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Smoke and Tariffs!

Ontario Investing \$262,500
to Advance Lithium
Processing in Northwestern
Ontario

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GOLF AREA TO VISIT

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 @tbay25  @Scott Sumner

Publication Mail Reg. # 40050324



Ontario Investing \$262,500 to Advance Lithium Processing in Northwestern Ontario

The Ontario government is investing \$262,500 through the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund to support new lithium-processing research led by Rock Tech Lithium in Northwestern Ontario. The project will examine whether crude

tall oil, a byproduct of Ontario's pulp and paper industry, can be used as a more affordable and lower-emission input during lithium processing.

Working with Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper, Rock Tech Lithium will test the



forestry-derived material as a flotation reagent used to separate lithium-bearing minerals from surrounding rock.

"As we face a common threat from China, Premier Ford launched Fortress North America, designed to strengthen the resilience of Ontario's mineral sector while we work to advance domestic mining projects," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Energy and Mines. "To secure the resources essential for advanced manufacturing, energy security and national defence, Ontario is stepping up by investing \$262,500 in Rock Tech Lithium as part of our plan to build mines faster and invest in made-in-Ontario innovation."

If successfully validated, the technology could help reduce processing costs and emissions while decreasing reliance on foreign or conventional processing materials. It could also create a new use for a product generated by Ontario's forest sector.

"Northwestern Ontario has the natural resources, skilled workers and industrial experience needed to play a leading role in Ontario's critical minerals future," said Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products. "As Associate Minister, I am pleased to see this investment bring our mining and forestry sectors together by exploring a new use for a forestry byproduct in lithium processing. This made-in-Ontario innovation could create new opportunities for our forest sector, strengthen our domestic critical minerals supply chain and support good

jobs and long-term economic growth across Northern Ontario."

The initiative supports Ontario's plan to build a more secure and self-reliant critical minerals supply chain. It will help advance the province's goal of having more Ontario minerals processed and refined within the province by Ontario workers.

We're proud to have the continued support of the Government of Ontario through this latest intake of the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund," said Mirco Wojnarowicz, CEO of Rock Tech Lithium. "The future of critical minerals competitiveness will be driven not only by what we mine, but by how we process and innovate. This project brings together Ontario's strengths in critical minerals, forestry and research to evaluate a practical solution that could reduce emissions, strengthen project economics and create new opportunities for domestic industry."

The project also supports Rock Tech Lithium's broader plans in Northwestern Ontario, including the Georgia Lake Lithium Project and the proposed Red Rock Lithium Converter.

Since its launch in 2022, the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund has supported the development and commercialization of new technologies across Ontario's mining and minerals sector. These projects are helping strengthen domestic processing capacity, improve competitiveness and create new opportunities for Ontario businesses and workers.

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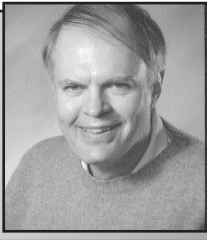
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Publisher's Note Scott Sumner



A long time ago, a female business owner in Thunder Bay, who has a very famous brother in the music business located in California, told me you should say whatever you want in your publisher's note because it's your vehicle to get your thoughts out there to people.

I think that always resonated with me and today not only can I put my thoughts out to people that live in Thunder Bay and the immediate vicinity, but I can place them up for the world to see. Our publication is on the internet, social media and the Press Reader platform. Press Reader is a world class platform of hundreds and hundreds of publications that is based in Vancouver. I'm happy to deal with a Canadian company.

Each day when we wake up in Canada today it seems we get something new which can be pretty challenging! We've lived in a smoke filled environment for over a week now which that thankfully seems to have cleared a bit today as I write this. This week you looked out of your win-

dows or you're on your deck and it's like bright sunshine, but you can't see the sun because it's smokey. It's almost like an apocalypse now environment and makes you really wonder. I do feel for those that



have had so much loss because of the fires we had been experiencing in Northwestern Ontario, some who have lost everything. It's definitely challenging.

