



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

**71ST
ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**

**Hosted by the
Atikokan Chamber of Commerce**



**GENERAL INFORMATION
FOR MEETING**

**Atikokan, Ontario
September 29, 30, October 1, 2006**

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FOR INFORMATION: *(Since NOACC AGM - September, 2005).....Cream*

- NOACC Executive Minutes - April 19, 2006
- Special NOACC Conference Call Minutes - November 8, 2005
- NOACC Conference Call minutes - February 8, 2006

Message from the President:

This past "NOACC" year has seen more than our fair share of critical issues in Northwestern Ontario. Complex issues like the forestry crisis, border crossing issues, Regional Energy Pricing and, yes, even the controversy over the cancellation of the spring bear hunt continues.

NOACC, as an organization, made a very bold move at our Spring Meeting in Sioux Lookout in April, to take a step back and really assess who we are and where we are going.

Under the facilitation of Katie Crowe, we made some amazing progress toward "reinventing" ourselves that will take us and our members well into the future.

Through our many conference calls and impromptu meetings, your Executive has been working diligently and in many cases, behind the scenes, to ensure a vibrant economy for the entire region. Who knows Northwestern Ontario better than someone who lives, works and raises their children here.

The vast majority of MPP's come from Southern Ontario ridings and often cannot appreciate or even understand the economic issues that are crucial to our area. NWO is not solely a resource extraction area for the sole benefit of the GTA and frustration is hitting critical levels especially when you start hearing of separation from Ontario.

The future can be bright providing people are ever vigilant and organizations like NOACC continue to fight the good fight... a fight that ultimately benefits everyone regardless of address.

I look forward to working with the new Executive to continue our lobbying efforts on behalf of all our members into the next year and beyond.

Melissa Kuznier

President

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario



NOACC

2006 AGM/Fall Meeting

Hosted by the

Atikokan Chamber of Commerce

2005/2006 EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

President - Melissa Kuszniel, Thunder Bay
President-Elect - Barry Streib, Thunder Bay
Vice-President - Bob Hancherow, Marathon
Vice-President/Finance - Sabrina Donahue-Lake, Dryden
Immediate Past President - Jason Nesbitt, Schreiber

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aguasabon Chamber - Jason Nesbitt
Dryden Chamber - Sabrina Donahue-Lake
Geraldton Chamber - Katherine Alton
Marathon Chamber - George Macey
The Land of the Nipigon - Levina Collins

Atikokan Chamber - Judi Simmons
Fort Frances Chamber - Alan Tibbetts
Kenora Chamber - Thelma Wilkins-Page
Sioux Lookout Chamber - Dick MacKenzie
Thunder Bay Chamber - Barry Streib

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE 2006 AGM & FALL MEETING

**** Draft Agenda ****

**** See agenda for exact locations of meetings and meals ****



Title Sponsor of the Annual General Meeting/Fall Meeting



Platinum Sponsor



Platinum Sponsor

Friday, September 29, 2006

4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

REGISTRATION FOR DELEGATES

Atikokan Hotel (Fireside Lounge) - 400 Front Street

5:00 pm

EXECUTIVE MEETING

White Otter Inn (Conference Room - 710 MacKenzie Avenue)

7:00 pm -

MIX & MINGLE

Atikokan Hotel (Fireside Lounge)

Saturday, September 30, 2006

7:30 am - 12 pm

REGISTRATION - continues - Errington Hall (300 Main Street)

8:00 am

BREAKFAST - Errington Hall

8:45 am

BUSINESS MEETING - Errington Hall

➤ CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME Melissa Kuszniere, President

- Greetings from the Town of Atikokan.....Mayor Dennis Brown
- Greetings from the Atikokan Chamber
- Greetings/Update from NOMA.....Michael Power, President

➤ Attendance Report

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

➤ on separate agenda

BUSINESS MEETING

- 2007 Meeting Locations/Dates
- 2006/2007 Teleconference Meeting Dates - *to follow*
- Policy Status
- 2006/07 Budget
- Strategic Planning - Future Direction & Action
 - Where do we go from here?

10:30 am

NUTRITION NETWORKING BREAK (15 minutes)

Sponsor: Gillons' Insurance

11:45 am

LUNCH - Errington Hall

SPEAKER: Mary Long-Irwin

Municipal Election Preparation Overview

Saturday, September 30, 2006...continued

- 1:00 pm** **INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH MP's/MPP's**
- Bill Mauro, MPP - Thunder Bay/Atikokan
- Ken Boshcoff, MP - Thunder Bay/Rainy River
- 2:00 pm** **2007 RESOLUTION/POLICY REVIEW**
- 3:30 pm** **NUTRITION NETWORKING BREAK**
Sponsor: Gillons' Insurance
- 3:45 pm** **TBayTel – "Regional Perspective" Presentation / Q & A SESSION**
Kevin Burns -VP, Business & Consumer Markets
Timo Hiiback - Director, Product Management
- 5:30 pm** **RECEPTION - Little Falls Curling Club (Little Falls Road)**
Cash Bar
- 6:00 pm** **DINNER/PRESENTATIONS**
- KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Michael Power**
V.P. - Regional Cancer Services
- ENTERTAINMENT**

Sunday, October 1, 2006

Breakfast & Meetings

Errington Hall - (300 Main Street)

- 8:00 am** **BREAKFAST**
- 8:45 am** **REPORTS/UPDATES**
➤ Northern Ontario Forum on Economic & Social Development - George Macey
➤ Regional Recovery Task Force – Iain Angus
➤ North Superior Training Board – Dave Farrell/Terri McKirdy
➤ Northwestern Ontario Development Network - Dan Brenzavich, Manager
➤ Canada-Ontario Business Service - Mary Barr, Sr. Project Manager; Serv. Integration
➤ Ontario Chamber of Commerce - Barry Streib
- 10:00 am** **NUTRITION NETWORKING BREAK**
Sponsor: Gillons' Insurance
- 10:15 am** **2007 RESOLUTION/POLICY REVIEW – Continued**
- 11:30 am** **REPORT/UPDATE**
➤ Northern Development Council - Jason Nesbitt, Northwest Chair
- 11:45 am** **PARADE OF CHAMBERS**
- 12 Noon** **THANK YOU - HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME!!**



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

71st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday September 30, 2006 - 8:45 am

1. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME Melissa Kuszniere
2. APPROVAL OF AGENDAMembership
Be it resolved that the Agenda for the 2006 Annual General Meeting be accepted as presented.
3. APPROVAL OF 2005 AGM MINUTESMembership
Be it resolved that the minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting held in Thunder Bay, September 29, 30 and October 1, 2005 be approved as presented.
4. APPROVAL OF JUNE 14, 2006 CONFERENCE CALL
*Be it resolved that the minutes of the June 14, 2006 Conference Call be approved as presented.....*Membership
5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES Membership
6. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT Melissa Kuszniere
Be it resolved that the President's Report be accepted as presented.
7. TREASURER'S REPORT Sabrina Donahue-Lake
Be it resolved that the Financial Statements for the period ending June 30, 2006 be adopted as presented and as prepared by BDO Dunwoody LLP, Thunder Bay office.
8. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2006/07 Membership
Be it resolved that BDO Dunwoody LLP, Thunder Bay office be appointed to serve as NOACC auditors for the 2006/07 fiscal year.
9. REPORTS
 - a) Communications
 - b)
 - c)
10. Motion to accept all Transactions by the Directors for 2005/2006 Membership
Be it resolved that all business transacted, resolutions passed and by-laws enacted by the Directors of the Corporation since the last annual meeting of the Corporation are hereby confirmed, ratified, approved and sanctioned.
11. NOMINATION REPORT Jason Nesbitt, Immediate Past President
Be it resolved that the slate of candidates nominated for the Board of Directors for 2006/2007 be accepted as presented.
12. INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REMARKS Barry Streib
13. BY-LAW AMENDMENTS Membership
Be it resolved that all amendments to the by-laws be accepted as presented.
14. NEW BUSINESS Membership
15. ADJOURNMENT Attendance
Be it resolved that there being no further business of the members of NOACC, the Annual General Meeting be adjourned.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Aguasabon - Jason Nesbitt
Dryden - Sabrina Donahue-Lake, Melina Jansen, Brian Miles
Fort Frances - Gary Rogozinski
Kenora - Bonnie Dobson, Jodi Gibson
Marathon - Bob Hancherow, George Macey
Sioux Lookout - Ralph Ireland, Dick MacKenzie
Thunder Bay - Gail Brescia, Dennis Buset, Rebecca Johnson, Melissa Kuszniier, Kelly Litt,
Eric Long, Ian McCormack, Hanna Pattyson

Corporate Members:

Gary Rogozinski - Abitibi Consolidated
Kelli Gothard McKinnon - Capital Financial Services
Barry Streib - TBayTel

Guests:

Ken Boshcoff, MP - Thunder Bay/Rainy River
Bill Mauro, MPP - Thunder Bay/Atikokan
Howard Hampton, MPP - Kenora/Rainy River
Joe Virdiramo, Thunder Bay City Councillor
Mayor David Canfield, Kenora
Bill Boulton, Northwest Midwest Alliance
Bob Gregor, Bob Gregor Consulting
Bruce Hansen, Industry Consultant
David Laderoute, MNDM - Thunder Bay Team
Marg Scott; Dave Farrell, Francis Bell - North Superior Training Board
Keith Sveinson - NTAB, Dryden

The meeting was brought to order by Jason Nesbitt, President at 9:01 am. Surveys were distributed by the North Superior Training Board to fill out. Thank you to Capital Financial Services for sponsoring last night's Mix & Mingle, and Thunder Bay Hydro for sponsoring this morning's breakfast.

GREETINGS FROM THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY – Councillor Joe Virdiramo

It is good to have support and work together to get things back on track in the Northwestern Ontario. On behalf of Mayor Lynn Peterson and City Council we extend a welcome to Thunder Bay, and congratulations on the 70th AGM of NOACC. Understand delegates are in attendance from across N.W. Ontario. Thunder Bay has served as a meeting place for over 100 years. I hope you take some time to enjoy shopping, sightseeing, etc. Congratulations on the hard work and dedication with Chambers in N.W. Ontario to make sure that the business voice is heard. Hope you have a successful conference and all the best in the year ahead.

GREETINGS FROM THE THUNDER BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – Dennis Buset, Thunder Bay Chamber Board & Executive Member

The Thunder Bay Chamber is proud to host the AGM this year – thanks to the sponsors for making this meeting possible and for their contributions. We in the North know what a great place this is, and the economic importance to the province, and we need to convey this message to the rest of the province. We need to pull together to ensure meetings such as these produce more initiatives to promote N.W. Ontario.

ATTENDANCE REPORT

There are seven Chambers in attendance out of 11 Chambers in good standing - a quorum has been achieved.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by: Sioux Lookout Seconded by: Fort Frances

That the agenda for the 70th NOACC Annual General Meeting be approved as presented, with a minor adjustment - will start discussing the resolutions today.

CARRIED.

DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None. Will be done as necessary throughout the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by: Fort Frances Seconded by: Marathon

That the minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting held in Marathon on September 24, 25, 26, 2004 be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

Moved by: Sioux Lookout Seconded by: Marathon

That the minutes of the June 8, 2005 NOACC Conference Call be approved as presented.

CARRIED.

AUDITOR'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mary Long-Irwin, COO reviewed the audited financials, which were included in the AGM information package for the year ending June 28, 2005.

Moved. by: Thunder Bay Seconded by: Fort Frances

That the audited financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2005, prepared by BDO Dunwoody be accepted as presented; and further that: BDO Dunwoody be formally thanked for their financial donation to NOACC in the amount of \$2,800. to prepare the financial statements and supporting schedules.

CARRIED.

Moved by: Marathon Seconded by: Thunder Bay

That BDO Dunwoody (Thunder Bay office) be appointed the NOACC financial auditor for 2005/2006.

CARRIED.

CONSTITUTION/BY-LAW AMENDMENTS

There were no amendments to discuss.

2005/2006 NOACC BUDGET

Copies of the budget were distributed to the membership. Mary reviewed the budget for 2005/2006. The Executive decided to transfer \$5000. from members' equity to develop policy and advocacy. The amount for OCC was down in 2006 – Mary reported that OCC is covering the cost of a representative that we send to the OCC Board meetings, and the Thunder Bay Chamber pays for the rest of the expenses. Have put in \$500. in case the NOACC President plans on attending any OCC meetings. The

Weyerhaeuser/NOACC scholarship will not be available in 2006. Corporate memberships are down – will work on to bring the numbers of corporate members up. Bad debt – some Chambers haven't paid their membership dues. Jason reported that he has contacted the Red Lake Chamber re their membership, but they haven't paid to date. A overall trend of lower Chamber membership numbers has been seen in the last 4 years – need to address as an Executive or Board - there are many factors involved, such as a decline in population and businesses in N.W. Ontario.

Moved by: Thunder Bay

Seconded by: Marathon

That the 2005/2006 NOACC budget be accepted as presented.

CARRIED.

2005/2006 MEETING LOCATION

Hanna Pattyson reported that the Atikokan Chamber has expressed an interested in hosting an upcoming NOACC Meeting - haven't indicated if it would be the Spring Meeting or the AGM. Hanna will contact their office to get confirmation. Sioux Lookout is interested in hosting the Spring meeting in 2006. Will set the exact date and location as soon as possible and notify all. Aguasabon will host the AGM or the Spring meeting in 2007, unless a host is needed for the AGM in 2006.

2005/2006 TELECONFERENCE MEETING DATES

NOACC conference calls are usually held in December, February and June each year – will decide on the exact date and forward to the Chambers.

PARADE OF CHAMBERS

Sioux Lookout

- Their Chamber's Executive Assistant will be replaced – it is a shared position with the Administrator of the Travel Information Centre
- They now have free internet access for the public
- Have signed a memo of agreement with the municipality – they have a non-voting representative on the Chamber Board – purpose is to share information on projects, initiatives, etc.

Marathon

- Dr. George Macey has been given a lifetime membership in the Marathon Chamber - appreciate the support of mentors and champion leaders over the years
- Northern Genesis – portal movement working on for 5 years – formed partnerships with Dryden, Marathon, Thunder Bay –did a launch preview at the recent NOMA conference
- A Chamber committee is trying to get involved in Community in Blooms – have hired a landscape artist
- Marathon residents are the #1 users of telemedicine in Ontario
- \$100. million of mining exploration is going on in N.W. Ontario

Kenora

- Their mill has been in the news lately – The Abitibi #9 machine has shut down and the #10 has been idled
- There is also good news – the Chamber has changed - have new ideas and have grown their membership list. Held a membership drive
- Expanding vision of how we want to see Kenora as a city – have a natural resource and beauty in Lake of the Woods
- Need to address how to keep our major employer here

- More people are choosing to move to Kenora – people are looking to invest in the lake region – need to lobby our city to support the retirement community

Fort Frances

- Their biggest issue over the last few years has been the decline in membership
- The Chamber has been very visible on issues in the city, so a positive trend has been seen in the membership
- A few businesses have closed in the downtown, probably due to the opening of larger stores. The smaller stores that have remained open have changed and adapted.
- The City is revitalizing the downtown – the chamber has spearheaded this to make it more competitive Theme – to promote and increase marketing through the Midwest states
- The tourist info centre was built on the other side of the highway, making it more difficult to access for visitors entering Canada from the US - have seen a tourist decline of 50%.

