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# ty pursues tax incentive pilot project

IA VEAL

en hopes to be one of six pilot sites in Ontario to participate in a tax incentive zone proposal from the provincial government.

Al Heayn, the city's director of corporate services, said on Sept. 27, Dryden is applying to be a pilot community for the province. The council approved a resolution to pursue this application at its meeting on Sept. 23.

Tax incentive zones are aimed at stimulating economic growth by encouraging both large and small businesses to invest, relocate or expand. Deadline is Oct. 18, for expressing interest in the project participation to the Ministry of Finance.

Heayn said tax incentive zones are used in the United Kingdom, the United States and other provinces in Canada.

"Right now, municipalities are not allowed

to give away free land to a company, for example," he said. "But with tax incentive zones, maybe the cost of building permits could be forgiven or perhaps property taxes for 10 years."

Heayn stressed that the plan is not designed to rob one municipality from another, but to encourage economic development opportunities. Applicants for the project will need to demonstrate a commitment to build local partnerships with the pri-

vate sector, community organizations and key public sector institutions; community support and evidence of a ready labour force; opportunities for attracting investment and jobs.

In announcing the pilot projects, Premier Ernie Eves said they will give, "Ontario's young people the opportunity to live, work, raise a family and give something back to the communities where they grew up."

City manager Arie Hoogenboom told council Dryden has many advantages for development, such as publicly and privately owned available commercial and industrial properties; a regional marketplace; competitive tax rate; and stable educated workforce.

"Our challenges include an isolated northern location, single resource-based economy and transportation linkages," he said. ★

Dryden Observer - C + 1/1/02

# Giant Pickle Lake fire base will save lives and trees in boreal forest

Janet Gibson  
STAFF WRITER

**T**HE province is waging war on forest fires in Northwestern Ontario.

Finance Minister Janet Ecker dipped into the SuperBuild fund to pay NDL Construction Ltd. of Winnipeg \$5.5 million to build a 12,000 square foot fire attack base beside the Pickle Lake Airport. It will replace existing facilities built in the 1940s.

"The new facilities will integrate both fire management and aerial fire operations under one airport facility," Natural Resources Minister Jerry Ouellette said. The building has office space for fire response planning and administration, areas to process fire equipment and Fire Ranger Crew training, not to mention



**(above) Site Superintendent George Vincent. (below) Foreman Roger Darbyshire and Carpenter Rick Schewchuk review floor plan of the new MNR Fire Attack Base.**

warehouse space for forest fire equipment. Pilots and maintenance engineers also have their own work space. The structure will support 70 fire and aviation

personnel.

"There will be four water bombers, four spotter planes and four helicopters here full time," said NDL Site Superintendent George Vincent as he stood by the steel frame, buzzing with

builders since mid-June.

The modern structure, boasting screened porches and "prone areas" for pilots to take a nap, will be ready by May or June, 2003, Vincent said, just in time to fight next summer's fires.



*Sioux Lookout Bulletin Oct 2/02*



# Chambers join drive for twinned highway

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce wants the Trans-Canada Highway "twinned" across the country and the federal government to talk to more communities about the Kyoto air pollution protocol.

The two resolutions were among those approved by about 50 delegates at NOACC's fall meeting in Dryden on the weekend.

"We're asking for a voice at the table (regarding Kyoto)," NOACC president Tannis Drysdale said.

Before the federal government signs the Kyoto agreement to reduce greenhouse gases, Drysdale said, "we want meaningful consultations by the government with the provinces, municipalities and the public."

As for twinning the Trans-Canada, Drysdale said delegates have renewed a NOACC commitment to a divided highway across the country.

"We want the federal government to begin the twinning of highway sections where there are no alternate Canadian routes," such as Highway 17 from Nipigon west to Shabaqua, she said.

Others resolutions approved by delegates called on:

- The Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to implement a two-year field trial in Northwestern Ontario, analysing the effects of video lottery terminals (operated by non-profit groups and hotels) on the regional economy.

- Northern Ontario municipalities to ask the province to establish a regional tax-incentive zone in the North that would enhance job creation and promote economic development.



# Ontario faces electricity shortages, higher bills without new supply: report

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Ontario's electricity system has a "serious capacity problem" that needs to be corrected or it could lead to supply "interruptions" and higher energy bills next summer, says a provincial agency monitoring the province's power.

Supply was extremely tight while demand was high during the peak summer periods in Ontario, which forced the province to import power "21 per cent of the time" in the July-August period, the Independent Electricity Market Operator (IMO) said in a market surveillance report released yesterday.

"If steps are not taken to address this (supply) situation, Ontario could face even more serious reliability problems next summer, leading to the possibility of supply interruptions and continued upward pressure on prices during periods of peak demand," the IMO states in its report.

Also yesterday, the Ontario government announced it will launch an immediate review of the mandate of the Ontario Energy Board.

The board, established in 1960, is a regulatory agency of the Ontario government and is responsible for overseeing the energy sector through licensing, enforcing codes, and in some cases setting rates

for energy utilities. It also has a role in consumer protection.

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*"If steps are not taken to address this (supply) situation, Ontario could face even more serious reliability problems next summer. . ."*

## Independent market operator

*Quote from market surveillance report*

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"There have been ongoing changes within the energy sector and I believe the rules and procedures governing the OEB need to be examined," said Ontario Energy Minister John Baird.

Baird said he will review the board and report back to cabinet in 100 days.

Over the few months Baird said he will meet with consumer groups, energy experts, industry stakeholders and taxpayers to come up with recommendations on how to improve the board.

The IMO said the supply shortage this

summer is linked to lack of service from two Ontario nuclear power stations — in Pickering, which has been idle for five years, and at Bruce Nuclear Station on Lake Huron, which was idle all summer.

The IMO also noted that there has been a lack of construction of any new significant capacity since 1988. The IMO's report looks at the May-August period. For May and June, prices were "relatively stable" after Ontario's electricity market opened up to competition on May 1. However, during July and August, prices "increased in the face of rising costs of hydroelectric power and very high temperatures that resulted in record levels of demand."

The IMO said current forecasts suggest 3,500 megawatts of nuclear capacity from Pickering and Bruce may be returned to service over the next two years. But additional generating capacity is required and at the moment, only 1,000 megawatts of an additional 5,800 megawatts of new construction projected to be onstream in 2005 is under construction now, the IMO said.

The report also recommends that Ontario Power Generation — the government-owned entity that generates most of the province's energy — should speed up its mandate to reduce its share of generating capacity to 35 per cent from almost 70 per cent within 10 years.



Oct 8/02

## Oil heating systems to undergo greater scrutiny for certification

Owners of oil furnaces can expect to have their home heating appliances inspected in the near future.

Oil distributors are now under direction from the provincial government to inspect their customers to ensure furnaces, tanks and other attachments comply with the current safety codes.

Rod Spalding, a local consultant on home heating regulations, says the province's Technical Standards Safety Authority (TSSA) is placing more emphasis on ensuring homes are up to standard on oil furnaces in response to safety con-

cerns.

"They're saying to distributors, 'you're responsible for an inspection program when delivering oil,'" he says.

The inspection must be carried out by a certified technician.

While the onus for inspections may rest with distributors, homeowners need to pay attention also.

"Everybody's responsible; the distributors, the technicians and, most importantly, the homeowner," Spalding says.

Furthermore, in five years every installation of a fuel oil heating system must be inspected by

a certified technician. Oil furnaces are also expected to have an annual maintenance inspection.

Propane systems underwent similar scrutiny in 1997.

Among the new regulations which must be enforced are those regarding the installation and upkeep of fuel tanks.

The tanks must be certified and installed on a non-combustible base and set up so the drain allows water to flow out.

Spalding, who is also a certified training provider with the TSSA, explains that frequently the tanks were set up so the water would not freeze in the drain. However, the result was water corroding tanks from the inside out.

