

Kasabonika gets provincial boost for mineral development

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The province is helping a remote North-western Ontario First Nation to take part in mineral development activities in the region.

The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has signed an agreement with Kasabonika Lake First Nation aimed at strengthening communication and bringing new economic opportunities to the remote community.

"Our government is committed to working with remote northern First Nations communities to build a strong and trusting relationship," Northern Development and Mines Minister Rick Bartolucci said Tuesday.

The memorandum, signed yesterday by Bartolucci and Kasabonika Chief Gordon Anderson, commits both parties to enhancing communication and understanding that may foster economic growth.

"Our community has chosen to be actively engaged in resource development,

especially mineral exploration, because we need to build our own economic future that respects our culture, values and environment," said Anderson.

With a population of 900, Kasabonika Lake is located about 400 kilometres north of Pickle Lake. It is accessible only by air and seasonal winter road.

"Our community has chosen to be actively engaged in resource development, especially mineral exploration, because we need to build our own economic future that respects our culture, values and environment."

Gordon Anderson

Chief of Kasabonika First Nation

By gaining a greater mutual appreciation for issues surrounding resource development

opportunities, Bartolucci said, "We can effect positive change leading to economic development that also respects heritage and cultural values."

In addition to the Memorandum of Cooperation, the First Nation will receive \$263,437 in Northern Ontario Heritage funding to upgrade and expand the Kasabonika Mineral

Warehouse and the Kasabonika Hotel.

These projects will help Kasabonika Lake benefit from the mineral development in the region, Bartolucci added.

Ont. to have fixed election dates

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Ontario voters will know exactly when they'll return to the polls to elect a new premier under a law passed Tuesday, but opposition critics

say the province's electoral system needs more reform.

The bill approved Tuesday makes Ontario only the second province, after British Columbia, to have set election dates. Manitoba has also considered such

a move.

The law sets Ontario's next election date for Oct. 4, 2007, and subsequent elections will now be held on the first Thursday in October every four years.

Officials for Marie Bountrogianni, the

minister responsible for democratic renewal, expected the lieutenant governor would give the electoral law amendments royal assent shortly.

"With these measures, we've taken the next step in the most ambitious democratic renewal initia-

tive in this province's history," Bountrogianni said in a statement emailed from Hong Kong where she's attending the World Trade Organization conference.

"I believe that the democracy that we're building to-

dates, real-time disclosure of donations

gether through this process will be rich, vital and strong."

Previously, provincial governments had to return to the polls every five years, though the exact timing was at the discretion of the government.

In effect, the legislation removes the right of a premier and his government to call a snap election for political purposes. In other words, current Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty can't call a sudden election a year early based on polls or other political strategy.

The Ontario legislature is still subject to confidence motions that could bring down the government, though that's unlikely when one party holds a majority of seats, as the McGuinty government currently does.

Task force aims to boost civic pride

BY JONATHAN WILSON
THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

A beautification plan for the City of Thunder Bay may finally be acted upon, more than four years after it was presented to city council.

The \$20,000 report compiled by landscape architect Werner Schwar in 2001 will be one of the resources used by the new Mayor's Task Force on Civic Pride.

"That's certainly one of the pieces we've got our hands on," Mayor Lynn Peterson said Tuesday. "We've had a strategy, but we've had no actual projects or funding behind them."

The civic pride idea is one of the goals promised by Peterson in her 2003 election campaign.

But Peterson said before she could focus on beautifying the city, she had to take care of more basic matters such as the city's New Foundation plan.

"It wasn't particularly sexy, but it had to be done," she said.

Peterson described civic pride as making the city a nice place to walk through and visit, and said there are many areas where Thunder Bay can functionally become more beautiful.

One area where the task force could take action immediately is the city's tourist routes, Peterson said. That was discussed at city hall, with council complaining that the Bayview, Memorial and Friendship routes have been poorly promoted.

Schwar's 2001 report, meanwhile, cited an "urgent" need for trees and plants in the urban area, especially along

Memorial Avenue, and for the hiring of a beautification co-ordinator.

"We're taking what we hope is the best of the best and talking about what things will make a difference," said Peterson.

The 11-member task force was put together in October and includes Peterson, Schwar, Coun. Rebecca Johnson, chamber president Mary Long-Irwin, Bombardier employee Rod McLean, art gallery co-ordinator Sharon Godwin, artist Biljana Baker, heritage committee chairman Dave Knutson, Ministry of Culture staffer Bonnie McNulty and architect Cory Stechyshyn.

Peterson said the long-term goal is to work on projects "piece by piece," and find ways to tie other new projects together with walkways or public art.

City policies affecting tourism will be looked at, along with the city's capital budget forecasts for the next 10 years.

The 2006 budget could see money set aside for the task force to work with.

Peterson said no dollar figure has been determined, but

the task force plans to finalize a proposal before budget talks resume in mid-January.

"We'll have at least one more meeting to see what type of project we can pull together the soonest," she said.

The group will present a full report to council at the end of March, including the group's overall vision, timeline for projects and money required.

"It clearly won't happen overnight, we need to get started," she said.



Mayor Lynn Peterson

More quake action in Dryden area

MEADOWS
ST BUREAU

Dryden area is fast becoming a hot bed of activity.

Small earthquakes shook homes south of Dryden last week, and seismologists say it's not yet clear if the area has felt the last of the

quakes, a spokesman for the Geological Survey of Canada said Tuesday that "sometimes we see (seismic) activity" in Northern On-

tario.

"We don't know if this will continue or not."

Earthquakes of 1.7-, 1.5-, 0.9- and 1.8-magnitude were felt last Wednesday by residents south of Dryden at 1:07 p.m., 1:35 p.m., 1:49 p.m. and 5:33 p.m., respectively. Some people heard a loud noise, like an explosion.

On Nov. 24, a few homes shook and a large bang was heard about 8:30 p.m., during a 1.5-magnitude earthquake which had an epicentre three kilometres south of the city.

The Geological Survey of Canada's (GSC) web-

site (<http://gsc.nrcan.gc.ca/>) says it was the second of two seismic events that week in the area. A 1.6-magnitude quake hit 57 km south of Sioux Lookout at about 4 p.m. two days before.

Northern Ontario experiences about 40 small earthquakes a year. They are fairly shallow and affect a relatively small area.

Adams said the latest shaking could be reminiscent of what happened a few years ago in the Sioux Lookout area when several small earthquakes occurred over the course of a year.

He explained that the area is "a pretty stable

area" of Canadian Shield rock, and that shallow seismic events are normally associated with blasting due to road construction, or mine and quarry work.

He said a check is underway to determine whether someone is blasting in the Dryden area, to ensure the latest tremors were in fact caused by earthquakes.

Adams said the earthquakes are likely associated with the Mid-Atlantic ridge and West Coast plate squeezing the continent and the Canadian Shield.

"It means the brittle crust is cracking a little bit."

Kenora area gets Internet with money

WEST BUREAU

Province is investing more than
million dollars to expand high-
speed Internet in the Kenora area.

Kenora of the Woods Business In-
corporation will receive \$575,000
from Ontario Heritage funding to
provide broadband service to 15 commu-
nities in the Kenora area, including five
municipalities.

"With this infrastructure in place,
residential and business communication
will be enhanced favouring new opportu-
nities for economic development and job
creation," said Northern Development
Minister Rick Bartolucci.
"Ensuring this communication medi-
um is available in Northern Ontario is
an important step in fostering economic
development in our region," he said.

NOMA goes after Liberals for 'crybabies' remark

NORTHWEST BUREAU

The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association has criticized comments made last week by Markham MPP Tony Wong that municipalities upset over massive job losses are nothing more than "crybabies."

"These comments show a complete lack of understanding of the economics of Northern communities and the challenges the forest industry is facing," NOMA president Michael Power said Tuesday.

"People at Queen's Park need to understand that the pain of job loss in our communities is very real," Power said, adding families in communities across Ontario, like Cornwall, Thunder Bay and Kenora, are going to have a very tough Christmas this year.