Dryden

- Melina Jansen reported – it has been a learning process for her – she has been in the job of Manager at the Dryden Chamber now for 6 months
- Major issue they are dealing with is the forestry industry – hoping to see some changes
- Have held a few successful events such as Moosefest, the Walleye Masters – these events are organized by the Chamber – they probably wouldn't be happening if the Chamber didn't organize them - also working on a Scarecrow Festival.
- Master mixer event is being held at the Agricultural Centre on Saturday – mix of business & entertainment in it's second year – will included a murder mystery with a Hollywood theme and pig roast
- It was a decent year with tourism – have noticed that US travel is down a little
- Working on revitalization – in the process of working on the Gateway – construction is going on – it will be beautiful coming in from the west

Thunder Bay

- The Chamber held a very successful Central Canada Outdoor Show – The first show was held in February 2005.
- Ongoing with work re manufacturing of light rail cars for Bombardier – this plant is very important to Thunder Bay's economy
- Working on a 'Made in Canada' policy – most countries in the world give some preference to sourcing domestically – Canada doesn't seem to have a policy like that – Thunder Bay Chamber is trying to spearhead this
- Protective & Emergency Training Services Centre - the Chamber is continuing to work on this project to keep people in N.W. Ontario
- Forestry sector – important issue the Chamber is working on – meet with Queen's park to remind them how important that forestry is to Ontario
- Working on the energy issue with various industries
- Ongoing work on Hwy 11/17 – need the infrastructure to be an economic force
- Working with members re status cards, fair exchange rate
- The membership is growing – Gail Brescia, Director of Membership Development has received a membership award – she placed 1st internationally in ACCE – Gail is two memberships away from her goal for this year.

RESOLUTIONS – Discussion

Dick MacKenzie stressed that is important to submit resolutions ahead of time - there is also a constitutional requirement to circulate the resolutions to member Chambers at least 20 days before the AGM. Can approve late resolutions, but this should not be the norm - it has become more frequent in the last few years. NOACC needs polished, substantial resolutions. Need to take the resolution process seriously - we need the expertise of the whole region. George Macey suggested that we dedicate the Spring Meeting to a policy session – he proposes to start the resolution process over again. We need to dedicate more time to the resolutions – they should be the most important thing that we are doing. Need to get back our cabinet meeting, which NOACC held from 1950 to 1999. Discussion followed:

- There are issues that come up during the year – the reason we have teleconference calls is to deal with those issues as they come up
- Energy, Video Lottery Terminal, Off Sale Vendors - already on the NOACC books
- The Kenora Chamber reported that the Off Sale Vendors resolution has been presented for about 20 years.
- Should have speakers that deal with the issues to assist in preparing the resolutions/policies
- Need to identify issues, bring in targeted speakers and expertise that focus on our issues
- Need to be made aware of ahead of time re the outstanding resolutions that will be brought forward since we usually don't have a lot of time
- Dick MacKenzie has agreed to be the captain editor for the resolutions

TOURISM UPDATE/REPORT

Marlis Bommers-Duszinski has notified us that she can't attend the AGM to bring a report as planned – it was noted that she sits on the NOSTA Board, etc.

Dennis Buset reported on behalf of Marlis. She is one of Dennis' clients and conveyed this situation to him recently. She was really upset by a situation where she says she lost \$5,200. from U.S. clients who were in N.W. Ontario recently for a bear hunt. She felt that the hunters were harassed by MNR conservation officers and then decided to leave - they will probably never come back. It seems that the officers were not there to help them but to almost discourage them. Tourists are a big asset – need to make tourists coming for hunting aware of what the laws in Ontario are, probably at the border when they are entering Canada and Ontario. This is a big issue, since much of our customer base from the US could disappear with all the problems dealing with the border, etc. NOACC will encourage Marlis to submit a letter with her concerns re this issue - Bob Hancherow will follow up with Marlis.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The slate for the NOACC Executive was presented by Kelli Gothard McKinnon, Past President.

President – Melissa Kuszniel

President Elect – Barry Streib

Vice-President – Bob Hancherow

Vice-President/Finance – Sabrina Donahue-Lake

Unfortunately, Levina Collins had to resign from her position as VP-Finance to work on issues in her own community of Nipigon. Appreciation was expressed to Levina for all her work.

Moved by: Aguasabon

Seconded: Marathon

That the slate of individuals nominated for the 2005/2006 NOACC Executive be accepted as presented.

CARRIED.

STATUS OF 2004 POLICIES – Melissa Kuszniier

Melissa reviewed the 2004 policies and the progress made.

- Need to promote Northern Genesis
- Innovation culture – there is now a focus on innovation and commercialization
- Twinning of the highways – it was pointed out that this policy is coming off the books – were not able to get a new resolution – will need to address and get a resolution back on the NOACC books.
- Bob Hancherow - Information was distributed, including Ournorth.com, and information highlighting the Liberal plan, the MNR Strategic directions, the Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness, and copies of other articles from NOB, Chronicle Journal, etc. covering the economy of Northern Ontario.
- Want some discussion to see if this is something that NOACC wants to work on
 - Northern Ontario is in a dilemma - we need to address the economy
 - We need concrete answers to concrete questions, a long term vision, well defined set of objectives and priorities and an action plan.
 - Need to work on this for the spring session – need to identify what we need to do

STATUS OF 2005 POLICIES - Jason Nesbitt

Two policies re Video Lottery Terminals and Off Sale Vendors are already on the books and will be until the end of 2006 – the Kenora Chamber agreed to withdraw the new resolutions submitted for 2006 regarding these issues. Should look into the process for amendment of existing policies – can take existing resolutions and vote on amendments.

- Snowmobiling – Bob indicated that very little progress has been made
- Energy – a written proposal was turned down – need to come up with an energy resolution
- The Tourist Information Centre in Fort Frances needs to be pushed – the Provincial Government has not done anything to date
- Bill 97 – need to make realistic and specific recommendations
- Mary noted that the Trans-Canada Highway policy will be coming off the books this year - need to have another resolution on this issue - will use the same background information

Moved by: Thunder Bay

Seconded by: Dryden

That the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce call on the Federal and Provincial Governments to partner on a ten year plan to build a divided highway on all sections of the Trans-Canada Highway in Northwestern Ontario, where there is no alternate Canadian highway route, starting with the Nipigon to Shabequa section; and further that this plan be in place within two (2) years.

CARRIED.

GROW BOND UPDATE – Mary Long-Irwin

The Grow Bonds Board has been formed - there are four from Northwestern Ontario and four from Northern Ontario – they are meeting this weekend to review some applications. \$13 million are available for loans – the Board meets on a regular basis. There are far more applications from Northwestern Ontario.

Mary reported that there are grants available for up to \$25,000. for under 29 for starting businesses – not a lot of applications have been received from Northwestern Ontario – need to provide the information on grants, etc to the communities. Discussion followed:

- What do we do with Grow Bonds now – we need to encourage the government to do this again, but have a different period with a bigger window, and it needs to have a bit more flexibility. Need to tell the government that we have the ability to get these funds - it is important to have more windows to

apply at least four times a year/once a quarter – the program turned out to be far more positive than the government anticipated. Can we get input on the deal flow side? Need to work with Minister Bortolucci.

LUNCH SPEAKER – David Laderoute, Manager - Thunder Bay Team MNDM

Dave Laderoute reviewed the new programs for the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), and highlighted the new mandate. The new NOHFC is open for business. After extensive consultation across the North, they feel their new programs will address the priorities of northerners by creating stronger communities, foster job creation and building future prosperity in Northern Ontario. They will also help to retain youth, and support important community initiatives and private-public partnerships that foster economic growth and job creation in the North.

He highlighted the new programs, including eligibility guidelines. The new programs are: Enterprises North Job Creation Program; Northern Ontario Youth Internship and Co-op; Northern Ontario Young Entrepreneur Program; Small Business Energy Conservation Program; Emerging Technology Program; Infrastructure and Community Development Program. The application process has been streamlined. Application forms are available on the NOHFC website at www.nohfc.com or can be obtained from Government Information Centres, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines offices or the NOHFC. The phone number for questions is: 1-800-461-8329.

FORESTRY/ENERGY PANEL DISCUSSION - September 30, 2005 1 - 4 pm

Panelists: Bill Mauro, MPP-Thunder Bay/Atikokan; Howard Hampton, MPP-Kenora/Rainy River; David Canfield, Mayor of Kenora; Bruce Hansen, Industry Consultant; Bob Gregor, Bob Gregor Consulting

Melissa Kuszniar welcomed everyone to the panel discussion – reminded all Chambers to be in attendance on Saturday morning for the debate and voting for the resolutions. She gave a recap of the current forestry resolutions on the NOACC books.

Melissa introduced Ian McCormack, who will serve as the facilitator for the panel discussion. Ian introduced each of the panelists, giving their background and roles in N.W. Ontario, and their commitment to their communities. He reviewed the format for the panel discussion, and what we want accomplished. Each panelist was given ten minutes for an opportunity to share their view. The goal will be to capture the key points that NOACC can focus on and then take action on. Should identify 4 or 5 key action items.

HOWARD HAMPTON

He distributed a map showing Northern Ontario's power generation. Information was also distributed re Northern Ontario's electricity supply and demand and national industrial hydro rate comparisons. The high cost of electricity is affecting forestry, but also mining, etc. Also need to address delivered wood costs – cost of building roads. The issue is not the supply of electricity but the affordability.

BILL MAURO

Mr. Mauro commended NOACC on the work done on Grow Bonds. He commented briefly on Minister Ramsay's announcement. It is not just electricity costs, but gas costs. Locational marginal pricing – think it's a great idea. Need to keep our Northern Ontario businesses competitive. He noted that the Provincial Government has appointed an energy conservation officer.

DAVID CANFIELD

We are all working together for the good/love of N.W. Ontario. The Minister's announcements were the first steps, but have a long way to go. How we got to this situation is immaterial. He reviewed the statistics such as number of jobs, fees, contributions in taxes, etc. of the forest industry. There are huge challenges re access to markets – ie softwood lumber issue. The Government has to understand that decisions can't be put off. Need to make the investments to make business competitive.

BRUCE HANSEN

The industry is cyclical – what we are seeing is the rationalization of the industry. We have to look after our own "house". The Minister's announcement may have helped, but we have not turned the tide. An isolationist approach will not work.

BOB GREGOR

The cost of fibre as it applies to fibre supply - is the number one issue that has to be dealt with. Forestry is by far one of the country's most important industry, and one of the largest private sector employers in Canada. Despite the industry's significance, it is not often appreciated or respected. It is important to have a sufficient, reliable and affordable wood supply.

Issues /Messages:

- Separation of Northern and Southern Ontario energy production and consumption
- Regional pricing or Ontario Pricing Management Structure
- Use more wood – access to available fibre
- Need for federal investment
- Layers and cost of guidelines, bureaucracy, regulation and downloading of costs (roads)
- An isolationist approach to energy will not work
- There is much more to do – Ontario must become competitive

NOACC Issues/Actions/Policy - Panel Discussion

Discussion followed:

➤ **Main points**

Wood Supply

- We know there is a wood supply problem – should NOACC adopt a policy position to have a moratorium on any additional withdrawals from the wood supply until a complete re-inventory is done

Industry Fundamentals

- Should NOACC focus on the economic fundamentals – fibre cost, energy cost and road cost/access
 - need to focus on growing the industry - need to reposition mills for the changing economy
 - the roads are paid by the forest companies and are used for other uses and by other usersResult = grow the industry
- NOACC's position on Ontario or Regional Energy Pricing - should be very careful re regional energy pricing
- What should NOACC's role be re multiple use of forest lands
 - How can NOACC play a role in increased use of the forest for better collaboration and better cycles of the forest
 - think that NOACC can play a moderating role of multiple use of forests and roads – tours etc of mills, camps, value added

- work cooperatively in promoting industry – wood promotion – need more in research and development if we are going to move ahead
- Political representation and the effect on decision making at provincial level re issues that affect N.W. Ontario – do we need a policy position for NOACC
 - Need to be proactive – 3 MPP’s – to approx 100 in S. Ontario – feel that N.W. Ontario needs to have some autonomy in managing the decision making process – the formula we do have does not work
- Need a forest industry impact assessment at the provincial and deputy Minister’s level to assess impacts before decisions are made
- Does NOACC have a First Nations policy/action focus? Ie. economic development and north of 51 - what is NOACC’s fit with labour/1st nations, NOMA?
 - Need to bring the other sectors re high energy costs into the discussion – it isn’t just forestry - it is very important to work with our partners – need to sing from the same songsheet with labour, NOMA, etc.

DINNER SPEAKER – George Macey - Strategies to Move Forward

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2005

Jason Nesbitt informed everyone that the Provincial Tax Increment Finance meeting will not be held in Thunder Bay.

KEN BOSHCOFF – MP – Thunder Bay/Rainy River

NOACC has come a long way – we are very fortunate that NOACC parallels the political boundaries of NOMA. He noted that every municipality in Northwestern Ontario is a member of NOMA. Their goal is for economic rejuvenation of N.W. Ontario. Target priorities have not quite been established yet – NOACC has a role to help political people set their priorities ie issues that we can get on government agendas before they become crises. A National Forestry Caucus has been formed which the MP’s in N.W. Ontario are involved in. Need to try to convince people how difficult the situation is in N.W. Ontario re forestry - need to build support and awareness about the forestry issue. The tourist border crossings are down 35% since 2001 – he found this out when meeting with tourist organizations in Fort Frances - this is a huge number, and means a great deal. Should make it easier for the Americans to come to Canada. Focused messaging is needed re important issues – there is information overload, and always too many issues to deal with. Ken still has great optimism and hope for Thunder Bay, and encouraged everyone to watch “The End of Suburbia” video. NOACC needs to concentrate on those issues that they think the federal government could get involved in – take the issues in a non-partisan way to be more effective. They are working on a national forestry policy with a view to financially assisting companies willing to reinvest in the communities they are in, and want some long range commitments.

MICHAEL POWER – Mayor of Greenstone & NOMA President

The forestry issue profile has been raised – the work of the coalition has helped. He expressed appreciation for NOACC's role as part of the coalition - still have a lot of work to do. It is not just a N.W. Ontario issue – it is a business issue affecting all businesses in Ontario – need to move this issue up to the Ontario Chamber. The economic footprint of the forest industry is second only to the auto industry. Michael highlighted some of the statistics on forestry – there was \$19. billion in total sales last year in the forestry industry, with about 85,000 people employed in the forest industry, and approximately 190,000 employed indirectly in the industry on the supply side. When we begin to look at the impact on the economy we can see the importance. The forestry industry pays approximately \$2.3. billion in taxes. 107 communities are home to 177 mills or processing facilities in S. Ontario. What happens in N.W. Ontario affects those in Southern Ontario – 232 businesses have been identified in 75 Southern Ontario communities that provide equipment and services to the forest sector. This information gives leverage to

our lobbying on the forestry industry. Need to put our energies and efforts in areas where we can be effective. He noted that one mill in N.W. Ontario purchases \$600,000 million of goods, with about \$300,000. of that which comes from S. Ontario. There is a huge impact when mills in communities close, but we won't be able to save every mill. The government contribution should not be considered aid, but an investment in N.W. Ontario, Ontario and Canada. Minister Ramsay talked about phases in his announcement which keeps the door open. We have a vehicle through FedNor - could have an innovation fund or something - that's where the federal government can be of assistance - innovation is important. Will rely on members of the coalition - we have to get the wood costs down, which is the goal in Phase four. This is an issue that is so crucial to N.W. Ontario - it is our responsibility that our lifestyle is maintained and keep the economy strong - need more young people to come here. Look forward to NOACC being part of the coalition.

Jason Nesbitt indicated that NOACC would like to set up a joint meeting with NOMA and NOACC in the near future.

DR. GEORGE MACEY – Update on Medical School

George encouraged members to check out the website for the Forestry Coalition - handout distributed. Information was also distributed re the public policy issues in the public health issue. George has been involved with NOW Alliance (Negotiating Ontario Wellness) The Alliance includes OMA, NOMA, NOACC, the Ontario College of Physicians, etc. The Executive Summary includes the wish list. George encouraged everyone to read the Klassen report. Trying to build in incubation system to get physicians to come to Northern Ontario - he noted that we are 2000 doctors short in the province. Trying to take to another level by looking at Family Health Teams. George is a member of the Medical School Bursary committee - one of the fears is that some young people who are smart enough won't or can't take on the debt, since it costs about \$18,000/year. Michael Power reported that NOMA has started a separate bursary fund tied in with the medical school for N.W. Ontario students so that there will be a pool of money to assist.

Bob Hancherow suggested that we give them a report card on listening - should give to the liberal government and hold their feet to the fire.

2006 RESOLUTIONS

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Moved by: Kenora

Seconded by: Marathon

That the resolution for Video Lottery Terminals be withdrawn from consideration for 2006 since it is still on the NOACC books.

