no shoulders. A patch of ice or driver error means a head-on collision, a cliff or a ditch.

2+1 and twinning are long-term goals but are necessary if these roads are to carry additional mining loads, let alone 35-ton nuclear waste bundles, 3x/week for 50 years. If the government can spend billions to study a fantasy tunnel, they can build out passing lanes and shoulders where there are currently none.

**Maintenance:** It is a conflict of interest when generating a profit is pitted against the safety standards. Winter highway maintenance needs to return to the MTO to enforce consistently high standards.

**Enforcement:** In 2023, there were eight

meaningless. The OTA, Truckers for Safer Highways, and organizations advocating for the welfare of drivers, are begging for regulations to be enforced. Otherwise, legitimate companies are undercut and forced to close; insurance rates go up; wages go down; drivers are unprepared for the realities of driving 40-ton bullets; and all highway users are put at risk. This is a front-end of enforcement full of gaps.

Inspection Stations are the back-end. The OTA wants inspection stations open 24/7. If people are driving without licenses, or vehicles are unfit for the road, they can be

pressreader

Check out  
North Superior  
publications on  
PressReader!

Beautiful outdoors of  
Ontario, read more on  
PressReader.



inspectors for over 700 trade school locations, including 260 commercial driving school sites. The Auditor General has pointed out that contracts with testing agencies are being automatically renewed without addressing reports of fraud.

According to the VP of the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) over 90% of commercial trucking fleets have never been audited. In Caledon, Boulton and Brampton there are fleets setting up illegally on former farmland, creating traffic nightmares for locals.

From the Worker's Action Centre we know that many new drivers pay for training they do not receive; are pushed to drive unfit vehicles; pushed to meet unreasonable deadlines; experience wage theft; and are then ignored by the Labour Relations Board.

If regulations can't be enforced, they are

removed. The good news is that 22 Transportation Enforcement Officers are being trained to staff the Shuniah inspection station – a big win for safety advocates.

Bringing highways 11/17 up to standard is the responsibility of both provincial and federal governments and we, along with NOMA, FONOM and municipalities across the north want the modernization of 11/17 to become a nation-building priority. The ONDP caucus has introduced several pieces of legislation advocating for measures that could be addressed immediately, but the Ford government has voted each one down. We support making CMV driving a skilled trade, but as for all other doable changes, it will be up to each one of us to keep up the pressure until the government finally decides that northern lives matter.

# Transportation

-April Feature

NORTH SUPERIOR  
PUBLISHING

THUNDER BAY  
BUSINESS

## Future Good Opportunities Possible at the Port of Thunder Bay

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER

*Thunder Bay* BUSINESS

I asked Pat Bushby, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Port of Thunder Bay, some questions about how the Port has done last season and future prospects for 2026 and beyond.

**How did the 2025 season go for the Port of Thunder Bay and what do you expect for the 2026 season?**

“It was an excellent year at the Port of Thunder Bay with some record tonnage moving through the facilities.”

“Personally I think 2026 will continue to be a good year for the Port of Thunder Bay with many opportunities. The only swing product might be Canola as China has lifted their ban, which has been on again, off again. The ban created more Canola moving east through the Port of Thunder Bay. Overall I think there is still a lot of product to be moved on the grain side of things. We will have to see how the next crop develops once planted in the spring but early indications are positive. We are continually working on maintaining and building existing business, some of that being project cargo such as wind turbines and potash which remain strong.”



We are also keenly focused on cargo diversification.”

**Are there some potential unique new cargo ideas for the Port?**

“We are looking at supporting an energy corridor for oil and gas through Thunder Bay, putting it on tankers here and moving through the Great Lakes, and the seaway to eastern destinations. If this could happen it would be a game changer. The Northern Ontario mineral sector is another opportunity. We need to get all the parties together on

these opportunities, because it would be a huge economic driver for the region and country.

Thunder Bay is a key National trade corridor servicing Western Canada and Northwestern Ontario to and from the East. There is interest in the Arctic areas but we can't forget about Thunder Bay. There is a lot of infrastructure already here and we are quickly able to embrace opportunities.”

“Now is the time to think about going through Canadian corridors wherever possible, given the cur-

rent political climate. There is good capacity available in the East as compared to the West coast of Canada so it is really about taking a look at what we have to offer and how can we do it best.”

“The Seaway also continues looking at ways to keep the Locks open longer. If we could keep the Seaway open for 12 months, or close to 12 months each year, that would be huge. We know we could gain incremental business from this.”

# Transportation

-April Feature



## Ontario Protecting Drivers on Highway 11/17 Corridor

Province investing in increased enforcement to enhance safety across northern highways to keep goods and people moving safely

The Ontario government is taking action to improve safety on the Highway 11/17 cor-

ridor by advancing road enhancement projects and cracking down on dangerous driving. Highways 11 and 17 form a key part of the Trans-Canada network, supporting supply chains, economic growth and access to jobs and services across the

North. As part of its plan to protect Ontario, the government is continuing to invest in critical highway infrastructure to ensure people can safely and efficiently access essential goods and services, while building stronger, more resilient and self-reliant communities across the North.

