

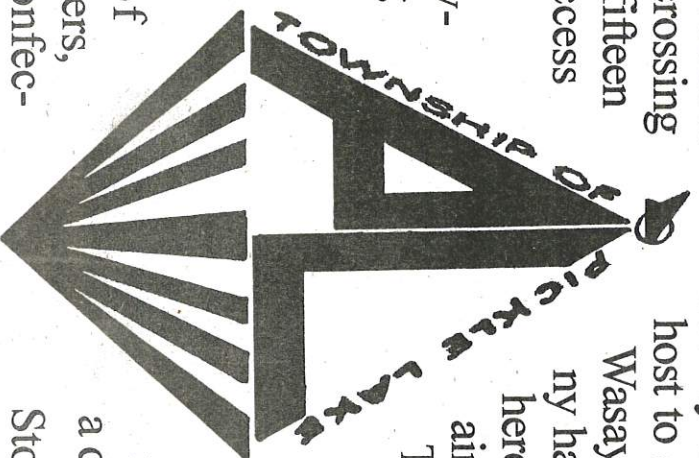
# Pickle Lake

## The door to the north

When winter arrives with all its cold and snow, Pickle Lake becomes the doorway to the northern communities. The Nishnawbe-Aski First Nations, which are isolated all year, are suddenly connected to the outside world by winter roads crossing lakes and muskeg. In 1996 more than fifteen Native communities will have direct access through Pickle Lake.

Pickle Lake welcomes these travellers. Whether you are truckers hauling loads into the communities or residents coming out to shop for personal items, make time to stop in Pickle Lake.

Pickle Lake offers an array of restaurants, boutiques, hotels, wholesalers, service stations, building suppliers, confecti-  
 onery stores, grocery and retailers, vehicle suppliers, sports arena, curling rink, bowling alley and much more.