Another new regulation which could cause concern is regarding the use of wood stoves. Stoves cannot use the same chimney as an oil stove unless it is certified for use with an oil-burning appliance. ☆



# Going smoke-free no picnic

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

Ear Falls bar owners forced to go smoke-free last month are worried they'll be customer-free soon.

"At this point, there has been a noticeable impact on business," Glenn Williamson, owner of the Northland Hotel, said yesterday.

"We've had groups of people walk out," he said. "People have been quite serious about not adjusting" to the smoke-free environment.

Ear Falls went smoke-free on Sept. 3 after municipal council voted to ban smoking in any establishment that has employees, including bars and restaurants.

Williamson said his restaurant customers are trying to adjust, but bar patrons are less patient.

"We've told people that they can't smoke (in the bar) and their attitude is 'Are you kidding?' . . . It's been really hard to deal with.

"Until they outlaw tobacco completely, how can they do this? (The municipality) wants us to police this, but it's hard," he said.

"We're not going to start throwing people out, or phoning the town office and reporting them. We have to limit the

impact of the smoking bylaw on our business.

"The dollars and cents are down" and the worse has yet to come, he said.

Once the tourists are gone, he said, "it will be tough operating under this bylaw during the winter months when business is traditionally slow.

"It could mean the closing of the business," Williamson said.

"We have 13 employees, some of which are single mothers . . . what happens if I can't survive and we close."

The bar at the nearby Trillium Motel and Restaurant was closed by management two weeks ago.

"Business traditionally slows down this time of year,"

a Trillium spokesman said.

He said the restaurant has had "no trouble at all" with customers who want to light up, but can't.

"They can understand why we're doing it," he said.

On the other hand, the municipality should have allowed smoking in bars, he said.

Williamson said he's "trying to give the bylaw a fair shake.

"But it's not fair that we are the only one's that have to deal with this now. The medical officer of health said that it would be an equal playing field right

now, but that's not happening."

He said he felt council should have adopted a smoke-free bylaw like Dryden's.

Dryden council has approved a smoke-free bylaw that kicks in Jan. 1 and bans smoking in any enclosed space where anyone under 18 is allowed to attend, whether or not a sign prohibiting smoking is posted.

"I understand that (second-hand smoke) is a health hazard but those people over 18 are old enough to make a choice as an adult to go where smoking is allowed, or not," Williamson said.

"We certainly have opinions" for and against the bylaw, Ear Falls Mayor Geoff McClain said.

He said hotel and bar owners haven't contacted him about their concerns.

McClain said he hadn't noticed a reduction in the number of customers at bars and restaurants.

No one has been charged for violating the bylaw yet, he said.

Medical officer of health Dr. Pete Sarsfield has put 3,000 businesses west of Thunder Bay on notice that enforcement of smoke-free public spaces is imminent.

"It's just a case of when," Jennifer McKibbin, a health unit spokeswoman, said yesterday.

McKibbin said the health unit wants enforcement efforts to be fair.

"We first want to let everyone know what we're trying to accomplish."

## EAR FALLS

Bar owners  
feeling the pinch  
of smoke-free  
bylaw

# Smoke-free effort has support

## *It's a coming trend, health planner says*

BY CATHI AROLA  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

The driving force behind Ghislaine Shields' presence at last night's Thunder Bay bylaw advisory committee meeting was her 23-year-old daughter.

Her daughter, who works as a waitress, is exposed to second-hand smoke for eight hours in a day.

"She can't complain because there are 50 other people to replace her — she thinks it's part of her job and she has to accept it," Shields said.

"I don't think she's as concerned as I am."

It was next to impossible to find anyone last night opposed to the 100-per-cent smoke-free bylaw proposed for Thunder Bay by the committee.

On Nov. 18, the committee will tell city council that second-hand smoke is a health hazard that harms employees and customers, a smoke-free bylaw should protect the health of all employees and customers in the city and the bylaw will provide a level playing field with the same rules for all workplaces.

The committee says there should be a ban on smoking in every workplace.

The committee expects a plebiscite on the matter in the November 2003 municipal election, and that it will result in a comprehensive smoke-free bylaw.

"Smoke-free bylaws are part of a com-

ing trend... provincial, national and international," Simon Hoad, a health promotion planner with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, said.

"The entire country of Norway is talking about legislation to make their hospitality industry and workplaces 100-per-cent free and it's an initiative that's supported by their unions," Hoad said.

The Thunder Bay committee includes members of city council, health officials and representatives of the bar and restaurant industry. Feedback from the forum and results from a questionnaire distributed during the meeting will be presented to city council.

"It's important for The City of Thunder Bay (to pass the bylaw) because we don't have a bylaw that impacts the workplaces and the public places that people use," Hoad said.

An existing bylaw covers limited areas, he said.

Michael Meade said it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that a no-smoking bylaw is going to be better for the health of everyone.

"It's just plain wrong that we have to accept that people who smoke have rights over ours in terms of the health of everyone," Meade said.

Twenty minutes of second-hand smoke exposure can "de-tune" a non-smoker's heart to the rate of a smoker's heart, Hoad said.

Thirteen municipalities in Ontario have total smoke-free bylaws in place.

Thunder Bay has 40 smoke-free restaurants and cafes among 230 hospitality sites.



BRENT LINTON/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Margaret Anthes, a radiation therapist with the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre, had daughter Victoria in tow as she voiced support for a no-smoking bylaw in Thunder Bay.

Chronicle - Oct 9/02



## Construction at new mine

BY WARD HOLLAND  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A small southern Ontario company has started construction of a new gold mill near Pickle Lake which is expected to be operating next month, government employees say.

Can Tera Mining Ltd., a privately-owned junior mining company from Perth, Ont., plans to mine and mill more than 400,000 tonnes of ore in the next five years from the former Pickle Crow Mine site, about eight kilometres northeast of Pickle Lake.

"Can Tera may be opening the door to a new era of profitable gold mining to numerous small high-grade gold deposits in North-western Ontario," said Michael Grant, a mineral development coordinator from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Ministry officials said the mill is projected to be operating by the end of November and that total employment, including the mill and mine, is expected to be about 30 workers.

The production rate of the new mill is expected to be about 225 tonnes a day. Can Tera has the mining rights to the property and has identified enough ore to operate for at least five years and possibly another five years after that.

"They have been stockpiling their ore and are currently constructing their mill," Grant said.

The company will mine the surface layer of the former Pickle Crow gold deposit, known as the crown pillar, which can be as much as 40 metres thick in some



## Where the water moves you

Janet Gibson  
STAFF WRITER

**B**ERNIE Cox is talking about Ontario's salt water coast. Excuse me?

Cox and his wife Lynn's company, Canoe Frontier, is the only canoe trip outfitter in Pickle Lake, the most northerly community accessible by road in Ontario.

"The only one!" Cox says, pointing out there are nine provincial parks ac-

cessible from Pickle Lake.

But outfitting is not what they're famous for. They specialize in taking people, many from Europe and Asia, down wild rivers to the coast of Hudson Bay. "They go polar bear viewing and beluga whale viewing at the end of their trip and fly back out. It's a high end trip and it's guided and we send out red wine and nice food.

"We've brought our canoeing background and our

aviation background to the last frontier," Bernie said.

Lynn and Bernie, who looks like a big teddy bear, beamed down on Pickle Lake in 1997. Born and raised in Atikokan, where his family owned Quetico North Tour Services – an outfitter/baitshop/giftstore/restaurant – Bernie got tired of competing with American businesses in the adjoining Boundary Waters. So he got his pilot's license and flew fishermen into remote lakes.

"When you've got a camp on a lake, you've got some protection and then the logging roads come in and you lose that," he said. From there he jumped to Holinshead Outfitters near Armstrong before establishing Canoe Frontier.