We have the smoke and fire conditions in Northwestern Ontario and it can migrate to places as far away as Toronto and into the US to places like New York City. It's sort of very discouraging that you get those in leadership positions in the US, tell us that we better get our smoke under control or they're going to tariff us or make us pay. So many wild statements from people in positions of power that we've never really experienced before, at least in my lifetime. Normally they would have offered to help us if they could.

Also out of the blue the US government have just announced that they will tariff Canada 50% on a long list of items in about a months time. This is on top of all the tariffs Canada has been living with on wood products, which is very important economy in Northwestern Ontario, on steel and aluminum in Ontario and Quebec, and on the car industry. This has basically made major automobile companies have to totally reorganize their approach to make sure that their vehicles are not achieving tariffs and even then that's not possible in its entirety. I know when I got a new truck recently it

was made in Mexico. Major automobile companies have lost billions of dollars through these tariffs as have others in these distinctly affected areas. Overall I think the tariffs have cost Canada billions!

What can you do as a person, as a business owner? I guess you just have to go along as best you can, work with what you can and see what happens because we don't really control these major events. We don't control how the US treats Canada or how the world economy will react.

However we can control our own actions and I like the concept of spending your money and your time in Canada not in other places. Supporting Canada and seeing what Canada has to offer, buying things that are made in Canada has made a major impact on our fortunes here I think and as time goes on, I think there's no doubt that Canada is going to win.

Remember, we have the second largest land mass in the world. We have tremendous resources that the world needs in many areas, such as energy, food and water. Perhaps most of all, we have a tremendous educated population that can help Canada pivot to improve even more as the months and years go on!

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Thunder Bay's Booky Outpaces Big Tech with Fully Integrated AI Platform

In a world full of AI hype, a Northwestern Ontario tech company is stepping ahead of the curve when it comes to appointment booking software.

Built by Thunder Bay developers, Booky is an all-in-one business management platform for appointment-based businesses. It wasn't born in Silicon Valley or created as a tech experiment, but inspired by every day business challenges. The platform was



originally developed to support the team at The Rowan Tree Collective, a local organization creating meaningful employment opportunities for young adults with exceptionalities. As the system evolved, it became clear the operational challenges it addressed, weren't unique.

"All businesses face the same headaches, like managing staff, booking appointments, tracking payments, juggling inventory,

even picking up the phone. We built something to solve that," says Paul Gibson, Founder of Booky.

Local salon Trenz became the testing ground. Frustrated with an outdated system and looking for a better solution, the team at Trenz worked alongside Booky's developers to build and refine the platform in real time.

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"We've been in business for over 25 years and balancing creativity with the demands of being a salon owner is always a challenge. It's important for us to create a great customer experience, and not be pulled a way for the backend needs like appointments, scheduling, reports, payroll," explains Carmen Minnella, Trenz Owner. "Booky has helped us spend more time with our customers. Now Esme handles all of the bookings and I get to spend more time with my customers. It's way more efficient."

"Trenz was our guinea pig," says Gibson. "We built it and tested it together. Every tweak came from real world use."

The result was a platform that combines scheduling, integrated payments, inventory management, staff scheduling, product sales, mobile management, and automated reminders without the long-term contracts.

At the heart of it all is Esme, an AI answering service that doesn't just chat, she books. "When we went live with Esme, the call was over in 20 seconds," says Gibson. "It's faster to book with Esme than any other way. She already knows who you are. It's even quick-

er than going online."

"If a client is in the car calling between errands, Esme answers. If staff are mid-service with a client, Esme answers. If three people call at once, she handles them simultaneously. No missed calls, hold music, or voice-mail, which means no missed opportunity for that business," says Gibson.

While AI answering services are becoming more common, most operate outside a company's internal systems, Esme is different. Unlike other AI bots that simply respond to specific questions, Esme takes action, booking appointments directly into the business' live system.

