



Michael Gravelle, MPP

Thunder Bay-Superior North

SUMMER 2011 NEWSLETTER



11/17 Four-Laning Update: We're Halfway There!!!

2011 funding commitment means 50 kms of four-laned highway!

Take a quick drive down the TransCanada Highway east of Thunder Bay and you'll see a dream for Thunder Bay-Superior North coming true—right on schedule.

Since he was first elected as MPP, Michael has pushed for the four-laning of Hwy 11/17, with special focus on the 100 km corridor between Thunder Bay and Nipigon.

And Michael just announced more good news—this year's funding allocation from the Northern Highways Program (NHP) means another 7 km stretch has been approved! Once complete, we will have a 50 km four-laned corridor on our major transportation link east of Thunder Bay.

New projects!

Four-laning construction will begin in 2013 on the section between Birch Beach Road and Highway 587 at Pass Lake and the design contract was awarded to a Thunder Bay firm, Engineering Northwest Limited. The plan is to twin the existing highway with a 30 metre median.

And there's more. Also part of this year's total of \$618 million in NHP funding commitments are five major bridge projects in our riding, including:

- Reconstruction of three bridges near Marathon (Black River, Little Pic and Big Pic River Bridges)
- Reconstruction of two bridges east of Nipigon (Jackfish River and Jackpine River Bridges)

In total, that brings the number of expansion projects funded by NHP on our Thunder Bay to Nipigon corridor to seven. Already, over 20 kms are under construction.



The new interchange and ramps at Hodder Avenue have been fascinating to watch as they take shape.



Four-laning work on Hwy 11/17 is right on schedule. Here is a viewpoint near the Terry Fox Lookout.



Construction on the ramps at Copenhagen Road.

Now under construction

Work began this summer on the new Hodder Avenue interchange and exit ramps. It's an enormous project that's been fascinating to watch as it takes shape, and will significantly improve safety at this busy intersection.

The Current River Bridge is also being widened eastbound to accommodate the new eastbound exit ramp to the Hodder interchange. The grade of the highway is being lowered to accommodate traffic under the massive new structure. Total value of this 6 km project is \$42 million.

Four-laning work on the 14 km stretch between MacKenzie Station Road and Birch Beach Road is progressing on schedule. As well, more than 28 kms of the existing highway are being resurfaced 17.5 kms east of Terrace Bay, creating about 45 jobs this season.

And the Nipigon River Bridge is being completely reconstructed as a cable-stayed bridge, with four-laning on approximately 3 km approaching the new bridge from both directions. It's a project that will not only improve safety, but create a significant and beautiful new landmark for both travelers and the community.



Renderings of the new Nipigon River cable-stayed bridge, part of the four-laning work on the Thunder Bay to Nipigon corridor.

Construction scheduled for next summer

Next season's work is already planned, and the four-laning of about 12 km between Red Rock Road No. 9 and Still Water Creek will begin.

And, perhaps among the most exciting developments will be the linking of 33 continuous kilometers of four-laned highway, when the 13 km stretch from Hwy 527 to west of MacKenzie Station Road is completed next summer.

"We are absolutely committed to seeing this project through and four-laning the entire Thunder Bay-Nipigon corridor. It's tremendously exciting and rewarding to see the progress we're making, and I'm especially pleased that all of the construction to date is on schedule and on budget," Michael says with pride. "I encourage everyone to take a drive and see for themselves how significant these improvements truly are," he adds.

Please remember to watch for flagging and work crews, drive with caution, and take note that the posted speed limit will be lowered from 90 km/hr to 70 km/hr in construction zones.

Follow Michael on Twitter! @michaelgravelle

Celebrate Ontario funding boosts three Northern festivals

Summertime in Northwestern Ontario is festival time – and Celebrate Ontario funding helped three events to attract new and bigger audiences.

Marathon's *SummerFest* was awarded its first ever Celebrate Ontario grant. Mayor Rick Dumas said the \$32,000 in funding "will help create a wide range of activities and opportunities to promote our town, and create more economic benefits for Marathon and the region."

Schreiber Mayor Don McArthur was excited to learn about the \$18,000 grant for the annual *Heritage Days Festival*. "This is a great partnership with Ontario," he said. "Our volunteers are the backbone of this event, and these dollars will be well used to enhance the celebration and the economic spinoffs."