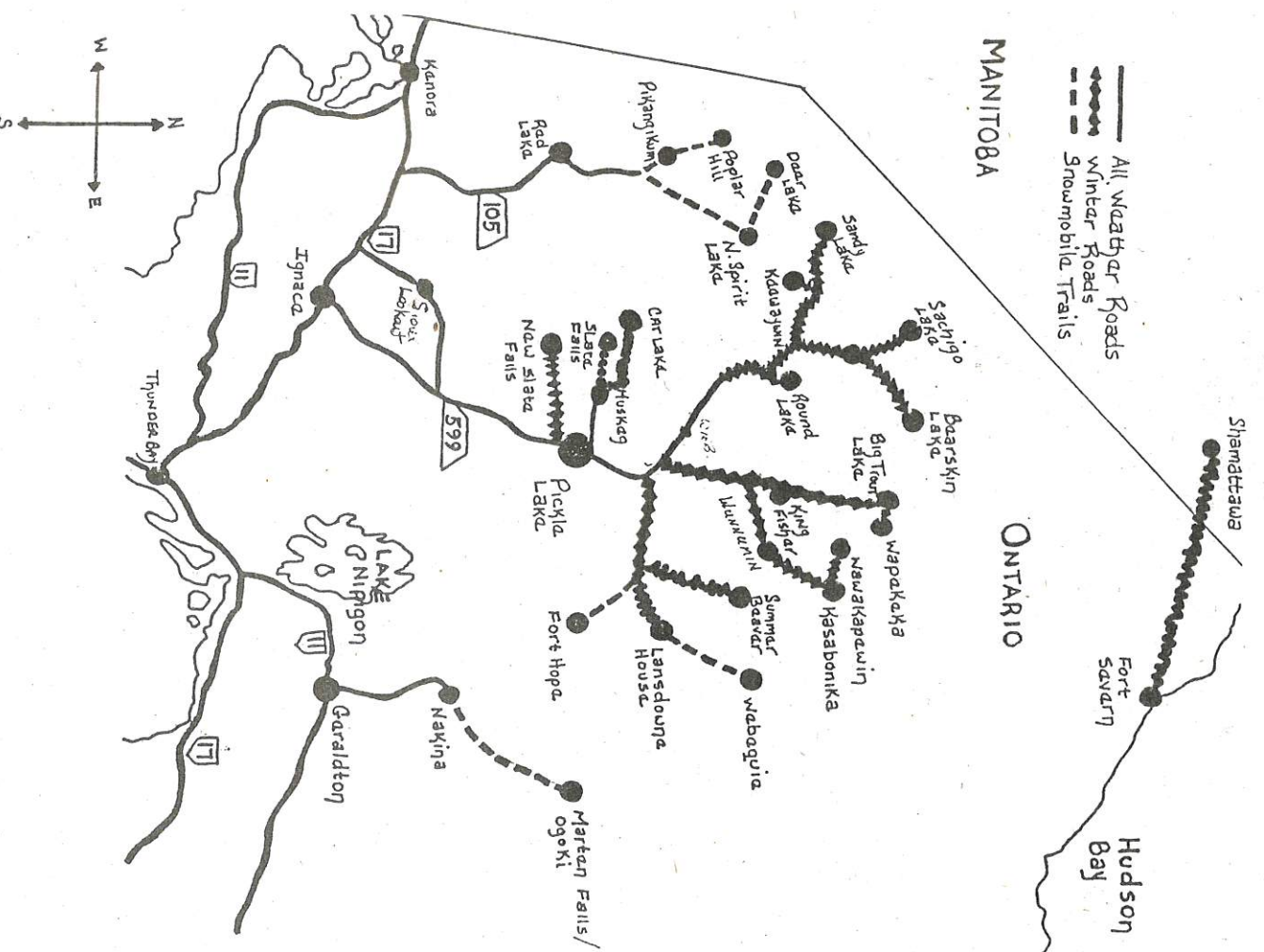


Pickle Lake has actively sought to serve the needs of northern residents and is proud of the facilities offered. Our modern indoor arena is available for hockey tournaments. The Pickle Lake airport is host to a number of airlines servicing the north. Wasaya Airlines, an Aboriginal owned company has established its operational headquarters here in Pickle Lake and a number of other airlines provide freight and charter service. The airport is quickly becoming a major distribution centre for the northern communities.

The recent investment by Imperial Oil in a bulk facility demonstrates the increasing importance of Pickle Lake as a door to the north.

Stop in Pickle Lake and enjoy the changes independent business people and the Township of Pickle Lake have made to meet your travelling needs.

## 1996 Anticipated Winter Road Network



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Council

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# Investing for the future...



Imperial Oil invested over \$1 million at the new bulk plant in Pickle Lake. This investment marks a commitment to meet the needs of the northern communities. The bulk plant was designed to

meet and exceed the environmental regulations. We know how important a clean environment is to northern people. Your quality of life is important to Imperial Oil.

## Imperial Oil is proud to have Carter Rice as their agent

Carter Rice was born and raised in Sioux Lookout. His wife Linda moved to Sioux Lookout at the age of two years. These are people who know the North and the conditions that challenge people.

In 1968 Carter first began his career in the fuel delivery business and in 1990 established a presence in Pickle Lake during the winter road season.

Winter road delivery brings many fond memories to Carter. Carter is proud to have been the first bulk fuel carrier to arrive in Cat Lake, Slate Falls and Lansdowne House.

Preparing for winter road delivery has been a developmental process. The new bulk plant in Pickle Lake is a further commitment by Carter and Linda to serve the North.