In light of Wong's comments, NOMA wants Premier Dalton McGuinty to "immediately demonstrate" his government's commitment to Northern communities, and to outline his timetable for action on the forest industry crisis.

"If the government is serious about northern communities, they have to finish what they started and do what it takes to make this once-competitive industry thrive again in Ontario."

To accomplish that, NOMA has asked the government to:

- Fund 100 per cent of the cost of building primary roads and 50 per cent for secondary road construction.
- Provide stable, affordable rates by extending the cap on OPG non-prescribed assets for the next three years.
- Lower delivered wood costs by cutting red tape.



From left, Thunder Bay Community Foundation executive director Paul Wolfe Friesen present a grant to PRO Kids fund development co-ordinator Sharon McDaniele.

Foundation shares t

THE CHRONICLE JOURNAL

CHRISTMAS
DOWNTOWN THUNDER BAY SOUTH
VICTORIAVILLE AND CENTENNIAL SQUARE
WIN \$500

Friday, December 16, 2005

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Mill closure rocks Kenora

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

How to stop the bleeding?

That's what Kenora residents were asking themselves Thursday following the news that Abitibi-Consolidated Inc. will permanently shut down its newsprint mill there, throwing 340 people out of work.

"It's not fun. This is getting serious," Mayor Dave Canfield said Thursday.

"We plan to regroup and take a look at a lot of things," Canfield said. "We have to talk to the company ... and discuss with government what the options are."

While the company has indicated it doesn't want to sell the mill, Canfield said it should be one of the options considered.

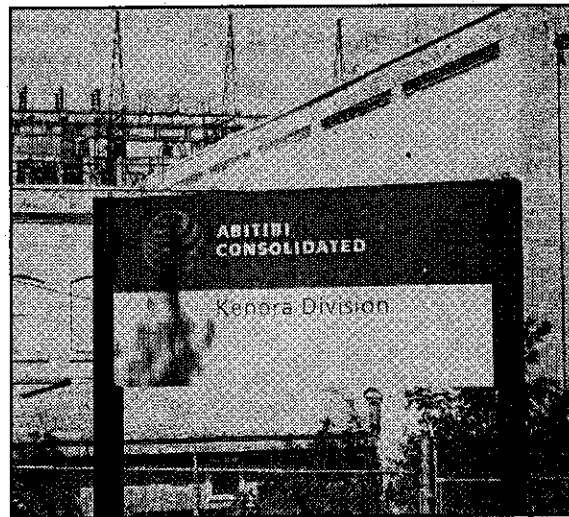
However, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union spokesman Cec Makowski said the prospect of "alternative ownership is facing big obstacles."

"Number 1, the company's refusal to sell, and there's not a big lineup of industry players looking to buy a paper mill."

The company and representatives of six unions had met on and off over the last few weeks to try and hash out a deal to save the mill. The talks began shortly after the company announced in July that it planned to shut down one paper machine on Oct. 23, and idle another.

Makowski said the talks collapsed last week after the company tabled a document full of concessions.

"I think the unions tried their best in both locations (Abitibi is also shutting down a mill in Newfoundland)



CP FILE PHOTO

Abitibi-Consolidated Inc.'s paper mill in Kenora, along with the company's plant in Stephenville, N.L., is permanently closing.

to find solutions," he said. "It's not up to the workers to subsidize an industry that has failed to invest and that government policies have put behind the eight ball."

The latter issue is what exasperates Canfield.

"I don't think the government knows what's going on ... where to take action."

Thirty paper machines have been idled across the country over the past year, he said. "I don't know where (the forest industry) is going to (end up). There are so many unknowns."

NDP Leader Howard Hampton, MPP for Kenora riding, said the closure shows that the provincial and federal governments' forestry plans aren't working.

Makowski maintained that the company's failure to invest in Kenora, combined with factors influencing the industry such as the high Canadian dollar, and a lack of tangible incentives from government "spelled disaster for the mill."

Canfield added that city council plans to get "very aggressive" over the next year to try and diversify Kenora's economy and attract new investment.

Makowski said CEP will try to get "significant" severance packages for the mill's employees.

Calling Abitibi's decision "completely unwarranted," he said the company "had better do the right thing for the traumatic effects the layoff will have on their employees."

Abitibi spokesman Denis Leclerc told The Canadian Press that several factors worked against the Kenora mill, including the steady increase in the Canadian dollar, a declining newsprint market, the financial situation of the company, and the lack of an agreement with unions over an operational structure.

Abitibi-Consolidated will also close its mill in Stephenville, N.L., after failing to find cost-cutting solutions to make that operation viable.

The Newfoundland mill employed about 300 people.

Greenstone just keeps rolling along

Friday, December 30, 2005

AA:07

Municipality's 5th birthday approaches

CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

As its fifth birthday approaches, the town that many apparently still love to hate appears poised to survive.

The grumbling about the Municipality of Greenstone, which merged four towns, two villages and a handful of unorganized areas into a single sprawling town, is palpable.

It's on the streets. It's in the stores and in the five (count 'em) hockey arenas.

But there seems to be no organized group determined to dismantle Greenstone, which came into effect under a cloud of legal wrangling Jan. 1, 2001.

"I hear the grumbling, I hear the talk, but nobody has come to me directly to ask what we can do to get out of this," Tim Griffin, a Greenstone councillor who lives in the former town of Longlac, said Thursday.

Greenstone, which has about 6,000 inhabitants, was created in 1997 by a commissioner appointed by a former Conservative government.

Many residents felt it was rammed down their throats. Even the name, unpopular at the time, was chosen for them.

"A municipality of this size is unworkable and will negatively impact on the quality of life for the residents of this vast area," Liberal MPP Michael Ravelle said during the lead-up to Greenstone's 2001 start date.

Some who opposed Greenstone from the beginning say the way the government handled the merger still smarts.

"The government made up its mind, it didn't care what our feelings were," Deb Edgrieff, one of the organizers who tried to retain the former town of Nakina, recalled this week.

Edgrieff said she can't point to any ob-

proved under Greenstone.

"The police still only show up here periodically," she said. "I think after Greenstone came in, everyone felt so discouraged. People just said 'C'est la vie.'"

Greenstone operates on about \$17 million per year, a figure that is more than the combined budgets of original towns Beardmore, Geraldton, Longlac and Nakina.

Greenstone chief administrator Roy Sinclair said the communities as a whole are better off.

While there is a bigger area to serve, the amalgamation generated more revenue, more property assessment.

"It's financially advantageous for us to be in Greenstone," Sinclair maintained.

As far as Sinclair is concerned, Greenstone is here to stay. "The province will never overturn that decision. (Trying to reverse the merger) is beating a dead horse."

The brighter financial picture has been

somewhat obscured by growing concerns about significant increases in property taxes.

After Greenstone began operating, homeowners both in the former towns and in rural areas saw the value of their homes being marked up by the province's Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

The Municipality of Greenstone doesn't set the values. But many angry homeowners associated the rise in taxes with the new municipality. Several groups have formed to challenge their assessments at MPAC hearings.

Griffin still believes Greenstone can work but says the provincial government has to play a more supportive role.

The policy of providing financial support for only one major infrastructure project per year should be changed in Greenstone's case, Griffin said, because

"I hear the grumbling. I hear the talk..."

Tim Griffin
Greenstone councillor

Mill closure rocks Kenora

BY BRYAN MEADOWS
NORTHWEST BUREAU

How to stop the bleeding?

That's what Kenora residents were asking themselves Thursday following the news that Abitibi-Consolidated Inc. will permanently shut down its newsprint mill there, throwing 340 people out of work.

"It's not fun. This is getting serious," Mayor Dave Canfield said Thursday.

"We plan to regroup and take a look at a lot of things," Canfield said. "We have to talk to the company ... and discuss with government what the options are."