Bernie, the outfitter/pilot/canoeist, met Lynn, canoeist extraordinaire, not on a river, but at a barbecue in Fort Frances in 1989. They got married in a hangar in 1990.

Lynn, tall like Bernie, with silver blue eyes and blonde hair, cut her teeth as a ranger in Algonquin Park, then specialized in outdoor recreation at Lakehead University. Besides venturing down many rivers with

friends, she taught leadership programs at a YMCA youth camp. Her current credentials include certification in the Ontario Recreational Canoe Association's Lakewater, Moving Water Instructor, and Canoe Tripping Instructor programs as well as Swift Water Rescue Technician and Wilderness First Aid.

"Lynn has developed this really neat training program," Bernie said.

She takes people who rent equipment from them to a whitewater river 10 minutes from Pickle Lake and shows them how to read moving water and how to navigate through five or six sets of rapids.

The pair operate from their blustery base at the Pickle Lake Airport. Lynn has an office in Canoe Frontier's base camp – a comfortable, furnished cabin which houses canoes, sea kayaks, food and gear. On the deck outside are two hanging canvas chairs they picked up at a trade show.

When not loping around his new 8000 square foot hangar, in which he parks and repairs his aircraft, Bernie might be found in his office at North Star Air, the aviation side of the equation.

"Originally we ran both businesses out of one side, with two showers in each washroom," Bernie said. "We were the first people with amphibious turbine airplanes in any kind of operation."

They built a permanent



"When the plane pulls in, we put gear in a cart, then on a scale, up the ramp and onto the airplane. It extends your day," he said.

While tourists are only 30 per cent of their business, it's the part Bernie likes the most. "Every two years we bring in buyers

from Europe and Asia and sometimes the U.S. We've slowly built up a reputation with them. Hopefully we'll be able to bring in people from all around the world through tour operators," he said.

They take people to "one of only seven large frontier

forest areas left in the world - Ontario's northern boreal forest" as described by the Wildlands League.

"Some people work with information all the time," Bernie said. "They never do anything that's really tactile in their whole lives."

"They come away with



Bulletin photos/Janet Gibson

(top) Lynn and Bernie Cox relaxing in front of their Canoe Frontier base camp. (above) Mapping a canoe route. Cox's companies Canoe Frontier and North Star Air Ltd. are the second largest employers in Pickle Lake.

some kind of...raising the level of their own spirit," Lynn added. "The best part is when I can't recognize the people who come in from a trip. The most stunning change is the aura of

peace and quietness of their body language that brings the greatest satisfaction for me."

Bernie and Lynn's next step is to build an eco-lodge nearby where they can

feed people and put them up for the night. But it won't be a hotel. There are already two of those in Pickle Lake. "We want something unique," Lynn said, "like a yurt."



# Pride of the North launches weather balloons

Janet Gibson  
STAFF WRITER

**L**UCIE Hoffman was quick to point out she doesn't forecast weather; she observes it. But she was less quick to broadcast that her company, Pride of the North, contracted by Environment Canada to run a tiny weather station in Pickle Lake, is one of two stations in Ontario that send radiosondes high into the sky.

Radiosondes are instruments that record upper air weather data, one of the main sources, besides satellites, of raw data for weather forecasters. Designed in Finland, they measure four by six inches and, encased in cardboard, weigh just eight ounces.

Hoffman attaches them to eight-foot balloons filled with helium and lets them go, but not more than one at a time and only at 6:15 a.m. and 6:15 p.m.

In fact, around the world at 1000 designated sites, there's a global party of sorts when balloons are released at exactly the same time.

Hoffman watches a balloon rise until it becomes a tiny speck. It climbs a thousand feet a minute for two hours to a height of 30 kilometres, powered by a water battery.

On the way up, its sensors measure air pressure, humidity and temperature, said Richard Klein, a senior aerological observer at



Bulletin Photo/Janet Gibson

**Weather Observer Lucie Hoffman holds a radiosonde in the palm of her hand.**

Stony Plain Aerological Station in Alberta. The radiosonde has two antennas, he said. One receives signals from ground stations. The other transmits signals back to earth. Using triangulation with ground stations, a processor in the Pickle Lake weather station calculates wind speed and direction. The weather data is fed into a personal computer which uses special software to produce a variety of upper air weather messages. These are sent to a much bigger computer at the Canadian Meteorological Centre in Montreal.

The information is shared globally. While it is useful to the public, it is vitally important to commercial jets. For instance, jet streams, ribbons of high-

speed winds, assist jets travelling east. And high humidity is an indicator of water which could cause icing on airplane wings.

"The balloon will eventually break but we don't

track it on the way down," Hoffman noted.

Hoffman runs Pride of the North with her husband, Roy, who is also mayor of Pickle Lake and a fishing guide.



# Health Care tour positive

BY JIM KELLY  
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Underserved areas in Northwestern Ontario are not offering \$50,000 signing bonuses as a recruitment tool for doctors, but there are other incentives, said a member of a local medical recruitment team.

Medical students or doctors on a visit to Thunder Bay are compensated for airfare, accommodations and a rental car, Patricia Lee, co-ordinator of medical affairs for Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, said.

Some communities in the Niagara region are shelling out \$50,000 signing bonuses for doctors to move there.

Lee said there are incentive grants of \$40,000 offered in Northwestern Ontario for physicians and specialists, but the grants are paid in instalments of \$10,000 per year for up to four years. If a doctor leaves after three years, they only get \$30,000.

She said another \$40,000 is available, also in \$10,000 annual payments, for educational support.

Lee is back from a recruiting tour of Ottawa, Toronto, Kingston, Hamilton and London.

Others on the tour were TBRH chief of staff Dr. Blair Schoales; TBRH director of communications Don Edwards; Jan

Inkster, assistant administrator of community programs; Sheelagh Hendrick, community relations co-ordinator; and Alison Hill, co-ordinator of recruitment and retention for the underserved area program.

Lee said team members received many inquiries not only from doctors but other health care professionals, such as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech language pathologists.

Such health care workers are also eligible for incentive grants of \$5,000 a year for up to three years to work in underserved areas.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm shown in our medical school and new hospital," Lee said.

The medical school is to be a shared project between Lakehead University and Sudbury's Laurentian University. The new Regional hospital, currently under construction, is to open in 2004.

Lee said when she returned to her office, there was a "whole bunch" of e-mails from health care workers seeking more information about the Northwest.

She said there is intense competition for health care workers among rural and underserved areas across Ontario.

"Some don't care to look beyond Toronto (for job opportunities)," Lee said.

"Others are looking for the rural and Northern experience."

Chronicle - Oct 10/02

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Chronicle - Oct 10/02



# Health care comes with the territory

*Remote areas can't expect much, Ministry of Health director says*

BY JIM KELLY

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Once again, the shortcomings of the Northern Health Travel Grant were pointed out. This time it was during a health conference at Thunder Bay's Valhalla Inn.

Usually it's politicians like Liberal MPPs Lyn McLeod and Michael Gravelle who are attacking the inadequacy of the grant that pays about \$900 for necessary medical travel.

Costs for accommodations, meals and other expenses are paid by the patient.

Yesterday, the attack came from a member of the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital board who asked why the government doesn't provide more money to people travelling to medical appointments.

"I'm shocked people can't get a responsible disbursement of costs," Wayne Tocheri told Peter Armstrong, North regional director for the Ministry of Health.

Armstrong spoke of the massive size of Northern Ontario (larger than France), the older population, the large aboriginal population and some of the health issues.

He said the province spends \$21 million annually on the Northern Health Travel Grant program, but Tocheri said he feels that is inadequate.

"I know of Northerners paying substantially from their own resources (for medical travel) to access basic services," he said.

"We should not be having roadblocks because people made a choice to live in a small community in the North," Tocheri said later.