“Our government is keenly aware how important safe roads, bridges and highways are to the residents, visitors and businesses in the North who rely on them daily,” said George Pirie, Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth. “That is why we are taking action to improve safety, increase enforcement and make targeted investments that will keep people safe and goods moving, while strengthening connections between northern and remote communities.”

The province is making the Highway 11/17 corridor safer by:

- Increasing the number of Transportation Enforcement Officers in Northern Ontario.
- Expanding enforcement blitzes along the Highway 11/17 corridor between truck inspection stations to ensure trucks are safe and drivers follow the rules of the road.
- Deploying two mobile inspection support units in spring 2026 to increase truck enforcement along the Highway 11/17 corridor.
- Launching procurement in spring 2026 to rebuild the Hearst truck inspection station and replace the weigh scale.
- Improving and upgrading highway signage for better visibility.
- Installing new portable variable messaging signs to provide better safety information to drivers about weather conditions and closures.
- Advancing preliminary design work to expand Highway 11/17 between Thunder Bay and Shabaqua, including scheduling a public meeting in spring 2026.
- Upgrading the provin-

cial rest area network in Northern Ontario to provide more year-round truck parking and working with municipal and business partners to expand capacity, including a new service hub facility in Matheson that will allow more trucks to pull off safely during winter storms.

Continuing to work with stakeholder groups, including the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and the Ontario Road Builders’ Association on further improvements.

“Highways 11 and 17 are lifelines for Northern Ontario, and we’re making them safer and more reliable by cracking down on dangerous driving, strengthening enforcement and investing in new safety measures that keep people and goods moving,” said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. “Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is working to protect Ontario drivers, fuel our economy and ensure northern communities stay connected year-round.”

The Ontario government is delivering increased enforcement, education and safety upgrades along critical northern links like Highways 11 and 17 and will continue to move forward with the investments needed to enhance northern communities. In 2025-26, Ontario is investing nearly \$583 million through the Northern Highways Program, including \$481 million for rehabilitation projects and almost \$102 million for expansion projects, to improve road safety, reduce congestion and support economic growth across Northern Ontario.

Ontario will continue to work with its partners and local communities to determine areas where rehabilitation or upgrades are required to deliver highway infrastructure improvements that are needed to support growing communities and a stronger, more resilient economy.



Check out  
North Superior  
publications on  
PressReader!

Local business news that  
matters to residents.



**THUNDER BAY.**  
GREAT PORT.  
GREAT SHIP.  
GREAT PARTNERSHIP.



CANADA STEAMSHIP LINES



[cslships.com](http://cslships.com)



# Ontario Investing More Than \$78,000 to Grow Machinery Distribution Business in Thunder Bay

Funding will help expand operations, promote trade and create jobs

The Ontario government is investing \$78,080 through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to help Final Drives Canada relocate its operations in Thunder Bay to a larger facility. As part of its plan to protect Ontario, the government is making strategic investments to provide northern businesses the tools they need to

grow, become more competitive and create jobs in their communities. “Building a strong northern economy is only possible when our businesses are able to operate at their full potential,” said George Pirie, Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth. “By supporting Final Drives Canada in expanding, our government is promoting sustainable growth in key industries, creating good-paying jobs and strengthening global trade opportunities.”

Final Drives Canada, a distributor of mining, construction and forestry equipment parts, is using NOHFC funding to expand its warehousing and

Thunder Bay and across Northern Ontario. By supporting the expansion of Final Drives Canada through the NOHFC, we are strengthening the supply chains that support these industries,



shipping capacity in a newly acquired and updated space. The project includes investments in new equipment, updated manufacturing stations and improved IT systems, which will enable the company to offer more products and services to clients, create new jobs and increase distribution across Canada and the U.S.

“With support from the NOHFC, we’re proud to continue building on the vision behind Final Drives Canada. By stocking essential components in Canada, we help create a dependable supply network that minimizes downtime and keeps heavy equipment working here it’s needed most.” said Kyla Jarvinen, Community Relations at Final Drives Canada. “Here in Northwestern Ontario, that reliability supports our core industries, protecting jobs, sustaining local businesses, and driving regional growth.”

Mining, construction and forestry remain key drivers of growth in

”said The Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay – Atikokan.

“Investments like this help secure good-paying local jobs and ensure our region continues to play a leading role in Ontario’s growing mining and resource economy,”

The Ontario government is prioritizing investments through the NOHFC that protect northern industries and jobs, mitigate the impacts of U.S. tariffs and trade disruptions and secure new opportunities for the long-term prosperity of Northern Ontario. The renewed focus is boosting competitiveness and ensuring the North remains a leader in Ontario’s economy. This new direction is in addition to the province’s investment of an additional \$30 million over three years, bringing the NOHFC’s annual budget to a total of \$110 million. Together, these initiatives will benefit communities of all sizes, both rural and urban, including Indigenous communities.



## SALES EVENT

### PROMO PRICING ON TORO TIME CUTTER & TORO TITAN ZERO TURN RIDING MOWERS

Check In-store for rebates/discounts on all Toro riding mowers.



