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March 2025

Ontario Expanding Access to Cardiac Care in Thunder Bay



INSIDE

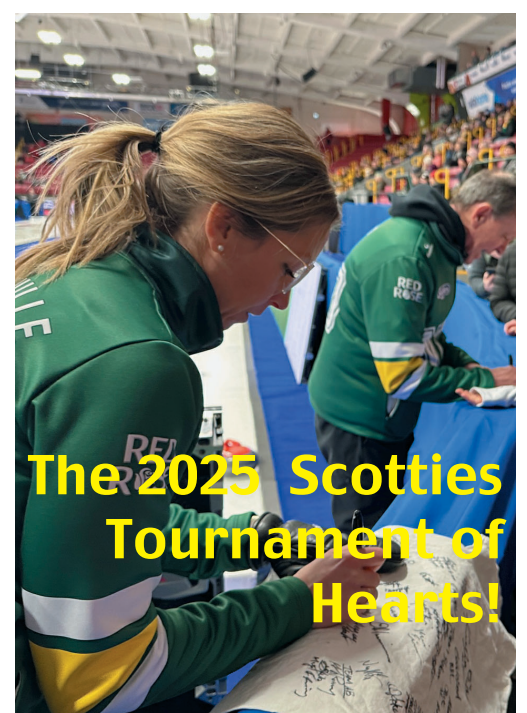
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for Apprentices
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Conference
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Prosperity Northwest Conference
Focuses on Regional Growth
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The 2025 Scotties
Tournament of
Hearts!

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- Special Feature


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New cardiovascular surgery program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre will connect more people to care in Northwestern Ontario

The Ontario government is celebrating a key milestone connecting more people in Thunder Bay and across Northwestern Ontario to life-saving cardiac care by awarding the construction contract and investing over \$93 million to build the new Cardiovascular Surgery Program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. This new funding builds on the over \$5.7 million the government has previously invested to support early planning and design for this transformational project.

“Today marks a significant milestone for Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario with the announcement of the new Cardiovascular Surgery Program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.” Said The Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay – Atikokan. “This \$93 million investment will bring life-saving cardiac care closer to home for thousands of residents, eliminating the need for travel to Toronto for surgery. Since I was elected in 2022, I’ve worked closely with local healthcare providers to as of today secure over \$263 million in life-changing funding for the healthcare sector in

Thunder Bay - Atikokan. This is a testament to our government’s commitment to improving access to care and investing in the health of every Ontarian. I look forward to the great impact this transformative project will have on our community.” Through this investment, over 76,000 square feet of space will be renovated and expanded to accommodate a new comprehensive Cardiovascular Surgery Program that will allow Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre to complete vital cardiac procedures, reduce wait times for urgent and elective procedures and ensure timely access to essential services in the region.

they live,” said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “The addition of this new cardiovascular surgery



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program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre will allow people across Northwestern Ontario to access state-of-the-art cardiac care, in their community, when they need it.”

““This investment in Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is great news for the people of Northwestern Ontario. It brings us closer to establishing a Cardiovascular program - meaning patients can look forward to receiving life-saving treatment right here at home.” Said Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President & CEO of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Science Centre. “We are committed to evolving to meet the needs of our community and this funding helps us do just that. We appreciate the support in making high quality care more accessible and the government’s dedication to invest in our future.”

Construction on this project is scheduled to begin in early 2025 and is expected to be completed in late 2027.

This transformative project will include:

- 14 new cardiovascular surgery inpatient cardiac care unit beds
- 6 coronary care unit beds
- A new, state-of-the-art surgical suite equipped with C-arm imaging technology and recovery area
- An expanded ambulatory care and pre-admission clinic
- A new vascular lab
- Renovations to medical devices reprocessing and biomedical departments

This cardiovascular surgery program would be the first of its kind in Northwestern Ontario and will help save patients in the region from travelling over 10 hours to receive surgery in Toronto. By offering these lifesaving cardiovascular services in Northwestern Ontario, the program will also help to increase capacity and address surgical wait times in other hospitals across the province that currently perform cardiovascular surgeries for patients from Northwestern Ontario. “Our government is making record investments to modernize and expand hospitals across the province to connect people of all ages to the care they need, no matter where

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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
THUNDER BAY - SUPERIOR NORTH
1-888-266-8004/Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca

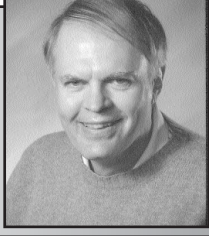
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Publisher's Note
Scott Sumner



It was fun to attend the 2025 Scotties Canadian Women's Curling championships at the historic, 74 year old Fort William Gardens! The event lasted 10 days and attracted thousands of people from near and far beyond to witness or participate in some world class curling.

I asked Nolan Thiessen, CEO of Curling Canada some questions about the event.