"This funding is designed not only to support fun activities for families, but to help local businesses. The goal is to help our Northern festivals grow and attract more visitors, which in turn creates new jobs and generates more economic activity," Michael notes.

A good example of how Celebrate Ontario funds help festivals grow is the "*Live from the Rock*" Folk Festival in Red Rock. Last year's funding helped draw bigger crowds and this year's festival, August 5 – 7, was granted \$15,000. "*Live from the Rock* brings in hundreds and hundreds of people and that really helps our local businesses. This funding not only helps the festival grow again, but most of the out-of-town guests promise to come back for a visit – and do," says Red Rock Mayor Gary Nelson.

And this year, "*Live from the Rock*" received a \$15,000 grant from the Ontario Arts Council, through the Presenter/Producer Projects program.

Enjoy the summer festival season!

Grants approved!

Twelve community groups in our riding were approved for grants totalling \$610,500, thanks to support from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**. The successful groups include:

- Municipality of Greenstone, towards a skateboard and BMX park for kids in the Longlac area
- Centre des Femmes Francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario to help increase programs and services for Francophone women in the Greenstone area
- Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 116, to replace the roof, soffit and fascia on the Nakina Legion building
- Thunder Bay Counselling Centre, to help develop online counseling services for people in the city and region
- Port Arthur Ski Club, for race gates, safety netting, timing and other equipment
- Children's Centre Thunder Bay, towards child and youth mental health programs and suicide prevention

Since 2007, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded over \$2 million in grants to community organizations in Thunder Bay-Superior North.

Did you know?

To report a forest fire, call 310-FIRE!

You can find Michael Gravelle on **facebook!**

Northern Ontario Heritage Fund supports region's jobs, economic development

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) invests in new and existing northern businesses, emerging technologies, infrastructure and community development projects, youth internships and co-op programs, and young entrepreneurs. For the fourth budget in a row, our government has invested an additional \$10 million for this regional economic development fund—exclusively for northerners—bringing us to \$100 million this year.

Since 2003, the NOHFC has invested nearly \$69 million in the riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North (TBSN) alone – creating 1,869 direct jobs and sustaining over 200 more!

Here are just a few of the projects that received NOHFC funding this past year:

- Finlandia Association of Thunder Bay (to restore the century-old Finnish Labour Temple)
- Terrace Bay's Cultural Centre expansion
- Greenstone's new municipal complex in Beardmore
- Thunder Bay Port Authority, for a new crane to increase capacity and create jobs
- Lakehead University – to establish a new state-of-the-art semi-conductor research laboratory, focused on developing new crystal-growth technology that could produce brighter light-emitting diodes (LEDs) at a lower cost

Other NOHFC investments in TBSN this year include:

- over \$1 million in youth internships and co-op placements
- \$230,000, supporting 10 projects and creating 11 jobs, through the Young Entrepreneur program
- Over \$600,000, supporting 15 projects and 34 jobs through the Northern Entrepreneur program

The NOHFC offers seven different funding programs to promote job creation and economic development in the north. For more information, visit www.nohfc.com



A ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the official opening of the brand-new Terrace Bay Cultural Centre earlier this year, with over 150 people joining the celebration. Over \$360,000 in funding for the project came through the NOHFC's Infrastructure and Community Development Program.

With the help of \$1 million in funding from the NOHFC, the Thunder Bay Port Authority will have a new crane to handle more cargo, increase the port's capacity, attract new business and boost the local economy. Three new jobs will be created, in addition to the 20 workers already employed. Here, Tim Heney of the Port Authority with Michael at the announcement.



Thunder Bay Gets First Law School in Northern Ontario!

Lakehead University Faculty of Law will open doors to students in 2013

For the first time in 42 years, Ontario has a new law school – and it's in the riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North.

At a much-anticipated ceremony on July 5, Michael and his colleague, Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Bill Mauro, jointly announced the good news along with Lakehead University President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Brian Stevenson.

Lakehead University's Faculty of Law will be located in the historic former Port Arthur Collegiate Institute building. The new program will begin in September 2013 with a strong focus on Aboriginal law, law relating to our resource-based economy in Northern Ontario, and legal issues that are relevant to rural and remote communities.