CARRIED.

OFF SALE VENDORS

Moved by: Kenora

Seconded by: Dryden

That the resolution submitted for Off Sale Vendors be withdrawn from consideration for 2006 since it is still on the NOACC books.

CARRIED.

LOTTERY LICENSING POLICY CHANGES

Moved by: Fort Frances Seconded by: Kenora

That the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs review and revise the policies related to Lottery Licensing as set out by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and to consider the broader interpretation of culture that respects the history and social priorities of the various regions of the Province, and further that:

Municipal governments be granted the autonomy to acquire lottery licenses and disperse the proceeds of lotteries to significant community initiatives.

CARRIED.

ENERGY COSTS

Moved by: Marathon Seconded: Fort Frances

That the 2005 energy resolution submitted by Kenora, be withdrawn from consideration to be incorporated in a new energy resolution as follows:

That the Province of Ontario recognize the significant implications of the five objectives as stated above, and further that:

All orders of Government provide financial resources and develop effective public policies to reduce electricity rates to competitive levels.

CARRIED.

We need one energy strategy to move forward – Michael Power reported that NOMA will hold a conference call on Monday – NOACC and NOMA can work together on the energy issue.

Moved by: Marathon Seconded by: Thunder Bay

Recognizing the existing Memo of Understanding for NOACC, NOMA and NODN, that NOACC support and work together with NOMA in their pursuit of a Northwestern Ontario Energy Strategy.

CARRIED.

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Moved by: Fort Frances Seconded by: Aguasabon

That the Forestry Industry resolutions be tabled for a vote from member Chambers during a conference call on November 1st at 10 am, and that the NOACC Executive be directed to work on the resolutions, and that they be circulated to the Chambers for review and input before the call on November 1st.

CARRIED.

We need to use the information gained during the forestry panel discussion to prepare other resolutions re forestry.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The Atikokan Chamber submitted the resolution, and did not have a representative in attendance - it was decided that the information in the resolution will be incorporated into another energy resolution.

Rebecca Johnson gave an update on the Northern Ontario Women's Leadership Forum being held on November 17 & 18, 2005 in Thunder Bay at the Valhalla Inn. She reminded everyone that Gail Evans, who is the former Executive Vice-President of CNN will be the keynote speaker. There is a good line-up of speakers, as well as practical and informative workshops.

Eric Long gave a brief update on the Ontario Chamber of Commerce - he sits on their Board. Mary Long-Irwin gave a presentation to the OCC Board a couple of weeks ago covering various important issues. OCC is starting to pay more attention to the north, but we need to communicate effectively.

Moved by: Thunder Bay

Seconded by: Aguasabon

That the 70th NOACC Annual General Meeting be adjourned at 11:25 am.

NOACC CONFERENCE CALL
June 14, 2006 – 10 am

PARTICIPATING:

Aguasabon - Jason Nesbitt

Dryden - Dianne Loewen

Fort Frances - Alan Tibbetts

Kenora - Tina Brookes

Land of the Nipigon - Levina Collins, Paula Menchions, Michael Nitz, Holly Sitch

Marathon - Bob Hancherow, George Macey

Sioux Lookout - Dick MacKenzie

Thunder Bay - Gail Brescia, Dave Farrell, Rebecca Johnson, Barry Streib, Mary Long-Irwin,
Hanna Pattyson

Regrets: Marlene Davidson, Sabrina Donahue-Lake, Nancy Jordan, Melissa Kuszniier,
Judi Nault, Thelma Wilkins-Page

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The conference call was called to order at 10:05 am by President-Elect, Barry Streib.

2. **CONFIRM PARTICIPANTS ON CONFERENCE CALL**

The participants on the call were confirmed.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Moved by: Aguasabon Seconded by: Marathon

That the agenda for the June 14, 2006 NOACC Conference Call be approved as circulated, with the following additions: 6.9 Grow Bonds; 6.10 Passport Issue; 7.1 EDAC Conference Update

4. **DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None declared.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES - SPRING MEETING HELD APRIL 20, 21, 22, 2006 IN SIOUX LOOKOUT**

Moved by: Sioux Lookout Seconded by: Fort Frances

That the minutes of the NOACC Spring Meeting, held in Sioux Lookout on April 20, 21, 22, 2006 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED.

6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

6.1 **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS** - No report. Barry expressed regrets on behalf of Melissa Kuszniier.

6.2 **V.P. FINANCE REPORT** - No report.

6.3 **ONTARIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE**

Barry reported that he attended the Ontario Chamber Annual General Meeting held in Hamilton on May 5-7, 2006. A number of northern resolutions went forward – he noted that

the approved resolutions are on the OCC website. It was a good meeting – he stressed that OCC is representing the north, and reminded everyone that Eric Long of Thunder Bay is the representative from our area on the OCC Board.

6.4 **N.W. ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT NETWORK REPORT**

No report.

6.5. **NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL UPDATE** – Jason Nesbitt

Jason reported that the sub-committee of the council held a meeting, including Development Councils, involving youth. The report should be out in the next couple of months. Will be going live online on the MNDM website – will be doing a survey targeted to youth – encouraging youth to fill out.

Some discussion followed:

- Jason doesn't have the details on the survey, but he will forward the survey in the next two weeks for information. The information gained from the survey will be used by MNDN to create and policy.
- It was pointed out that the timing to do a youth survey is not good, since universities and colleges are done for this year. Should also get the survey out to Economic Development offices in the area.
- Also relying on community leaders to educate and encourage youth to fill out the survey.
- Jason will also inform everyone on the deadline to receive the survey.

Jason also indicated that they are looking at extending the definition of youth to beyond the age of 29. They are now gearing up for the fall – the next topic is: Opportunities for northern businesses to sustain and grow. Jason reported that he is still the Chair of the Northern Development Council.

6.6 **FORESTRY & ENERGY UPDATE** – Mary Long-Irwin

Mary reported that the Neenah mill situation is not finalized yet, but it looks like it will be moving forward. She reported that the provincial government has decided to follow the recommendations of the Ontario Power Authority and not close the coal plants in Thunder Bay and Atikokan. Thunder Bay will be not converted to gas, and Atikokan will have a research component to their facility. Mary indicated that what remains of \$300. million that has been promised to Thunder Bay - need to lobby that these dollars go back into industry, not into general coffers. Need to keep in the area – should focus the dollars on energy/use the dollars to work with the existing mills to keep them viable Everyone/all groups should be on the same page – NOMA, etc.

An announcement is expected re energy in the next two to three weeks. Mary indicated that Ontario will be divided into three areas and large industry users will be charged the wholesale energy cost for that area. Once the announcement comes out, NOACC should sent out a media release commending the government on this positive news.

Bob Hancherow reported that a Northwestern Ontario Forest Council Executive meeting will be held on June 21 – should bring up the \$300. million at that meeting as well to get their input as to what we should do with the money. Bob indicated that he will be attending the meeting. Mary will forward the information to Bob – he will ask for that to be put on the Forest Council meeting agenda.

Dave Farrell reminded everyone of the rally at the City Hall today in support of the forestry industry.

6.7 2006 SPRING MEETING EVALUATION

6.7.1 STRATEGIC PLAN

Barry indicated that the NOACC 2006/2007 Strategic plan was emailed to all participants yesterday to use for the call - it is an action plan.

Will need to discuss who from each group will be responsible for carrying out the action plan for each area of focus. The two columns "Timeline" & "Who" should be in one column, and will add a column for "Outcome/Result." It was noted that the Relationships & Image groups are trying to organize a conference call. There is more work to be done – the key is to continually follow up with team members. Barry is willing to assist with the different areas as a resource.

Dick MacKenzie reported that he has set up an MSN group for one of the teams. He reminded everyone that he has set up a website to assist which can be used as a communication tool. SKYPE is a program for free computer to telephone calling (5 people at a time can be on) Would allow smaller groups to work together. Contact Dick for details and assistance to set up.

The NOACC Executive is working on a policy for NOACC Corporate membership. Have received information on the OCC corporate membership policy which will be used as a model. Tried to get a conference call together near the end of May, but very few corporate members were available, so the Executive went ahead with a conference all to start working on a policy, and will then get input from corporate members. George Macey and Jason Nesbitt will forward the summary to Hanna and will then forward to corporate members to get input from them as well.

6.8 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - September 29, 30, October 1, 2006 Atikokan, Ontario

6.9 GROW BONDS

Bob Hancherow reported that a meeting was held in Nipigon this week. A presentation was made by MNDM which mentioned Grow Bonds. They are looking at the program, and will review it. Will then make a decision as to if they will continue with the program, since it was a pilot project last year.

Discussion followed: NOACC should make a strong statement in support of it. Felt it wasn't well advertised last year. Understand that many applications received were not good quality last year – possibly a pre-screening process should be used. Should educate NOACC members on Grow Bonds – it is a loan, which has to be paid back. Will get something off to the appropriate minister right away – George Macey, Mary Long-Irwin and Barry Streib will work on.

6.10 PASSPORT ISSUE

What should NOACC do about this issue? Gary Rogozinski reported that he has been working closely with Jerry Fisher of Morson Outfitters, who feels that the passport issue is very important. Jerry is trying to get Chambers across the area to look into this issue. Discussion followed:

- NOACC should be supporting this initiative, possibly give a little money towards lobbying to BESTT, if needed
- Tina Brookes reported that the Kenora Chamber has drafted a letter to hand out to members and have put on website to educate and inform people on the passport issue.
- Should lobby neighbouring US governors on a grass roots level on this issue
- Mary reported that the Canadian Chamber will have a resolution on this issue – they want a resolution that fits the needs across Canada. CCC is now debating this issue to prepare for the AGM. Gary indicated that he is interested in participating on a CCC conference call in the next week or so. Mary gave him the details.

7. **OTHER ISSUES**

7.1 **EDAC CONFERENCE UPDATE**

Rebecca Johnson updated everyone on the Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Conference which is taking place on September 23-26, 2006. Approximately 250-300 economic development officers across Canada, and internationally will be attending. Will be getting the conference packages out this next week. The packages will also be in the development offices. This conference will showcase what is happening in N.W. Ontario. Have excellent speakers and workshops in place. Planning to work with the people who attend by setting up meetings with N.W. Ontario businesses. If you would like to have contact with other organizations across Canada this is time to participate. It was noted that NOACC will pay for a NOACC representative to attend the conference.

8. **WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR AREA?**

No reports were given.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by: Marathon

That the NOACC conference call be adjourned at 11:15 am.

**Northwestern Ontario
Associated Chambers of Commerce
Financial Statements
For the year ended June 30, 2006**

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Driving growth

BDO Dunwoody LLP
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and Advisors

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Auditors' Report

To the Members Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce

We have audited the balance sheet of the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce as at June 30, 2006 and the statement of operations and members' equity for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

Except as explained in the following paragraph, we conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether these financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many non-profit organizations, the Organization derives receipts from membership dues, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these receipts was limited to comparisons of recorded receipts with bank deposits and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to contributions, excess of revenues over expenses, current assets and net assets.

In our opinion, except for the effects of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of the membership dues referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at June 30, 2006 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

BDO Dunwoody LLP

Chartered Accountants

Thunder Bay, Ontario
September 18, 2006

**Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce
Balance Sheet**

June 30	2006	2005
Assets		
Current		
Bank	\$ 10,050	\$ 13,458
Temporary investments (Note 2)	25,898	24,282
Accounts receivable	1,458	3,908
	37,406	41,648
Long term investment (Note 3)	10,000	10,000
	\$ 47,406	\$ 51,648
Liabilities and Members' Equity		
Accounts payable	\$ -	\$ 6,161
Membership contingency fund (Note 4)	11,950	12,820
	11,950	18,981
Members' equity	35,456	32,667
	\$ 47,406	\$ 51,648

On behalf of the Board:

_____ Director

_____ Director

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce Statement of Operations and Members' Equity

For the year ended June 30	Budget 2006	2006	2005
	(Note 4)		
Revenue			
Membership dues (Schedule)	\$ 18,500	\$ 19,900	\$ 18,640
Interest income	1,750	2,016	1,712
Corporate memberships	3,000	4,000	5,000
Miscellaneous	-	-	3,000
	23,250	25,916	28,352
Expenditure			
Advertising	-	119	-
Office expenses	5,800	6,302	5,781
Administration fee	6,000	6,400	6,420
Bank charges	140	125	137
Ontario Chamber of Commerce meetings	500	1,135	389
NOACC meetings	100	129	75
Bad debt expense	500	1,500	490
Lobby expenses	5,000	577	8,140
Lobby travel	-	1,162	-
Northwestern Ontario Forest Council membership	2,000	2,000	2,000
Scholarship	-	1,500	1,500
Spring and annual meetings	-	584	-
Insurance expense	650	621	621
Telephone and fax	2,060	1,522	1,939
Web page design	500	321	460
	23,250	23,997	27,952
Excess of revenue over expenditure for the year	-	1,919	400
Members' equity, beginning of year	32,667	32,667	32,192
Transfer from membership contingency fund (Note 4)	-	870	75
Members' equity, end of year	\$ 32,667	\$ 35,456	\$ 32,667

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

June 30, 2006

Organization	The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce is a non-profit organization incorporated without share capital under the laws of Ontario. The Chamber is a regional organization operating to serve the collective interests of all sections of Northwestern Ontario by promoting social and economic development and to be the collective voice of Northwestern Ontario business to the government, the media and the general public. The Organization is tax exempt under the Canadian Income Tax Act.
Financial Instruments	Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from its financial instruments.
Capital Assets	Capital assets are expensed in the financial statements at the time the payment is made.
Revenue Recognition	The Organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Revenue from membership dues is recorded on an accrual basis, based on receipts subsequent to the year end.
Long Term Investments	Long term investments are stated at cost.
Contributed Services	Due to the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.
Membership Contingency Fund	The Organization has established a reserve fund for membership contingency. Transfers to and from the fund are determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce Notes to Financial Statements

June 30, 2006

1. Incorporation

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce was incorporated on March 8, 2000 as a Corporation without share capital under the Business Corporations Act.

2. Temporary Investments

The funds are invested in a Money Market Fund.

3. Long Term Investment

The Northern Ontario Grow Bond was purchased and recorded at cost in the amount of \$10,000 on April 11, 2005. Simple interest on the principal amount of the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds accrues from April 11, 2005 at the rate of 4.00% per annum and is payable on April 11, 2006 and every April 11 thereafter up to and including the maturity date. On the maturity date of April 11, 2010 or on such earlier date within the terms and conditions endorsed on the Bond the Northern Ontario Grow Bond becomes payable.

4. Membership Contingency Fund

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1999, the Board of Directors passed a resolution establishing a membership contingency fund which is to be maintained at a level of the greater of 50% of the current year's membership income or \$10,000.

5. Budget Figures

The budgeted figures are presented without audit and are for comparative purposes only.

6. Cash Flow Statement

A statement of cash flows is not presented since the cash flow information is readily apparent from the other financial statements.