While the company has indicated it doesn't want to sell the mill, Canfield said it should be one of the options considered.

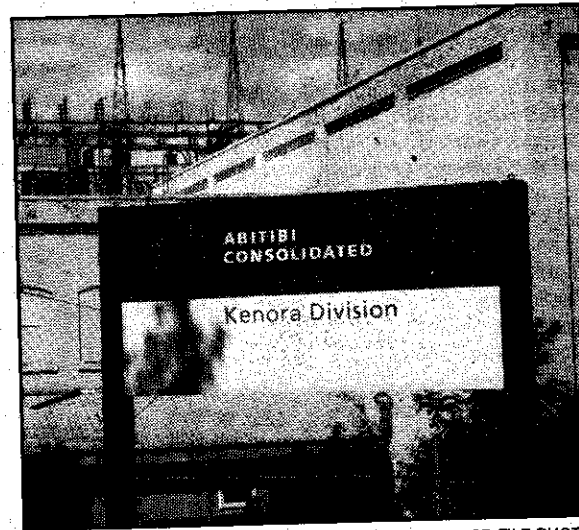
However, Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union spokesman Cec Makowski said the prospect alternative ownership is facing big obstacles.

Number 1, the company's refusal to sell, and there's not a big lineup of industry players looking to buy a paper mill."

The company and representatives of six unions had met on and off over the last few weeks to try and hash out a deal to save the mill. The talks began shortly after the company announced in July that it planned to shut down one paper machine on Oct. 23, and idle another.

Makowski said the talks collapsed last week after the company tabled a document full of concessions.

"I think the unions tried their best in both locations (Abitibi is also shutting down a mill in Newfoundland)



CP FILE PHOTO

Abitibi-Consolidated Inc.'s paper mill in Kenora, along with the company's plant in Stephenville, N.L., is permanently closing.

to find solutions," he said. "It's not up to the workers to subsidize an industry that has failed to invest and that government policies have put behind the eight ball."

The latter issue is what exasperates Canfield.

"I don't think the government knows what's going on ... where to take action."

Thirty paper machines have been idled across the country over the past year, he said. "I don't know where (the forest industry) is going to (end up). There are so many unknowns."

NDP Leader Howard Hampton, MPP for Kenora riding, said the closure shows that the provincial and federal governments' forestry plans aren't working.

Makowski maintained that the company's failure to invest in Kenora, combined with factors influencing the industry such as the high Canadian dollar, and a lack of tangible incentives from government "spelled disaster for the mill."

Canfield added that city council plans to get "very aggressive" over the next year to try and diversify Kenora's economy and attract new investment.

Makowski said CEP will try to get "significant" severance packages for the mill's employees.

Calling Abitibi's decision "completely unwarranted," he said the company "had better do the right thing for the traumatic effects the layoff will have on their employees."

Abitibi spokesman Denis Leclerc told The Canadian Press that several factors worked against the Kenora mill, including the steady increase in the Canadian dollar, a declining newsprint market, the financial situation of the company, and the lack of an agreement with unions over an operational structure.

Abitibi-Consolidated will also close its mill in Stephenville, N.L., after failing to find cost-cutting solutions to make that operation viable.

The Newfoundland mill employed about 300 people.

DECEMBER 17, 2005

Dilico official appointed judge

STEPHANIE MACLELLAN
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

An Ojibwa woman who grew up on Fort William First Nation has been appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice.

Joyce Pelletier is to reside as a judge in Thunder Bay starting Dec. 28. She will be the first aboriginal person, and the second aboriginal woman, on the court.

"I'm very excited and extremely honoured," Pelletier said. "The bench will be

representative of the community that it serves."

Pelletier has been executive director of Dilico Ojibwa Child and Family Services for nearly nine years.

Pelletier said she hopes her understanding of aboriginal perspectives and concerns, and her knowledge of the social services available to them, will make a positive contribution to the system.

"I'll bring the issues and the awareness, but I also think that I will bring solutions," she said. "I hope I will

(bring) an understanding of the perspectives and history of First Nation people, while at the same time administering justice."

Pelletier also hopes to use her position to serve as a role model for young aboriginals.

"With hard work, with dedication, with commitment and with integrity, there are lots of opportunities to succeed, and I'm just an example of that," she said.

Stan Beardy, Grand Chief of Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, hailed Pelletier as a trailblazer.

"I think it sends a strong message to aboriginal people that you have something to look forward to, a positive relationship with

the province of Ontario," he said. "We need to have our own people in the justice system."

Pelletier, 45, earned a BA at Lakehead University, studying political science and philosophy. She received her law degree from Queen's University in 1990, and returned to the Thunder Bay area to practise law privately.

In 1997, she joined Dilico as its executive director.

Her position at Dilico allowed her to do legal work in areas like child protection, employment law and corporate law.

Pelletier currently lives in Thunder Bay. She is married with a 13-year-old son.



Joyce Pelletier



Bulletin Photo/Dick McKenzie

New hospital has good news

Clearing began last week in preparation for construction of the new 60 bed Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre. The Ontario Ministry of Health has approved the site and land ownership has been finalized with the Municipality. During summer 2006 roads, water, sewer and electricity will be put in place. Construction of the hospital will begin in 2007.

Dryden council responds to job cuts at mill

MEADOWS
ST. BUREAU

Dryden council will take several steps to address the economic and social challenges posed by the layoff of 110 workers this week at the local Weyerhaeuser pulp mill.

At a special meeting, council approved the following measures:

• Increase in the 2006 municipal budget will be restricted to two per cent.

• Freeze for all new positions until the current positions are filled, and any vacancies filled after a sound business case is presented.

• The level of city services will be

maintained this year.

• City managers were told to straighten out their operational budgets.

• Economic development efforts and diversification opportunities, and how the services are delivered and supported locally, to be reviewed.

• Senior levels of government will be aggressively lobbied for special grants so that priority work can proceed.

• Premier Dalton McGuinty and senior Weyerhaeuser officials will be invited to Dryden to discuss the regional forest industry crisis.

"These seven measures are needed in order to focus on the shrinking employment base and dwindling municipal resources," said Mayor Anne Kras-

silowsky.

"The city with community support, will continue to pressure both the provincial and federal governments for a competitive action plan," she said. "Retaining investor confidence is critical to the continued growth and development of the business community."

Citing poor market conditions, Weyerhaeuser announced last month the permanent shutdown of No. 1 paper machine at its Dryden mill on April 1, throwing 80 people out of work.

The decision came on the heels of a November announcement that the company was shutting down the round-wood processing plant at the local mill in the spring. About 35 employees will lose

their jobs — 30 in the mill and five in contract harvesting operations — when the wood-room closes March 31.

With the layoffs, manpower at the Dryden mill will be reduced to 685 employees.

Weyerhaeuser vice-president of Ontario operations Norm Bush has said the company plans to produce more value-added paper products at the Dryden mill "with a different grade mix, which will hopefully get a higher price in the marketplace."

"Our whole focus going forward is to get (the Dryden mill) competitive."

Following the April shutdown, Dryden No. 2 will be the last uncoated paper machine running in Ontario.

Abitibi forest sale under attack

Ontario let opportunities slip away: NOSA

BY JIM KELLY
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

The head of a U.S. company which purchased 196 square kilometres of land from Abitibi-Consolidated said there will be no drastic changes in the way the new owner conducts business.

"We'll maintain what Abitibi has been doing," Tom Colgan, president and chief executive officer of Wagner Forest Management Ltd., said Tuesday from Lyme, N.H.

"We'll harvest lumber and sell it to local mills and people who had contracts with Abitibi (cutting wood), we'll assume all those contracts."

Colgan said some of the wood will be sold to U.S. interests just as Abitibi had done.

Abitibi-Consolidated received \$55 million for the land in a deal that was announced last week.

Colgan said public access to the large tract of land west of Thunder Bay will continue at least until summer.

"On some of the lands we manage, there are public access programs so there will always be some type of component of public access (on the purchased land)," Colgan said.