How has the week gone here at the Scotties at the Fort William Gardens?

"It's been great here, third time is a charm. We have a really great host committee and really great partners from tourism involved and excited. It seemed like we could never quite get it off the ground, but once we did this week it has



been tremendous and we got a full house for the final."

There will be over 50,000 spectators here this week?

"Absolutely we are going to have over 54,000 spectators. We will have between \$10 and 15 million worth of economic impact for the city and we will name our Team Canada, so a lot of good things. The competition has been great all week and the playoffs has been really, really good curling."

The 2025 Scotties Tournament of Hearts!



When Curling Canada has the Scotties event in Thunder Bay how does it work financially?

"The city bids on the event to host and we come in, set up the field of play, set up the entertainment, The Patch and we have event staff and sponsorship, tickets sales the whole thing. The host organizers generate some revenue based on a percentage of ticket sales and it goes to be shared by all the curling clubs here in Thunder Bay. We make sure to get investment back in the sport which is really exciting. The Northern Ontario Curling Association also gets a cut to help invest in the future."

So the Scotties here in Thunder Bay has been a success?

"It definitely has been a success, it's been a great event. On top of the economic impact we put 3000 school kids through here this week and curling experiences in the schools to try and develop that next generation of curlers."

How does the Scotties relate to a Brier?

"It's maybe a couple thousand less fans but other than that it's the same event. The Canadian Womens curling championship and the Canadian Mens curling championship. We run them the same."

Thunder Bay curler Krista McCarville and here team were fan favourites representing Northern Ontario. They did not make the finals but came back after a 0-4 start to win 4 in a row to finish 4-4.

Krista McCarville

"We want to keep moving forward, playing better. You never know what could happen, it doesn't look great for us but we want to finish strong. We still want to win badly, we just have to move on. When are the



Scotties going to be held in Thunder Bay, probably not in my curling lifetime, so I just want to enjoy it. My Holy Family school grade 6 students will be here tomorrow. The Thunder Bay crowd have been amazing, unbelievable. I wish we could give them more to cheer for but we are doing the best we can right now."

Paul Burke, Sport & Community Development Supervisor, City of Thunder Bay

"We expecting the opening and closing weekends will be packed and jammed and it will be a pretty amazing event for Thunder Bay. We hosted the Scotties in 2022 during Covid and there weren't fans allowed for the majority of the event but we were able to open up to about 500 family members and volunteers on the final weekend. We also hosted this event in 1996."

"You have all the players and their families here as well as a number of fans that will travel to the Scotties event no matter where it is across Canada. So many fans from out of town will create a big economic impact for Thunder Bay in terms of hotel, restaurants etc."

Team Homan won the event, including \$100,000 first place prize, remaining undefeated in all 11 games! Next stop for them are the Worlds in South Korea!



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AD DESIGNER
Miranda van den Berg

ADVERTISING INFORMATION
Sylvia Gomez:
(807) 629-7599

Office:
(807) 623-2348

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Springpole Gold: A New Mine in the North

First Mining Gold (FMG) has reached a significant milestone in the progress of the Springpole Gold Project, an open-pit gold and silver mine proposed for northwestern Ontario. Following the submission of its Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Assessment last November, Springpole is looking ahead to the next project phase.

“This is a major milestone for the Springpole Project,” says Dan Wilton, CEO of First Mining Gold. “Our team has worked across multiple scientific and engineering disciplines to achieve a sustainable project that will both protect the environment and deliver tremendous socio-economic and infrastructure benefits to an underserved region of northwestern Ontario.”

Project Background

The Springpole Gold Project will be a major economic development engine for northwestern Ontario at a critical time in a region that is largely underserved. With forestry industry uncertainties and few other new mineral projects in the near or mid-term pipeline, the Project is positioned to be a sustainable economic driver for the region.

Springpole promises substantial benefits, including infrastructure upgrades, high-paying jobs, training and skills development, and potential critical minerals for renewable energy technologies. FMG emphasizes its commitment to responsi-

ble development that supports environmental protection, economic prosperity, and the well-being of Indigenous and local communities.

Environmental Assessment

An environmental assessment is a planning tool used so that the Project is designed and developed in a careful and precautionary manner that avoids or mitigates potential environmental effects and considers the benefits and opportunities from the Project. Examples of the components assessed include water quality, wildlife habitats, greenhouse gas emissions, and traditional land and resource use.

Springpole incorporates extensive environmental protection through planning and modern engineering designs and technologies. The follow-up and monitoring programs will validate predicted effects, assess mitigation measure performance, support adaptive management, and ensure compliance with all environmental permits. Collaborative efforts, including the establishment of an Environment Committee(s) with local Indigenous communities, aim to ensure ongoing engagement, transparency and adaptive management throughout the Project’s lifecycle.

