

# A Growth Plan for Northern Ontario

Vol. 1, Issue 4

June 2010

## Message from the Ministers

### Building the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario

Important steps are being taken as we work to finalize the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario.

The response and interest from northerners in the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, released last October, has been unprecedented. Thank you for your contributions and the insights that you have shared.

Our two ministries are now working with 15 other provincial ministries to reflect the feedback and ideas from northerners in the development of a final plan and its implementation.

The final plan – expected to be

released by the end of the year – will be a strategic plan that guides decision-making and investment planning over the next 25 years. It will focus decisions to build a regional economy that is resilient and sustainable, gives northerners more education and career choices, and attracts new people and investments.

The Open Ontario plan, introduced in February's Throne Speech and detailed in the 2010 Budget, provides strong indica-

tions on how our government will support the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario over its first five years. Open Ontario initiatives and investments will help set the foundation for the Growth Plan's long-term, 25-year approach.

We look forward to finalizing the Growth Plan this year to build a strong, prosperous North.

We know the plan will be ambitious. It will take time to achieve and will take the collective efforts of us all.

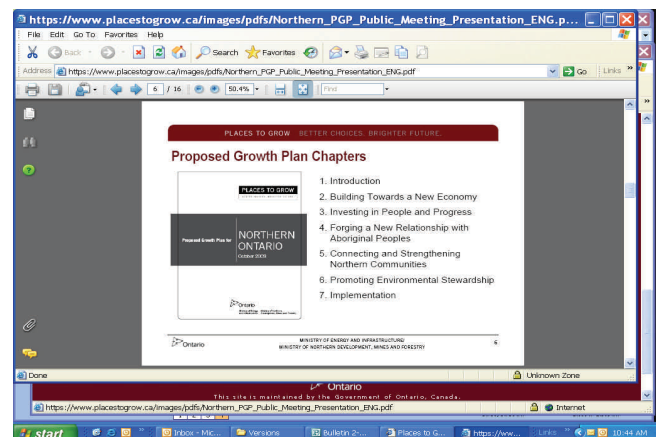
*Hon. Michael Gravelle  
Minister of Northern Development,  
Mines and Forestry*

*Hon. Brad Duguid  
Minister of Energy and  
Infrastructure*

## Bringing the Growth Plan Home

Over the next while, the ministries will be considering northerners' feedback, and working with colleagues in at least 15 relevant partner ministries to finalize the Growth Plan, and to determine how the Growth Plan will be put in place, monitored and measured.

The ministries continue to work with Aboriginal people in developing the final Growth Plan, and may need to have further discussions with northerners as details of the final Growth Plan are realized.



## Northerners are Passionate About Their Region

Since its release last October, the Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario has generated close to 300 submissions from individuals, municipalities, educational institutions, industry and community organizations across Northern Ontario.

More than 1,400 northerners participated in 10 public information sessions and more than 40 videoconferences, meetings and workshops to review and provide input on the Proposed Growth Plan.

Many groups organized special meetings to bring together communities and individuals from across sectors to discuss and provide their input.

More than 260 people from First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal organizations have also reviewed the proposed plan and provided input at 10 regional workshops over the past few months.

We will continue to engage Aboriginal leadership as the final plan is developed. More than 130 youth, including high school, college and university students, and

young professionals building their careers in the North have also provided input.

Those responding have shown a keen interest in the future of Northern Ontario and have passionate views on how best to support it.

Every respondent has offered unique insights, whether commenting on the Proposed Growth Plan as a whole, or focusing on a particular area of interest. This feedback will be very useful in developing the final plan.

Visit the [Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario](#) for more information on the draft document.

### What We've Heard

In general, we've heard some common threads in northerners' responses:

They've liked:

- The idea of a Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, and its comprehensive, long-term approach to growing the North
- That the Proposed Growth Plan builds on previous reports by northerners, and reflects earlier feedback
- That the Proposed Growth Plan recognizes the importance of First Nations and Métis people in the future of Northern Ontario.