He said Wagner will set up an office in Thunder Bay by next month called Wagner Ontario Forest Management.

Colgan said contractors, hunters, fishermen and others will have to go through this office.

However, John Kaplanis, president of the Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance, said he is

skeptical of what Colgan said Wagner intends to do with the land.

"This places the future of this forest in jeopardy, and it most certainly means that economic benefits that could have been realized by Northwestern Ontario will be missed," Kaplanis said.

He said the land consists of registered traplines and roughly 1,000 lakes rich in a variety of fish species important to the tourism economy of the north.

NOSA is upset that the Ontario government did not step up to the plate to buy the land from Abitibi, instead allowing a U.S.-based company to purchase the land.

Kaplanis said NOSA believes that more should have been done to obtain the land in a day and age where millions are spent on forestry industry bailouts.

"It would have made sense for the Ontario government to buy back this land as a holding under the Crown, to use it for the benefit of Northern Ontario's natural resource-based industry, tourism and recreation," he said.

"The recreational and forestry industry value, in addition to the potential sale of cottage lots, could have provided the (Ministry of Natural Resources) with revenue to pay for the vast expanse of woodland and sustain numerous economic opportunities here in the Northwest," he said.

"However this opportunity has now been lost."

Wednesday, January 4, 2006

IRENT LINTON/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Thunder Bay's Canada Games

wimmers times Complex

he swim test. If they fail, they are sent to the shallow end, and are allowed to swim there without supervision.

The potential for kids to disobey the order and sneak back into the deep end has been an ongoing concern, Warren said.

He said the pool has had "its share of incidents" over the years, but there's never been a fatality.

"It would be a nightmare," Warren said.

Crusher repairs set for mine

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

North American Palladium's Lac des Isles mine plans to get by with portable crushing units for the next three weeks while the operation repairs its primary crusher unit.

"Employees have begun the crusher's disassembly and the repairs are expected to take up to three weeks to complete," the company said Tuesday in a news release.

The crusher breaks down chunks of ore before the material is put through the mine's mill plant.

Problems with the machine were first noticed in December. Spare parts are on site, the company says.

The amount of ore being put through the mill will continue at the reduced daily rate of up to 9,000 tonnes until the end of this week, the release said.

After that, the portable units are expected to be on line and full production will resume.

Workforce levels at the operation will not be affected.

About 400 NAP employees and contractors work at the mine north of Thunder Bay.

Reminded

white or opaque.
ry snow on a frozen lake or river
below and slow down the freeze.

aid it's also a good idea to let
are you're planning to fish and
turn.
ing and equipment are also im-



Sundays you get:

- The L.A. Times crossword puzzle
- Linda Turk's Country Concerns
- David Suzuki's Science Matters
- Graham Saunders' Weather Whys



own it!

New

Come and

New

Thursday, January 5, 2006

Pickle Lake mine take sale completed

Junior mining company PGM Ventures has completed the sale of its stake in the Thierry Mine at Pickle Lake. The company received 5.7 million units from Richview Resources Inc., its joint-venture partner, which fully owns the mine now.

PGM also completed the conversion of a \$700,000 loan to equity.

Shares in PGM Ventures (TSXV:PPG) lost four cents, or over 5 per cent, to trade at 71 cents on the TSX Venture Exchange after the announcement, while Richview shares (TSXV:RVR) were unchanged at 35 cents.

Legislation to revamp municipal planning, limit scope of OMB

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Residents and municipal councils would have greater say over how their communities grow under new legislation introduced Monday that curtails the powers of an often controversial land-use tribunal.

If passed, the proposed bill would give councils and citizens more power to determine what developments go ahead and influence the architecture and design of proposed new buildings.

It would also restrict powers of the Ontario Municipal Board, the independent tribunal that rules on land use complaints, by scaling back on its current duties as decision-maker to merely hearing appeals on local planning matters. The board would also have to give city council decisions more weight when it evaluates appeals.

"We want to put land use planning decisions back where they belong, in the hands of municipal decision-makers, and provide new opportunities for citizens to become truly engaged in the process that shapes their communities," Municipal Affairs Minister John Gerretsen said at a news conference.

Too often, the OMB has been a costly and bitter battleground in which municipalities and their citizens are pitched against developers.

Cities and citizens have complained the board dismisses their views when it rules against them, while developers see it as a necessary check against poor city council planning.

Ann Mulvale, Mayor of Oakville and a former president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, said changes

not have any contact with the community affected by its decision — have the power to overrule any planning decision made by elected city councillors.

Currently, a developer can successfully appeal a planning decision "without ever being considered by the municipal order of government, totally bypassing any community or council review," Mulvale said of the OMB, the only body of its kind in Canada.

"That clearly is wrong. It will change with this legislation."

The proposed legislation requires municipalities to have an official plan that's revised every five years, and gives them three years afterward to implement all necessary zoning changes.

The bill also makes it easier for cities to redevelop former industrial sites, prevent sprawling development, and protect sensitive environmental or agricultural areas.

The bill would also remove time-consuming minor appeals — such as complaints over a resident's new deck — from the board's purview and put them in the hands of a local appeal board.

Neil Rodgers, president of the Urban Development Institute of Ontario, which represents developers, said such changes would put greater onus on municipalities to use their authority wisely.

"There needs to be an equally important obligation on municipalities to make good decisions," he said.

The provincial government has the ability to put a stop to bad planning decisions by municipalities, Rodgers said, and may have to use that power if a city

Investment chill feared by MNR in land sale

BY STEPHANIE MACLELLAN
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

The Ministry of Natural Resources chose not to expropriate Abitibi-Consolidated timberland sold to a U.S. company because of fears it could scare off other potential investors.

"The government participated in the bidding process in good faith, and unfortunately, in spite of a very competitive bid, the bid wasn't chosen," ministry spokesman Rick Winston said Thursday. "But (expropriation) would have sent a chill through the business investment community across the province."

The expropriation process would take years, Winston said, but he couldn't describe what the process would entail for the land.

New Hampshire-based Wagner Forest Management Ltd. paid \$55 million to Abitibi-Consolidated for the 196 square kilometres of land near Raith, west of Thunder Bay, in a deal that was announced last week.

The MNR knew the land was for sale when Abitibi announced it publicly on April 28, Winston said.

Neither he nor an Abitibi official would disclose what the ministry bid on

"It would have been more comfortable for all of us if, as the province, we had been able to be the successful bidder in terms of acquiring the property, whether it was expropriation or just by being a competitive bidder," said Bill Mauro (L-Thunder Bay-Rainy River).

He added it was a sale between two private land owners, which leaves little room for government involvement.

Mauro and Gravelle are to meet with Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay on Tuesday to discuss how the decision was made and what options are still available to the government.

"This is a piece of land that has some very valuable forest on it, and here we are dealing with a crisis where there's a lack of fibre," Gravelle said.

The province can't force the new owners to keep the timber in Canada, Winston said. But Ramsay plans to meet with the company to discuss how they'll use the land.

"The ministry will work with (subsidiary) North Star Forestry and Wagner to encourage the ongoing management of the lands for timber production, so the supply can continue to be made available to contractors and those in North-western Ontario," Winston said.

Erika Halverson
Grade 11 student,
St. Ignatius High School
THUNDER BAY

What are seniors supposed to do?

To whom it may concern,

WHAT ARE seniors supposed to do? Staying in their own homes does not seem feasible as:

1. Sewer usage costs more than drinking water;
2. The costs of other utilities are raised at a rate not comparable to pension cheque increases or the cost of living;

3. A property tax deferral policy was put into effect, but the amount of tax payment is just under the amount needed to qualify.

What can we do?

Why is it that all these "perks" are always just so much empty air and promises?

Do we pay your wages just to get charged more for living at home or will city council be responsible for giving us a nice place to finish our time here after you have taken all you can from us?