Throughout the environmental assessment planning process, First Mining Gold prioritizes early and transparent sharing

of Project information and meaningful consultation opportunities for Indigenous communities, regulators such as government agencies, and other interested parties.

Social and Economic Benefits

Beyond environmental protection, the Springpole Gold Project is expected to bring substantial economic growth to northwestern Ontario. Over its 18-year lifespan, the project is projected to generate:

- \$7.6 billion in economic contributions.
- Over 43,000 person-years of employment.
- \$2 billion in tax revenue for government investment in community services and infrastructure.

FMG is committed to prioritizing local and Indigenous hiring, with approximately 600 jobs expected during construction and 350 jobs during operation. Additionally, training programs and business opportunities for Indigenous communities will be a key focus.

Indigenous Consultation and Cultural Considerations

FMG recognizes the importance of meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities. The company has been working closely with local Indigenous groups to integrate traditional knowledge into the project design and environmental management strategies. Measures to support

Indigenous ways of life include:

- Establishing Environment Committees with Indigenous communities.
- Developing an Access Management Strategy to protect traditional land uses.
- Supporting cultural and community activities through ongoing consultation.

Next Steps in the Approval Process

The Final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Assessment now moves into the technical review phase. This process, expected to conclude in late 2025, will involve further collaboration with regulators, municipalities, Indigenous communities, businesses, and the public to address any remaining questions.

FMG remains committed to ensuring that the Springpole Gold Project is developed in a way that balances economic growth with environmental responsibility and community well-being. As the environmental assessment process progresses, the company will continue working transparently to create a sustainable and beneficial project for northwestern Ontario.

For more information and updates on the Springpole Gold Project, visit firstmininggold.com

Government of Canada investing over \$1.7 million in outdoor tourism projects across Northern Ontario

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for FedNor, announced Government of Canada investments totalling \$1,720,064 in support of ten strategic outdoor tourism initiatives in Northern Ontario.

These investments will foster continued economic growth by supporting the expansion of a critical industry in the region. These projects will help draw tourists to communities across the region by building upon existing infrastructure and creating new opportunities. This will support communities by helping them benefit from the many sights and experiences Northern Ontario has to offer.

Specifically, the projects include the development and expansion of both snowmobile and multi-use trail systems, the hiring of skilled professionals to support tourism industry needs, the development and implementation of strategic plans and studies, and upgrades to facilities and infrastructure.

For more detail on the projects being funded, please see the associated backgrounder.

Quotes

“Northern Ontario is a place of boundless natural beauty, and destination for adventure, culture, and relaxation. The Government of Canada understands that investing in tourism helps us showcase our fantastic region and boost our local economies. By supporting projects that draw visitors to our region, we are helping Northern Ontario create and seize new opportunities for development.”

• The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister Responsible for FedNor

“Northern Ontario offers breathtaking landscapes and thousands of pristine lakes and rivers that could easily take a lifetime to discover! Through the Tourism Growth Program, the Government of Canada is supporting local organizations like these to fuel the economic engine in their communities. Investing in the tourism industry will also help to attract more domestic and international visitors to explore this bewitchingly wild region, time and again.”

• The Honourable Soraya Martinez Ferrada, Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of

Canada for the Regions of Quebec

“Sioux Lookout is the host community for many festivals, events, and services. The beauty and adventure waiting in the surrounding wilderness makes our community a unique, and exceptional tourist destination—the hub of the north. We are thankful that FedNor is supporting us in building upon and seizing the opportunities available to Sioux Lookout so that we can attract visitors from far and wide and help share a Northern Ontario people cannot forget.”

• Doug Lawrance, Mayor, Municipality of Sioux Lookout

“We are grateful that FedNor and the Government of Canada are stepping up to help us transform our facilities into an all-season tourism hub. Laurentian Ski Hill Snowboarding Club is excited to provide more activities, support healthy lifestyles encouraging individuals to engage in sport and recreational activities. If you are looking for an unforgettable experience for the whole family, it’s a great time to visit the Laurentian Ski Hill Snowboarding Club or any one of Northern Ontario’s tourism gems.”

• Brad Gavan, Board President, Laurentian Ski Hill Snowboarding Club

Quick facts

- The majority of FedNor funds announced today are provided through the Tourism Growth Program (TGP), a Government of Canada program that will deliver \$108 million to tourism projects over three years. TGP funds are delivered by Regional Development Agencies and aim to support communities, small and medium-sized businesses, and not-for-profit organizations in developing local tourism products and experiences.
- Additional funds announced today are provided through FedNor’s Northern Ontario Development Program (NODP), through which FedNor invests in projects led by municipalities, First Nations, and other organizations and institutions that support community economic development, diversification, job creation and self-reliant communities in Northern Ontario.

What's CLAC Doing Up North?