**CARTER RICE - Your Imperial Oil Agent**

Pickle Lake (January to April)

Head Office: Front Street Sioux Lookout

807-928-2261 - 24 hours

807-928-2970 - Fax

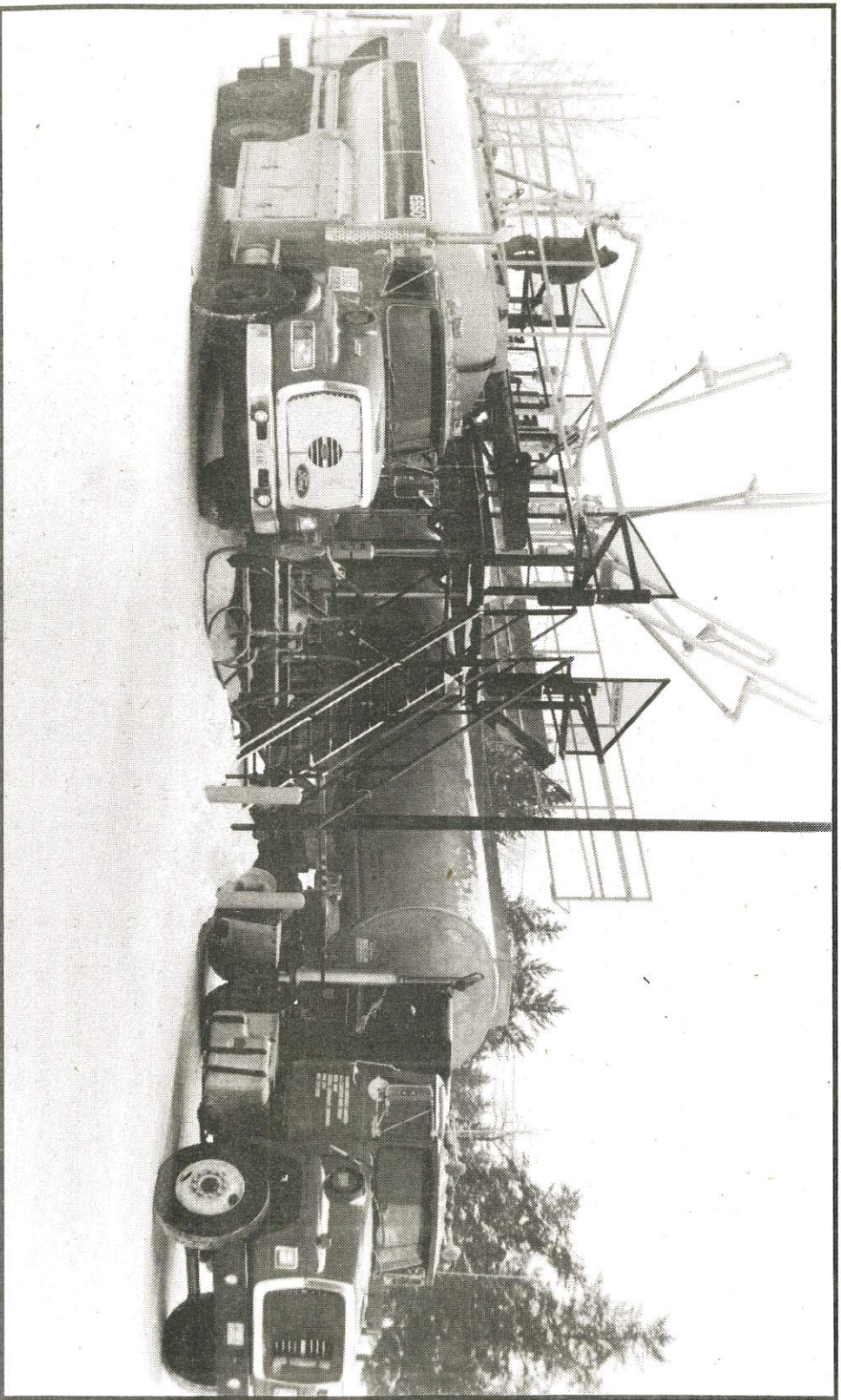
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- Lubricants
- Working with Aboriginal communities to meet and exceed present environmental regulations.

Imperial Oil is pleased to have Carter and Linda Rice as their agents.