They've identified priority directions:

- Promote more local, value-added processing of resources and the development of new products to help diversify the economy and create more jobs
- Build networks of business and technical experts to support innovation and commercial success
- Match education and skills training to jobs in traditional industries that are changing, and jobs in new, knowledge-based industries
- Refine educational policies and programs to improve access to all levels of education and to ensure more graduates
- Give priority to broadband and transportation improvements that connect people to services and to economic opportunities
- Plan for vibrant, attractive, accessible communities to retain and attract youth, families and workers in knowledge-based jobs
- Improve opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to participate in the economy
- Build on the significant resource that is the North's Francophone population
- Implement a plan that sets out the timing and details for achieving the Growth Plan's strategies.

# Open Ontario Supports Growth Plan

The government's Open Ontario plan was introduced in February 2010 in the Speech from the Throne and detailed in the 2010 Budget. Open Ontario is a five-year plan that will open Ontario to change, opportunities and the new world.

Open Ontario initiatives and investments will help set the foundation for the Growth Plan's long-term, 25-year approach.

## Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Regional Economy

Open Ontario lays a strong foundation for the Growth Plan's vision of creating a regional economy that is resilient and sustainable by:

- Providing \$45 million over the next three years for a new training program to help Aboriginal peoples and Northern Ontarians participate

in and benefit from emerging economic development opportunities. Through this funding:

- Aboriginal communities and organizations will be better able to participate in resource-related activities
- Aboriginal and Northern Ontarians will gain transferable credentials and sustained employment in resource-related economic development opportunities.
- Establishing a Ring of Fire Coordinator to work and consult with Aboriginal peoples, Northern Ontarians and the mining community to encourage responsible and sustainable economic development related to the Ring of Fire – an area with

potentially large deposits of minerals such as chromite, nickel, copper and platinum

- Partnering with Sudbury and Thunder Bay to pilot economic development planning areas, as touched on in the Growth Plan
- Supporting northern forestry, mining and other industry through a three-year Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program. The program will average \$150 million annually to help qualifying large industrial facilities reduce their electricity prices by about 25 per cent
- Increasing the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation funding by \$10 million to \$90 million this year to support job creation and strengthen the

*(Continued on page 4)*



*The February 2009 Think North Summit brought together international speakers and northerners to discuss a long-range economic blueprint for Northern Ontario. More than 400 northerners attended the Thunder Bay sessions in person. Many others participated through web cast or at KNet and Contact North videoconferencing facilities across the northern region.*

## Highways provide an economic lifeline for North

(Continued from page 3)

economies of northern communities

- Investing a record \$770 million this year in northern highways – an almost 20-per-cent increase over last year. The Growth Plan focuses on the importance of good transportation infrastructure in the North, where the highways network is an economic lifeline
- Providing up to \$15 million to support Huron Central Railway's infrastructure investments on the Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury rail line.

### Improving Access to Training and Education

Open Ontario contains initiatives to improve northerners' access to

education and increase graduation levels, through:

- Implementing the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers to help unemployed older workers
- Increasing postsecondary attainment rate by adding new spaces to northern colleges and universities
- Improving students' ability to navigate Ontario's post-

secondary system by providing additional resources to support the implementation of a credit transfer system.

### Attracting New People and Investments

Open Ontario addresses the need to attract new people and investments to the region by:

- Taking an aggressive approach to the international marketing of Ontario's postsecondary schools, including those in Northern Ontario, to encourage the world's best students to study here, settle here and help build a stronger economy
- Opening markets and creating new trade opportunities for Ontario businesses, including those based in Northern Ontario, by securing new inter-provincial and international trade agreements.



Participants at a Fall 2009 discussion session in North Bay explored some of the ideas proposed in the draft Growth Plan. Once finalized, this bold 25-year plan will help chart a new economic direction for the North.