CLAC, its skilled members, and signatory contractors are committed to northern development and prosperity

Northern Ontario is brimming with opportunities. After years of unmet potential, the region known as the Ring of Fire is finally edging toward mining readiness.

CLAC members have a solid history in Northern Ontario. Their work has included highway maintenance and building infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and water and wastewater treatment plants. Some are involved in major commercial construction work.

But it's mining that is driving CLAC's presence in the north today. This is very sensitive work, as it takes place on or near First Nations' lands.

Building mines disrupts hunting, fishing, and pristine nature. Before any work begins, agreements are negotiated between mine owners and Indigenous groups to ensure local communities benefit from the work involved in extracting resources. These benefits include training and

employment opportunities for local people. When a CLAC-signatory contractor wins a contract, CLAC has a role in delivering training and guiding local northern and



Indigenous workers toward job opportunities.

We are sensitive to longstanding issues that have created barriers to cooperation and engagement. We are working with Indigenous communities to build trust, and

that is an ongoing process.

CLAC has been listening and learning. We started by engaging a northern Indigenous

firm, Firedog Communications, in late 2023 to provide some thought leadership. They helped us assess our messaging for sensitivity. They helped us create literature that speaks to northern and Indigenous communities' concerns.

In 2024, we began attending events related to mining, Indigenous relations, northern economic development, and government relations. These events were held by groups such as the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada (PDAC), 2025 Prosperity Northwest MineConnect (Prosperity Northwest), Neegaani-Iishawin Gathering 2025 (Neeganii Ishawin), the First Nations Major Projects Coalition (FNMPC), and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association.

In 2025, we will be attending 12 events to support northern awareness. Our representatives are fully committed to learning the issues and meeting with local people and community leaders. We are working to build relationships and enhance awareness of what CLAC can bring to northern development.

Indigenous people are a growing economic and political force. We respect their role as stewards of the land. Our goal is to help local communities flourish, while creating work opportunities for all Ontarians.

The National First Nations Housing Conference Returns with Exciting Updates for 2025

The First Nations Housing Conference (FNHC), Canada's largest and longest-running event dedicated to First Nations housing, hosted its highly anticipated 22nd Annual Conference February 4-6, 2025, at the Valhalla Inn Hotel in Thunder Bay. The event showcased groundbreaking updates, new features, and enhanced programming, making the 2025 conference the most impactful yet.

Exploring Challenges. Empowering Sustainability. The 2025 theme, "Exploring Challenges. Empowering Sustainability," highlights collaborative efforts and innovative strategies to address housing challenges.

The FNHC serves as a crucial gathering for First Nation housing professionals eager to expand their network, strengthen their administrative, technical and leadership skills, and explore cutting-edge innovations in First Nations housing.

The conference featured a dynamic tradeshow showcasing cutting-edge housing innovations, technologies, products, and best practices, providing valuable insights and networking prospects for professionals in the field.

Builders Challenge 2025: Focus on Youth The Builders Challenge at the 2025 First Nations Housing Conference, expanded by adding First Nations Youth to each team. Hosted by Celebrity Handyman Jon Eakes, this initiative empowers First Nations youth to explore housing innovation through hands-on projects. The program aims to inspire young participants to consider careers in housing and construction while building essential leadership, creativity, and technical skills. By showcasing the critical role of youth in creating sustainable housing solutions, the Youth Builders Challenge highlights the importance of investing in future leaders to build a stronger, more resilient housing system for generations to come.

Conference Features

One of the highlights was the Community Housing Recognition Awards, where outstanding housing achievements are celebrated during a special gala dinner.

Attendees enjoyed inspiring video tributes honoring the exceptional contributions of award recipients. Additionally, the conference hosted an All-Day Tradeshow, showcasing cutting-edge housing products and services from top industry vendors.



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Prosperity Northwest Conference Focuses on Regional Growth Opportunities and Partnerships

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce and the Anishnawbe Business Professional Association held the Prosperity Northwest Business Conference & Trade Show January 28 & 29.

Panel discussions and presentations envolved five themes: Insights from the Indigenous Economic Study; Unlocking Future Opportunities: Building Tomorrow's Projects; Economic Horizons: Maximizing



Prosperity Northwest focused on regional opportunities in mining, energy, forestry and bioeconomy. January 28th featured a welcome reception followed by a full day conference and tradeshow on January 29th with both taking place at the Valhalla Hotel & Conference Centre.

Ontario's Potential; Rooted in Respect: Indigenous Reconciliation and Forestry Innovation; and Golden Horizons: Seizing Economic There were 68 exhibitors from a broad range of local, regional and national organizations.



