

Winter roads keep costs down

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Keewaywin will get a winter road that connects the eastern shore of Sandy Lake to Magiss Lake.

Deer Lake will receive funding for a winter road that connects it to North Spirit Lake. Poplar Hill and Pikangikum, will each receive close to \$45,000 for the construction of new winter roads.

The Minister's announcement is also good news for communities like Sioux Lookout, say business representatives. They note businesses thrive on the north's patronage.

"The fortunate part of the winter roads in my business is that it enables us to keep people year round,"

said Tom Nebbs, manager of Beaver Lumber. Without the road system, Nebbs said his business would be left with more expensive shipping alternatives, like flying materials out by plane.

"The unfortunate part is that communities actually lose out then because an awful lot of the money that would have been spent strictly on materials would now go to air freight. So far, the air freight is considerably more expensive.

"If the winter roads were not there, it'd be a very seasonal business for us here in Sioux Lookout," he said. "It gives us a jump on the year.

"The winter roads are a major part of our business."

Wolfden Resources active in Pickle Lake

BY DICK MACKENZIE
Editor

WOLFDEN Resources and Jonpol Explorations Ltd. announced drill results before Christmas from two of the first three holes in the Phase II program at the Pickle Crow gold project. Results included one of the best drill intersections

ever at Pickle Crow said Wolfden president Ewan Downie. The Pickle Crow Gold Mine was a high-grade producer in the past.

Wolfden has entered into an agreement with Cantera Mining Ltd. to complete a business plan for mining, processing and expanding the known crown pillar reserves on the Pickle Crow property.

Theft charges laid

Jan 18/00
Sioux Lookout's former accounts administrator faces charges of theft over \$5,000 following a three-month investigation by the Sioux Lookout detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Dagen Observer
After an investigation into the theft of approximately \$10,000 from the Town of Sioux Lookout, police charged the local woman with theft over \$5,000 and theft under \$5,000.

Police allege the money was stolen from various town accounts between December 1997 and October 1999 by the former administrator.

Bev Carson, 30, has been summoned to appear in Sioux Lookout Criminal Court on Jan. 24, 2000. ★

Industry Canada will choose method to pick phone provider

BY ANN HARVEY
STAFF WRITER

INDUSTRY Canada is selecting a method to pick each of two applicants will be Sioux Lookout with service.

Thunder Bay Mobility half of the City of Dryden (City of Thunder Bay) Superior Wireless applied to broadband B to serve two areas. These are: the Highway 17 corridor from Verulam to Red Lake and the Highway 17 and Highway 72 corridor from Raith to Dinorwic and

to Sioux Lookout.

Industry Canada gave the companies a chance to work out a deal themselves but that opportunity closed without result at the end of 1999 and the ball is back in the government's court. In a phone interview Jan. 4, Carl Olsen, Industry Canada's Toronto-based Ontario spectrum management director, said there could be three alternatives, but in this case only two apply.

"Selection by chance is gone." This option would be a lottery or draw in which random chance decides the outcome, he said.

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Funding for winter road projects benefits many

BY COLIN LOUGHEED
STAFF WRITER

TIM HUDAK, Minister of Northern Development and Mines announced that new funding would be allocated for building more winter roads in many northern communities.

This comes as good news to many First Nation communities who will have their cost of living reduced when they're better connected to larger centres during the winter months.

Transporting equipment to and from the north will be significantly cheaper with new winter roads. Previously, many northern communities could only

ship freight via air or water. Now they'll have better access year 'round.

Some of the larger contributions will go to: Matawa First Nation Management, which will receive \$547,650 for the building of a road to Nibinamik, Lansdowne House, Fort Hope and Webequie; Asheweig, which will receive \$477,000 for the building of a winter road from Pickle North and an all-season road to Kingfisher Lake, Wunnumin Lake, Kasbonika Lake, Wawakapewin, Wapekeka, and Big Trout Lake; and Fort Severn, which will receive \$210,600 for the construction of a winter road from Shamattawa, Manitoba.

Significant contributions will also be made to Sandy Lake, North Spirit Lake, Cat Lake, and Muskrat Dam. Sandy Lake will receive \$172,000 toward a winter road from Deer Lake Road and a blasting project that will improve safety. North Spirit Lake will have \$156,600 for the construction of a winter road from the all-season Nungessor Road.

Cat Lake will get \$154,800 for a winter road from Pickle Lake, while Muskrat Dam will receive \$145,800 to connect a winter road from Round Lake.

Also included in the development are Bearskin Lake and Sachigo Lake, both of which will get a winter road to connect them to Muskrat Dam.

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Minister of Industry John Manley will make the final decision

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"That's a process that both parties would have to agree to." The applicants eliminated it.

"We're now working on choosing: do we use a selection by auction or do we use a process where we select it by who has submitted the application that meets our criteria?" said Olsen. This last option, the comparative process, sets out criteria such as: how quickly the service would be available; what services

would be available; and proof of financial capability for providing the service.

The applicants have to submit information on the requirements. This is studied by the federal government's Industry Canada staff he said. "Then we rate them by points according to the criteria."

The evaluations are given to the Ministry of Industry, currently John Manley, who makes the final decision. "The process itself and, of course, the criteria

are approved in advance by the minister."

Olsen said the comparative process is the most commonly used system. Auctioning was introduced a few months ago for digital phones – the second generation of cellular.

It is similar to the process of tendering bids for public contracts. One difference is that it allows multiple rather than a one-

shot chance.

At that time 500 licences were made available and all the bids were pre-qualified. "It was a relatively long auction. It took several weeks to complete and it was done by computer."

While no decision on method has yet been made it is true the auction is more appropriate to large Canada-wide licencing, said Olsen. "We're trying to keep the process as simple as we can.

"I think generally they (the applicants) would prefer the comparative process. The industry has said that to us many times.

"Auctioning is new. It doesn't have the same comfort level as the comparative process has."

Olsen said Industry Canada doesn't have a deadline for making the decision but it is "trying to do this as fast as we can. We're trying to accelerate it, taking into account we're only talking about two corridors.

"It's not the same thing as trying to divvy up To-

ronto, Montreal, Vancouver and all of Alberta."

Once the government picks a process then the applicants need time to prepare, either implementing a bidding process or preparing a report of the comparative process.

No fixed timeline is available, he said.

Sioux Lookout Mayor John McDonald has reported to town council that he is making weekly phone calls to Industry Canada to keep track of progress and encourage prompt decision-making.