\*All Equipment Pdi & Taxes extra Offers valid until May 31/26.

**WE PROVIDE YOU WITH SERVICE AFTER THE SALE!**



## Northern Turf Equipment

710B Balmoral St. • 807-623-1941 • [www.northernturf.ca](http://www.northernturf.ca)

**OPEN MONDAY TO FRIDAY 8:30AM - 5:00PM • SATURDAY 9:00AM - 12:30PM**

# GREAT OUTDOORS

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, ATTRACTIONS, ACTIVITIES & MORE!

FEATURING: **GOLFING NEWS**  
YOUR GOLF RESOURCE

Northwestern Ontario  
**SNOWMOBILE NEWS**

April 2026

[www.ThunderBayBusiness.ca](http://www.ThunderBayBusiness.ca)

## Polaris Expands Industry's Largest Cabbed Lineup With New Ranger Models For All Season Comfort

Polaris Off Road, the world leader in powersports and off-road innovation, today announced two new enclosed cab models, the 2026 RANGER 1000 CAB and 2026 RANGER XP 1000 CAB. The new trim offerings expand the Polaris cabbed model portfolio and deliver versatile solutions at competitive price points.

year warranty, available in a 3-seat only, and comes in the following colors: Granite Gray, Mirage Beige, Rover Rust, and Polaris Pursuit Camo. Pricing starts at \$26,999 (CAN.) and will begin shipping to dealers in February 2026. 2027 RANGER XP 1000 CAB

The new RANGER XP 1000 CAB is available in a 3-seat or CREW, and comes equipped with a factory-installed enclosed cab with heating and air conditioning to comfortably ride in all seasons.

RANGER XP 1000 CAB is backed by a 1-year warranty, and available in Avalanche Gray. Pricing starts at \$30,999 (CAN.) and will begin shipping to dealers in March 2026.



“Leveraging our expertise and adding to our breadth of cabbed side-by-sides, our new cab models offer value options for consumers who need all-season comfort to tackle work and play in a variety of weather conditions,” said Reid Wilson, President, Off-Road Vehicles, Polaris. “We are consistently listening to our customers to create innovative, rider-driven improvements, and the new cabs deliver solutions that inspire confidence and build upon the trusted RANGER lineup.”

### 2026 RANGER 1000 CAB

The new RANGER 1000 CAB expands on the RANGER 1000 Premium by adding an enclosed cab and factory installed heat.

RANGER 1000 CAB is backed by a 1-

# POWER YOU TRUST

## SAVE UP TO \$600\*

on select residential generators

**HONDA**

**939 Tungsten Street**  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5Z3  
Phone: 807-623-5042  
Email: [annemarie@jandsports.ca](mailto:annemarie@jandsports.ca)

**SIoux LOOKOUT**  
Hub of the North  
*An Ideal Location for Your Business!*

SERVING 29  
NORTHERN  
COMMUNITIES  
WITH A  
POPULATION  
OF 30,000

**SIoux LOOKOUT AIRPORT**  
(YXL) Hub Of The North

Home to daily scheduled flights from our friends at Wasaya, Perimeter and North Star Air

Fast & Friendly Service

Short and Long Term Parking

Terminal Advertising Available

Airside and Groundside Commercial and Industrial Land for Lease

*For more information contact:*

**Ben Hancharuk,**  
Airport Manager

(807) 737-2829 x5502  
[benhancharuk@cyxl.ca](mailto:benhancharuk@cyxl.ca)

[www.siouxlookout.ca](http://www.siouxlookout.ca)

# Annual Pothole Repairs Underway

Annual pothole repairs are underway as City crews address road damage caused by winter freeze-thaw cycles.

Potholes form when fluctuating temperatures allow water to seep into small cracks in the pavement. As temperatures drop, the water freezes and expands, then contracts as conditions warm. Over time, this repeated cycle weakens the asphalt. Traffic travelling over these weakened areas can cause

the surface to break apart, creating potholes.

Late winter and early spring typically bring increased pothole activity due to melting snow, rainfall and ongoing temperature fluctuations. Localized flooding may also cause temporary lane and road closures in some areas.

Roads staff regularly patrol roadways and respond to reported issues as weather conditions permit. High-traffic

areas and locations where conditions pose safety concerns are prioritized. Crews use temporary cold patch asphalt for repairs. More durable hot mix asphalt will be applied once local asphalt plants reopen for the season.

The City maintains more than 2,200 lane kilometres of roadway. While pothole repairs take place year-round, activity increases significantly during the spring thaw.

Residents are encouraged to report potholes to help crews identify and address issues. Reports can be made by calling the City's 24/7 Dispatch line at (807) 625-2195 or online at [thunder-bay.ca/potholes](http://thunder-bay.ca/potholes).

Motorists are reminded to reduce speed and maintain a safe distance when approaching road maintenance operations to ensure the safety of both workers and other drivers.

**Valard** We value the **power** of partnership.

A QUANTA SERVICES COMPANY

Our work with Indigenous communities goes beyond building infrastructure - we are committed to creating lasting relationships based on respect, trust, and shared success.

[valard.com](http://valard.com)