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Teleco Tech Talk: The Evolution of Business Phone Systems – Why Cloud VoIP Is the Future

Business phone systems are the heart of workplace communication. At Teleco, we've witnessed firsthand the evolution of these systems, from traditional landlines to advanced cloud-based solutions. While technology has changed dramatically, one fundamental need remains: businesses require reliable, seamless voice connectivity to operate effectively. As organizations grow and adapt, so must their communication tools—and Cloud VoIP has emerged as a transformative solution that enhances efficiency, scalability, and mobility.

Why Cloud VoIP is the Future of Business Communication

1. Increased Efficiency and Productivity

Cloud VoIP integrates with modern business workflows, offering advanced features such as call forwarding, voicemail-to-email, call recording, and business text messaging. These tools ensure that employees remain connected, enhancing responsiveness and operational efficiency regardless of location. Unlike traditional phone systems that tether employees to their desks, cloud VoIP allows professionals to stay productive from anywhere.

2. Scalability for Growing Businesses

Legacy landline systems require significant

infrastructure updates to accommodate business expansion, making growth cumbersome and costly. Cloud VoIP offers unmatched



flexibility—businesses can effortlessly add or remove users as needed, making it an ideal solution for organizations with evolving needs, whether scaling operations, managing seasonal demands, or integrating remote teams.

3. Enhanced Mobility and Remote Work Capabilities

With the rise of hybrid and remote work, businesses need communication solutions that enable seamless connectivity. Cloud VoIP ensures employees can make and receive business calls on any device—desktop, laptop, or mobile phone—using a single business number. This capability provides a

consistent, professional presence, regardless of where employees are working, eliminating the barriers of traditional office-based phone systems.

4. Cost Savings and Lower Maintenance

Traditional phone systems require ongoing maintenance, costly service contracts, and expensive hardware investments. Cloud VoIP operates on a subscription-based model with lower upfront costs, eliminating the need for extensive infrastructure. Additionally, North American long-distance fees become a thing of the past, allowing businesses to communicate freely without added costs. With reduced maintenance and increased functionality, cloud-based solutions optimize budget and performance.

5. Built-In Security and Disaster Recovery

Reliability is crucial in business communications. Traditional phone lines are susceptible to service disruptions caused by physical damage, power failures, or technical malfunctions. Cloud VoIP providers offer built-in redundancy and failover systems, ensuring continuous connectivity even during an internet or power outage. Calls can be automatically rerouted to mobile devices, safe-

guarding business operations and customer service from unexpected downtime.

Is Your Business Ready for the Future of Communication?

For organizations still reliant on legacy phone systems, the transition to Cloud VoIP is more than an upgrade—it's a strategic move toward enhanced business efficiency and adaptability. In today's fast-paced business environment, scaling, maintaining seamless connectivity, and optimizing costs are critical for long-term success.

Understanding available options is essential as businesses continue navigating the future of communication. Whether exploring new technologies or upgrading existing systems, ensuring communication infrastructure aligns with business needs should be a top priority. The evolution of phone systems is here, and embracing Cloud VoIP means embracing innovation, flexibility, and a more innovative way to work.

Penny Belluz, Director of Operations at Teleco, drives innovation in IT, security, and telecom. Teleco has proudly supported businesses with trusted technology solutions for over 40 years.

Thunder Bay Teacher Up for 2025 Juno Award

Thunder Bay's own Greg Chomut has been nominated for MusiCounts Teacher of the Year

at the 2025 Juno Awards. Announced today, Chomut is one of five educators from across Canada recognized for their outstanding contributions to students and music education.

For the past 17 years, Chomut has been a dedicated teacher at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC), where he has mentored and supported countless students. He is also a driving force behind the Wake the Giant Music Festival in Thunder Bay—an annual event that welcomes hundreds of Indigenous youth from remote First Nation communities to the city year after year. Through the festival, Chomut has supported his students perform in front of thousands, helping them create and write their own songs and even participate in a powerful collaboration with July Talk.

“Being a music teacher is about giving my students opportunities they may have never imagined for themselves—once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that show them just how much they're capable of,” says Chomut. “Whether it's working with professional musicians, performing their own songs on a festival stage, or creating artwork that's on display for the entire city to see, these moments are life-changing. It's about opening doors, building confidence, and showing them that their voices and talents deserve to be celebrated.”

Chomut's passion for music goes beyond the classroom. Writing songs for as long as he can remember and being a part of local band, Luke Warm and the Cold Ones, he understands firsthand the power of music as a tool for connection, cultural expression, and personal growth. He's also a strong advocate for music education, emphasizing its role in breaking down barriers, and its benefits to academic success, mental health and wellbeing for students. “Wake the Giant brings people together from all walks of life, allows students to develop confidence through performing, and helps them to process difficult emotions through songwriting,” he explains.