Most of the seniors in Thunder Bay have saved and scrimped for years to have a comfortable retirement, yet with being taxed and charged for everything we need, there seems no way out except to sell our homes and go to a city-owned apartment where we are not guaranteed a safe environment. Please reply as soon as possible.

Herbert Henriksson
THUNDER BAY

Saturday, January 7, 2006

Thunderland sale to Americans riles readers

NT SALE of half a
res of forest near
merican firm is just
ple of a govern-
not see past North
early taken the
ited. I would like to
to block the deal
nd back.
nty government
ly insulted the resi-
orthern communi-
words and their
her inaction). This
demonstrates yet
southern Ontario
either doesn't un-
esn't care about
f the northern On-
t. It has also shown
ille and Mr. Mauro
voice within their

ity campaigned on
f Ontario strong,
ions that would be
n further develop-
conomy and shar-
with all of Ontari-
t time he has done
(What a surprise,
olitician who says
does quite another
A truly shocking
His energy policy
to harm Ontario
the increased cost
wer and the closing
of cheaper coal
st with the current
ty in the Dryden
areas the argu-
all that spent urani-
government's pro-
n dumping ground
our favour. The
a rupture as just

Peter Wirtz

hopefully this concern is shared
by others, is whether this type of
land sale to a foreign-owned cor-
poration is in the best collective
interests of those living in
Northern Ontario. It does not
seem right.

I am not completely versed in
how Abitibi acquired the land in
question — it was Crown land at
some point. I have heard that
land was commonly given to in-
dustries by the government to
promote the use of the railways.
When an industry that has prof-
ited by this promotion no longer
requires the use of land for their
business enterprise, should it
not return it back to Canada?

My other concern is whether
this land sale mitigates the U.S.
concerns within the softwood
lumber, NAFTA and WTO rul-
ings. This land sale occurs short-
ly after the Canadian govern-
ment has announced that it will
look to China as an alternative
market. This land sale may spark
the aggressive purchase, use and
development of "private lands"
by foreign entities — especially
when their local markets are
scarce. This goes beyond fibre is-
sues, and directs attention to the
potential of our water, and ener-
gy being expropriated and ex-
ported through this type of sale.

At a minimum, public consul-
tation and environmental assess-
ments were not available as a
protocol for local interests to ex-
press concerns. Unfortunately,
the voice of Northern Ontario,
due to its shrinking population
and large land base, does not
have political influence, regard-
less that the revenues produced
by this region are significant to
the GDP.

THIS LETTER is to anyone
who thought the Thursday,
Jan. 5 editorial hit the nail on
the head ("Block land sale, do it
now"). If you didn't read it, dig it
out now.

I'd like to suggest that we all
cut it out and inundate McGuin-
ty's office.

Ella Johnson
THUNDER BAY

A FAVOURITE politician was
once asked why he made so
many comments about forestry
and railroads. His answer was
because people are so emotional
and interested in these subjects.
The reaction to the current
Abitibi land sale illustrates this.

One writer said "someone
from outside the county is com-
ing to mangle our natural re-
sources." This person should get
a list of foreign properties and
assets owned by Canadian com-
panies and a similar list of
Canadian assets owned by for-
eign companies. I suspect that
this land transfer is a small part
of international business. In On-
tario, progressive pulp, paper
and woodlands operations have
been owned by companies with
headquarters in both the United
States and Canada. Good man-
agement depends on the person
and not on what passport they
carry.

Others are worried about bad
forestry practices. In my experi-
ence, professional foresters man-
age forest lands in both Canada
and U.S.A. in a very similar and
caring fashion. One writer said
that the new owner might strip
their new holding. If this is a
normal industrial forest only a

Pickle Lake and Sioux Lookout highest cost per household

Continued from front

know how in every way we know how, trying to convince them that the formula is detrimental to us. Something has to be done. It's as simple as that. We have to have policing and are obliged to pay for it," Dewing commented.

He added, "The funding formula is hurting us. The policing costs have increased over time, but it never was a substantial issue because we always were reconciled. We were always paid the difference. We never had to go to the taxpayer for anything beyond \$90 per household. Now we have to go to the taxpayer for the \$150, plus half the difference, so we're going to the taxpayer for a substantially larger amount of money.

"The bottom line is, don't point the fingers at the police force. Point the fingers at the province and their new funding formula."

Dewing, in fact, praised Sioux Lookout OPP and the job they are doing, "Policing is not the problem. They're doing a great job and they're working as much as they can to keep the costs down."

Pickle Lake and Sioux Lookout are experiencing the highest cost per household for policing in the province.

"The full impact will be realized next year, unless the province changes the formula to recognize our special situation or gives us another means of being reconciled, so the full brunt and the full impact will be realized in 2006," he said.

Dewing stated the Municipality does have other options for policing besides the OPP, however he didn't feel any of those other options would actually save money.

Sioux Lookout OPP Detachment Commander Staff Sergeant Connie Capovilla said the Municipality of Sioux

Lookout has a non-contract agreement with the OPP.

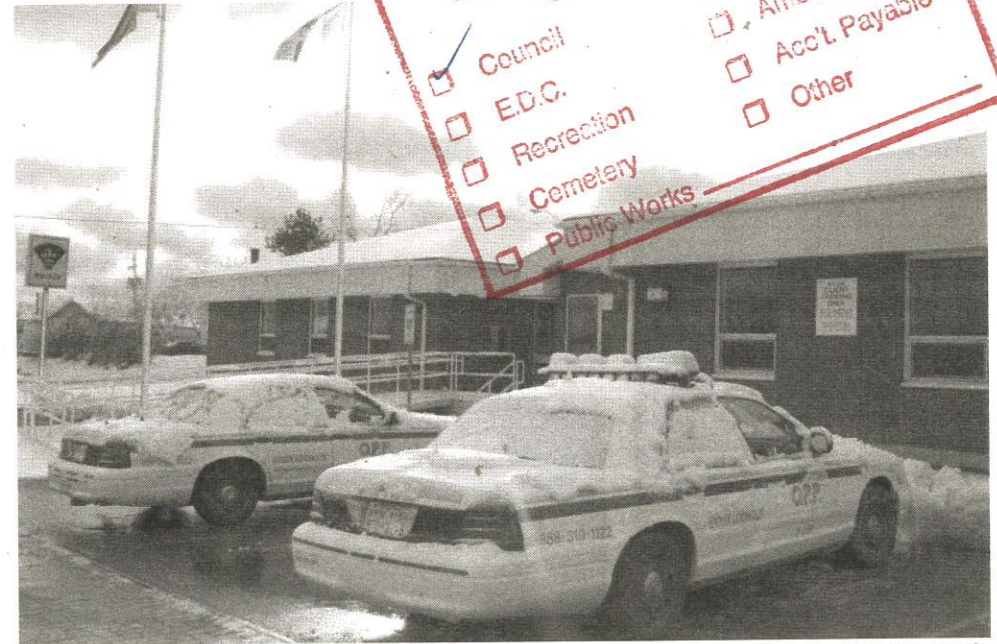
She said the Sioux Lookout OPP detachment is comprised of 30 officers, made up of one staff sergeant, three sergeants and 26 constables, adding that the number of officers posted at the detachment is directly related to the number of calls for service police respond to.

She also stated that the municipality pays for a percentage of the total complement of police officers at the detachment when it pays for policing.

Capovilla commented, "Since the cost of policing is based on the calls for service and if the calls for service were less, I guess what you could assume from that is that if calls for services were minimal, then your officer presence would be minimal."

This would result in a decrease in the cost of policing.

Capovilla said that in



Bulletin Photo/Tim Brody

A change in the province's funding formula for municipalities resulted in a \$1.4 million dollar increase in the cost of policing that had to be addressed in the 2005 budget.

2004 Sioux Lookout OPP responded to over 10,500 calls for service.

"The reality is that the calls for service dictate police to be in this municipality. The municipality has a legislated requirement to provide that adequate and effective police service," she stated.