Businesses that use Booky train Esme by giving her detailed information about their services, team roles, and client preferences. Because she's directly integrated into Booky's backend system, she learns and understands availability, history, and context.

While many tools can respond to inquiries, very few are built to take meaningful action within a business's live operating system. Booky's AI is embedded directly into the platform, enabling it to book appointments,

process transactions, and interact with real-time availability and customer data.

"It's a game changer, and we're just getting started," continued Gibson. "AI is everywhere, and I think a lot of people are struggling with what it can do for their business. Booky solves that problem as well."

Booky is now rolling out to appointment-based businesses across the region like salons, spas, gyms, automotive services, clinics, and service providers. "At the end of the day, technology shouldn't be complicated. It should let business owners get back to what they actually love doing."



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NOSM University and McMaster to strengthen rehabilitation care in the North

A new pathway will support occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech-language pathology students with placements, housing, and relocation support in Northern Ontario.

McMaster University's School of Rehabilitation Science and NOSM

University are launching a new pathway that will help rehabilitation sciences students from Northern Ontario train closer to home and build careers in the region.

The Northern Practice Pathway builds on a long-standing partnership between the two universities and responds to ongoing short-

ages in rehabilitation services across Northern Ontario. The pathway will support students in occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech-language pathology through clinical placements in the North, housing during placements, and relocation support.

For many learners, clinical placements are where careers are rooted. By making it easier for students from Northern Ontario to complete placements in the North, the pathway is intended to strengthen the connection between education, local practice, and long-term recruitment.

"When learners are supported to train in Northern communities, they gain first-hand experience with the unique strengths,

health-care needs, and realities of practicing in the region. Those experiences shape the health professionals they become and strengthen the connections that encourage them to build their careers in Northern Ontario," says Dr. Céline Larivière, Provost and Vice-President, Academic at NOSM University. "This partnership reflects the power of long-term collaboration to improve access to care across Northern Ontario."

"Northern Ontario has a high rate of job vacancies in rehabilitation sciences," says Dr. Mike Ravenek, Director, Health Sciences and Program Development at NOSM University. "The Northern Practice Pathway will help NOSM University effectively serve learners and communities as we work to respond to the unique health challenges and evolving needs of the region."

Support is provided through existing funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health. Students selected for the pathway will complete most of their clinical placements in Northern Ontario. They will also receive support for travel and relocation costs, secured accommodations for the duration of their northern clinical rotations, and dedicated educational opportunities that focus on the understanding of Indigenous and Francophone health and responsive care.

"The Northern Practice Pathway is a practical response to rehabilitation needs across the region," says Dr. Sarah Wojkowski, Vice-Dean, Health Sciences and Executive Director, School of Rehabilitation Science at McMaster University. "By using existing provincial support in a focused way, we can reduce some of the barriers students face and help them build the relationships, skills, and confidence to practice in the North after graduation."

Each year, the pathway will be available to up to six occupational therapy students, six physiotherapy students, and two speech-language pathology students. Prospective students can learn more about the pathway on the McMaster School of Rehabilitation Science website.

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- August Feature

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Westfort Street Fair Returns August 15th with New Attractions and a Full Day of Family Fun

One of Thunder Bay's most anticipated summer traditions is back with exciting new attractions, live entertainment and plenty of reasons to spend the day in Westfort Village.

The Annual Westfort Street Fair, proudly presented by Janzen Pharmacy, takes place on Saturday, Aug. 15, transforming Frederica St and the surrounding business district into a lively destination featuring more than 100 vendors, local businesses, family activities, entertainment and food.

Each year, thousands of visitors make their way to Westfort to experience the unique atmosphere that combines small-town charm with one of Northwestern Ontario's largest community festivals. Organizers say this year's event offers several fresh experiences while building on the tradi-

tions people have come to love.