“My teaching philosophy is to help students

fall in love with a subject matter so that they become self-motivated in their learning. Over the years, it has become clear that when students are personally interested in a subject they retain information with ease and seek it out on their own. They don't just do it to get the mark, they go above and beyond because they're chasing their own goals for growth. In music, this is particularly evident because there's such a direct correlation between practice time and skill development. As musicians we all know that the students who really fall in love with playing their instruments will spend every spare moment practising, and excel far beyond what the curriculum requires of them.”

Over the last three years, Chomut has also played a key role in developing a new recording studio at DFC, providing students with hands-on experience in music production and media. Under his guidance, students

have even launched a podcast, interviewing high profile guests such as Ryan Reynolds, X Ambassadors and DJ Shub.



“At Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, our music program is built around students—their stories, their culture, and their needs. Many of them leave their families, home and communities behind to pursue an education in Thunder Bay. Music isn't just a subject; it's a way for students to connect, express themselves, and feel a sense of pride in who they are.”

Chomut will attend Canada's biggest night in music, with the Juno Awards taking place on March 30th, 2025 in Vancouver. “This nomination wouldn't have been possible without the incredible students at DFC and the colleagues who inspire me every day. Every project I've worked on has led me to this moment, and I couldn't be more grateful.”

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CLAC Advocates for Apprentices in Ontario

CLAC, a national union representing 60,000 workers across Canada, recently surveyed its members in Ontario's construction sector to learn what barriers apprentices face. This is important because people are urgently needed to enter the skilled trades as thousands of older workers retire. At least one-third of tradespeople in Ontario are 55 or older.

One of the biggest—and often scariest—steps in becoming an apprentice in the skilled trades is enrolling in trade school.



Every year, hundreds of new apprentices take to the books to learn the technical skills that are required for their trade. Unfortunately, due to limited spots in many schools, delays in receiving offers and progressing through the school levels are all too common among apprentices in Ontario.

To better understand this experience, CLAC's Ontario Apprenticeship Team recently conducted a survey to examine the issues apprentices are having in accessing in-class trade school training.

More than 125 people from a variety of trades took part in the survey. Of the respondents, 112 identified as apprentices and 14 as journeymen, the majority of whom were enrolled in the electrical trade.

What did CLAC find?

- 42 percent of apprentices experienced a delay in getting into trade school within the previous 12 months.

- Of the 42 percent who experienced delays:

- » 53 percent have completed Level 1 (Basic) and were awaiting an offer for Level 2 (Intermediate). There is a typical wait time of 12-18 months per level of school.

- » 68 percent have waited longer than seven months for an offer. Did you know that you can contact your local Employment Ontario apprenticeship office? You can ask to speak to a consultant about your training agreement and in-class training.

Trade school delays can be affected by several factors including scheduling of classes, location of colleges, trade availability at colleges, and backlog of COVID applications.

Did you know that trade school seats are budgeted annually and are impacted by your choice to attend school? That means that when you get an offer, you should register for the class as soon as possible.

What are the solutions?

The majority of survey respondents indi-



cated that they believe the solution to these delays is simple:

- Increase the number of course offerings per year (23 percent of respondents).
- Increase class sizes (31 percent of respondents).

Several other respondents suggested that a return to online training may also help increase accessibility to trade school. Having a list of colleges that have available spaces for students may be helpful to those waiting for offers.

As well, some respondents suggested that registering directly with the school—rather than waiting for an offer letter from Employment Ontario—would alleviate the stress of having to organize personal and work obligations around a sudden offer.

What is CLAC doing?

CLAC is advocating for apprentices' needs by lobbying the government for more funding to increase class sizes and availability. It is talking to Employment Ontario about the common barriers for apprentices today.

Finally, CLAC continues to support apprentices on their journey by providing trade school tuition reimbursement to help reduce financial barriers to schooling.

The skills crunch is a very real crisis that is stalling economic growth. CLAC's goal is to boost the number of apprentices, which in turn will boost our economy, ease the housing crisis, and improve the quality of life of for all Canadians.

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Hunger in our region doesn't come from a lack of food, but the inability to afford and access food. Due to the large number of people in need of assistance, increasing the capacity and program offerings of food banks and charity organizations in the region is critical.

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Confederation College Receives \$100,000 Donation from CIBC to Support CICE Students

Confederation College announced a generous \$100,000 donation from CIBC to support students in the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program. This significant contribution will provide financial assistance and enhance experiential learning opportunities for CICE students over the next three years.

The donation includes \$75,000 allocated for student awards, creating 10 bursaries of \$2,500 each per year for three years. An additional \$25,000 is designated as an experiential learning fund, providing approximately \$8,500 per year for 3 years. This fund will assist students in purchasing necessary equipment and resources and covering service fees and travel expenses related to their co-op placements.

Rose Hankkio, Lead Integration Facilitator, emphasized the importance of the donation: "The support from CIBC is transformative for CICE students. It reduces financial burdens and lets them engage fully in their educational experiences. This funding will open doors to new opportunities and help our students thrive academically and personally."