Capovilla said a lot of those calls for service included responding to

in many cases. It's an issue for this community, absolutely."

Capovilla stated, "I'm sure Sioux Lookout officers are busier than officers in other communities, but again... our calls for service are high on the criminal investigations part of it, where other communities have maybe much more traffic oriented functions. It's hard to compare. We're busier than some communities

do the investigation."

She continued, "A search warrant years ago took nothing to write up. One of our members just spent over 30 hours doing a search warrant."

All told, Capovilla said when you factor in a high number of calls for service, a high number of 911 hang up calls and missing persons, an increase in the time it takes to do paperwork, as well as having officers away from

Policing costs under the microscope in Sioux Lookout

AAS7

Tim Brody
STAFF WRITER

A new provincial funding formula is pushing the cost of policing through the roof and police have all they can handle between paperwork and responding to calls for service.

Sioux Lookout CAO Merlin Dewing explained that for 2004 the total cost of policing per household was about \$1230.

Under the old funding formula the Municipality would have to back everything but \$90 per household.

For 2005 the cost of policing was about \$1250 per household.

Under the new funding formula the Municipality gets only half of that minus

\$150 per household.

This change resulted in a \$1.4 million increase in the cost of policing in Sioux Lookout that had to be factored into the 2005 budget.

Dewing said that one time transitional funding from the province was used to offset the increase in the cost of policing, which still resulted in a tax increase of 11.82 per cent.

Without that one time funding, the tax increase could have been higher, so in an effort to prevent that, the Municipality is lobbying the provincial government.

"Council has sent delegations to the Minister of Finance, other ministries, to municipal affairs. We're lobbying everyone we

See PICKLE on page 6

What is a vote worth?

BY WARD HOLLAND
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Bryan Lokstet thinks his vote in the federal election is worth \$1,400.99, the value of a golf membership and a pack of gum.

J.T. Zieroth believes the value of his vote is \$666.75, the price of a lever-action Marlin .450 firearm.

C. O'Neill-Major says her vote is worth \$10.99, the approximate cost of a ticket at a movie theatre.

Voters from across Canada are recording their comments on a humorous website called BuyMyVote.ca, which was set up by Paul Wolfe of Thunder Bay.

"Obviously there is not enough people in Canada who believe this election is worth a trip to the polls," Wolfe said. "That either means their time is worth more than the trip or they just don't think it's worth anything."

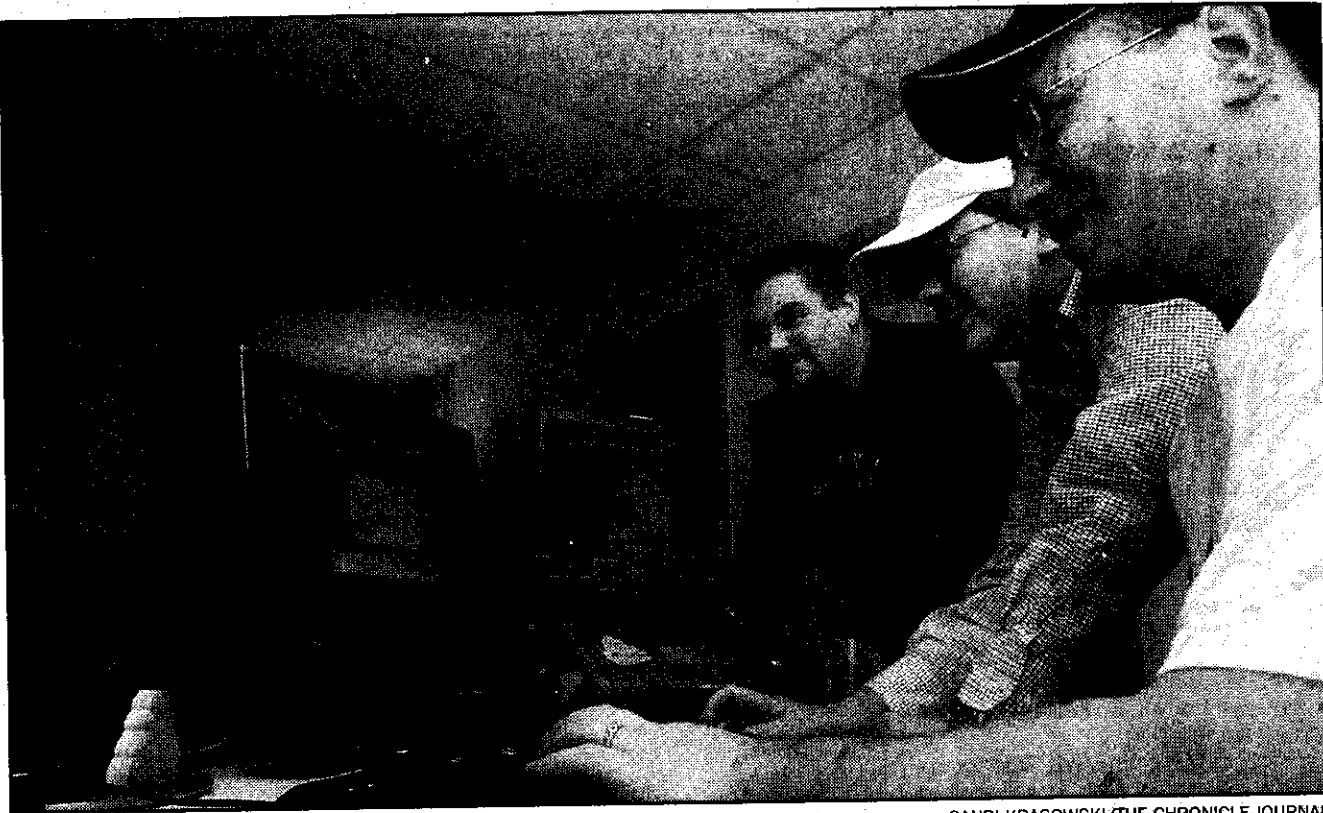
Selling votes in Canada is illegal, but registering comments on a website isn't.

"When you register on this website, you are expressing your opinion on the value of your vote in terms of Canadian dollars," the site says. "You are also welcome to give a rationale for that opinion."

"BuyMyVote.ca is simply a Canada-wide forum to discuss the value of the Canadian vote."

Wolfe and two employees from Brick-Host, a company in Thunder Bay, created the website after a journalist from Surrey, B.C., inquired about the site's registered domain name.

Wolfe said the plan was to build the website for a future election, not the Jan.



SANDI KRASOWSKI/THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

BuyMyVote.ca site designers, from left, Bryan Lokstet, Andrew Campbell and Paul Wolfe monitor the website.

made any money from the website, he added.

One of the messages Wolfe likes the most came from a woman in Victoria who quoted Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*.

"Give me television and hamburgers but don't bother me with the responsibility of liberty," A.M. Foster wrote.

"The fact that Canadian citizens could even contemplate a price for such a right illustrates how arrogant, lazy and ungrateful we are as a nation. Disgusting."

Foster said the value of her vote was zero.

"Bring it on!" Wolfe said. "I think that's great."

The site has received national and international media attention. Wolfe has done interviews with CBC Radio One in Sudbury, Windsor and Toronto. A local reporter interviewed him for a segment on *The National*.

After high school, he attended Canadian Bible College in Regina for four years and became an ordained minister. He worked as a pastor for the Christian and Missionary Church, a small evangelical denomination, for five years in Richmond, B.C., Kelowna and Dryden.

Wolfe then a leave from the ministry and earned a computer diploma from the Academy of Learning in Thunder Bay. He worked for BDO Dunwoody for the past five years, finishing there in August.

"I haven't gone back to the ministry yet," he said with a laugh. "I'm still on my leave."

Wolfe is taking correspondence business courses from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland. He is attempting to get a master's of business administration degree.

Wolfe claims he is not a member of any political party, but he has voted in

representation and you won't need websites like this."