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce Schedule of Membership Dues

For the year ended June 30	2006	2005
Atikokan	\$ 640	\$ 700
Dryden	2,600	2,530
Fort Frances	1,690	1,700
Geraldton	690	770
Kenora	1,070	910
Marathon	500	350
Rainy River	-	390
Sioux Lookout	1,400	1,300
Aguasabon - Schreiber, Rosspport, Jackfish, Terrace Bay	550	620
Land of Nipigon	380	420
Emo	530	100
Thunder Bay	9,850	8,850
	\$ 19,900	\$ 18,640

The accompanying summary of significant accounting policies and notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

**Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber of Commerce
Budget for Year ending June 2007**

Revenue

Membership Dues	\$20,000.00
Corporate Memberships	4,000.00
Interest Income	2,000.00
Total	\$26,000.00

Expenses

Advertising	\$ 100.00
Office Expense	6,500.00
Administration Fee	6,000.00
Bank Charges	150.00
Ontario Chamber meeting expense	1,200.00
NOACC Meetings	150.00
Bad Debt Expense	500.00
Lobby Expense	5,000.00
NWO Forest Council Membership	2,000.00
Spring/Fall Meetings	500.00
Insurance Expense	650.00
Telephone and Fax	2,000.00
Web Page Maintenance Expense	1,000.00
Total Expenses	\$25,750.00
Excess Projected Revenue over Expenses	\$ 250.00



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

NOMINATIONS FOR 2006-2007 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT:

Incumbent: Melissa Kuszniel

Barry Streib

PRESIDENT-ELECT:

Incumbent: Barry Streib

Dick Mackenzie

VICE-PRESIDENT:

Incumbent: Bob Hancherow

George Macey

VICE-PRESIDENT/FINANCE:

Incumbent: Sabrina Donahue-Lake

Sabrina Donahue-Lake

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAMBER

DIRECTOR

ALTERNATE

Aguasabon

Jason Nesbitt

Dan Brenzavich

Atikokan

Judi Simmons

Nancy Jordan

Dryden

Sabrina Donahue-Lake

Dianne Loewen

Emo

Paul Kyro

Fort Frances

Alan Tibbetts

Geraldton

Katherine Russwurm

Ron Melhuish

Kenora

Thelma Wilkins-Page

Tina Brookes

Marathon

George Macey

Bob Hancherow

Sioux Lookout

Dick MacKenzie

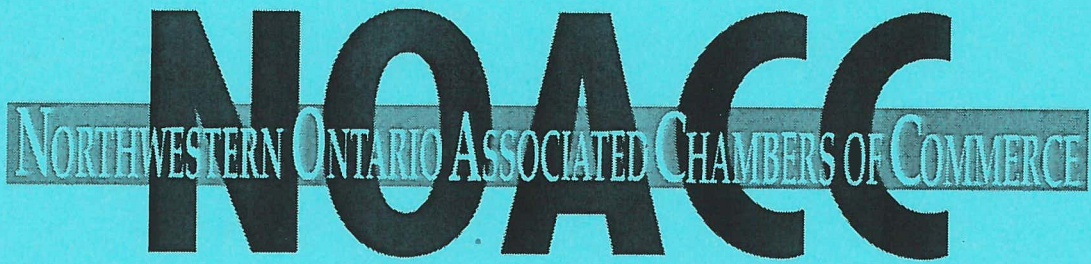
The Land of the Nipigon

Levina Collins

Thunder Bay

Barry Streib

Kelli Gothard McKinnon



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Amended September, 2002

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VALUES

NOACC focuses as the voice of business for Northwestern Ontario to ensure economic development and quality of life for all communities in Northwestern Ontario.

VISION

To be the active link and the voice of business in the formulation of public policy contributing to the economic development of Northwestern Ontario.

MISSION STATEMENT

The NOACC team serves the membership by providing a strong membership focus with a clear powerful vision and team NOACC will communicate this Northwestern Ontario business vision to designated targets.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 - Name

The Association shall be known as the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce, hereafter called "the Association".

ARTICLE 2 - Objectives

The objectives of "the Association" shall be:

- I. To serve the collective interests of all sections of Northwestern Ontario by promoting social and economic development.
- II. To be the collective voice of Northwestern Ontario business to government, the media and the general public.
- III. To be the active link and the voice of business in the formulation of public policy contributing to the economic development of Northwestern Ontario.
- IV. To promote the image of the business individual within the community.
- V. To put forward concern for the civic and cultural aesthetic values of the region.
- VI. To create an independent financial base if feasible, not totally dependent on membership fees, which accelerates the level and amount of membership services and the values of N.W.O.
- VII. To market NOACC to all N.W.O. communities and the membership.
- VIII. To promote and improve trade, commerce and the economic, civil and social welfare of Northwestern Ontario.
- IX. To communicate with and to lobby the provincial and federal government to ensure accountable and responsible actions which support regional goals.
- X. To function as an organization of business, professional, and other like-minded people who share their viewpoint, of promoting good government at all levels through intelligent opinions and serious advocating.
- XI. To provide a professional and social network for interaction among local chambers through regional meetings, newsletters, electronically and cooperative efforts.

MISSION STATEMENT

Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce is the active voice of business in Northwestern Ontario.

We provide leadership to ensure quality of life and a healthy economy for our member Chambers, the Regional business community, and the citizens of Northwestern Ontario.

We communicate with and lobby government to ensure accountable and responsible public policy which Supports regional goals.

Through regional meetings, newsletters, electronically and cooperative efforts, we provide a professional and a social network for interaction among local Chambers.

ARTICLE 3A - Chamber Membership

The membership of the Association shall consist of all Chambers of Commerce located within Northwestern Ontario. (Northwestern Ontario is defined as that portion of the Province of Ontario lying to the west of a line drawn due north and south through White River, Ontario; the Districts of Thunder Bay, Rainy River and Kenora.) Map Appendix A.

ARTICLE 3B – Corporate Membership

Corporate Membership be made available to all Northwestern Ontario businesses who are members in good standing in their local Chamber of Commerce.

ARTICLE 3C – First Nations Membership

First Nations membership be made available to First Nations located within Northwestern Ontario who are members in good standing in their local Chamber of Commerce or who are located in an area not served by a Chamber.

ARTICLE 4 - Officers

The officers of the "Association" shall be:

President
Immediate Past President
President Elect
Vice-President
Vice-President of Finance

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

- I. These Officers shall constitute the Executive Committee, which shall have power to act for and in the name of "the Association" between annual meetings. Further, the President shall have power in case of emergency, to submit matters to the members of the Executive Committee and call for a vote thereon and act on such vote as fully as if the matter had been passed at a regular meeting of the Executive.
- II. All Officers except the Past President, shall be elected by general vote of the membership at the Annual Meeting. The Past President's position shall hold office until the President becomes Past-President by virtue of his successor being elected as herein set out.
- III. Any Officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board members present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering such removal from office. The Chief Operating Officer upon petition of two members of the Board must call such a meeting.

ARTICLE 5 – Board

- I. The Board of “the Association” shall consist of the Executive and one representative of each member Chamber of Commerce exclusive of the Officers.
- II. Each member Chamber of Commerce shall appoint one director together with an alternate to represent that Chamber on the NOACC Board of Directors. The appointed director or alternate shall exercise one vote.
- III. The Board shall meet immediately after the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting and shall:
 1. appoint standing committees and other “ad hoc” committee
 2. conduct any other business as required by “the Association”

ARTICLE 6 – Vacancies

- I. When a vacancy occurs among the Executive, the Board shall appoint a qualified person to the office vacated for the balance of the term of office.
- II. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of the Past President, the Board will appoint a Past-President from the general membership giving priority to Past-Presidents wherever possible.
- III. When a vacancy occurs on the Board, exclusive of the Executive, the member organization losing representation by reason of the vacancy shall appoint a successor for the balance of the term of office.

ARTICLE 7 – Duties of Officers

THE PRESIDENT

The President shall:

- I. Be the Chief Executive Officer of “the Association”.
Preside at all general meetings, executive and board meetings.
- II. Be ex-officio, a member of all Association Committees.
- III. Exercise general supervision over the business affairs of “the Association”.
- IV. Keep “the Association” and Executive informed and present a general report on the activities and affairs of “the Association” at the Annual General Meeting.

- V. Be the official spokesperson/liaison on behalf of "the Association" with government, media and external interest groups.
- VI. Assist in the direction of the undertakings of the Strategic Committee.
- VII. Assist in the management of issues, resolutions and position papers.
- VIII. Direct relationships and liaisons with coalitions.
- IX. Consider in the future the possibility that the COO and President have combined duties and be a paid position.

THE PRESIDENT ELECT

The President Elect shall:

- I. Be responsible for the Resolutions Committee, and the Resources Development Committee.
- II. Act in the place of the President when the President is absent.
- III. Have such authority to carry out such other duties as the Executive from time to time may prescribe.
- IV. Chair the Strategic Committee (lobbying, resolutions, position papers and issues)
- V. Be responsible for the preparation of final resolutions, position papers and lobby strategy.
- VI. It is the responsibility of the President elect to forward the resolutions to the appropriate Minister and/or organization.
- VII. If there is no reply within six to eight weeks a second effort is to be initiated.
- VIII. It is the responsibility of the President elect and Chief Operating Officer to communicate to the membership information concerning the resolutions and the position papers.
- IX. The position papers and resolutions are to be managed in the same manner.

VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice-President shall:

- I. Be responsible for the Member Services Committee and the Convention Planning Committee.
- II. Act in the place of the President when both the President and the President elect are absent.
- III. Have such authority to carry out such other duties as the Executive from time to time may prescribe.
- IV. Assist the President elect in lobbying efforts, preparation of position papers.
- V. Chair Review Committee.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF FINANCE

The VP of Finance shall:

- I. Manage all sources of revenues.
- II. Keep or cause to be kept full and accurate books of account in which shall be recorded all receipts and disbursements of "the Association".
- III. Under the direction of the Executive Committee, control the safe keeping of securities and the deposit of funds of "the Association" in a Chartered Bank or Trust Company.
- IV. Render to the Board and to meetings of the Executive Committee, an account of all transactions as the VP of Finance and of the financial position of "the Association".
- V. Render to the annual Meeting an audited statement of the financial position of "the Association".
- VI. Chair the Finance Committee.
- VII. Set annual Budget following guidelines as set out in the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce Constitution or the OCC manual as a suggestion. (Appendix B)
- VIII. Act as overseer of book keeping and liaison with "the association" appointed Chartered Accountant.
- IX. Manage the reserve funds and be the administrator for the rollover of investments.
- X. Chair Fundraising Committee.
- XI. Manage the member's equity fund.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

The Immediate Past President shall:

- I. Chair advisory committee of past presidents and special advisors.
- II. Chair the Nominating Committee.
- III. Be responsible for the Constitution Review Committee.
- IV. Rule on challenges to the chair and questions re: the interpretation of the Constitution.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

- I. The COO is to be compensated by salary or contract. Compensation is a line item of the budget.
- II. The job description is to be drafted by the Review Committee.
- III. The COO is responsible for the day to day operation of "the Association".
- IV. There is to be a periodic evaluation by the Review Committee when deemed necessary by the executive council.
- V. The COO is responsible for communication.
- VI. The COO sets the agenda for executive and board meetings.
- VII. The COO sets the agenda for the Annual General Meeting and special meetings with the Vice-President and the Convention Committee.

ARTICLE 8 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of "the Association" shall commence on the first day of July each year.

ARTICLE 9 – Revenues

- I. Funds for the operation of “the Association” shall be derived from: an annual per capita membership levy of each Chamber of Commerce, which shall be established at each Annual Meeting by a majority vote of the membership.
- II. Membership fees for Corporate members shall be \$500. per year. The membership fees will be reviewed at each Annual Meeting by a majority vote of the membership.
- III. Membership fees for First Nations membership shall be \$500. per year. The fees will be reviewed and amended at each Annual Meeting by a majority vote of the membership.
- IV. Other such income opportunities as shall be deemed necessary and appropriate when approved by a majority vote of the membership.

ARTICLE 10 – Meetings

“The Association” shall hold **two** general meetings each year:

- I. The Annual General Meeting to be held the last full weekend in September by invitation in member Chamber of Commerce municipalities.
- II. A spring meeting to be held by invitation in a member Chamber of Commerce Community in the third or fourth weekend of April.
- III. A majority vote of the membership present at an Annual General Meeting will determine the location of the following spring and Annual Meetings.
- IV. The Chief Operating Officer shall be responsible for ensuring notice of the date and place of the Annual General Meeting furnished in writing to all member Chambers at least ninety days before such date.
- V. At any Annual General Meeting or Special Meetings, twenty-five percent (25%) of the member Chambers in good standing shall be a quorum, and unless otherwise specifically provided, the majority of members present shall be competent to perform all acts which are or shall be directed to be done at any such meetings. Should a quorum not be formed, thirty minutes after the meeting is called to order, the meeting shall stand adjourned to a time determined by the President.

VI. The meetings of "the Association" shall be conducted according to "the Association" Constitution and By-Laws. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern matters not addressed by the Constitution and By-laws.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

All NOACC meetings of the general membership, Board, Executive or Committee will include a declaration of conflict of interest to occur after the acceptance of the meeting agenda.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest will be defined as any current, or anticipated future financial interest associated with the discussion of, or the forwarding of a motion for acceptance or rejection.

Financial Interest

A financial interest will be defined as direct or indirect, through business or family, an ownership or investment interest, or compensation arrangement with any entity that the Corporation has a transaction with, or arrangement with. OR directly or indirectly through business or family an ownership or investment interest, or compensation arrangement with any entity that the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement with.

Procedures

Executive or Board members will be absent from, and not contribute to discussions regarding agenda items to which they have declared conflicts. As such, they may not forward or vote on motions associated with agenda items to which they have declared a conflict. Member Chambers or Corporate members, where appropriate, may assign an alternative Board Member to vote or attend meetings should their representative have declared a conflict of interest.

ARTICLE 11 – Expenses

- I. If “the Association” requests the attendance of its Executive or other members at meetings of interests to “the Association”, “the Association” may pay their reasonable expenses.
- II. Members who are elected/appointed to the Board of Directors of the Ontario Chamber shall be eligible for an expense subsidy.
- III. The Executive Committee shall determine the limit of the subsidy from time to time.
- IV. Discretionary fund as a line item budget for president expenses.

Guidelines for Purchase of Products/Service

Products and services used by NOACC with a value greater than \$2000. will be purchased through the following process and be governed by the following restrictions:

1. A request for price quote and/or tender will be forwarded to each Member Chamber for distribution to their respective membership and relevant businesses in Northwestern Ontario.
2. A purchasing committee to include either the President or COO, will review quotes and/or tenders.
3. The purchasing committee will give administration one (1) to two (2) weeks to send out the tender and has four (4) weeks from the time of distribution to Member Chambers to make a decision on the tender.
4. Board or Executive members will not be assigned to any purchasing committee to which they anticipate responding to a request for a price quote or tender.
5. The Committee may accept any quote or tender and may reflect interested parties previous donations to NOACC in their evaluation.
6. Expenditures made on behalf of NOACC that exceed the line item allowances within the NOACC annual budget will be approved by the Board of Directors.

7. Should products or services be unavailable for purchase through the membership, alternative suppliers will be sought by direction of the purchasing committee and the expenditure must be approved by the Board of Directors. Preference will be given to Chamber members.

ARTICLE 12 – Committees

The following committees shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting or at the Board meeting immediately following the Annual General Meeting:

NOACC COMMITTEES

Finance	Chaired by VP of Finance
Member Services	VP
Review Committee	VP
Convention Planning	VP
Resource Development	President Elect
Nominating	Past President
Resolutions	President Elect and VP
Strategic Committee	President Elect
Position Papers	President Elect and VP
Communications	President
Constitution Review	Past President

The Executive may appoint other committees as required.

ARTICLE 13 – Limitation of Action

- I. No action shall be taken by “the Association” in matters particularly affecting any city, town, village or district without the approval of the Chamber of Commerce, or Municipal; council of such city, town, village or district.
- II. Notwithstanding the above, the Board of Directors must have consensus on issue related resolutions before proceeding. A simple majority vote of the Board is required on all other matters.

ARTICLE 14 – Amendments

- I. Amendments to the Constitution shall be made only at an Annual General Meeting or Special meetings of “the Association” by a two-thirds vote of member Chambers present and voting.
- II. Provided that no proposed amendment shall be acted upon at any Annual or Special General Meeting unless a copy of the proposed amendment has been lodged with the Chief Operating Officer of “the Association” thirty days before the date of the Annual or special general meeting and unless a copy thereof shall have been mailed to the Secretary of each member Chamber of Commerce at least twenty days before the date of such Annual or Special General Meeting.
- III. It shall be the duty of the Chief Operating Officer of “the Association” to cause such copies to be mailed.
- IV. Only a member Chamber of Commerce in good standing may propose amendments to the Constitution.

ARTICLE 15 – By-laws

By-laws consistent with this Constitution embodying additional provisions for the government of “the Association” shall be adopted and may be amended at any Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting in such manner as may be set out therein.