"CIBC aims to create a world without limits to ambition and we're committed to helping remove barriers that all too often stand in the way of success for many students from underserved communities," said Per Humle, Senior Vice-President and Region Head, Ontario East, Personal Banking and Imperial Service, CIBC. "With these awards, we are proud to help support these students in achieving their academic dreams."

Michelle Salo, President of Confederation College, expressed her gratitude for the donation: "This contribution from CIBC demonstrates their commitment to inclusive education and community development. The impact of this donation will be far-reaching, providing our CICE students with enhanced financial support and valuable experiential learning opportunities. We deeply appreciate CIBC's partnership in fostering the success of our students and strengthening our College community."

The Community Integration through Co-operative Education program at Confederation College is designed to provide individuals with developmental disabilities and other significant learning challenges with a college experience that prepares them for greater independence and employment opportunities. The program accepts 20 students per year for a two-year term, totalling 40 students at any given time.

CICE offers a personalized, assisted learning approach tailored to each student's specific academic needs, with support both in and out of the class-



room. The curriculum includes skills for life and work, enhances communication skills, promotes healthy lifestyles, and promotes personal and professional growth. Supervised field placements provide students with valuable work experience to build their résumés and showcase their talents to potential employers.

As part of the program's commitment to skill-building, CIBC representatives will be invited to conduct financial literacy sessions for CICE students and their families, further enriching the educational experience.

For more information about the CICE program, visit: <https://www.confederationcollege.ca/program/community-integration-through-co-operative-education>

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Personal Brand Quiz

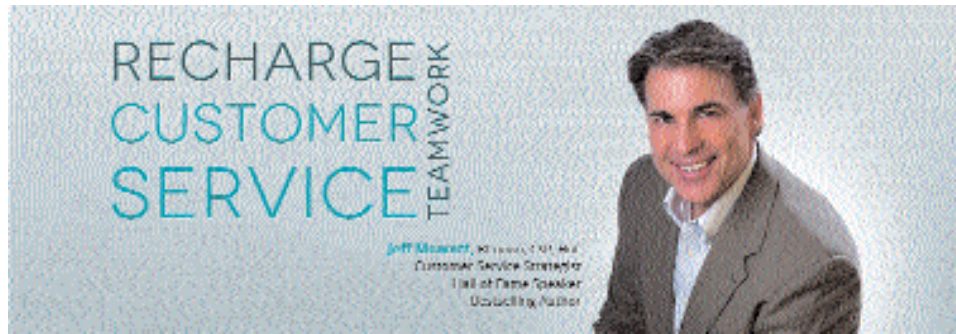
Test how your personal reputation stacks up

In marketing terms, your company's Net Promoter Score indicates your customers' willingness to recommend your products and services. Bringing this concept closer to home, ever wondered how likely people are to recommend you personally? For example, would your supervisor go to bat for you to support you receiving a pay raise? Are your competitors hearing about you from your customers and considering offering you a job? The likelihood of these kinds of recommendations is based on what I call your Trust Equity Score. The higher your trust equity, the more inclined people will be to recommend you to others, and be willing to pay a premium – literally – to do business with you. Take this quiz to discover your score out of 45 possible points...

Do you keep your promises? Subtract 5 points if you occasionally use these phrases: I'll try, I'll do my best, I won't be able to do it until tomorrow. Add 10 points if instead you often say, You'll have it within 24 hours (and consistently deliver on that promise). It's specific and positive, and when conveyed in precise hours, rather than in a day, it sounds shorter and more intentional. Tip – when you do deliver within 24 hours start your com-

munication with, "As promised..." That way, it actually registers with others that you keep your word.

Do coworkers and customers see you as their friend or trusted advisor? Give yourself a zero if most people at work see you as a friend. Add 5 points if they would describe you as a trusted advisor. Keep my little rhyme in mind: Friends



compare and overshare. Advisors ask and stay on task. It's a reminder to talk less and listen more. Focus the conversation on the other person and what their overall objectives are and why. People value the input of a strong listener over that of a smooth talker.

Do you look like a professional? If you are often dressed and groomed more casually than your peers, and are in worse physical shape, subtract 5 points. If you are dressed and groomed slightly sharper

than your peers, and are in better shape, add 5 points. In the real world whether it's fair or not, people judge you by outward appearances. It's a reflection of your self-esteem, self-discipline, and attention to detail. It should look like you put some effort (including exercising) into your appearance.

Are you involved in your profession?

Subtract 5 points if you are not a member of your professional/ industry/ trade association and never go to meetings. If you are a member and attend meetings add 5 points. If you also volunteer and serve in some capacity in your association, add 5 more points. Professional/trade associations give you the opportunity to network with peers in your industry. You learn from competitors who are actually willing to share. And you have the opportunity to give back while raising your profile. Do your personal brand a favour – pay your

dues and get involved.