"These communities are essential to the economy of the North."

In an interview with The Chronicle-Journal, Armstrong remained evasive about increasing the travel grant.

"We're trying to ensure we have the right services in the North," he said.

Armstrong predicted the proposed Northern Ontario rural medical school to operate in Thunder Bay and Sudbury would help in finding and keeping doctors, and locums — temporary doctors — would assist in the treatment of patients.

Armstrong said the key is making health care accessible in the North.

But, getting the specialists and other health care workers to come here may be difficult.

It takes 3.7 months to recruit health care workers in Northern Ontario compared to the provincial average of 1.3 months, said Gwen Dubois-Wing, executive director of the Northwestern Ontario District Health Council.

"The impact of this is longer waiting times, changes in service delivery approaches, cancelled programs or services, and overtime (because of the shortages)," she said.

The inadequate supply of medical personnel is particularly hard for First Nations communities, said Bruce Minore, director of the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research.

Patients frequently are seen by differ

# Welcome doctors, keep them in NWO

*A community's attitude is very important, MD says at conference*

BY JIM KELLY

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Making a doctor feel welcome can go a long way to keeping that physician in a northern community, participants at a conference in Thunder Bay heard.

Family physician Dr. Ben Chan an anecdote to illustrate that point at an Ontario Hospital Association conference yesterday.

When Chan, a resident of Toronto, was working in the emergency department at Dryden District General Hospital, a woman approached him and presented him with a fruit basket.

"I was told that if you're interested in fishing, see that doctor, or if you're a golfer, see that other doctor," Chan said.

The point he was trying to make was that while some doctors, especially from southern Ontario, may have difficulty in adapting to the North, there are ways to help them blend in.

Chan and Dr. Joshua Tepper, chairman of the underserved area program review working group, were making a presentation on breaking down the barriers to physician recruitment and retention.

Chan said lack of training for a rural practice, remuneration, a heavy workload and isolation are just some of the difficult issues involved in recruitment and keeping doctors.

There are others.

Then, they might ask about the weather and what cultural and recreational opportunities there are for the entire family.

Being isolated from family and friends is another disadvantage of working in isolated regions.

"These are all potential barriers that must be addressed," said Chan, who has worked in 30 Northern Ontario communities.

"Every community will have to market itself and tell the prospective doctors what they have to offer," Chan said in an interview following his presentation.

He said a doctor may be interested in moving to a Northern or rural area if he or she is convinced the workload will not be overwhelming, there is a guaranteed salary and the doctor will have a good quality of life as some of the work will be assumed by locums or nurse practitioners.

Chan said attitude in the community plays a role.

"What is the attitude of the community to itself?" he asked.

"If you don't love your community, how are you going to get a physician to love it?"

Chan said doctors can be recruited in a number of ways.

These include advertising in medical journals, recruitment tours and fairs, placement registries and work by community development officers such as those at Health Sciences North.



# Health services group reports one success

northwest region  
a great deal of  
the recent recruit-  
ment in southern  
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coordinator for  
professionals in  
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Superior, signifying the  
united effort.

In other business con-  
ducted at the Foundation's  
meeting, Martin MacKin-  
non was appointed to fill  
the position previously held  
by Robert Shuparsky.

The finance and negotia-  
tions sub-committee present-  
ed various options relating to  
the future role of the Foun-  
dation and the physician  
clinics. The sub-committee  
was directed to gather more  
information on selected  
options and the flexibility to  
include the physicians in  
these discussions. A report is  
expected at the next meeting  
on Oct. 28.

The Launch working  
group announced that the  
first fund-raising event on  
Oct. 19 is sold out. The  
evening of gourmet dining,  
entertainment, recognition  
and fellowship takes place  
at Eagles' Landing. ★

# 3 nurse practitioner spots funded for Thunder Bay

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Out of \$11 million in government funding to pay for 117 nurse practitioners this year in Ontario, Thunder Bay has been funded for three positions, said the regional representative for the Nurse Practitioners of Ontario.

"Thunder Bay has been assigned funding for three nurse practitioners, so if 20 groups apply only three will be successful," Sandra Crawford said.

The city might be eligible for more

funding in 2003-04 and 2004-05 as the province has budgeted \$30 million for next year and \$40 million for 2004-05.

Crawford said the Ministry of Health is seeking requests for proposals from small, rural and underserved areas where the 300 nurse practitioners will be hired over the next three years.

Some local agencies are in the midst of preparing requests for proposals.

Recent figures show there are 268 under-employed or unemployed nurse practitioners in Ontario.



# aling for doctors heads north

Janet Gibson  
STAFF WRITER

HE heartbeat rate of health care in Northwest Ontario went up last when health care workers from 128 Sioux Lookout Zone health centres gathered for a meeting at the Friendship Centre to discuss the use of telehealth in their communities. Telehealth, as its name implies, makes access to health care a phone call away instead of an airplane ride across a province as big as some small countries.

The goal is to integrate telemedicine in everyday practice, said Dr. Rob Williams, medical director of NORTH Network, the company that is launching this into a 24-month

telehealth pilot project with five First Nations.

The communities — Deer Lake, Fort Severn, Keewaywin, North Spirit Lake and Poplar Hill — are represented by the tribal council, Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) and have been hooked up to high-speed Internet by the council's information technology arm K-Net.

Representatives from First Nations not yet utilizing telehealth heard about its benefits and the obstacles to getting it going. The most vivid display of the technology was a live multi-point teleconference among workshop participants at the Friendship Centre and telehealth co-ordinators in Deer Lake and Keewaywin.

While admitting telehealth is

very expensive to get started, Williams said it saves megadollars in travel costs. For instance, an individual flying from Fort Severn to Thunder Bay to see a specialist pays \$594 return, booking one week in advance.

KO Director of Health Services Orpah McKenzie said a working group from the 28 First Nations will send a proposal to Health Canada's Primary Health Care Transition Fund for \$9.3 million to implement telehealth.

"It's not a given," she added.

Telehealth provides an array of services such as psychiatry, diabetic screening, reading a heartbeat, radiology, retinal screening and mammography. It also encompasses family

*See WILL ADD on page 6*

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## *Will add to access and quality of health care*

*Continued from front*

visits and education of telehealth workers, who learn, among other things, basic anatomy.

Radiologist Dr. Dermot McLoughlin showed an X-ray of the chest of a hunter

When asked what she would change, given the chance, another worker replied, "the paperwork."

Williams said an evaluation of NORTH Network's telehealth services showed a 94 per cent or higher rate

# Residents look into government styles

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

Residents of unincorporated areas in Kenora District will get a say on the future of their governance during information meetings this month.

While the group pushing for formation of an Area Services Board has nothing but good to say about the governing structure, municipal politicians are not so keen.

Unincorporated-area representative Anthony Nickel said he's been trying for six years to get an Area Services Board (ASB) established "so that people in the unorganized areas can have a voice (in local government), control of their taxes and services, and have a representative when dealing with the provincial government.

"We're now sending all kinds of land taxes to the government and they're not sending anything back," Nickel said.

He said an ASB shouldn't have any affect on taxes, unless people want more services than they have now.

Taxes would go to the ASB rather than the province, Nickel said.

"It will bring the tax vehicle to our doorstep . . . (and) opens the door to more services like fire protection and land planning," he said. That would mean more local control of such things as property severances and could be a boon to land development in rural areas.

"It would also put us on more of a level playing field with area municipalities," he said.

Nickel said an ASB would also allow area-rating for taxation purposes — rural ratepayers would only pay for services they receive, instead of being

subject to a possible "block tax" from a nearby municipality.

Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield disagreed that an ASB would reduce the cost of local government.

"What it does is create a two-tier of government and opens up the door to building a huge bureaucracy," Canfield said.