BY-LAWS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- I. The nominating committee shall present to the Annual General Meeting, a slate of Officers for the positions of President, President Elect, Vice President, and Vice-President of Finance. Written consent will be obtained from any person who is nominated.
- II. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a list of candidates for election as officers of "the Association" who shall have previous experience as a Board Executive Officer of a member Chamber. The recommended slate shall be circulated to member Chambers prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- III. Additional nominations may be made in writing to the Nominating Committee provided any such nomination is seconded by the signature of an authorized person, representing a Chamber in good standing and the written consent of the nominee is obtained.
- IV. Officers will be elected for a term of one year. They may be re-elected to a second one year term.
- V. The election of officers shall take place at the Annual General Meeting. Each Chamber Member shall have one vote.

POLICY RESOLUTIONS AND POSITION PAPERS AT THE GENERAL MEETING

- I. Policy resolutions and Position Papers may be submitted by any Member and shall be presented in writing to the Chief Operating Officer at least forty-five (45) days preceding the Annual General Meeting at which they are to be considered. The Chief Operating Officer shall cause all resolutions to be circulated to the members at least 20 days prior to the AGM. Late resolutions may be considered, subject to a two-thirds majority vote at the AGM.
- II. The Resolutions Committee shall review each Policy Resolution or Policy Paper prior to the AGM. At the AGM the Resolution Committee shall report their findings on each Policy Resolution or Position Paper and shall recommend them for adoption, rejection or amendment.

- III. Each member Chamber in good standing is entitled to one vote on each Policy Resolution or Policy Paper. Any changes to this process voted at an AGM shall apply to the ensuing AGM.
- IV. Acceptance or rejection of Policy Resolutions or Position Papers at the AGM shall be by majority vote of Chamber members.
- V. Policy Resolutions and Positions Papers shall be NOACC policy for a two (2) year period. After this period they must be re-submitted as outlined in this constitution.

PROCEDURES FOR THE PROCESSING OF NOACC RESOLUTIONS AND POSITION PAPERS

- I. Each resolution is deemed to be duly moved and seconded by the originating Chamber and the operative clause only will be read aloud.
- II. The recommendation of the Resolutions Committee will also be read aloud.
- III. Amendments by the Resolution Committee are deemed to fully be moved and seconded by the Committee.
- IV. A representative from the sponsoring Chamber will be given first opportunity to speak.
- V. All speakers must identify themselves and their Chamber and must confine their remarks to a maximum of three minutes.
- VI. No delegate will be permitted to speak more than once on any one resolution until all other delegates wishing to speak have been heard.
- VII. The chair also deserves the right to alternate speakers, those speaking in favor or in opposition.
- VIII. Amendments to resolutions duly moved and seconded will be accepted from the floor for voting purposes.
- IX. Motions to refer a resolution will be in order at any time and will be voted on immediately without debate.
- X. At the close of debate, a vote will be called on the resolution. (Note you will voting on the resolution itself, not on the recommendation of the Resolutions Committee.)
- XI. A majority vote is required to accept the resolution or position paper.
- XII. For procedures not covered by the above, Robert's Rules of Orders will apply.
- XIII. Position papers will be treated the same as the resolutions.

TURN AROUND OF POSITION PAPERS AND RESOLUTIONS

- I. It is the responsibility of the President elect to turn the resolutions and the position papers around.
- II. If there is no reply within six to eight weeks a second effort is to be initiated.
- III. It is the responsibility of the President Elect and Chief Operating Officer to communicate to the membership information concerning the resolutions and the position papers.
- IV. The position papers are to be managed in a similar manner to the resolutions.

AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS

- I. Amendments of these by-laws shall be made only at General Meetings of "the Association" by a two-thirds vote of the member Chambers in good standing present.
- II. Provided that no proposed amendment shall be acted upon at any Annual General Meeting unless a copy of the proposed amendment has been lodged with the Chief Operating Officer of "the Association" thirty days before the date of the Annual General Meeting and unless a copy thereof shall have been mailed to the secretary of each member at least 20 days before the date of such General Meeting. It shall be the duty of the Chief Operating Officer of "the Association" to cause such copies to be mailed.
- III. Only a member Chamber of Commerce in good standing may propose amendments to the by-laws.

MEMBERSHIP CONTINGENCY FUND

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 1999, the Board of Directors passed a resolution establishing a membership contingency fund which is to be maintained at a level of the greater of 50% of the current year's membership income or \$10,000.

RESOLUTION AND POSITION PAPERS

RESOLUTION FORMAT

- I. Background
- II. Issue
- III. Resolution

POSITION PAPER FORMAT

- I. Title Page
- II. Contents Page
- III. Executive Summary
- IV. Background and History
- V. Public Policy Issue
- VI. NOACC Position
- VII. Public Policy Recommendations
- VIII. Supportive documentation
- IX. Research
- X. Sources
- XI. Appendices

POSITION PAPER QUALITY

The position papers will represent NOACC's corporate image. They must be drafted with sound and solid research. The presentation and submission must be professional being laser printed and bound.

POSITION PAPER PREPARATION

The membership will determine the priorities and topics of the position papers. A volunteer individual or chamber will prepare the papers with the Strategic Committee. If it is deemed necessary the Executive Council can assign a contractor. The VP of Finance will factor in a budget amount for the payment of a contractor. The position papers should be professional and be administered by the Strategy Committee.

TURN AROUND

It is the responsibility of the President elect to turn the resolutions and the position papers around. If there is no reply within six to eight weeks a second effort is to be initiated. It is the responsibility of the President Elect and Chief Operating Officer to communicate to the membership information concerning the resolutions and the position papers. The position papers are to be managed in a similar manner to the resolutions.

BENEFITS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

- I. NOACC will stay in phase with other organizations regionally and globally through modernization and refocus.
- II. NOACC has the responsibility to adjust because of its history, (75 years) traditions, heritage and statesmanship.
- III. Improved membership recruitment and retention and follow up through modernization and refocus.
- IV. The process serves as validation of the leadership for membership.
- V. The process establishes identity and credibility for members communities, and most importantly the "Targets" lobby targets, politicians, and sister agencies (network NOMA, OCC).
- VI. NOACC will achieve adjustment to the new political and economic paradigms.

STRUCTURAL REVIEW

- I. A bi-yearly standard evaluation is required to update the by-laws and renew update refresh NOACC goals and direction.
- II. The relevance of the review is elevated global, national, local, socio-economic that has been right sized and restructured.
- III. It is necessary for the re-synchronization of NOACC with the new economy that has been restructured and downsized.
- IV. The membership, leadership and the communities also drive constitutional review in times of flux towards balance and stability.
- V. Mechanisms and tools are required for restructuring.
- VI. Constitutional review focuses the Executive Council and the membership and hence a continuing business education.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this document may be found in the accompanying research and resource manual the pillars of NOACC.

- I. A blend of the Thunder Bay Constitution review with their history and traditions.

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- II. The organizational guidelines as set out in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce organizational manual for new chambers and refreshing existing chambers.
- III. There are other constitutional examples in the manual. (Rotary, Toastmasters, the Ontario Dental Association, and community Member Chambers.

Blended with these many avenues is extensive executive council input and many opportunities for further membership input (minimum 3 mailings and AGM debates. This forms the foundations and basis for the direction and thrusts of the constitutional review.

SYNOPSIS OF AMENDMENT BY-LAW PROCESS

- I. Duty of Past President.
- II. Mandatory grassroots membership input.
- III. Deadline for amendment 30 days before AGM.
- IV. Membership distribution of amendments 20 days before AGM.
- V. Vote for amendment carried by two-thirds of members present.
- VI. Recommendation mail out three times for membership input.
- VII. Massaged by the Review Committee.

Amended: 2001, 2002

BY-LAW AMENDMENTS - SEPTEMBER, 2006

Article 3B- Corporate Membership

Corporate Memberships are available to all Northwestern Ontario businesses who are members in good standing in their local Chamber of Commerce.

The core businesses of the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce are twofold:

- I) Developing public policy alternatives which foster economic progress and a superior quality of living in Northwestern Ontario;
- II) Vigorously advocating those policy alternatives to government, the media and the general public to ensure their implementation.

Your company's membership in the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber allows you to contribute to the development of the NOACC's policy positions through your resolutions submitted at our Annual General Meeting in September. The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber of Commerce is among the most influential advocates for business in the Province.

Membership in NOACC also provides the opportunity for representatives from your company to meet with executives from other firms to share ideas and to meet with senior bureaucrats, politicians and other policy thinkers who might be invited to our meetings.

With your NOACC membership you also gain access to The Ontario Chamber of Commerce which can be your link to Queen's Park and to the emerging issues which impact your business activities.

NOACC represents every active Chamber of Commerce from Marathon to the Manitoba border. Our membership includes over 2000 businesses and 14 of the largest corporations in the region. We have been the Voice of Business in Northwestern Ontario since 1931. The organization believes that business is the engine of the exceptional way of life that is enjoyed in Ontario. Business success creates a more prosperous Ontario, both economically and socially. Whether you want to be among the NOACC's most active participants or simply a passive supporter, make sure your company is an NOACC member.

ARTICLE 3C – First Nations Membership

First Nations memberships are available to First Nations Businesses located within Northwestern Ontario who are members in good standing in their local Chamber of Commerce or who are located in an area not served by a Chamber.

The core businesses of the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce are twofold:

I) Developing public policy alternatives which foster economic progress and a superior quality of living in Northwestern Ontario;

II) Vigorously advocating those policy alternatives to government, the media and the general public to ensure their implementation.

Your First Nation Company's membership in the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber allows you to contribute to the development of the NOACC's policy positions through your resolutions submitted at our Annual General Meeting in September. The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chamber of Commerce is among the most influential advocates for business in the Province.

Membership in NOACC also provides the opportunity for representatives from your company to meet with executives from other firms to share ideas and to meet with senior bureaucrats, politicians and other policy thinkers who might be invited to our meetings.

With your NOACC membership you also gain access to The Ontario Chamber of Commerce which can be your link to Queen's Park and to the emerging issues which impact your business activities.

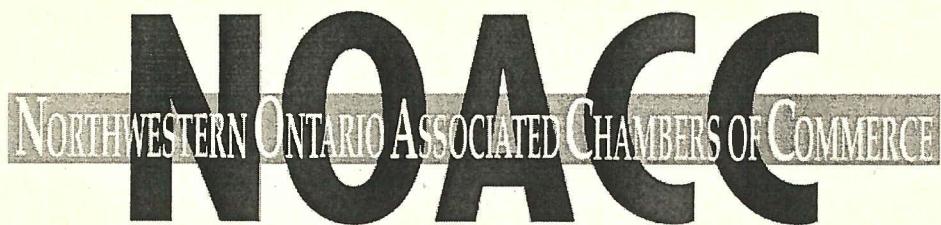
NOACC represents every active Chamber of Commerce from Marathon to the Manitoba border. Our membership includes over 2000 businesses and 14 of the largest corporations in the region. We have been the Voice of Business in Northwestern Ontario since 1931. The organization believes that business is the engine of the exceptional way of life that is enjoyed in Ontario. Business success creates a more prosperous Ontario, both economically and socially. Whether you want to be among the NOACC's most active participants or simply a passive supporter, make sure your company is an NOACC member.

POLICY RESOLUTIONS AND POSITION PAPERS AT THE GENERAL MEETING

VII. In cases of urgency where an issue is time sensitive a resolution may be submitted by a chamber via e-mail to the Chief Operating Officer to be circulated to the resolution committee whom shall recommend it for adoption, rejection or amendment to the membership. The assigned NOACC representative for each individual chamber would then electronically vote on the resolution (reply e-mail either in favour or not) within a reasonable timeline.

NOTE: The AGM is still the preferred channel to discuss, approve and carry resolutions.

Presented by Constitutional Review Committee



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

**2005 & 2006
NOACC
POLICIES**

2005 POLICIES

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NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

Background:

Non-profit organizations and hotel owners are finding it harder and harder to attract people to their business to make them profitable. We need to find new and creative ways to attract patrons to N.W.O. establishments. We have to continue to find new ways of making our businesses grow.

Issue:

The current laws that govern the province of Ontario do not allow VLT's in any non-profit or hotel. The impact is we cannot attract the people to the places to make the business grow and expand. We constantly see people going across our borders to Manitoba or the United States to use these machines. This business should stay in Ontario for our people, not continually going out.

Recommendation:

That the Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs begin a two (2) year field trial of Video Lottery Terminals in the premises of non-profit organizations and hotels in Northwestern Ontario, and that within thirty (30) months, an analysis of the economic benefits of the trial be provided to the public.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

OFF SALE VENDORS

Background:

At the present time, the sale of beer is regulated by the brewer's retail and they set the hours. What we are asking is for the appropriate agency to look at this issue and allow businesses to apply to be in a trial project.

Issue:

Beer can only be sold at the brewer's retail in Ontario; we would like this to be at hotels, as off-sale beer. The result would be to increase business to our already fading hotels with another source of revenue to keep them alive and prospering.

Recommendation:

That the Government of Ontario review current policy regarding off-sale beer. Further, that they consider allowing an approach that is best for our hotel owners and tourists; and to permit off-sale beer on a trial basis to N.W. Ontario hotels and monitor the pros and cons of the trial project.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

SNOWMOBILING

Background:

This resolution is based on The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) paper titled "Snowmobiling in Ontario – Issues and Opportunities" dated January 2004. Efile and hard copies are available.

"The OFSC is a not for profit, volunteer driven organization ... The impact of organized recreational snowmobiling on the Ontario economy is considerable and growing. Using the Conference Board of Canada's TEAM model, the total estimated economic activity created by snowmobiling during the 96/97 season exceeded \$1 billion. Provincial sales taxes alone are estimated at \$73 million due to this activity.

Snowmobiling provides the image and the activity to draw tourists out of region and out of province to inject fresh dollars into local economies at a time of year when it is most needed."

Issue:

"During the past two years, the OFSC has been challenged by several major issues and opportunities that are determining the future of snowmobiling."

The paper illustrates ten "big picture" challenges that the OFSC is contending with. The OFSC is requesting assistance from government and industry partners in combating these challenges.

The impact of the problem is quite simple – to sustain and improve the snowmobiling industry in Ontario, it is mandatory that any government and industry partner that receives revenue or benefits from the snowmobile industry must be prepared to reinvest human resources and financial contributions back into the industry. To create sustainability, basic business sense dictates that revenues should be offset by fair expense ratios. Therefore, the hospitality industry and all three levels of government must become accountable for the benefits that they receive from this industry. To not listen to this critical plea for help, to not react immediately will certainly witness the crumbling of this billion dollar industry. In essence, the governments and industry partners will lose a cash cow.

Recommendations:

That the Provincial and Federal Governments support the OFSC paper titled "Snowmobiling in Ontario - Issues and Opportunities" dated January 2004; And further that the Governments of Ontario and Canada seriously reinvest into this industry to create and maintain a healthy economic atmosphere within our communities.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

ENERGY

Background:

Northwestern Ontario's population is declining. Often, in discussion over the declining population, a common issue of energy arises. There is an inherent concern and belief that our present provincial energy policies curb retention and expansion of existing business/industry within our region – as well as hinder the attraction of new business/industry to the region.

With its energy-intensive resource driven regional economy, Northwestern Ontario is more vulnerable to changes in the electricity marketplace than other services-based regions of the Province. Recent and ongoing energy-related initiatives on the part of Provincial and Federal governments, agencies and institutions will result in dramatic changes to every aspect of the electric power sector over the next few years. We must recognize that this context presents a unique opportunity to enhance Northwestern Ontario's competitive position as a resource-based economy.

Therefore, with interest from NOACC, an informal group of NWO concerned stakeholders from various interests (unofficially tagged as The Northwestern Ontario Energy Task Force) met at Quetico Centre in the fall of 2003 to discuss a Northwestern Ontario Energy Development Strategy. Much of the discussion focused around the Independent Electricity Market Operator's research seeking ways and means of bringing about greater wholesale price stability. Their focus has been on the benefits of a "committed" Day Ahead Market (DAM); and on the replacement of uniform provincial pricing with "Nodal" pricing – also known as Location-based (or just Locational) Marginal Pricing (LMP).