The investment by Imperial Oil in the bulk plant at Pickle Lake demonstrates the commitment being made to meet the needs of northern communities. Imperial Oil is proud of the service record established by Carter Rice and his crew.

**For all you fuel needs call**



**CARTER RICE - Your Imperial Oil Agent**

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# Thunder Airlines expands in the North at the Pickle Lake terminal

by Robert S. Grant

It takes courage to pursue and reorganize an airline and then, within months, expand into a Northern Ontario community already served by strong competition.

Thunder Airlines Limited, headquartered in Thunder Bay, has done just that. By the time their first flight took place in October 1994, president Ken Bittle had considered creating a satellite base in Pickle Lake, 189 kilometres northeast of Sioux Lookout.

"There was plenty of competition everywhere in Northern Ontario, but in Pickle Lake there didn't seem to be enough," Bittle explained. "In fact, the situation has become almost a one-carrier monopoly so we saw enough business for another airline."

Bittle, who has held other senior positions in the northern transportation industry, pointed out that Thunder Airlines provides only charter services and intends to stay clear of establishing scheduled point-to-point flights. When airlines and air services offer both "schedules" and charters, customers often suffer.

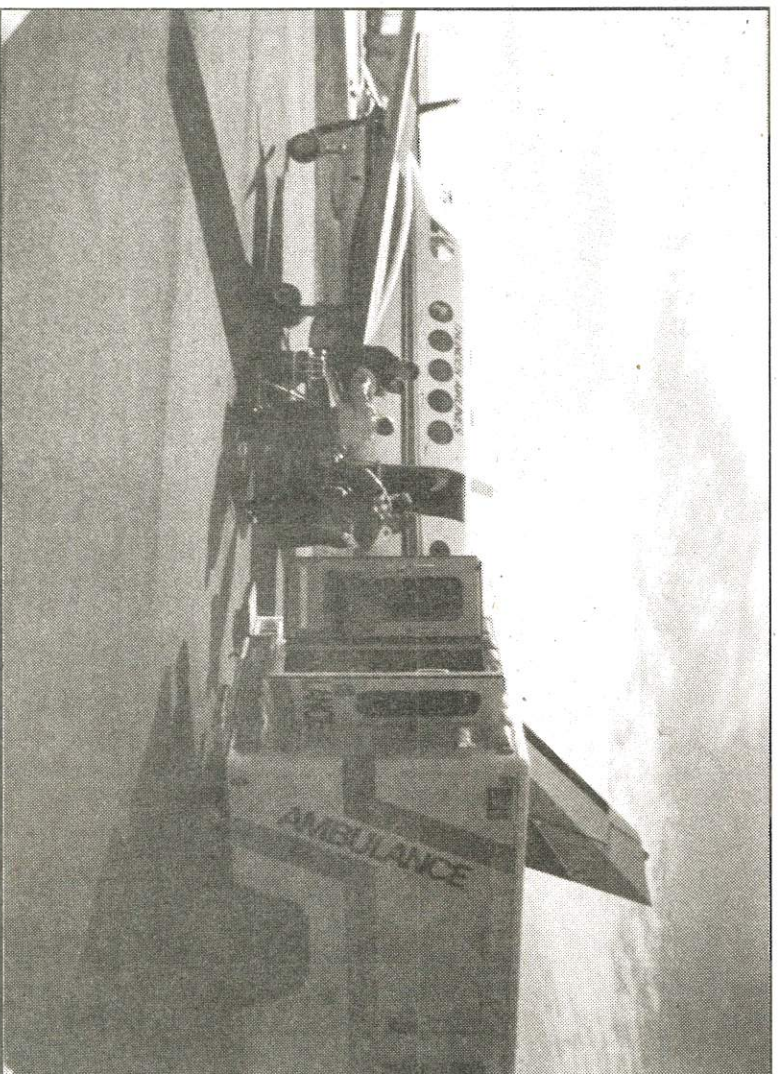
"The sched is usually the one that takes priority because they've published a timetable and the public has no choice but to rely on it," said Bittle. "Scheduled connections cannot and should not be altered."