When unorganized-area groups started talking about an ASB, area municipalities agreed they didn't want it because it would create an upper-tier of government, he said.

The Kenora District Services Board and its nine employees shows how more government creates more bureaucracy, Canfield said.

He said there are more efficient ways than an ASB to provide services. For example, he said, municipalities have staff in place to collect taxes from nearby unorganized areas. And ratepayers wouldn't be taxed for services they didn't use, such as water and sewer, he said.

The 13-member Kenora District Services Board bills municipalities for such services as land ambulance, Ontario Works; social housing and child care. Service levies for unincorporated areas are paid by the province.

Final approval to establish an ASB would require a double-majority vote by KDSB's 13 members which include four representatives from the unincorporated area.

The population of the unorganized area in Kenora District is pegged at 35,000 people.

Unorganized ratepayers and property owners have been asked to attend one of the meetings being held across the district. One was held Saturday; others are set for Oct. 21, 22 and 26.

For more information contact: Nickel, 1-807-937-6440; Ken Pride, 807-543-2491; Jack McKenzie, 807-548-4069; or Bill Blower, 807-727-3971.

*Chronicle - Oct 16/02*



# Services board waits for joint proposal revisions

BY LILIA VEAL

The Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) may not get a new delivery system for Ontario Works in place by the anticipated January 2003 deadline. However, a joint proposal from Dryden and Kenora to take over the program for the district is still active.

Representatives of the two municipalities met on Oct. 16 with members of the board's Ontario Works/Child Care Committee to discuss their decision.

"We gave them a list of what they want further clarification on. We are going to decide that by the deadline mid-November," related Hoogenboom, Dryden's manager.

Ken Lif, KDSB chief administrative officer, said the review committee will meet at the revised submission and report to the board members at the Dec. 12 meeting.

"This deadline is not cast in stone," he said, referring to the projected January start. "The idea is to get it right."

KDSB had requested proposals for Ontario Works delivery after facing a \$1,000 operating deficit last year for the program. Although bonus funding will cover the shortfall this time, it

is not available in future.

Ear Falls Mayor Geoff McClain, who sits on the review committee, says Jan. 1, 2003 is "a self-imposed deadline, not set by the government, so we can move it ahead." Ear Falls is the lone municipality in the district to not renew the Ontario Works contract in April, electing instead to have neighbouring municipality Red Lake handle the caseload.

"We were down to an eight-person caseload," explained McClain.

McClain says the results show the Ontario Works program has met with success. He credits such factors as the requirements for work search, retraining, clients finding jobs and other who moved to disability support "where they should likely have been in the first place."

This is part of the reason for KDSB wanting to change the delivery system. Lif recalled that in August 1998 when the board was prepar-

ing to take on the Ontario Works program, the delivery model was anticipating 1,600 to 1,800 clients.

"By the time we progressed to the transfer in April 1999, the caseload had dropped to 968," he said. Since then, caseload numbers have been hovering around 500.

As the load dropped, the funding was adjusted based on the numbers. "Our geographic size is not considered; the delivery model that works in southern Ontario doesn't necessarily work here," Lif said. "The ministry paints the province with one brush in how they fund things."

Ontario Works contracts are set up with municipalities spread across the district. Although the caseload, such as in Ear Falls may be small, "we're concerned there may be a detrimental effect in smaller communities," Lif said, adding that communities are sensitive about keeping their residents and also retaining jobs. ☆

# Smoke-free ban to be enforced west of city starting Jan. 1

BY BRYAN MEADOWS  
NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Northwestern Health Unit will begin enforcing a ban on second-hand smoke in about 2,500 businesses west of Thunder Bay on Jan. 1.

All workplaces and public places in the district must be 100-per-cent smoke-free by Jan. 1, medical officer of health Dr. Pete Sarsfield confirmed yesterday.

"The results of our June 2002 Notice of Health Hazard to the businesses in the district is almost complete, and the time has come to set 'the date' and work towards (its implementation) with those businesses who are still not 100-per-cent smoke-free," Sarsfield said.

Health promoter Jennifer McKibbon said that 45 per cent of 2,400 business owners contacted to date have "indicated they are already smoke-free or would be going smoke-free sometime before the end of 2002."

"The remainder (of district businesses) are assumed to smoke-free and will now will be required by the medical officer of health to be 100 per cent smoke-free by Jan. 1, 2003," she said.

The smoke-free ban will apply to all

restaurants, bars and other businesses that allow customers and employees to light up.

Violators of the smoking ban could face fines up to \$25,000.

McKibbon said the health unit's smoke-free notice and enforcement date also applies in the city of Dryden, where council has approved a bylaw that bans smoking in any enclosed space where anyone under 18 is allowed to attend.

Businesses in communities such as Ear Falls, where the municipality has approved a 100-per-cent smoke-free workplaces, will have already met the public health requirement of the medical officer of health, she said.

In that regard, Ear Falls bar owners maintain they have lost revenue and customers due to the smoke-free declaration on Sept. 3.

The medical officer of health maintains that he's within his rights to declare second-hand smoke a health hazard under Ontario's little-known Health Protection and Promotion Act.

While he "expects a court case" from business owners challenging the smoking ban, Sarsfield said earlier that health unit lawyers "say we are going to win."

Chronicle - Oct 22/02



# NOMA launches price-tracking Web site

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association has launched a new Web site it claims will give customers new powers in controlling gas prices at the pump.

The Web site [nomagastracker.ca](http://nomagastracker.ca) lists gas stations from White River to the Manitoba border and the prices they charge at the pump.

"NOMA wants this site to foster competition between stations so that consumers can purchase their fuel at the lowest price possible," NOMA president Ingrid Parkes said yesterday.

NOMA believes that

it is in the consumer's best interest to monitor this site and update it as gas stations change their prices, she said.

Parkes said the municipal organization has "been striving to bring an end to the excessive prices found from time to time in various communities."

According to [nomagastracker.ca](http://nomagastracker.ca), regular gasoline yesterday afternoon was selling from 59.9 cents per litre in Dryden (primarily due to an on-again, off-again price war) to as much as 87.9 cents per litre in Ear Falls. Thunder Bay prices ranged from 75.2 to 76.6 cents a litre while Marathon gas stations were charging 77.9 to 84.9 cents.



[nomagastracker.ca](http://nomagastracker.ca)

# Cough up the money for improvements, AMO tells province

**BY CARL CLUTCHEY**  
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

While the provincial government was touting its new Safe Drinking Water Act yesterday, some Northwestern Ontario politicians grumbled about having to deal with expensive legislation they say will do little to improve water quality where they live.

"Basically, this is about making people pay more money for safe water they already had," Terrace Bay Mayor Mike King remarked yesterday.

King said new drinking water regulations introduced in the leadup to the act will cost his cash-strapped municipality \$5 million once a new treatment plant and connecting pipes are operating next fall.

The regulations forced the town of 2,000 people to build a brand-new plant, even though there was nothing wrong with the old one and the town's cold water source — Lake Superior — is virtually bacteria-free.

In addition to the expense of building the plant, Terrace Bay and other North Shore towns like Marathon have seen costs of water testing soar.

"We now have to test for things several times a year, like pesticides, even

though they've never showed up in our water when we've tested for them every few years or so," King said.

In a news release yesterday, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario said its members "need relief from the frequency of testing where the testing evidence indicates there are no adverse results."

"We call on the province to share its ideas for a financing strategy for the water and sewer infrastructure deficit," added AMO president and Thunder Bay Mayor Ken Boshcoff in the release.

Boshcoff said capital requirements for fixing old pipes and distribution systems could cost "in the billions" of dollars.

The majority of Marathon town council has also been upset over the new drinking water regulations, which required the town to add chlorine — a suspected carcinogen — on a regular basis.

King said that in the wake of the Walkerton tainted-water tragedy, all municipalities have been unfairly labelled either incompetent or corrupt when it comes to providing drinking water.