To her, the website indicates that people don't believe their votes count for anything anymore.

"Two thoughts come to mind," Kaniesser said. "It's the pinnacle of the commercialization of the electoral process. It shows how disenfranchised Canadians feel about the electoral process."

"My Green Party thought is: 'This is why we need proportional representation.'"

David Leskowski, the Conservative candidate for Thunder Bay-Rainy River, said the site "just looks like a fun thing" put together by young people.

"At least they're paying attention to the fact that they have a vote," Leskowski said. "Obviously no one is going to sell their vote. It looks like some of the comments they make are off the cuff."

January 16, 2006

Website links Northern business to the world

ABETH BROWN
E-JOURNAL

is being touted both as
Northern Ontario businesses
the world and as a way to

Government funders and
es rubbed shoulders last
north.com launch.

opportunity to open the
community to the world,"
Mayor Anne Krassilowsky,
municipal leaders who lav-
the project.

The website project started in 1999,
and was created through the provincial
Connect Ontario program and FedNor.

So far, the communities of Dryden,
Manitouwadge, Marathon and Thunder
Bay, along with Superior North Commu-
nity Futures Development Corporation
and the Emergency Measures Organiza-
tion, are on the site.

It includes information about munici-
palities, health, Northern Ontario travel
destinations and services, as well as eco-
nomic development tools.

While people can't yet pay their park-
ing tickets or buy a dog licence online,
that's only because the municipalities
haven't published that information on
the site yet, said website administrator
Dan Walter, who noted the capability to
do those things is there.

It's an issue of critical mass now, said
Bob Hancherow, president of the North-
ern Genesis Community Portal Associa-

tion which is responsible for the website.
He was one of several people involved
with the website who noted it will be a
success when municipalities, buyers and
sellers all register, use the site and put
their information on the site.

John Fullerton, project manager for
the economic development system, said
there's no excuse for a Northern Ontario
business not to be registered on the site
in the next six months. The service is
free to all businesses.

As an example, he explained that a
non-profit group needing 20 tables can
simply find the list of office supply busi-
nesses in the e-business directory and
fax the request for quotes to the compa-
nies, all in about five minutes, and for
free.

"And you've just done e-business,"
said Fullerton.

Once a supplier receives a request via
the Internet, that company will be much

more likely to take advantage of website
business as well, he added.

Also in the economic development
portion is government information, mu-
nicipalities' strategic plans, municipal
tenders and municipal properties for
sale. The site also highlights the region's
cutting-edge research in genetics and
technology.

A new feature Fullerton expects to see
ready in May is a regional e-bay of sorts
for excess inventory, where an organiza-
tion or business can post a notice about
extra items, at no cost.

In the travel section, prospective
tourists can search a database of travel
companies, request information or book
travel packages. As well, though only
one hotel is currently on the system,
travellers can book their rooms through
the website, and even check out photos of
their chosen hotel and get maps on how
to find the place.

Ignace outfitter charged

NORTHWEST BUREAU

An Ignace-area outfitter and 15 U.S. hunters face illegal hunting charges following a year-long investigation by Ontario and U.S. authorities, the Ministry of Natural Resources has reported.

The Ontario investigation began when two bear hunters from Wisconsin tried to cross the border at Pigeon River without bear export permits, which are required under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

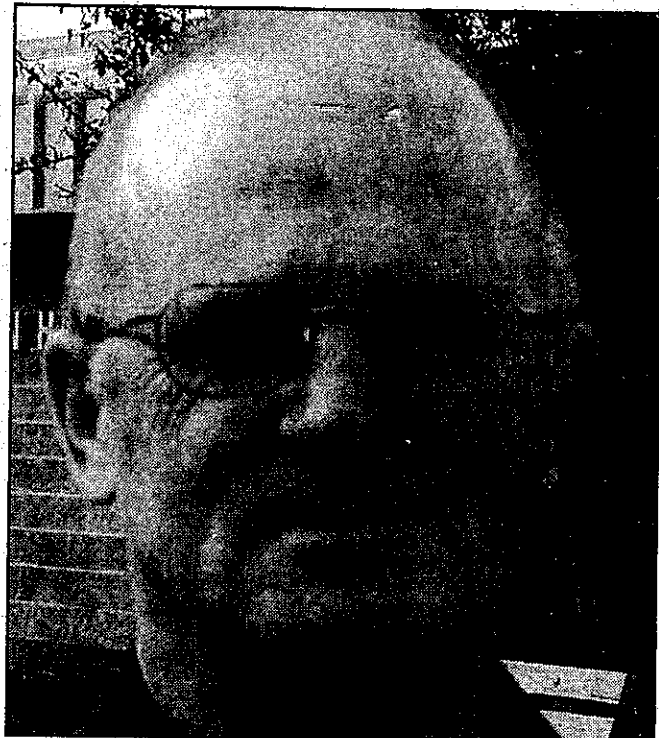
Conservation officers, special agents with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state wildlife officers in four states have been co-operating in the investigation over the past year. The offences are alleged to have taken place in the Ignace area between 2002 and 2004.

Harold Alfred St. Cyr, 68, of Agimak River Outfitters, is charged with four counts of illegally providing hunting under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. He is to return to Ignace court on Tuesday.

The MNR said the outfitter does not hold a bear management area (BMA) licence — a requirement to offer non-resident bear hunts on Crown land.

The hunters from Florida, California, Wisconsin and Minnesota face charges that include illegal hunting, harvesting and exporting black bears. They have February and March court dates.

The MNR explained that BMAs are a cornerstone of Ontario's bear management program and allow licensed bear operators to manage the bear harvest by non-resident hunters. Uncontrolled bear harvests could lead to unsustainable bear harvest levels and conflicts between hunters, the ministry said.



CHRONICLE-JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

Marathon Mayor Dave Bell gave up his job as an OPP officer to keep his council seat.

Dave Bell 1-term mayor

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

The municipal politician who risked his job as a police officer in order to hold on to his job as Marathon's mayor says he won't seek a second term.

Dave Bell made official Wednesday what has been one of the worst-kept secrets in North Shore political circles.

"I'm not going to run again," Bell said. "I'm going to be relocating with my wife to another part of the country."

Bell's wife is in the process of becoming a Protestant minister and he said that could take them anywhere in Canada.

Bell, 55, became front-page news shortly after being elected in 2003 because his employer, the Ontario Provincial Police, didn't like the idea of him being mayor and one of their constables at the same time.

At a 2004 hearing into the case, a judge agreed with the OPP that Bell would be in a conflict-of-interest as mayor because Marathon contracts out policing to the provincial force.

Rather than face certain dismissal from the OPP following the judge's ruling, Bell, an exemplary officer, took early retirement.

Bell had maintained that his position as a police officer hadn't negatively affected his performance as mayor. He said provincial legislation should be amended so that OPP officers can run for mayor in their home communities.

Bell said he will finish his three-year term, which ends in November.

He said he wants to continue working on a few pet projects, including the search for a new town landfill, as well as various

Pair sentenced to 9 and 12-year prison terms in finger-in-chili case

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE, Calif. — A couple who planted a severed finger in a bowl of Wendy's chili in a scheme to extort money from the fast-food chain were sentenced Wednesday to prison terms of at least nine years.

Anna Ayala, 40, who said she bit into the digit, was sentenced to nine years. Her husband, Jaime Plascencia, 44, who obtained the finger from a co-worker who lost it in a workplace accident, was sentenced to more than 12 years.

"Greed and avarice overtook this couple," said Superior Court Judge Edward Davila, adding that the pair had "lost their moral compass."

The two pleaded guilty in September to conspiracy to file a false insurance claim and attempted grand theft with damages exceeding \$2.5 million US.

In a tearful plea for leniency, Ayala apologized to the courtroom gallery and said the scheme was "a moment of poor judgment."

She said she retched March 22 after biting into the fingertip while dining with her family at a Wendy's in San Jose.