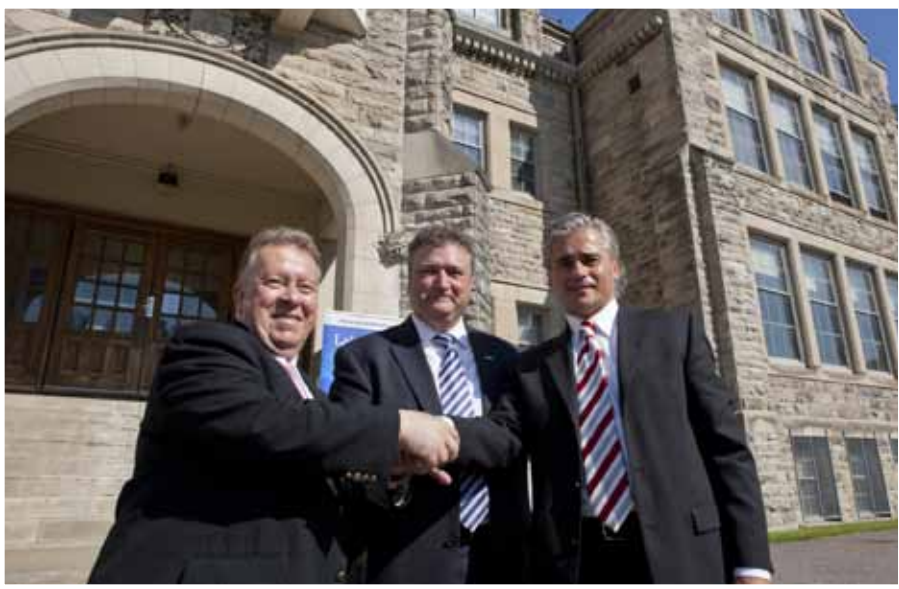
The Juris Doctor (JD) law degree program expects an enrolment of 55 students each year and will work with Northern law firms to ensure enough articling positions are available when students graduate. Many firms in the North have indicated they have difficulty attracting articling students and haven't been able to fill positions that are already available.

Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, John Milloy, pointed out other important benefits. "We're opening up access to students in the North to study law and develop expertise to meet the needs of Northern Ontario. Lakehead's law school will enable more students to learn closer to where they live and go on to successful careers in their communities," he said.

Michael agrees. "The new Faculty of Law means training, education and employment opportunities for Northerners and Aboriginal people and is in line with our Growth Plan for Northern Ontario," he noted. "This will provide benefits for all of Northern Ontario for generations to come."

"I want to thank the Ontario government for their unwavering support," added Dr. Stevenson. "The work they've done in approving the Faculty of Law at Lakehead University is greatly appreciated!"

For more information about this milestone achievement and more details on the new program, visit Lakehead University's Faculty of Law website at www.law.lakeheadu.ca



Michael celebrates the announcement of the new Faculty of Law to be located at the former PACI site, with LU President and Vice-Chancellor Brian Stevenson and fellow MPP Bill Mauro.

Special Occasions

CELEBRATING A SPECIAL DAY?



If you know of someone who will be celebrating a special anniversary, birthday, business milestone or some other special celebration, our office will be pleased to arrange for greetings from the Province of Ontario and/or Michael Gravelle.

Michael Gravelle, MPP

Thunder Bay - Superior North

Did you know?

Your application for the *Northern Ontario Energy Credit* will be part of your personal income tax return for 2011.

The maximum annual credit for a single individual is \$130. It will be reduced by one cent for every dollar of adjusted family net income over \$35,000. For a family (including single parents), the maximum annual credit is \$200. It will be reduced by one cent for every dollar of adjusted family net income over \$45,000. If you are eligible, the credit will be paid on a quarterly basis.

Need more info? Call toll-free at 1-866-305-1954 or visit www.ontario.ca/NorthernEnergyCredit

New OPP Detachments for Armstrong and Nipigon

Construction is now underway on two new Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachments in Thunder Bay-Superior North that will enhance community safety and create construction jobs.

In Armstrong, the new facility will be 10,600 sq ft with 4 holding cells, fingerprint and breathalyzer rooms, a seized-vehicles compound, evidence and exhibit vaults, and more.

In Nipigon, the new 14,700 sq ft detachment will have a secure area with 7 holding cells and a fingerprint room, evidence vaults with a processing area, a compound for seized vehicles and a public-access boardroom for community meetings.

About 50 local construction jobs will be created in each community.

The McGuinty government is building new, efficient OPP facilities across the province to enhance community safety and better protect families.