Both concepts are being debated in Northwestern Ontario and many believe that they could be valuable economic development tools if the results prove lower production costs for our resource-based economy. Although regional pricing is being debated in Northwestern Ontario, the debates are resulting in more questions about the direct and indirect impacts on the economy. As a result, a request for proposal (RFP) has been developed to select a consultant who can provide the policy analysis required to make proper judgments on this issue with respect to locational marginal pricing, day ahead market and an effective electricity delivery model for Northwestern Ontario. The RFP contains the following objectives:

1. Review and critically analyze recent studies by government agencies, government-appointed commissions and others on issues directly impacting energy supplies and delivered costs to consumers in Northwestern Ontario. Outline the impacts that the proposed models would separately have on each of the following components in Northwestern Ontario - generation, transmission, distribution, industrial and residential customers.
2. For the LMP model, provide an assessment of how increased supply of energy (at various levels of output) would impact Northwestern Ontario transmission congestion and overall pricing. What are the factors in this assessment?
3. Develop a model of operation for the delivery of electricity in Northwestern Ontario, with specific impacts on municipalities, rural areas, and First Nations' communities in Northwestern Ontario. Provide a set of conditions that must be met to achieve the best results.

4. Provide analysis of the findings in terms of the impact on the province of Ontario as a whole and recommendations on the basis from which to advocate these positions with the Government of Ontario.
5. Provide government relations services to advocate for the model that best advances the economic development objectives of Northwestern Ontario.

The RFP process was successful in selecting Acres Management Consulting Limited to carry out such a study. The proposal from Acres Management is titled "Regional Energy Pricing for Northwestern Ontario." The proposed budget request from the provincial and federal government will total \$293,500. Superior North Community Futures Development Corporation has (on behalf of The Northwestern Ontario Energy Task Force and stakeholders of Northwestern Ontario) agreed to be the administrative proponent of the project.

Issue:

The economy of Northwestern Ontario has not performed as well as that of the province as a whole. Because Northwestern Ontario has a greater supply than demand for electricity, regional pricing could lead to lower energy prices in the region. The prospect of lower-cost energy is regarded by many as the potential boost needed for economic recovery. Prior to entering the debate on locational marginal pricing or regional pricing in general, we must seek to understand the potential impacts that could arise from this policy initiative. Furthermore, many municipalities in the region are removed from utility decisions and therefore have lost a potential economic development tool. Therefore, the study would also develop a delivery model for electricity in the region. The project is intended to provide a Northwestern Ontario view of the regional pricing debate, as well as insight into government policy that could assist with planning for the region.

Awareness of the issue is growing in Northwestern Ontario and project results are expected to broaden the understanding of the concept of regional pricing for the region as well as electricity delivery models, and ultimately lead to activities that would advance the economy of Northwestern Ontario.

An educated advancement towards regional pricing will better inform industrial and other consumers as they make energy decisions as well as decisions regarding the viability of their operations. Understanding energy pricing options and operations would lead to better overall planning decisions and could be used to market the region to new industries thereby creating jobs for Northwestern Ontario.

In essence, the study will identify – in alternative future pricing contexts – energy investments that would be both attractive to investors and form part and parcel of an overall economic stabilization and development strategy for the region. Therefore, the aims for the strategy are the following:

- ▶ Sustaining, retaining and expanding of existing industry and commerce.
- ▶ Encouraging new enterprises to locate in the region, including First Nations and rural areas.
- ▶ Ensuring sustainable economic growth for all Northwestern Ontario communities, businesses/industries and residents.

Recommendation:

That the Province of Ontario recognize the significant implications of the five objectives as stated above;

And further that the Provincial and Federal Governments supply \$293,500. to complete this vital energy study for Northwestern Ontario.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

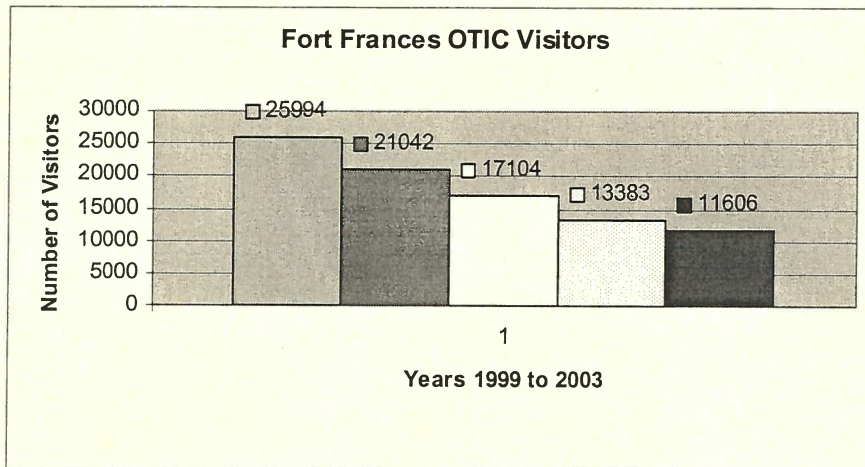
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Background:

The Fort Frances border crossing is one of the main entry points for US residents visiting Northern Ontario. Currently, US visitors are greeted by frequent traffic line-ups, a costly toll bridge, the industrial environment associated with a pulp and paper mill, and the customs and immigration experience. The opening of the new Canada Customs and Immigration facility in 2001 effectively cut off the current OTIC from eastbound traffic and severely limited the westbound traffic, as motorists were forced to undertake a 180 degree turn to proceed to the Centre.

Issue:

Prior to the construction of this building the OTIC was accessible to all traffic entering Canada as it sat astride both the east and west exits from the Customs area. While the number of US visitors crossing into Canada has remained consistent at approximately 405,000, the visitor numbers at the OTIC for the month of July have declined from 5,686 in the year 1999 to 2,210 in the year 2003. This trend is the same across all months since 1999. It is important to note that construction of the new facility started in May 2000 and was completed in June 2001. The year 1999 was the OTIC last typical year.



Given that close to 405,000 US visitors cross the border each year, with 59% staying two nights or more, it is critical that we encourage as many as possible to stay overnight. A recent Sunset Country Tourism Impact study states that a tourist spending time within the region usually spends \$282.02, but a tourist that stays overnight usually spends \$471.24, a significant increase. The OTIC has seen a decline of 9,436 visitors since the year 2000 or since construction started on the new Canada Customs and Immigration facility. Given that 59% of these visitors stay in Ontario two nights or more, the loss to the region's economy is \$4,446,620. If the decline since 1999, the last typical year, is used in the calculation, the loss would be even greater.

Recommendation:

That the Ministry of Tourism immediately relocate the Tourist Information Centre to a site that is visible for visitors entering Canada.

Approved 2004

On the NOACC books until September, 2006

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

BILL 97

Background:

Bill 97 is a Private Member's Bill to implement an act respecting the sharing of resource revenues for First Nations.

Issue:

Due to a number of issues, the existence of many forestry related businesses in Northwestern Ontario are presently being financially threatened. On an international basis, the economic indicators of this industry are not promising. The profit and loss statements of many forestry related businesses do not illustrate a healthy future.

Recommendation:

Respecting the First Nations quest for resource revenues, that the Ministry of Natural Resources move forward on resolving the issue, however not put any further financial burden on the forest industry's challenges and needs in Northwestern Ontario.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

HRSDC FUNDING FOR NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Background:

Ontario is the only province that does not have a true training agreement (Labour Market Agreement) with the Federal Government. Consequently, HRSDC (EI) funds are not flowing to Ontario as they should.

Issue:

Northwestern Ontario businesses and employees are suffering because federal EI funds are not flowing to Ontario in the same fashion as in other provinces. Training needs are not being met effectively or to the level needed due to this lack of funding. The economic future of Northwestern Ontario is very dependent upon a workforce with the necessary current and future skills for success.

Recommendation:

That the Governments of Ontario & Canada sign a Labour Market Agreement to ensure that Northwestern Ontario businesses and residents receive the skills training funding they need and deserve to ensure a vibrant workforce for the economic future of the region.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

GREAT LAKES HERITAGE COAST

Background:

The Ontario Living Legacy designated significant lands be removed from the commercial forest and become designated as protected areas.

Issue:

Significant economic development potential exists in these lands if tourism oriented development and use is encouraged. Many communities along the shore of Lake Superior support this project.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and stakeholders developed a Great Lakes Heritage Coast Strategy (GLHC) in 2003 with stakeholder consultation, which identified strategies for land use planning, development and marketing of the GLHC.

This strategy was completed in early 2003. This strategy has not yet been released. The release of this document would provide a blueprint for the communities, associations and industry along the coast to start to implement the GLHC vision.

Recommendation:

That the MNR release the GLHC strategy, and that the Province of Ontario release the funding to implement the strategy recommendations or release the protected land to its designated state previous to the Ontario Living Legacy.

2006 POLICIES

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NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (NOACC)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Issue:

The economy in Northwestern Ontario is on the brink of collapse. Forest product mills are closing as we speak and capital investment is going to other parts of the world. Our economy is tied directly to the health of the forest industry, which is in critical condition as a result of high energy, fibre and transportation costs, creating an uncompetitive business climate in the Province of Ontario.

Background:

Action is urgently required to prevent predictable and irreversible consequences for communities, businesses and employees. The forest industry is the economic bedrock of Northern Ontario, but the crisis in the industry threatens the prosperity of all of Ontario.

The forest sector is one of the key economic engines of Ontario's economy. With annual sales of \$18. billion and exports of \$9. billion, the forest industry provides direct and indirect employment to over 200,000 people across the province. While many communities in the north depend on the industry, thousands of jobs in southern Ontario depend on companies that supply the industry or use its products.

The Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness Final Report May 2005, clearly states the issue. The Forestry Coalition, the Ontario Forestry Industry Association and Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA); all have shown that there is a real crisis within the province of Ontario. The facts have all been well documented and clearly communicated. Now is the time for the Province to act in the best interests of the businesses and people of Northern Ontario.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That all the recommendations of the "Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness Report May 2005 be immediately implemented;

And that absolute priority be given to the cost and supply of energy to the industry, and the cost and availability of fibre, and further that;

The Government of Ontario work together on this issue - the Provincial Legislation must recognize the crisis that is currently facing the Forest Industry and work out solutions for the good of all Ontario.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

WOOD SUPPLY

Issue:

No other issue has had as much debate as the "Wood Supply" issue. There are mills, especially those in Northwestern Ontario that are experiencing shortages of the available fibre they require to operate at full capacity. There is no disagreement about the difficulty that some mills are having, but there is a lack of trust in the overall numbers for current and projected wood supply. NOACC believes this matter urgently requires resolution.

NOACC commends the Provincial Government for undertaking a forest resource inventory with a focus on its accuracy, completeness and currency. Maintaining healthy sustainable forests is of significant interest to all citizens of Ontario. We believe in responsible stewardship and embrace thoughtful realistic regulations that preserve our forest and the jobs they create in our communities.

Background:

The province of Ontario continues to withdraw Crown Forest land that is part of Northwestern Ontario's wood basket. Ontario has 69 million hectares of forest of which Provincial protected areas total 9.5 million. Forest industries harvest 210,000 hectares annually, which is three times less than what is lost every year to insects, blow downs and fire. Fire losses: 245,000 hectares; insect losses: 260,000 hectares; blow down losses: 100,000 hectares. (Figures from Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources) At 210,000 hectares harvested annually, our forests are managed and are sustainable.

Ninety-two percent of FSC certified land in Canada is Ontario crown land. Nationally 91 percent of Canada's original forest remains intact. (Forest Products Association of Canada).

The Forest Renewal Trust and Forestry Futures Trusts are both funded with money generated by the forest industry. Under the Forest Renewal Trust Regeneration, companies carry out activities, on recently harvested areas. Forest management plans set and define regeneration goals. Through Forestry Futures, areas that have undergone natural disturbance such as fire, wind blow down and insect infestation are also regenerated. This fund is sustained by a flat rate contribution per square metre of fiber harvested. An independent committee governs funding that ranges between \$62 and \$94 million annually and projects are focused on securing wood supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That the province's long-term wood supply available for harvesting be defined as soon as possible. Until this is completed, ensure that there is an immediate moratorium on reducing wood supply is instituted;**

- **To ensure that any deferrals or withdrawals beyond those that are already in established guidelines are preceded by consultation with stakeholders and are based on careful analysis of both the socio-economic and environment impacts, we recommend that there be:**
 - **No increase in harvesting fees such as stumpage;**
 - **No regulatory changes resulting in additional costs to the forestry sector;**
 - **No decrease in fibre supply due to legislative, regulatory or policy change.**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

ENERGY

Issue:

Energy has been used by the Province as a social/economic driver, to stimulate economic development in Ontario for decades. Southern Ontario has benefited dramatically by these policies, but Northern Ontario has not seen the benefits to nearly the same extent. The Province is in transition to reduce the impact of energy pricing as a social/economic tool. Given the dependence of the Northwestern Ontario economy on industries, and understanding that these industries are fifteen times more sensitive to energy pricing than the Southern Ontario economy, the overall impact is devastating to the economy of Northwestern Ontario.

Background:

The economy in Northwestern Ontario is on the brink of collapse. This economy is tied directly to the health of the forest industry, which is in critical condition as a result of energy costs and fibre costs.

Energy costs represent approximately 1/3 of the cost of production in the pulp and paper industry and as a result our economy is much more sensitive to energy pricing than Southern Ontario. As an example, the energy for the auto industry comprises less than 3% of the cost of production where the energy costs to the pulp and paper industry represents 33% of the cost of production.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Province of Ontario establish a clear set of environmental standards before eliminating any energy fuel sources; and

That the Province works with Northwestern Ontario to establish a Energy Management Authority with the authority to:

- a) **make recommendations on generation decisions in the Northwest system;**
- b) **negotiate power purchase agreements with industrial users as an economic development tool for the region;**
- c) **sell power at a slightly above cost where it can be proven by the industrial user that; (i) energy costs are a significant component of their cost of production (greater than 25%) (ii) the agreement with the industrial user will result in the maintenance or creation of jobs, investment of capital for modernization and the sustainability of the facility;**
- d) **Use energy pricing to attract new industrial users to the Northwest region;**

And further;

That the Province of Ontario act immediately on these resolutions and recognize that Northwestern Ontario is facing a crisis.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

FORESTRY AND SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Issue:

Northwestern Ontario recognizes that the forest industry is the second largest industry in the province. Communities depend on the economic contribution of the forestry sector and the thousands of jobs that are directly and indirectly created and sustained each year.

The high fibre and energy costs have made this industry uncompetitive, resulting in mill closures and job losses. The economic impact of this crisis affects all businesses within the communities, and consequently more job losses. With these job losses, families face many personal crises; financial, stress, abuse such as drugs, alcohol, physical and mental abuse increase, social dependence increase as well as an overall environment of desperation. The personal impact on families directly affected by job losses and uncertainties strike at the very fabric of our communities.

In addition the large industrial tax base is reduced, thereby reducing the municipalities' ability to provide the infrastructure and levels of service that are necessary for quality of life. Communities of Northwestern Ontario do not look to government for handouts to businesses and industry, but for solutions to create a competitive business climate for the forestry industry in Ontario.

Background:

The serious issues facing the forestry industry in Ontario today have a direct and severe impact to every community in Northwestern Ontario. All communities must face the issues as listed above.

RECOMMENDATION:

That all Ministries of the Provincial Government, in particular the Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister of Health and Long-term Care, Minister of Labour, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, recognize the issues facing the forestry industry in Ontario and become part of long-term solutions.

This issue will have a devastating impact on the very fabric of our families and thereby threaten the viability of communities' dependent of the forestry products industry. Therefore Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce's position is that this issue is not just a Ministry of Natural Resources issue.

That the Provincial Legislation come together to move the swift implementation of the recommendations of the Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

LOTTERY LICENSING POLICY CHANGES

Background:

The existing Lottery Licensing Manual under the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario is ambiguous and presently prevents Municipal governments from obtaining a lottery licensee or acquire revenue for dispersal from the proceeds of a lottery.