Do you ask for permission or forgiveness? If you have a tendency to check with others before taking action, subtract 5 points. If you're more inclined to adhere to the adage that, it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, add 5 points. Whatever your job title may be, people have more respect for those who are inclined to take action than those who wait to be told or given permission. If your organization penalizes people who take initiative, find someplace else to work.

Where are you when the chips are down? When it comes to visiting people in hospitals, attending funerals, or dealing with upset customers, you tend to either: a) find an excuse to be somewhere else (subtract 5 points). Or b) show up even though you don't want to be there (add 10 points). No one likes hospitals, funerals, or dealing with upset customers. That's why when times are tough, people do notice who shows up. And yes they also notice those who don't. There's always an excuse for avoiding unpleasant situations, which is why showing up like a grown-up does so much for your reputation.

Your score out of 45? Chances are if you took this quiz you probably scored pretty high. The fact that you're reading this article indicates you are interested in learning and development: a strong trait. Increasing your trust equity and enhancing the value of your personal brand is simple – just take the steps outlined. Of course simple doesn't mean easy. Trust-worthiness is after all, something we all have to earn.

Jeff Mowatt is a customer service strategist, Hall of Fame speaker, and bestselling author. For more tips, training tools or to inquire about engaging Jeff for your team visit

www.JeffMowatt.com

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July	June 23	June 27	July 2	Manufacturing
August	July 21	July 25	Aug 1	Environment
September	August 25	August 29	September 2	Education
October	September 22	September 26	October 1	Aboriginal
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December	November 24	November 28	December 2	Technology/Christmas
January	December 15	December 19	January 4	Fitness

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Miranda Bolt, Ad Designer

Advertising Information

Sylvia Gomez, Marketing / Sales Manager - 807-629-7599
sylvia@northsuperiorpublishing.com

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NORTH SUPERIOR PUBLISHING

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March 2025

Exceptional Snowmobiling: The Laurentians, Quebec Fly And Ride!

BY SCOTT A. SUMNER
Great Outdoors

Snowmobiling in Quebec has always been the best for me. The people there just seem to have a passion for the sport that is unmatched elsewhere on the planet!

My trip this year began with two quick flights and after a stop in Toronto, arriving at the very unique Mont Tremblant airport (La Macaza). When



stepping off the plane Serge Lariviere who along with his wife Isabel own the airport first greeted me! It was off to a fireplace and leather couches to greet my hosts and riding partners for this trip!

After a nice lunch in this log structure terminal building we changed into our snowmobile suits and walked out front to our waiting Ski Doo sleds! It really is a sweet set up and very unique in the

world. As we were quickly on our way, we passed with in 30 feet of an idling private jet that had just landed at La Macaza- fun to see!

Nicolas Morin, owner of the first lodge we would stay at, Pourvoirie Cecaurel and Misha Beauregard, snowmobile guide and myself were quickly on our way for a 100 km ride. It was a beautiful ride on well-groomed trails with a stop at a very nice waterfall along the way. This

area of the Laurentians, just north of Mont Tremblant, is home to many 4 to 5 star lodges to stay.

“Pourvoirie Cecaurel was the first owned by my father in 1985 and I purchased it from him in 2000. The lodge was started originally in 1955 and I was first a fishing guide here at age 10. We are located on two sandy points in summer and winter,” said Nicolas Morin. “

There are lots of area to explore. We have a lodge, restaurant, marina, fly shop, a museum which has recently won a prize, a campground, 12 rental boats, 12 canoes to use on our 7 kilometers lake, tent ready to camp and full equipment. We have 14 cottages, 100 camp sites and 40 docks in the marina.”

The clients of Pourvoirie Cecaurel come from Montreal, Ottawa, Europe especially France and the USA. The Mont Tremblant airport is about 60 km away by snowmobile or 35 minutes by car.

“ We have trails right to our restaurant and are at the trail head. You can also do backcountry snowmobiling in a beautiful area here- it is possible and really popular. We have a great BRP dealer here- Constantineau Mont Laurier with 150 rental sleds available each year which are brand new,” said Nicolas who was a construction manager in Montreal previously and build all the structures at Pourvoirie Cecaurel including the office, the cottages and main restaurant building. “ I love my job because I can do construction as well as talk to all the clients here. A good snowmobile ride for me is with some friends to the top of the lake with a small fire and we eat lunch.”

The best way to ride the snowmobile trails in Quebec is with a guide. We were



fortunate on this trip to have Misha Beauregard, a snowmobile guide and outfitter since year 2000. He grew up in Ottawa but has lived in the area for over 15 years. Misha also does guiding for bear hunting and woodcock hunting with dogs.

It is always fun riding snowmobiles in Quebec. The people are always enthusiastic about the sport and want to have a good time out on the snow!

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