Focus on the Future: "Ring of Fire" to benefit all of the north

Everybody's talking about it – the 5000 square kilometre region known as the "Ring of Fire" with its rich deposits of chromite and other minerals, including nickel, copper and platinum.

There's no question this is going to be a significant economic development driver for Northern Ontario. It will support regional and community infrastructure development and will have spin-offs such as value-added manufacturing, mining supply and services, and many other potential business opportunities that will help our economy here in Thunder Bay and the region, and in the rest of Northern Ontario.

So, where do things stand? Right now, development in the *Ring of Fire* region is still in the exploration stage. More than 35 companies hold claim in the *Ring of Fire*, although there are only six active exploration projects currently underway.

The main industry players are hopeful they can bring a mine into production in five years. That could mean thousands of direct and indirect permanent jobs, along with direct and indirect construction jobs, over the next five years.

Our government is committed to working collaboratively with communities in the area, including First Nation and Metis communities, and with industry, environmental groups and other key stakeholders. We all need to work together to reap the benefits from the *Ring of Fire* for today and tomorrow.



Michael Gravelle, MPP for Thunder Bay - Superior North



Eleven new short-stay unit beds announced for Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre!

The Ontario government is helping to reduce the time Northwestern Ontario residents spend in emergency rooms (ERs). The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) is receiving \$2,230,400 to help reduce ER wait times even further.

This funding will create eleven new “short-stay unit” beds, which will be located on the hospital’s in-patient wards. Only patients admitted through the ER will have access to these beds, where they can stay for a maximum of 72 hours before being discharged or transferred to another ward in the hospital. The beds will help improve the flow in the ER by ensuring patients receive the right care in the right setting, and are transferred out of the ER sooner.

Andree Robichaud, President and CEO of the TBRHSC, is pleased with the province’s investment. “This is really welcome news because these short-stay beds will help relieve space pressures in the Emergency Department. The funding addresses a need that we have identified. This is about appropriate patient care. I like it,” she commented.

Michael agrees. “This investment shows how our government truly listens and responds to our needs here in Northwestern Ontario, and continues to honour the commitment to better health care for all Ontarians. I know that these eleven new beds, along with the bonus funding for improving ER wait times, will make a tremendous difference for patients and for staff,” he notes.

TBRHSC is also receiving \$116,900 in bonus funding for treating more patients within provincial targets in the second half of the last fiscal year. This funding will be used to reorganize the Emergency Room department waiting room and to purchase medical equipment. As of March, 86 percent of ER patients at TBRHSC were treated within the provincial targets, which are four hours for patients with minor/uncomplicated conditions and eight hours for patients with complex or serious conditions. Since the province started measuring wait times in 2008, TBRHSC has been able to reduce its ER wait times by three percent.

Also announced was \$800,000 in funding for the Northwest Community Care Access Centre for 2011-12 to support the *Home First* philosophy, a key initiative related to improving patient flow through the emergency department.



More than \$2.2 million in provincial funding means the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre can create eleven new “short-stay unit” beds, which will help reduce ER wait times even further.

The 2011 Ontario Budget addresses deficit

Maintains support for health, education, infrastructure and jobs in the North

This year’s provincial budget is strongly focused on eliminating the deficit, but it also maintains support for health, education, infrastructure and jobs for Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.

The budget continues to strengthen Northern Ontario by remaining committed to the government’s five-year Open Ontario Plan. The 2011 Ontario Budget includes:

- \$100 million (an increase of \$10 million) to the **Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)** in 2011-12, to invest in new projects across the North
- Continued commitment to the four-laning of Highway 11-17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon
- Ongoing support for the **Northern Ontario Growth Plan**
- A 25% reduction in energy costs for major industrial users, under the 3-year, \$450 million Northern Industrial Energy Rate Program
- Continued support for advancing mining opportunities in the Ring of Fire
- Moves towards a new, modernized Forest Tenure system to put Ontario’s crown fibre back to work
- Investments in post-secondary education so that every qualified student in the province will have a space in an Ontario college or university by 2015-1016. That means 60,000 new post-secondary spaces, including the North
- Investments in a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, starting with children and youth

“I’m very pleased that the budget includes these commitments to benefit Thunder Bay-Superior North and all of Northern Ontario. These investments will help create a stronger, more prosperous North of all of us,” Michael notes.



Bill Mauro, MPP Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Marg Scott of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board, and Michael at the official release of the *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*.

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