Issue:

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario of the associated provincial and federal laws are inconsistent throughout their Lottery Licensing Manual. Not only does this ambiguity not allow for the recognition of the unique cultures of rural and Northern Ontario regions, it prevents Municipal governments from obtaining a lottery license. This significantly impacts the ability of non-profit organizations in Northern and rural Ontario to provide avenues for holding cultural and children's events. As Municipal governments are duly formed accountable bodies it would make sense to grant them the authority to manage the revenue for dispersal from the proceeds of a lottery.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Corporate Affairs review and revise the policies related to Lottery Licensing as set out by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, to consider the broader interpretation of culture that respects the history and social priorities of the various regions of the Province. And grant Municipal governments the autonomy to acquire lottery licenses and disperse the proceeds of lotteries to significant community initiatives.

The Rules

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble can not be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session

- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "**Close Debate**" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "**Committee of the Whole**" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

NOACC PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED DURING POLICY DEBATE

1. The discussion of each resolution will open with the Moderator naming the item and then inviting its sponsoring group (submitting chamber or policy committee) to comment thereon. The relevant committee will also be offered an opportunity to comment before opening discussion to all delegates.
2. Everyone is allowed to participate in the debate (discussion), but only accredited voting delegates have the right to move or second motions or amendments or to vote on them.
3. When participating in the debate please speak clearly and if a microphone is available, please ensure it is used so all can hear what you are saying.
4. Wait to be recognized by the Chair and then identify yourself and your organization before you begin your remarks. This information is needed for the person recording the minutes of the deliberations.
5. Please keep your comments on any resolution/motion or amendment brief. You're asked to observe the speaking limit of two minutes.
6. You are responsible to make your voting decisions in accordance with your beliefs about what is in the best interests of the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. You have three possible courses of action for each resolution:
 - a) to adopt it – with or without amendments – thus making it official NOACC policy that will go to the Provincial or Federal Governments as soon as possible.
 - b) to defeat it; or
 - c) to refer it to the Executive Committee or Policy Development Committee of NOACC for further study. While this third option precludes the item from becoming official policy at the time of the AGM meeting, it does permit the Executive to act upon it.
7. When voting, raise your card high and keep it there until the Chair directs you to lower it.

Although the policy debate is governed by Robert's Rules of Order, it is NOACC's policy that it takes two-thirds of the votes cast to pass any motion or amendment.

ANY DISAGREEMENT
DURING THE DEBATE
WILL BE DECIDED BY THE
MODERATOR.



Committed to the Business of Northwestern Ontario

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

AT THE
2006
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 29, 30, October 1, 2006

NOACC Vision Statement

"NOACC focuses as the voice and active link in the formulation of public policy contributing to the economic development and quality of life in Northwestern Ontario."

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NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

EXPANSION OF THE TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY

Background:

As a major artery serving the local population, summer residents, tourists and the transport industry, the Trans Canada highway between Kenora, Vermillion Bay, Dryden and Thunder Bay is a very busy transport corridor. Sadly, this stretch of highway also has claimed a number of lives, many of which need not have been lost if improvements were made to this stretch of highway.

This two-lane stretch of highway has a great number of areas with poor visibility, narrow clearances, and marginal passing lanes, all of which have been contributed to the loss of lives due to motor vehicle accidents. While not all accidents are preventable, it is a certainty that improved conditions on this stretchy of the Trans Canada highway would greatly improve the rate of motor vehicles accidents.

Issue:

As evidenced by the fatalities on the stretch of the Trans-Canada highway between Kenora, Vermillion Bay, Dryden and Thunder Bay, there is a real need to improve the road conditions along this major transport corridor. While it is not envisioned that such improvements will completely eliminate motor vehicle accidents, it is believed that improvements to correct the deficiencies would greatly enhance the safety of persons utilizing this stretch of the Trans-Canada highway.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That funding be obtained from the appropriate federal and provincial government entities in order to improve the stretch of the Trans-Canada highway between Kenora, Vermillion Bay, Dryden and Thunder Bay including, but not limited to the following improvements:

1. Expanding the lanes on this stretch of highway so that there are four lanes;
2. Where necessary, redirecting the route of the highway in order to improve driver visibility; and
3. The addition of signs in areas that have had a high accident rate.
4. The addition of areas where vehicles can pull off the highway, rest stops, along the highway, with signage indicating the upcoming stops coupled with the signage already in place about not driving tired.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

NORTHERN HIGHWAYS

Issue:

This resolution seeks to encourage the Ontario Government to make a long-term commitment to the improvement to the Trans-Canada Highway infrastructure through Northern Ontario.

The goal is to enhance economic development and attraction of new business and industry to Northern Ontario by ensuring that Northern Ontario has an up-to-date and modern highway so that goods can be easily transported from Northern Ontario to markets in Southern Ontario, the rest of Canada and also the United States.

Background:

Northern Ontario has not shared in the economic boom that occurred in Southern Ontario since the mid-1990's. The region has had higher rates of unemployment and out-immigration of its young people. It is in the interest of all of Ontario to have a strong, healthy and vibrant Northern Ontario economy.

Southern Ontario faces tremendous stress and pressure on its infrastructure as a result of spiraling economic and population growth, as well as spiraling costs to business and environmentally sensitive areas. This includes key farming areas, which are being lost due to limited land space. It is in the interest of all Ontarians, in particular the business community, that economic growth including the attraction of new industry becomes more evenly disbursed throughout the Province.

The latest announcement regarding the upgrading of Northern Ontario highways was encouraging, however, very little was provided for Northwestern Ontario making this part of the province even more inaccessible from the rest of the province. The business community does not support the direct subsidy of particular businesses by the government, however, businesses do support the government spending its money wisely, including spending on infrastructure to create the right climate for Northwestern Ontario Business development and growth

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Continue on track with the investment in the four-laning of Northern Ontario highways.**
- 2. Provide investment for the construction of much needed transportation corridors in Northern Ontario.**

ALLOWING CANADA'S AIRPORTS TO PROSPER

Background:

In 1994, Transport Canada introduced the National Airports Policy as a "vision for airports that will ensure a safe, secure and viable national Airports System that will serve Canada in the 21st century. The policy recognized that locally operated airports can provide more "commercially-oriented and cost-effective" management and are "more responsive to local needs".

The devolution of airports to local control is a model for the world and has been instrumental in the transformation of Canadian airports from neglected, money-losing, government-run infrastructure to fully revitalized cost recovery operations that have succeeded in finding new revenue streams and reducing operating costs. Airport Authorities are not-for-profit corporations with 100% of the financial responsibility for airport operations and capital projects. Canada's not for profit airport authorities pay hundreds of millions of dollars to the federal government each year in "Rent."

Issue:

In June 2006, the Government tabled Bill C-20 Canada Airports Act as a reintroduction of previous legislation that fell off the Order Paper in 2004. The National Airports Policy should certainly be enshrined in legislation; however, the Airports Act as proposed actually seeks to reverse many of the principles of the original Policy. The implementation of this legislation represents a fundamental risk to the economic development and business competitiveness of airports and their communities across the country

Lease agreements with the federal Government detail public accountability principles for airports. The proposed Airports Act will undo much of the business-oriented and community-focused approach of the current structure by adding excessive regulations, limiting business growth opportunities, and attempting to take back control without taking on the accompanying risk and expense of operations.

If implemented, the Canada Airports Act will:

- Reduce or eliminate the commercial success of Airport Authorities by placing unnecessarily restrictive limitations on innovative revenue-generating and business development opportunities;
- Dramatically increase administrative, legal and accounting costs, particularly at smaller airports;
- Severely limit how Airport Authorities can invest their moneys, thereby reducing investment revenue prospects; and,
- Enforce unprecedented audit regulations, reporting requirements and inspection principles.

Canada's airports create more than \$30 billion in economic activity and more than 150,000 direct jobs in the communities they serve. The implementation of this

legislation is NOT in the best interests of Canadians, will add more costs to an already hypertaxed and over regulated industry, will put the continued viability of smaller airports in jeopardy, and has been introduced despite an absence of public demand for such dramatic changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the federal government:

- 1. Prevent the bureaucratic re-regulation of Canadian Airports by defeating Bill C-20, as it is a step backward in terms of the Government's Policy on divested and commercially viable airports;**
- 2. Allow airports to continue to operate under current principles which outline the airports' mandates, detail their board composition, require forums for community consultation, and provide direct transparency mechanisms for the reporting of financial and operating information to the public; and,**
- 3. Recommit to the values outlined in the 1994 National Airports Policy of airports that are "safe, commercially oriented and cost effective".**

Note: CCC's 2003 resolution Bill C-27: Canada Airports Act expires at 2006 AGM

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

TRANSPORTATION AND ADJUSTED PUBLIC POLICY

Background:

A main feature of the recovery and development of the Northwestern Ontario economy is transportation. Rail, shipping, air and highways are the life blood of the NW Ontario economy. NW Ontario is strategically located in the middle of Canada and is the bridge between the eastern and western Canada. A crisis in the forestry industry is devastating the economy. The government is assisting with the prosperity plan and loan guarantees. The North is undertaking a regional recovery program and forest industry is rationalizing. This exercise of recovery will take substantial time. There are significant geographic factors such as the distance scope and scale 800,000 square kilometers and two time zones.

Issue:

Recognition of the importance of transportation infrastructure for the recovery of NW Ontario. Also recognition that NW Ontario was short changed on the recent Liberal Government funding. Most of the funding is allocated to the four laning in the NE. In order to enhance the NW recovery we need public policy adjustment to buy us time. Examples of adjustment are Special Taxation regions and Energy Regional pricing while we wait for more funding for transportation.

We are appreciative of Premier McGuinty's transportation announcements of \$350 million for five years (\$1.8 Billion). However it must be pointed out that there is an unequal and disproportionate distribution of funding going to the Northeast for highway construction short-changing the Northwest. A disproportionate amount is targeted to the Northeast especially for the four-laneing of the Highways 69 and 11. The explanation from the bureaucrats is there are more highways in the Northeast.

We understand how expensive it is to construct highways because of blasting granite and filling bogs. When the Trans Canada railroad was built across northern Ontario sometimes it would take as many as three contractors to successfully fill a bog for a railway bed. The Northwest is in a metaphoric economic bog with the economy and it will take time for rationalizing and diversification of the economy.

We are especially thankful for the bridge infrastructure reconstruction. NW Ontario is the physical transportation bridge between eastern and western Canada and a major gateway. We need time and support through the process of adjusted public policy to fill our economic bog

North Bay and Sudbury have higher job increases than Thunder Bay than Timmins, and Sault St. Marie. North Bay and Sudbury have advantages in the north because of the proximity to southern Ontario. Making highway 69 four lanes (four hours) will make Sudbury as close to Toronto as Cornwall and Windsor. North Bay is close because of Young Street. (Highway 400 and 11). Proximity to economic opportunity is a major asset. The proximity enhances the economic opportunities. Evidence of this fact is the closer a first nation is to a population center the more successful the community is. For example Fort William Reserve in Thunder Bay is successful because of the proximity

factor. The fairness factor is to allow for special adjusted public policy to level the proximity fact of life to opportunity playing field until the transportation gap is rectified.

Proximity to the south generates more opportunities through competition. The Northwest needs some adjusted public policy to adjust to the recovery economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to fill the economic bog to buy time until the restructuring can succeed and to support the government prosperity plan Keep people and skill set substitute proximity with adjusted public policy. We are disadvantaged because of proximity factor. Adjusted public policy would level the playing field buy time to fill the economic bog and enhance the Prosperity Plan and recovery until the transportation funding catches up.

An adjustment in public policy for the NW to survive until the rationalization and the recovery kicks in.

1. A Northern adjusted Public Policy Area could be created with sector specific tax incentives associated with green projects (energy and otherwise) plus wood promotion and innovation and commercialization of forestry, energy conservation and biotechnology initiatives.
2. Energy allowance and recognition of the unique separate energy zone and using this economic development tool in the forestry and biotechnological industries
3. Energy Policy as adjusted public policy can be used as an Energy *Economic Development tool*.

By using energy as an economic development tool for the north, the government can return prosperity to much of the north. Energy can become the economic driver for the area and having a robust, reliable and varied mix of generation sources at reasonable prices; it can help the north attract industry and high tech jobs to our area.

The north will also be able to keep current jobs and encourage the extensive development of a mineral rich landscape by the mining sector. With resource based industries thriving other sectors of the economy will also survive and thrive and the reasonably priced excess power can be exported to the rest of province as a made in Canada solution to Ontario's energy needs.

Background information for resolution.
See OLP Highway package

Submitted by: Marathon Chamber of Commerce

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE - FORT FRANCES

Background:

The present owners of the international toll bridge between Fort Frances and International Falls, Abitibi Consolidated and Boise Paper, have determined that they will sell their asset after almost 100 years of ownership. The border cities of Fort Frances and International Falls want the government to purchase the bridge.

Issue:

The bridge consists of a two lane concrete structure built in 1979 and a two lane steel railway/auto bridge built in 1908. The asset also includes the Canada Customs building on the Canadian side of the bridge. The bridge crossing carries a large toll at present. This river crossing is one of three from Minnesota into northwestern Ontario. It carries a significant amount of the tourist traffic into our region, as well as a great deal of commercial truck traffic and local traffic from both border towns. About 770,000 passenger cars and 36,000 trucks cross annually. For comparison purposes, the Pigeon River crossing handles 360,000 cars and 97,000 trucks annually and the Rainy River bridge crossing handles 388,000 cars and 24,000 trucks per year. The Fort Frances crossing is the major port of entry for American tourists whose ultimate destinations are spread throughout the northwest region.

The cities of International Falls and Fort Frances have called on the state, provincial and federal governments in both jurisdictions to assist in purchasing the bridge and turning it into a public asset. The Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce has been participating in the discussions on this issue and supports the purchase of the bridge as a public asset.

RECOMMENDATION:

That NOACC support the efforts to convince the Canadian and Ontario governments to purchase of the international bridge at Fort Frances and communicate that support to our federal and provincial members, the Ontario government and the government of Canada.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

THE FORESTRY INDUSTRY IN ONTARIO

(Forestry Coalition \$45. mwh (all in))

Background:

The forestry sector has consistently demonstrated a tremendous ability to produce jobs in and prosperity through out Ontario. The forestry industry in Ontario is at risk because it operates in an expensive and the least competitive jurisdiction in the world. One of the most significant factors reducing competitiveness is the highest electrical rate in all North America.

Forestry stakeholders can work together with government implement provincial electrical energy that will help restore economic stability in the North. Immediate action by the Government of Ontario on the electricity issue is critical to the future of the Ontario's economic prosperity.

Issue:

The government has the tool kit available to make the necessary changes and the return on investment will be tenfold in terms of retaining jobs, the tax base and economic prosperity. It should be noted that just in taxes alone to the Province of Ontario and municipalities, over \$950. million is generated by the forestry sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Ontario Government to act immediately to implement policies that result in an all in target rate of electricity of \$45. mwh for a three-year period as an economic stabilization/development tool for the North. The program should remain in effect until September, 2009. The target rate of \$45. mwh (all in) should be inclusive of all generation, transmission and other charges.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

ENERGY and Forestry 2006

(Should be combined with or replace the Energy Coalition resolution)

Issue:

Energy has been used by the Province as a social/economic driver, to stimulate economic development in Ontario for decades. Southern Ontario has benefited dramatically by these policies, but Northern Ontario has not seen the benefits to nearly the same extent. The Province is in transition to reduce the impact of energy pricing as a social/economic tool. Given the dependence of the Northwestern Ontario economy on industries, and understanding that these industries are fifteen times more sensitive to energy pricing than the Southern Ontario economy, the overall impact is devastating to the economy of Northwestern Ontario.

Background:

The economy in Northwestern Ontario is on the brink of collapse. This economy is tied directly to the health of the forest industry, which is in critical condition as a result of energy costs and fibre costs.