As a charter-only business, Thunder Airlines caters to customers who seek aircraft outside of regular flights. Clients working from Pickle Lake indicated the need of such a service.

While negotiating for licences to fly from Pickle Lake, Thunder Airlines added two new Cessna 208 Caravan freighters to its fleet. Valued at \$3.4 million, this type has had successful production runs and exceptional safety records in Northern Ontario. Several have freighted from Pickle Lake and handled the region's gravel airstrips with ease.

Beside the sleek turbo-prop Caravans, Thunder Airlines' luxurious Beechcraft King Airs and Piper PA-31 Navajo Chief-tain will become regular visitors to the company's Pickle Lake base. Used for contract work with high profile organizations like Bell Canada and Ontario Hydro they can move personnel from community to community at speeds ranging from 180 mph to 225 mph.

Besides regular charter work, medical transporta-



Besides regular charter work, medical transportation flights have become a Thunder Airlines specialty.

tion flights have become a Thunder Airlines specialty, said Cabin Medical Attendant (CMA) Supervisor George Guenther. The airline retains an on-call group of experienced medical personnel to accompany ambulance flights.

Comfortable rapid health care has become a cornerstone to Thunder Airlines' operating philosophy. To ease the trauma of an air ambulance, or "medevac" trip, the company acquired a state-of-the-art unit called Lifeport to enhance the airplanes' capabilities. Portable, it includes stretcher space, oxygen and life support systems.

Medical flights are not always requested by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Frequently, calls arrive from private parties wishing to travel to specialized facilities in Rochester, Minn. Others wish to avoid delays and discomforts associated with surface transport. Whether in the King Airs or Piper PA-31 Navajo, Thunder Airlines pilots and CMAs accompany patients and wait for their return flight.

Blair Pritchard, Pickle Lake's Base Manager, claims their new location will also serve as a staging point for southbound medical emergency flights and patient transfers to major centres such as Winnipeg, Toronto, and Duluth.

Bittle noted that the addition of new airplanes and costs associated with keeping the fleet in its standard, new and like-new condition, sometimes causes potential clients to consider chartering as an expensive venture. A

brochure issued by Thunder Airlines to the public disagrees.

"Aircraft costs are the same regardless of how many people are on board. The more people on board, the more cost-effective the trip."

Charters, Bittle elaborated, work out to prices comparable to first class scheduled flights with personalized service.

"A good rule of thumb,"

**Thunder Airlines provides only charter services and intends to stay clear of establishing scheduled point-to-point flights.**

added office manager Tracey Vescio, "is to remember private air charter's practical when four or more passengers wish to travel."

Bittle also pointed out that company pilots have never lost baggage and the organization does not charge for cancellations or plan changes. Instead of remaining tied to a large carrier's departure time, passengers depart at their own convenience.

As Thunder Airlines' new Caravans in Pickle Lake

began attracting interest, it became clear that larger airplanes would be needed to compliment the smaller types. Requests for "odd-ball loads" became more frequent. For example, corporate clients like Ontario Hydro, Bell Telephone or LTL Contracting Ltd., needed wooden poles, generators and lumber carried into communities like Fort Hope, Lansdowne House or Attawapiskat.

"The Caravans do excellent work for us," said

Pritchard. "They come with huge cargo doors and good hauling capacity but we have identified a need for another airplane to handle the larger goods."

Bulk cargo, such as drill equipment for mineral exploration companies or small vehicles for use in northern settlements, require a large cargo airplane. Also, septic tanks and satellite dishes, essential to modern living standards in today's north, cannot always be counted on to arrive via seasonal winter roads.

"Some customers fly their crews in with us and they've had to charter someone else to haul their heavy freight," said Bittle. "To offer complete service, it makes sense to have enough equipment to do the job."