Forensic tests later showed Ayala never chomped down on the finger, but she described the incident to television news crews.

"There's no words to describe what I felt. It's sick, it's disgusting," she said in a clip played be-

fore sentencing. "Just knowing there was a human remain in my mouth is tearing me apart inside."

Although authorities suspected a hoax, in part because the finger was not cooked, word of the stomach-turning find quickly spread around the world. The Dublin, Ohio-based fast food chain claimed it lost \$2.5 million in sales because of the bad publicity, and dozens of workers at the company's Northern California franchises were laid off.

The sentencing followed a 90-minute hearing in which several Wendy's employees testified, including the man who made the chili and the cashier who helped Ayala on the day she made the claim.

MPP goes to bat to keep MNR jobs

Mayor fears continued cuts will mean end of local office

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
NORTH SHORE BUREAU

A slow but steady trickle of public service job losses has sparked fears the Ministry of Natural Resources may soon pull the plug on its Terrace Bay office.

"I'm pretty furious about this, because the timing is just awful," Terrace Bay Mayor Mike King said Thursday.

MNR's Terrace Bay satellite office has lost five positions since 2003 either through retirements or transfers to a larger district office in Nipigon.

MNR district manager Ian Hagman said the positions weren't filled because there is no room in his \$3.4-million budget to do so.

Only six people continue to work out of the ministry's Terrace Bay office.

In a letter to the Township of Terrace Bay, Hagman said there are no plans to close the building this year, but suggested the future is uncertain.

"Budgets and our results-based planning approvals for future fiscal years are unknown at this time, therefore their impacts are unknown," Hagman said.

TERRACE BAY

King said the uncertainty can't come at a worse time. For the past year, his town has been reeling from the loss of 160 jobs at the local Neenah Paper mill.

Hagman said that since 1999, his district has lost 12 positions, including two conservation officers. None were replaced.

By contrast, the total number of ministry jobs has increased to just over 3,700 from 3,400 in 1999, said a spokeswoman for Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay.

Liberal MPP Michael Gravelle, who didn't know about the MNR job losses in Nipigon District, said they should have been replaced.

"I thought we were committed to keeping public service jobs in the North," said Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North). "These jobs shouldn't have been removed. I am protesting this deci-

sion, not trying to explain it."

Hagman said his budget has remained "tight" for several years and has not allowed him to replenish staff levels.

February 27, 2006



Roger Valley
watching FedNor.



Ken Boshcoff
takes on Natural
Resources.

Northwest MPs assigned critic roles

THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Three Northwestern Ontario MPs have been appointed associate critics for the Liberal Opposition.

Ken Boshcoff (Thunder Bay-Rainy River) takes on Natural Resources, while Roger Valley (Kenora) has been assigned to assist with the job of keeping watch on FedNor. Brent St. Denis (Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing) becomes associate critic of Veterans Affairs.

Veteran MP Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay-Superior North) de-

clined an appointment.

Comuzzi, a former FedNor minister, said he didn't want to be pigeon-holed and preferred to be able to speak on a variety of issues that may apply to his riding during the Tories' minority mandate.

The complete list of Liberal associate critics includes some prominent MPs, including Harvard University professor and possible Liberal leadership contender Michael Ignatieff.

Ignatieff was placed in Human Resources.

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Drilling project suspended

BY CARL CLUTCHEY
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

A mining exploration company has called off a \$1-million drilling program north of Thunder Bay, saying it wants to set the stage for new talks with a neighbouring First Nation opposed to the project.

"We have issues with government, and (the band) has issues with government, but it doesn't mean we can't work together," Platinex vice-president Simon Baker said Monday.

Toronto-area Platinex set up a drilling camp about 30 kilometres south of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation on Feb. 14.

The company is trying to find an economic deposit of platinum and palladium.

Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug maintains the operation shouldn't have gone ahead before company and government representatives sought agreement from the band.

The reserve, home to about 1,500 Ojibwe, is on Big Trout Lake about 500 km north of Thunder Bay.

About 100 native protesters set up near the mining camp last week, but there were no incidents of violence, the band said in a news release.

On Sunday, the camp was voluntarily shut down — about five days after band leaders demanded the company leave the area over claims it was trespassing.

Baker, maintaining the band has known for seven years about its intent to explore in the area, said he remains hopeful the company will be able to resume the drilling program, expected to last about six weeks.

"We have all our permits, and we can demonstrate that we have consulted (with the band) for the past seven years,"

Jazz denied court order

TORONTO (CP) — Air Canada Jazz has been denied a court order that the regional airline hoped would allow it to continue using the small island airport near Toronto's downtown core while it sought an alternative site.

"We're obviously disappointed by the decision," Jazz spokeswoman Debra Williams said Monday.

Jazz, controlled by the same parent company that owns Air Canada, sought an injunction from the Ontario Superior Court after it received a 30-day eviction notice from City Centre Aviation Ltd. on Feb. 31.

City Centre Aviation is controlled by Robert Deluce, who is setting up a new airline that will operate from the airport using turboprop aircraft in competition with Jazz.

As previously announced on Feb. 15, Jazz will suspend all flights from the Toronto city centre airport and serve its customers from the larger Pearson International Airport on Toronto's western border.

Porter Airlines, the new business being backed by Deluce, said the rejuvenation of the airport's terminal will begin shortly.

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Mayor's race takes shape

Johnson considers taking a run at top municipal office

BY JONATHAN WILSON
THE CHRONICLE-JOURNAL

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Thunder Bay Mayor Lynn Peterson could face a high-profile opponent in her 2006 re-election bid.

Coun. Rebecca Johnson said Monday she's seriously considering a run for the mayor's chair in the November municipal election.

"It's something I'm very seriously looking at, let's put it at that," Johnson said.

"I guess I'm just looking at some other options of what I'd like to do with my political career."

Johnson finished at the top of the polls in the councillor-at-large race in 2003, collecting 24,700 votes.

Peterson, meanwhile, had 26,572 votes in the 2003 mayor's race.

Johnson said her comparable showing to the mayor hasn't been a factor in her decision-making process. She said it's her own goals for the city which may prompt her to run.

"I just felt that there are some things in the the community that I'd like to take to another level," Johnson said.

Peterson, who filed her nomination papers at city hall on Wednesday, said she never had any doubt that she'd be seeking a second term.

"It's a difficult job, but it's one that I enjoy and one that I think that I have a real penchant for," Peterson said before Monday's city council meeting.

"There's so many things that need to be done and so many things have been started and so many things that I want to see through."

Peterson listed the forest industry, manufacturing, waterfront development and the New Foundations strategic plan as areas where she wants to finish the job.

Johnson said she won't make a final decision until September, but she has dropped several hints about her intentions.

"I've already spoken to Lynn about that, so it's not something that's brand new or anything," she said.

Peterson said she never expected she'd be acclaimed the second time around.

"I'd be surprised if there wasn't (another candidate)," she said.

Peterson said there's a diversity of skills and ideas among potential candidates for mayor, and she said the election pro-



Mayor Lynn Peterson will seek re-election.



Coun. Rebecca Johnson might run for mayor in November.

vides citizens with an opportunity to see those credentials and make their choice.

Coun. Iain Angus, who finished second to Johnson in the 2003 at-large race with 21,353 votes, said he won't be seeking the top job.

"Not me," Angus said Monday. "I'm having too much fun as a councillor."

"I've made a determination it's not what I want to do with my life."

Angus has previously served as a New Democratic MPP in Thunder Bay from 1975-77 and as an MP from 1984-93.

But the career politician said he has no plans of following in the footsteps of James Conmee, who served as mayor, MP and MPP in Port Arthur in the late 19th century and early 20th century.

Angus said every council member considers running for mayor. But he said he's satisfied with the job Peterson is doing, and feels he can accomplish a lot as a councillor working alongside Peterson.

"I see her in operation outside of the council chambers, in terms of the lobbying efforts, and I know the kind of hard work she does and the successful work she does," Angus said.