"I don't think there was anything wrong with the system we had," King said.



## Feature

# Fire on the edge

Structural firefighters and wild land forest firefighters are worlds apart in some ways — but there is a place where they meet and join forces — on the 'edge'.

In forest fire management it is known as the "wild land-urban interface", where fire has no borders and burns to the edge and further, into grass, brush and standing timber and past municipal and Crown land boundaries. Because of this the fire, police and emergency response personnel of some municipalities already have close partnerships with Ontario Natural Resources.

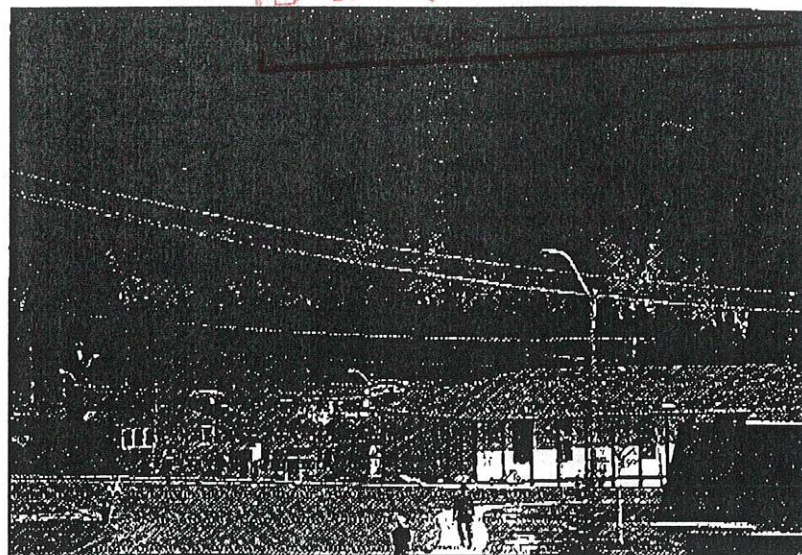
Both municipal firefighters and Ontario fire rangers fight to control grass, brush, and forest fires along that wild land-urban edge. The municipal police and emergency response personnel assist in road closures, providing information, helping in evacuations and the like.

A case in point is a fire that started at the edge of the northern community of Pickle Lake on June 30, 2002, forcing the evacuation of residents from the Central Patricia area of the town. Response was swift and decisive saving the community and minimizing the impact of the fire. When declared out July 20, the fire covered 589 hectares.

A thank-you from Pickle Lake OPP to Terry Popowich, Program Manager of the Ontario Natural Resources West Fire Region Forest Fire Management Program, shows the importance of the close partnership between the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and other agencies.

B.K. Hickey, Acting Sergeant of the Pickle Lake Detachment, says: "I cannot commence to name all the 130 firefighters, pilots and other support staff that were here but I would appreciate it if you could somehow convey the deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks of Pickle Lake OPP Detachment, the people of the Township of Pickle Lake and anyone else who was affected in any way by this fire. We know how close we came to a major disaster in our community and without the excellent work of the MNR crews it would have been a lot worse."

A statement from the Township of Pickle Lake showed how local



**BLAZE:** A forest fire threatens a small rural community in Northwest Ontario.

firefighters worked cooperatively with the MNR to control the forest fire.

"The volunteer firefighters of the Pickle Lake Fire Department and the MNR firefighters come from two very different backgrounds in the firefighting field but under the direction of the MNR were able to work hand in hand to extinguish the forest fire and ensure the safe evacuation of residents in the line of fire."

There are over 150 municipal fire agreements in place across Ontario that sort out the basics of cost recovery for either the municipality or for MNR, depending on whether the fire is on municipal property or on Crown land (see slide bar on page 5).

Beyond that, firefighters learn from each other when they battle different fires together. Except for the common factor of fire there are dramatically different techniques used for structural fire vs. a wild land fire burning in grass, brush or forests.

## Working the Edge

Perhaps one of the most distinctive differences is the wild land technique of working the edge of a fire instead of seeking the heart of a fire to put it out. Securing the perimeter of a fire

then working in towards the centre is one of the most effective ways of bringing a wild land fire under control.

Any structures threatened by the fire, whether within the fire's perimeter, or just outside the edge, are usually protected with portable sprinkler systems erected on the eaves of buildings with water supplied through hoses by a gas-powered pump. The sprinklers douse the buildings with water and protect them from fire burning on the outside.

Working the fire's edge also allows for the highly efficient use of air attack with CL-415 heavy waterbombers capable of scooping water from a nearby lake or river and dropping 6,000 litres of water at a time on a fire. These flying firefighters drop their loads of water strategically along the flanks or the head of a fire. Working the edge knocks the energy out of a fire and allows crews on the ground to run a hose line and prevent further fire spread.

## Common strengths

No matter what the area of expertise, whether structural or forest firefighting for example, there are common skills and concepts that all firefighters bring

Carbon Copy To:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Dept.
<input type="checkbox"/> E.D.O.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambulance
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Police
<input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

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⑦

with them to a wild land-urban fire. They respond immediately to the threat and dispatch resources to deal with it and call for more resources if necessary.

Their focus remains on preventing the situation from escalating and they strive to use the available resources in the most strategic way possible.

Of course there are specific skill-sets required for forest firefighting, just as there are for structural firefighting. These skills have been developed more over recent years through training partnerships between municipalities and the MNR and the future holds great promise that this exchange of skills and knowledge and experience will continue in a positive way.

### **Separate solitudes**

Natural and human events that imperil people have drawn various emergency response organizations together in many unexpected ways across the globe.

In fact, alliances between people who normally operate in their own separate solitudes reaches back to the beginning of human history. The difference today is that modern technology and communications, coupled with shifting economic times with fewer resources has encouraged more interaction than ever before.

*Article by Deb MacLean, Fire Management Program - West Fire Region, phone 807-937-7241, email debbie.macleam@mnr.gov.on.ca.*

## **The Low Down on Forest Fire Management in Ontario**

### **• Fires to August 18, 2002**

West Fire Region — 585 fires and 172,290.3 hectares burned over  
East Fire Region — 310 fires and 9,943.4 hectares burned over

### **• Fires for 2001 Season**

West Fire Region — 555 fires and 6,223.2 hectares burned over  
East Fire Region — 1,037 fires and 8,986 hectares burned over

### **• Ten Year Average 1992-2001**

West Fire Region — 626.2 fires and 162,364.6 hectares burned over  
East Fire Region — 605 fires and 34,000 hectares burned over

**Ontario Facts:** Ontario's Total Area is 1,068,580 sq. km (10% of Canada)  
Land Area is 891,193 sq. km  
Inside the Fire Region is 78,300,000 hectares

**Aircraft:** The Province of Ontario has nine CL-415 heavy waterbombers, seven Biddog Air Attack Units and five Twin Otters. This fleet is mobile and available for dispatch to any part of Ontario, other provinces or the U.S. when required if adequate resources remain available to fight fires in Ontario.

**Crews:** Type 1 — Initial Attack MNR FireRanger crews:  
West Fire Region — 114 crews  
East Fire Region — 87 crews  
Total across the province — 201 crews

**Waterbomber Record:** Set by Chief Pilot Peter Marsh and Co-pilot James Hooper for Dryden Fire Number 10 north of Dryden on June 2, 2002. They made 100 water drops in 3.5 hours. There are 1,350 Imperial Gallons or 6,000 litres per drop. Their total flight time on the fire was 3.9 hours. Peter Marsh attributed the record to the fire being so close to a large body of water that they could use to pick up on. The fire being so close to where the waterbombers were based adjacent to the Dryden Regional Airport meant that not much fuel was used to get to the fire.