To improve service for the Pickle Lake market, Bittle and his investors are considering acquiring a larger cargo airplane. Although the robust HS-748 freighter has been considered, Thunder Airlines has not confirmed what type will bear the company's stylized logo.

Thunder Airlines employs 34 people and anticipates hiring more at Pickle Lake. On the airside of the company, the AMEs or Aircraft Maintenance Engineers, are considered highly experienced with special talents for maintaining airplanes in cold weather.

Director of Maintenance James Holm and Quality Manager Douglas Puttkamer received training at Ontario's Premier Technical Institute, Confederation College of Applied

Arts & Technology in Thunder Bay. Both gathered expertise at several airlines before accepting positions with Thunder Airlines.

Veteran pilots like Todd Woodward and Chris Worley, who will be permanently stationed in Pickle Lake, work under the critical eye of chief pilot Jim MacAlpine. Regardless of experience, every pilot on a Thunder Airlines airplane adheres religiously to Transport Canada regulations.

"When we hire someone, Ken and I sit down and explain the philosophy of company policy," said MacAlpine. "That philosophy is what directs the rest of our operation and that means flying in a safe manner from initial training to everyday work."

Flying fast airplanes in Northern Ontario's demanding environment requires exceptional skill. The main differences from complex centres like Winnipeg or Toronto concern the lack of navigation aids and airport services. Thunder Airlines pilots are expected to be resourceful and flexible.

"Some clients are very demanding in their requirements of the people who fly them," said MacAlpine. "One customer, for example, expects captains to have at least 3,000 hours in command; they all meet that or exceed the requirement."

One of the reasons for Thunder Airlines' expansion may be found in what one pilot called a strong "esprit de corps." This includes a strong, positive relationship between management and staff which, in turn, leads to communication. Bittle and MacAlpine's open door policy reflects on how they deal with customers.

"Thunder Airlines has good potential," concluded MacAlpine. "Now it's in Pickle Lake and we're going up there to perform well. I'm sure, that in meeting customer needs, that'll generate more business opportunities."

Robert S. Grant, an aviation journalist with over 1,000 articles in print, has recently released his first book *Bush Flying: The Romance Of The North*. A 286 page non-fiction soft-cover available from Hancock House Publishers, Surrey, B.C. (1-800-938-1114), it costs \$24.95.



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is pleased to announce the opening of  
its Pickle Lake base for  
Charters and Freight



One of Thunder Airlines powerful Kingair aircraft.



Blair Pritchard (Pickle Lake Base Manager) discusses today's flight with Chris Worley (Caravan pilot).



Two respected community members (Lewis Yesno, Thunder Airlines Senior Captain, and Temius Nate, Marketing Representative) in front of one of Thunder Airlines new Cessna Grand Caravans.

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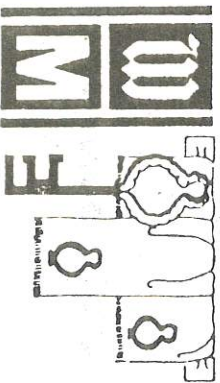
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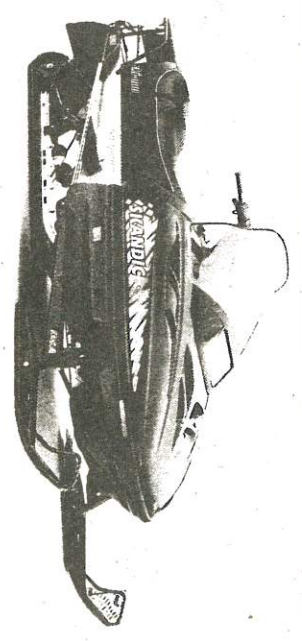
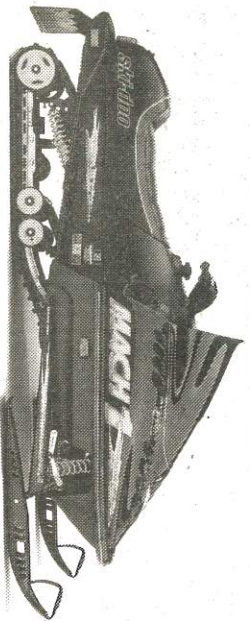
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# Patricia Auto Sales & Service Ltd.'s