Among the newest additions is a Kids' Watermelon Eating Contest, giving young participants the chance to compete in a fun-filled summer challenge. Families can also enjoy the ever-popular Tbaytel Kids Zone, offering activities and entertainment throughout the day.

Music lovers will notice a completely refreshed entertainment lineup, with all-new live bands performing throughout the event. Returning to the Street Fair is crowd favourite Mackinley's Magic Show, bringing interactive performances that are sure to entertain audiences of all ages.

The popular Open Minds Interiors & The Landing Lounge also returns with a new look and feel. Visitors can relax with beverages from Dawson Trail Craft Brewery



and Lakehead Beer Company while enjoying music from a live DJ, creating a vibrant gathering space in the heart of the festival.

the legendary Heartbeat Hot Pepper Eating Contest is back with a new twist, adding an extra level of entertainment for competitors and spectators alike.

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Continued

Beyond the scheduled events, visitors can browse more than 100 artisan, maker, retail and food vendors, sample a wide variety of festival favourites and discover what makes Westfort Village one of Thunder Bay's most unique shopping districts.

Local businesses will also be taking part in the celebration with sidewalk displays, exclusive promotions and special offers designed to welcome the thousands of visitors expected throughout the day.

"The Street Fair continues to evolve



while staying true to what makes it special," said organizers with the Westfort Village Association. "It's an opportunity to celebrate local businesses, showcase talented vendors and entertainers, and bring the entire community together for one incredible summer day."

ment, food and community spirit that have made the Westfort Street Fair a summer tradition for more than four decades.

The Westfort Street Fair takes place Saturday, Aug. 15, in the heart of Westfort Village.

Admission is free, and everyone is invited to experience the shopping, entertain-

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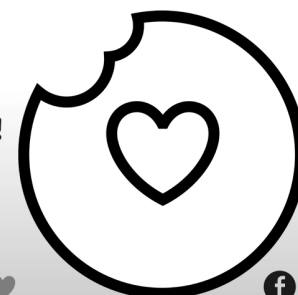
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The Westfort Street Fair Returns August 15th!



A bit of history about Westfort.

Westfort Village is a self-contained shopping district and in fact, many Thunder Bay residents will travel across the city to shop in the unique stores and shops. It is one of the oldest and most famous corners of Thunder Bay.

The community of Westfort, grew up around river traffic and the railway, home for working families. Early business owners established their own busy downtown area, complete with clothing stores, banks, restaurants, hotels, professional offices, pharmacy and food store.

Historic Westfort Village...

This historic village in Thunder Bay was once the focal point of a commu-

nity that worked at the local grain elevators, factories and in the rail yard. Its proximity to the Kaministiquia River made it an ideal location for the docking of the smaller ships of the time.

There is still extensive evidence of the areas past. Now a unique antique and collectible shopping opportunity, this community of specialty shops makes an enjoyable destination for Thunder Bay visitors.

The fort was first settled in 1860. The Fort William Town Plot were surveyed in 1859-60 by the Province of

Canada's Department of Crown Lands and opened to settlement.
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Once the Fort William Town Plot (later known as West Fort) was selected as the eastern terminus for the Canadian Pacific Railway, and con-

struction of the railway began in June 1875, Fort William began to grow, but very slowly. It would take the federal Department of Public Works, and later the Department of Railways and Canals, seven years 1875-1882 to build



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By 1883-84 it was clear to all but the residents of Port Arthur that the Montreal-based Canadian Pacific Railway syndicate, in collaboration with the Hudson's Bay Company, preferred the low lying lands along the lower Kaministiquia River to the rocky shores of Port Arthur, and the Company subsequently consolidated all its operations there, erecting rail yards, coal handling facilities, grain elevators and a machine shop. Library services for Fort William began in 1885 when CPR employees opened a bath, smoking and literary room, with a library attached in the Round House,



West Fort William. Fees were \$1.25 per year for CPR employees; outsiders were required to pay \$1.25 for use of the tub. The Mary J. L. Black Library, 151 West Brock Street, opened in 1938. Mary J. L. Black was the librarian of the Fort William Library from 1909-1937.