## **Municipal Fire Management Agreements**

Every municipality in the Fire Region as defined under the Forest Fires Prevention Act (Section 21 - FFPA) is responsible for the suppression of grass, brush and forest fires within its limits. Where there is a fire on Crown land within a municipality, the province will reimburse the municipality for fire fighting costs.

To better serve the people of Ontario, fire management agreements with municipalities were developed. They divide a municipality into fire protection zones and identify where the municipality or the Ministry of Natural Resources is the responding agency. While municipal agreements have been in place since the 1950s and dealt primarily with fire suppression, the current municipal agreements introduced in 1998 are part of an integrated fire management program, which includes fire suppression, planning and training.

The intent of the current agreement is to apply the principle of overall least cost in determining who should provide fire protection on specific lands, and to ensure full cost recovery for both Natural Resources and municipal organizations.

Factors such as fire cause, and fire load, fire type and municipal wild land suppression resources are examined to determine which agency should be the response agency. A Municipal Forest Fire Management Workbook allows for a structured examination of the factors. The result of both the workbook-based examinations and local negotiations is the identification of which are the Municipal Protection Areas and which are the Crown Protection Areas.

Within the Municipal Protection Area the municipality is responsible to respond to wild land fires, and Natural Resources responds to fires in the Crown Land Protection Areas. When assistance is provided by the municipality or by Natural Resources to support fire response in the other's areas then cost recovery occurs.

In Ontario, there are approximately 157 such Municipal Fire Management Agreements.



# ore optics hardware ks city to broadband

will be linked  
peg to Thunder  
h the 807 Broad-  
ork very soon.

to be linked by  
the year," said  
zanski, general  
f Dryden Tele-

uncil approved  
se of fibre optics  
needed for the  
ak out, at the  
Nov. 4. The cost  
'8.60 will be  
over 10 years.

last two years,  
ocal telephone  
t Thunder Bay,  
d Kenora, the  
ers in the 807  
Network, have  
g a broadband  
tion.

, the network is

completed from Thunder  
Bay to Fort Frances and on  
up to Kenora. Thunder Bay  
and Kenora have also com-  
pleted the fibre purchase  
from Winnipeg to  
Marathon, leaving the final  
completion going back to  
Thunder Bay.

Probizanski said, in  
order for the fibre network  
to operate, the fibre must be  
activated by fibre optics  
hardware. That will be sup-  
plied by Alcatel.

"It gives up the ability to  
offer competition to Bell  
and AT&T," said Probizans-  
ki.

"At first, we thought it  
was going to be radio con-  
nection; now the fibre is  
available. It gives us unlim-  
ited ban compared with  
radio," he explained.

The network will include  
radio break out in Ignace to  
Sioux Lookout and to Red  
Lake from Dryden.

Probizanski said the net-  
work has significant bene-  
fits for the mill, the hospital  
and schools, as well as com-  
petitive data services for  
business and other cus-  
tomers.

"People ask why we can't  
match the deals in larger  
cities," he said. "But big  
cities can purchase band-  
widths so much cheaper  
than we can in the north-  
west region.

"Even the T-1 cellular  
rate will be cheaper," he  
said.

Probizanski says Dryden  
is definitely going digital,  
but a slight delay means  
sometime in January. ☆

*Dryden Observer - Nov 19/82*

# Kenora district residents favour area services board

RYAN MEADOW  
THWEST BUREAU

Residents living in the unincorporated areas of Kenora district will continue the push to establish an area services board (ASB).

The 572 rural ratepayers who cast ballots at public meetings in October, 80 per cent voted in favour of developing an ASB proposal.

Unincorporated-area representative Bill Blower said yesterday that the vote commits the 16,279 residents and ratepayers living in the unincorporated areas to the development of a proposal.

For the low number of residents attending meetings in communities across the Kenora district, Blower said the meetings were well publicized and "the public had an opportunity to participate."

Municipalities now have to make a decision whether they want to participate," he said.

Final approval to establish an Area Services Board requires a double-majority vote by the Kenora District Service Board's 10 member municipalities, which include one vote by representatives from the district's unincorporated areas.

A double-majority vote means that in order for the ASB concept to go forward, six of the 10 municipalities, representing the majority of residents, have to vote in favour of the proposal.

A vote by municipalities on whether to continue to the next stage of ASB development is expected before Dec. 12.

ASB supporters say that the governing structure will give people in the rural areas a voice in local government; control of their taxes and services; and a representative when dealing with the provincial government.

While they maintain an ASB will reduce the cost of local government, some municipal officials argue that it will open the door to building another bureaucracy.

Sioux Lookout Mayor John McDonald is not one of those.

"Personally, I'm in favour of an ASB," he said, explaining that he felt "everyone should be paying their fair share."

McDonald said an ASB would provide "a fairer way to provide services such as ambulance, police and better land planning and management."

Sioux Lookout council has already agreed to continue the process of developing an ASB proposal.

An Area Services Board would replace the Kenora District Services Board, which currently bills municipalities for such services as land ambulance, Ontario Works, social housing and child care. Service levies for the unincorporated areas are paid by the province.



# Hydro rebate on the way

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MISSISSAUGA — The cost of electricity in Ontario would be capped on Dec. 1 and consumers stung by the spiralling cost of energy in the newly opened market paid rebates under legislation to be introduced next week by the provincial government.

Consumers who paid more than 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour since the market was thrown open to competition on May 1 would receive a \$75 refund by the end of the year, with the remainder to be credited later from electricity bills.

Premier Ernie Eves made the announcement yesterday as he took steps to deal with an emerging political crisis in a pre-election year.

"It is unacceptable that families are being hit with hydro bills they can't afford and businesses are facing cost increases significantly larger than they can han-

dle," Eves said from the kitchen table of a family home in this community west of Toronto where he chose to outline the first feature of his plan.

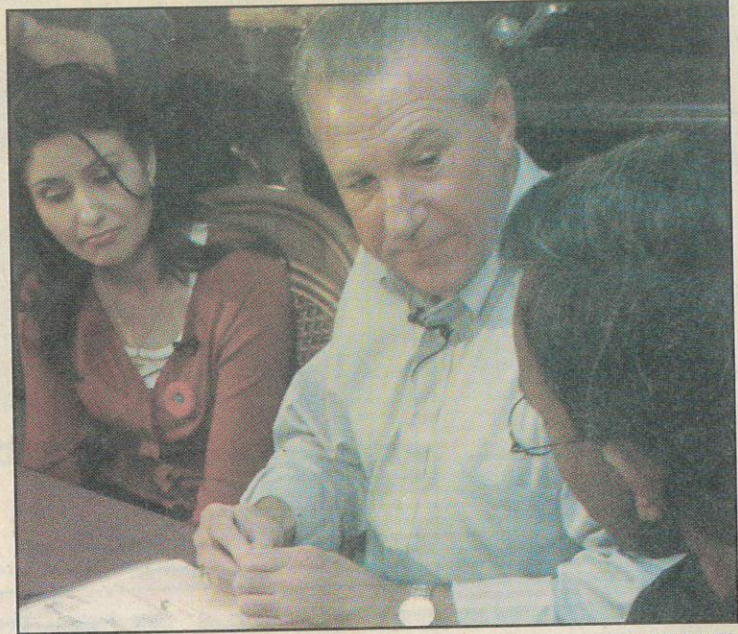
"The problem requires immediate action and we are taking it. From now on the only time your electricity bill will go up is when you use more power."

The rebates will be paid from the Consumer Protection Fund, a pool of money Ontario Power Generation has been collecting from consumers since May.

The money had been earmarked for rebates and Eves said collectively they should cost no more than the \$700 million now in the fund.

Eves tried to reassure consumers that no one in the province would have their power cut off until at least March 31, 2003, even if they have not paid their bills.