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1996 Formula III 600 Triple	Model 1076 suggested list price	\$8999.00	Season Special	\$7,950.00
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1996 Formula SL 500CC	Model 1521 suggested list price	\$5599.00	Season Special	\$4,850.00
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Patricia Auto Sales and Service Ltd. located on Highway 599 in Pickle Lake has been operating for the past fifteen years serving the needs of northern communities and businesses.

Patricia Auto Sales and Services Ltd. is the licensed dealer of Lund boats, Mercury Outboards, Bombardier snowmobiles and Husqvarna chainsaws.

Patricia Auto Sales and Service Ltd. services what we sell. We have factory trained small engine technicians. We also stock parts and accessories for the products we carry.

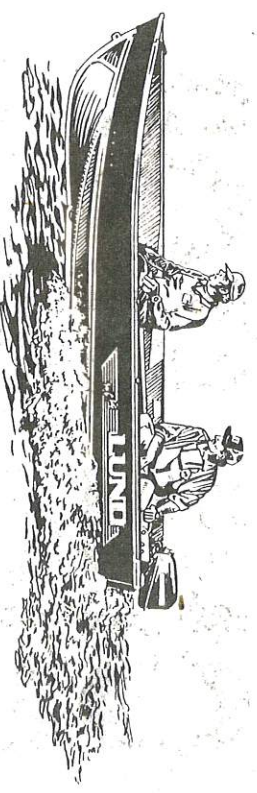
Patricia Auto Sales and Service Ltd. sells and repairs vehicles. We have a Class "A" motor vehicle mechanic to meet all your automotive needs. Automotive parts and accessories are also readily available.

Patricia Auto Sales and Services Ltd. provides 24 hour towing services.

When you come to Pickle Lake this winter, stop at Patricia Auto Sales and Service Ltd. and see what we have to offer. You will be pleasantly surprised at the wide selection of product available.

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SV-18	\$ 4,274.00
T8V - Alaskan	\$ 4,992.00
Alaskan 20	\$ 7,681.00



*Patricia Auto Sales & Service Ltd.*

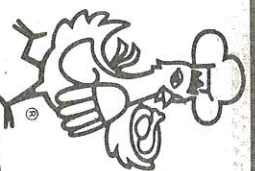
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Tom Chambers, manager of Frontier Foods prepares a take-out order of Chicken Delight.

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## Doing business has been exciting and wonderful

Barb and Ken Miller, the present owners of Grab-A-Cab "94", say the last two years of doing business in North-western Ontario has been an exciting and wonderful experience for them. "The people and friends that we have met 'on the road' are a real pleasure and joy to know", said Barb.

Barb and Ken originally arrived in Pickle Lake in July, 1989 to work with Placer Dome's Dona Lake Gold Mine. Ken was an underground supervisor and Barb was the head of Security and First Aid. Although they were happy to be in Pickle Lake, they had originally planned to stay for only a couple of years. In the meantime, that illustri-

ous and famous "Northern Bug" bit them and now it has been seven wonderful years of "Pickle Lake time." "We both enjoy the beauty and relaxing lifestyle of the North", said Ken, "So when the opportunity came up for us to purchase Grab-A-Cab in '94, we were thrilled to take it."

Since then, the company has expanded to include Mr. Trapper, a raw fur purchasing company and Grab-A-Cab Auto Sales & Towing. In recognition of their good fortune, Barb and Ken wish to thank all for their past patronage and say they look forward to serving the Northern Folks again in the future.

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