She was one of Canada's leading librarians in her day and was the first woman president of the Ontario Library Association. It seems appropri-



ate that the Westfort Branch was named in Miss Black's honour.

Many families enjoy taking their children out to this well, established, annual event. This an annual family event and never fails to provide a great time. If you haven't seen certain people in a

very long time, maybe it is time for you to venture out to the 2026 Westfort Street Fair.

Thank you for coming out.



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BY SCOTT A. SUMNER
Thunder Bay BUSINESS

For me it is always fun to see so many people out on a nice day enjoying themselves and seeing everything the Westfort Village Association has to offer. This is a very unique area for Thunder Bay and a great place to support local entrepreneurs!

The Westfort Village Association present a day of great fun for the entire family and visitors alike! Frederica Street is closed each year for the event when local vendors set up for the days event. This year, like



every other year, vendors will offer great food of different cultural cuisine, that is said to satisfy any appetite. Patrons casually sauntered up and down the avenue, meeting friends, being entertained by great, live, local musicians and that just makes the fair that much more, lively and happy. Everyone is in great spirits during the event and it seems that no one wants it to end!

Every vendor had sidewalk sales, showcasing different merchant wares that are special and interesting and also items that you just can't find just anywhere else.

Be sure to attend the Westfort Street Fair August 15th!

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Richard Schutte Double Deuce Night!

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER

Great Outdoors

It was very impressive seeing 134 race cars on the track with probably 1000 plus fans for the meet the drivers event at Thunder City Speedway for the Richard Schutte Double Deuce night! Dirt track racing in Rosslyn has become very popular with thousands attending every week. The number of drivers keeps growing including attracting some from the US.



Brandon Copp, number 22 is from Brule, Wisconsin about 4 hours from Thunder Bay. He races A Mod and the car is a MB Custom powered by a Vic Hill spec engine. The chassis is built in Wisconsin and the engine in Tennessee. It is a 350 block and produces about 600 HP plus. The car was new last year. Brandon is also a union labourer for a construction company in Superior. He has won 10 races so far this year at various tracks

Why come up to Thunder Bay?

"The people are awesome here, the track is awesome and there are many friends we have made here over the years. We couldn't come up during Covid but the last 3 or 4 years we have been coming up here."

How do you win races?

"The key is working harder than the guy next to you, that is really what it comes down to. The cars are built to turn left so make sure you don't turn right! We do wreck once in a while, it's part of the job."



Why do you like the sport?

"I grew up in it, my dad raced for 35 years and the passion I have built up growing up around it. We will have some good competition tonight with national champions Shane Sabraski and Dave Cain as well

as the excellent local drivers.

Tyler Kostecki, Thunder Bay, number 36 He runs a TRC chassis out of Hibbing



and a Chubbs performance motor in the Superstock class.

"I do all the races here in Thunder Bay and have been to Superior, Cedar Lake, Rice lake and Ogilvy. I never get nervous in these things, you are well protected including with the Hans device." Tyler was 10th in the points before this race night.

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Cumberland Revitalization Efforts Progress to Phase 2

The City of Thunder Bay's newest downtown revitalization project is progressing to the next stage of construction, requiring the closure of Cumberland Street between Park Avenue and Red River Road starting Monday July 13. The section of Cumberland Street between Park Avenue and Pearl Street will remain closed as crews work to completion of Phase 1.

In alignment with Action A3 of the City's Smart Growth Action Plan to revitalize the north core, the project will introduce extended patio space, decorative concrete, and landscaping to the downtown area. The project also includes replacement of sanitary sewers and watermain.

Pedestrian access to local businesses will be maintained throughout construction.

The next phase will extend from Red River Road to Van Norman Street. The final phase, from Van Norman Street to Tupper Street, is expected to begin in 2027.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit thunderbay.ca/cumberland for project details, timelines, and ongoing updates.



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