• Continued on page A4



CP PHOTO

Keshab and Meena Hardatt flank Premier Ernie Eves at their Mississauga home where yesterday's hydro announcement was made.

# Hydro move solves short-term problems

BY KRIS KETONEN

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

The provincial government's new hydro policies boil down to an admission of their "dramatic" mismanagement of Ontario's power system, a Northern MPP says.

"You look at all the things that have gone wrong, including Walkerton, and it's all based on decisions the government made and assumptions they made that were so incredibly inaccurate that they caused an absolute disaster," MPP Michael Gravelle (L-Thunder Bay-Superior North) said yesterday.

"They didn't think it through, they didn't have a plan, they didn't really know what they were doing, and . . . (yesterday's) announcement, no matter how you cut it, is ultimately acknowledgement of that."

He was referring to Premier Ernie Eves' new stance on privatized hydro, announced yesterday.

The government capped rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour retroactive to May 1. Anything extra customers paid since then will be rebated, and credited on bills as soon as local hydro companies are able.

The first rebate is due by the end of the year.

A new, easier-to-read hydro bill design is promised to clear up questions about what, exactly, customers are paying for. The search for new electricity supplies will continue, and once found, debt repayment will accelerate.

Pressure will be on the federal government to take GST off bills, and customers needn't worry about darkened homes if they can't afford a bill: nobody will have power disconnected until March 31.

The plan will remain in effect until at least 2006.

"It's going to solve some of the short-term problems," said Larry Hebert, general manager of Thunder Bay Hydro. "It

## POWER PLAN

### CAP:

- Price frozen at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour for all consumers effective Dec. 1 until at least 2006.
- Delivery price of power capped at current level.

### REBATES:

- Every cent consumers have paid above 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour to be rebated. That includes those who have signed fixed-price contracts. Initial \$75 rebate to be paid by year end, the rest in the new year.

### BILLS:

- All electricity bills across the province to be standardized in easy-to-read format.

### OTHER MEASURES:

- Review of all current electricity charges to ensure they are reasonable.
- Change Ontario Power Generation's board of directors.
- Call on Ottawa to remove GST from all electricity bills.
- Come up with conservation plan, incentives for more generation.
- Speed up repayments of old Ontario Hydro's \$38-billion debt.

— THE CANADIAN PRESS

constituents who found themselves in dire financial situations over the last few months, when the average charge climbed as high as eight cents per kilowatt hour.

He recalled one woman's tearful call



# Proposed paramedics course is cancelled

A paramedics program to be offered in Dryden has been cancelled.

Aileen Murdoch, manager of the Dryden and Fox Lookout campuses of Confederation College, says she was forced to pull the program due to a lack of resources.

"There were not enough staff available to provide placements for students," she explains.

"The college had planned to offer a paramedics course out of the

Dryden Regional Health Centre starting in January. A similar program in Fort Frances is still scheduled to proceed in 2003 and Murdoch encourages area students considering such a career to look at that program.

The college also offers an ongoing paramedics program out of its Kenora campus.

Murdoch adds she has not given up on the idea of offering the program in Dryden and plans to

revisit the proposal in the near future when the local facilities may have more resources.

Peter Marshall, the Kenora District Services Board's ambulance service manager, says he has a stable pool of paramedics right now with 107 full and part time employees. However, the service is always looking for additional staff to help relieve stress during times of holiday and sick leave.

★

# City to amend second-hand smoking policy

The City of Dryden is updating its 'in-house' smoking policy in response to a letter from the Northern Health Unit (NHU).

The NHU acknowledges that the city has already addressed the issue of second-hand smoke in municipalities. It mentions Dryden's policy, however, does not cover the smoking in certain areas nor does it cover smoking in the cabs of city vehicles and equipment used for firefighting.

City clerk Colleen Beau told Dryden council on Nov. 18, that the new

smoke-free bylaw, which comes into effect on Jan. 1, 2003, prohibits smoking in the arena. The city is currently drafting a new policy to be presented to council before Jan. 1, that addresses smoking in municipally owned vehicles and other equipment, she says.

Bill Limerick, NHU municipal and environmental health manager, says the Dryden bylaw is moving "in the right direction."

He hasn't had a chance to see Sioux Lookout's bylaw, passed on Nov. 20. Limerick was also set to attend a public meeting in

Ignace on Nov. 21, concerning a smoke-free bylaw.

What Dryden's bylaw doesn't cover, the NHU will do its part, Limerick says, referring to some bars and restaurants. The health unit has said it will issue official "health orders" in such cases. Health orders are issued after a public health hazard has been identified. Dr. Pete Sarsfield, the district's medical officer of health, declared second-hand smoke a health hazard last spring.

"We're hoping we are challenged," says Limerick. "We're hoping to make this case law in Ontario." ☆



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## Area services board idea slammed by city

By Michael Jiggins  
Miner and News Staff

Kenora councillors lashed out at a proposal to study a new regional service delivery agency and for good measure delivered a sweeping condemnation of the existing Kenora District Services Board.

With the heated discussion at Tuesday's committee of the whole meeting, council is now poised to vote no on a resolution to study the establishment of an area services board as recommended by a sub-committee of the area services board when it comes to Monday's regular meeting.

All nine municipal councils in the Kenora district are voting on a similar resolution to pro-

ceed with the study and will meet Dec. 12 to determine if the process can go ahead.

To proceed, the study requires support from a majority of the 10 voting members of the services board comprising 50 per cent of the area's population.

Already the unincorporated areas and councils in Ear Falls and Sioux Lookout have endorsed the study, with Dryden and Red Lake indicating they too support at least examining the concept. As stringent as it is, Kenora's opposition alone is not enough to quash the study.

Mayor Dave Canfield led the charge against the area services board concept, arguing it will only further entrench a waste-

ful upper-tier, which he claimed the existing board is presently.

Canfield said when the district board was formed, there was a consensus that it not become a second level of government.

"And lo and behold in a very short four or five years we have built another level of government. We have 10 employees already," charged the mayor.

"From our perspective, and we've had a hard time politically presenting that argument to the district services board, moving into an ASB ... in two years from now taking on some of those extra services, we would probably double and triple — and maybe even more

than that — the number of employees that we have at the upper tier now."

He wasn't alone in his opposition of the existing model or the proposal for a new board, which would increase the number of services delivered and have the power to tax.

"I don't like the way things are run right now ... I think we should be running things ourselves," stated Coun. Ron Lunny flatly.

Councillors Rory McMillan, Don McDougald, Ted Szajewski and Colin Wasacase in turn all indicated their opposition to the proposed area service board study. Coun. Ingrid Parkes was not in attendance.

Council's objections to what exists and what's being proposed did not come without a suggestion for improvement.

When they reject the study at Monday night's meeting, council is then expected to pass a resolution calling for the existing services board to be dismantled with service delivery returned to the municipal level. The wording of that resolution isn't finalized, but it's believed Kenora will propose the district be divided into east-west regions.

One municipality in each area would then absorb the services currently managed by the district board, those being land ambulance, Ontario Works, social housing and child care.

It's a similar service-delivery model to the one Kenora and Dryden are jointly pitching to the district services board for the takeover of Ontario Works programming.

"We see it as a way of bringing the services back home. If we could get to that type of a model, it would be an umbrella that would come under the existing municipality so we wouldn't create another level," said Canfield.

"Our neighbouring communities are under the impression that we just want to run everything. Well that's not the case, we want efficiencies, we want to eliminate an upper tier that never should have been developed."

### ▼ READY FOR MAKE UP

## Child poverty local reality

By Wes Godin  
Miner and News Staff

Take a second and imagine what it would be like without enough food on a daily basis. A number of parents across the country and in your own neighbourhood deal with this prob-

Loeppy said she certainly hasn't seen an improvement in the problem since the time she started working at the community centre three years ago. Although a lot of the parents do try very hard to make ends meet and try to be very

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