Energy costs represent approximately 1/3 of the cost of production in the pulp and paper industry and as a result our economy is much more sensitive to energy pricing than Southern Ontario. As an example, the energy for the auto industry comprises less than 3% of the cost of production where the energy costs to the pulp and paper industry represents 33% of the cost of production.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Province of Ontario establish a clear set of environmental standards before eliminating any energy fuel sources; and

That the Province works with Northwestern Ontario to establish a Energy Management Authority with the authority to:

- a) **make recommendations on generation decisions in the Northwest system; needs clarification**
- b) **Negotiate power purchase agreements with industrial users as an economic development tool for the region;**
- c) **sell power at a slightly above cost where it can be proven by the industrial user that; (i) energy costs are a significant component of their cost of production (greater than 25%) (ii) The agreement with the industrial user will result in the maintenance or creation of jobs, investment of capital for modernization and the sustainability of the facility;**
- d) **Use energy pricing to attract new industrial users to the Northwest region;**

And further; that the Province of Ontario act immediately on these resolutions and recognize that Northwestern Ontario is facing a crisis.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE (NOACC)

FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Issue:

Many forestry product mills have closed, and continue to close as we speak as capital investment is going to other parts of the world. Our economy is tied directly to the health of the forest industry, which is in critical condition as a result of the Canadian/US dollar exchange rate, high energy, and fibre costs, which combined create an uncompetitive business climate in the Province of Ontario.

Background:

More action is urgently required to prevent predictable and irreversible consequences for communities, businesses and employees. The forest industry is the economic bedrock of Northern Ontario. The crisis in the forest industry threatens the very existence of many of our northern municipalities and the prosperity of Ontario.

The forest sector is a key economic engine of Ontario's economy. With annual sales of \$18. billion and exports of \$9 billion, the forest industry provides direct and indirect employment to over 200,000 people across the province. While many communities in the north depend on the industry, thousands of jobs in southern Ontario depend on companies that supply the industry or use its products. One forest products company alone spends \$300. million per year on goods and services in Ontario, \$300. million of that is spent south of Parry Sound.

The Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness Final Report May 2005, clearly states the issues and recommends solutions. Its key recommendations are supported by the Ontario Forestry Coalition which is a partnership between industry (OFIA, OLMA), municipal organizations (NOMA), labour (CEP), chambers of commerce (NOACC) and representatives from aboriginal economic development that have joined together with a common purpose of promoting and enhancing the Ontario forestry sector's ability to continue to create jobs and economic prosperity in Ontario. NOACC is a member of the OFC and supports its position. Now is the time for the Province to act in the best interests of the businesses and people of Northern Ontario.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A list of five preliminary recommendations was submitted March, 2005 before the release of the "Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness Report in May, 2005. The priority issues were Red Tape, Energy Cost, Roads, and Fiber cost.

Some of the recommendations have been acted upon by the Province, others have not.

List of recommendations and deliverables to date is available

The key priorities are:

1. The cost of energy
2. The cost and availability of fibre

We urge the Government of Ontario to make these issues of priority as they impact the prosperity of the entire Province. The provincial legislation must recognize the crisis that is currently facing the forest industry and implement solutions for the North and for the good of all Ontario.

We urge the Government of Ontario to implement an energy policy that will result in a \$45. MWH (all-inclusive) rate for electricity to be used in Northern Ontario as a economic recovery/development tool. This position was presented to the Provincial Committee of Agencies by Mayor Lynn Peterson and Mayor Ann Krassilowsky in September , 2006.

FORESTRY AND SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Very significant should be updated to 2007 resolution

Issue:

Northwestern Ontario recognizes that the forest industry is the second largest industry in the province. Communities depend on the economic contribution of the forestry sector and the thousands of jobs that are directly and indirectly created and sustained each year.

The high fibre and energy costs have made this industry uncompetitive, resulting in mill closures and job losses. The economic impact of this crisis affects all businesses within the communities, and consequently more job losses. With these job losses, families face many personal crises; financial, stress, abuse such as drugs, alcohol, physical and mental abuse increase, social dependence increase as well as an overall environment of desperation. The personal impact on families directly affected by job losses and uncertainties strike at the very fabric of our communities.

In addition the large industrial tax base is reduced, thereby reducing the municipalities' ability to provide the infrastructure and levels of service that are necessary for quality of life. Communities of Northwestern Ontario do not look to government for handouts for businesses and industry, but for solutions to create a competitive business climate for the forestry industry to prosper in Ontario.

Background:

The serious issues facing the forestry industry in Ontario today have a direct and severe impact to every community in Northwestern Ontario. All communities must face the issues as listed above.

This issue will have a devastating impact on the very fabric of our families and thereby threaten the viability of communities' dependent of the forestry products industry. Therefore Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce's position is that this issue is not just a Ministry of Natural Resources issue.

RECOMMENDATION:

That all Ministries of the Provincial Government, in particular the Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister of Health and Long-term Care, Minister of Labour, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Minister of Northern Development & Mines, Minister of Energy and Minister of Finance recognize the issues facing the forestry industry in Ontario and become part of long-term solutions.

That the Provincial Legislation come together to move the swift implementation of the remaining recommendations of the Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

WOOD SUPPLY

Issue:

No other issue has had as much debate as the "Wood Supply" issue. There are mills, especially those in Northwestern Ontario that are experiencing shortages of the available fibre they require to operate at full capacity. There is no disagreement about the difficulty that some mills are having, but there is a lack of trust in the overall numbers for current and projected wood supply. There maybe a threat of surplus wood chips because of the lack of a market. NOACC believes this matter urgently requires resolution.

NOACC commends the Provincial Government for undertaking a forest resource inventory with a focus on its accuracy, completeness and currency. Maintaining healthy sustainable forests is of significant interest to all citizens of Ontario. We believe in responsible stewardship and embrace thoughtful realistic regulations that preserve our forest and the jobs they create in our communities.

Background:

The province of Ontario continues to withdraw Crown Forest land that is part of Northwestern Ontario's wood basket. Ontario has 69 million hectares of forest of which Provincial protected areas total 9.5 million. Forest industries harvest 210,000 hectares annually, which is three times less than what is lost every year to insects, blow downs and fire. Fire losses: 245,000 hectares; insect losses: 260,000 hectares; blow down losses: 100,000 hectares. (Figures from Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources) At 210,000 hectares harvested annually, our forests are managed and are sustainable.

An important point is the majority of Ontario Forests are independently third party certified see attached map of the working Forest

The Forest Renewal Trust and Forestry Futures Trusts are both funded with money generated by the forest industry. Under the Forest Renewal Trust Regeneration, companies carry out activities, on recently harvested areas. Forest management plans set and define regeneration goals. Through Forestry Futures, areas that have undergone natural disturbance such as fire, wind blow down and insect infestation are also regenerated. This fund is sustained by a flat rate contribution per square metre of fiber harvested. An independent committee governs funding that ranges between \$62 and \$94 million annually and projects are focused on securing wood supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the province take immediate steps to implement the recommendations of the Process Streamlining Task Force Report (May 19, 2006).

This report stems from the recommendation of the Minister's Council on forestry Industry Competitiveness relating to "the need to remove barriers and avoid unnecessary business costs to administrative red tape and delays in approval process".

That the province review fibre supply in light of recent mill closures with a view to

- a) Allowing mills which are still in operation to have access to fibre supply thereby improving security and cost for those mills to stay in operation.
 - b) Only after cost effective, long term fibre supply for existing mills has been confirmed should surplus fibre be made available to support new initiatives.
- That the province's long-term wood supply available for harvesting be defined as soon as possible. Until this is completed, ensure that there is an immediate moratorium on reducing wood supply is instituted;
 - To ensure that any deferrals or withdrawals beyond those that are already in established guidelines are preceded by consultation with stakeholders and are based on careful analysis of both the socio-economic and environment impacts, we recommend that there be:
 - No increase in harvesting fees such as stumpage;
 - No regulatory changes resulting in additional costs to the forestry sector;
 - No decrease in fibre supply due to legislative, regulatory or policy change.

COAL FIRED ENERGY PLANTS

Issue:

The Government of Ontario intended to close all of the province's coal fired generating stations by 2007. As they did not have reliable sources of replacement power up and running, they delayed the closure of the coal-fired plants for fear of an energy shortage. Very little has been done to insure adequate cost effective replacement generation.

To avoid major supply risks, coal plants need to be kept in operation until adequate replacement generation and demand reduction measures are in place.

Background:

Ontario electricity consumers will have to pay between \$900 million and \$1.2 billion more a year if the province's coal-fired electricity plants are closed down and replaced by new natural gas-powered plants, says a study by Dominion Bond Rating Service (Canadian Electrical Industry Study, October 2003).

Operating and maintenance costs for coal generation are about three cents per kilowatt-hour. For new natural gas power plants those costs are about five to six cents per kilowatt-hour. Also, the construction time frame of new gas-burning plants is estimated from 18 months to three years.

Ontario must move forward with prudence on this subject, first, in order for the province to remain competitive in the global marketplace an adequate energy supply is required to keep the province moving, while, large pollutants such as Ontario's coal fired plants must be removed in order to ensure that Ontario's workforce is healthy and productive.

If the objective of the government is cleaner air there are alternatives to closing coal stations. Significant improvements in air quality can be achieved at both lower capital cost and ongoing fuel costs. Manley noted that there are other approaches to reducing emissions including installing new technology to reduce the emissions of remaining coal generation.

Coal: This is the most cost effective solution for the future. New technology exists to permit continued lower cost energy production. Retrofitting and upgrading the Thunder Bay and Atikokan plants will achieve what the government requires, improve air quality, ensure a lower electricity cost as well as help retain industry in Ontario. The real objective should be cleaner air not closure of coal-fired stations.

Without coal power Ontario will, of necessity, become massively dependent on natural gas (an ever diminishing and ever more costly resource). Coal is plentiful and can be burned with waste wood products and agricultural products. Coal fired generation is the second least expensive way of generating power.

The clean coal option (retrofitted existing coal plants with SCR and scrubbers to remove NOx and SO2) meets the need of the province and the Chamber and communities in which we operate for sustainable development. Sustainable development suggests that it is possible for coal fired plant operation to be viable, protect the environment and care about people. Sustainable development calls for managing financial, social and environmental performance.

Green Power: An Ontario generation mix should include renewable, sustainable energy sources like wind. It is unlikely that there could be enough of these generating sources physically in one place to have an impact on urban electricity demand. Green power reliability is in question. As an example, the ability of this power to accommodate the peak fluctuations in demand created by severe Canadian weather patterns and our life-style is in doubt. Wind power is available at 25% capacity (10% during Summer peak times and 20% at Winter peak times). The province recently signed contracts for 1,300 megawatts of wind power.

Natural Gas: The use of natural gas for electricity raises some concerns. Natural gas has quadrupled in price over the last five years. Demand is out pacing supply. The volume of natural gas that will be consumed by the proposed gas fire generating capacity will exceed the amount of gas used in all of Ontario's homes. Massive expansions to the gas transmission and storage facilities will be required, which will be reflected in much higher electricity and natural gas prices to home owners, business and ultimately major industries.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Northwestern Associated Chambers of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Where it is economically beneficial to do so, retrofit the coal fired facilities with new emission reducing technology to ensure competitively priced electricity for Ontario industry and consumers, maximize electricity supply, and to meet cleaner air targets.**

Submitted by: Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce

PROPOSAL FOR A LONG TERM IMMIGRATION PLAN TO MAINTAIN A CRITICAL MASS OF POPULATION

Background:

Resources Bring A Diverse Population: As roads, rail and bush planes opened Northern Ontario, the development of natural resources lured people. The promise of work, freedom, and a new life brought French-Canadians from Quebec as well as Ukrainians, Finns, Italians and a host of other Europeans conferring an ethnic diversity that still defines northern communities.

Periodic waves of British and European immigration rolled into Northern Ontario over the next century. More than anything, however, population growth was dictated by resource development. It remains so today.

The largest single population increase in the history of Northern Ontario occurred in the 1950s during a period of unprecedented economic prosperity. The boom, mostly in the mining sector, pushed the population from 536,000 in 1951 to 722,000 in 1961.

Currently, more than 800,000 people call Northern Ontario home, about eight per cent of the provincial total. Ontario receives more than 50% of all newcomers to Canada. During the three year period, 2002-2004, Ontario received an average of 126,148 newcomers a year. This represents 55.2% of all newcomers landed in Canada. (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) - LANDED IMMIGRANT DATA SYSTEM (LIDS), 2005) 46% of Canada's newcomers and 83% of Ontario's newcomers settled in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). (Source: CIC - LIDS, 2005) About 22,000 newcomers a year settle in non-GTA communities. (Source: CIC - LIDS, 2005) In 2004, 67% of Canada's refugee claims (17,250) were in Ontario. (Source: Immigration & Refugee Board, 2004)

Issue:

One of Northwestern Ontario's major challenges is to attract newcomers to regions other than the GTA and other large urban centres such as Ottawa, Hamilton and Windsor. Attracting newcomers to rural and smaller communities provides economic opportunities for a higher quality of life as newcomers help bring needed skills to such areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Create programs and incentives to attract immigrants

- That a strategy be developed for encouraging immigration to Northern Ontario
- That needed support services be established to assist new immigrants in adjusting to life in Canada and the North
- In consultation with the federal and provincial governments, that pilot projects be established to encourage immigrants to settle in Northern and rural Canada

...2

- To negotiate and immigration agreement with the federal government that includes incentives for immigrants to settle and remain in Northern Ontario, e.g.:
- Without lowering the eligibility criteria, allow immigrants willing to settle in Northern Ontario to move up on the waiting list
- Significantly reduce the investment requirement for the investment class immigrant willing to settle in the North; this will also help to address the shortage of venture capital financing available in Northern Ontario, thereby supporting valued-added industries.
- Create support services that encourage immigrants to settle in the North and help municipalities to deal with the added demands that immigration incentive programs might create
- If municipalities so choose, develop tripartite agreements, similar to that in place in Winnipeg to provide incentives and fast-track immigrants to meet skills shortages in Northern Ontario e.g. professionals, entrepreneurs). These agreements would also support initiatives by ethnic communities to attract immigrants to the North.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

IMMIGRATION AND BUSINESS SUCCESSION

Background:

A unique business situation in Northwestern Ontario has been identified. The succession for small business is failing. As proprietors age and are ready to retire there are difficulties finding family members or others to take over the business.

Issue:

Immigration is recognized that Ontario's economy depends on the continual arrival of skilled newcomers and foreign investment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the three levels of government with Ontario government leadership cooperate to enhance regional economic development programs specifically focused on business succession opportunities and that processes are accelerated so the opportunities do not evaporate.

IMMIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background:

Regions of Ontario are suffering from population and economic decline. The economic growth of the province at whole is dependent upon immigration (skills global competition etc.) Southern Ontario (golden triangle) is facing environmental growth and gridlock challenges.

Issue:

There are existing economic development programs. There is the challenge to create innovative strategies - should incentives be used to attract newcomers to rural and less urbanized areas in Ontario? Ontario's economy depends on the continual arrival of skilled newcomers and foreign investment.

There are existing economic development programs specifically focus for the North and also general economic development programs province wide for example prosperity for the North, Go North Investor program Commercialization programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Ontario government implement an immigration policy that enhances and encourages immigration and that it becomes a funded economic development tool for the regions of Ontario. (See Backgrounder)

And that: The Ontario Government directs the Northern Ministry to include immigration as a major pillar in Northern Ontario Economic development programs; also the NDC system is directed to hold public workshops to investigate the value of immigration for the economic development of Northern Ontario and to receive ideas.

And further that: The appropriate ministries include immigration strategies in all economic development for the North.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

EXTENSION OF BILL 124 OR EQUIVALENT

Background:

There is a shortage of skilled truck drivers in Canada and Northern Ontario.

Issue:

On June 8, 2006, the McGuinty government introduced new legislation, called "The Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006" to break down barriers so that internationally trained professionals have every opportunity to work in their field sooner. The present legislation applies to 34 regulated professions in Ontario such as physicians, accountants, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and social workers.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Bill 124 be extended to include other classifications of workers, particularly truck drivers.

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS INTO THE ONTARIO WORKFORCE

Issue:

Without the funding by the Province of Ontario in programs and supports that are offered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to assist the integration of immigrants into the Ontario Workforce, the economy of Ontario will not be able to prosper and meet global productivity levels.

Background:

The Ontario economy is facing very significant challenges: an aging population, fast-paced technological changes and globalization that have brought new competition to our doorstep. These challenges could have a profound impact on the health of our economy and the standard of living of all Ontarians.

The most direct effect of an aging population is a skills shortage. The problems created by skills shortages are already beginning to have an impact. According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, about 52% of skilled trades people are expected to retire within the next 15 years. The same report also states that by 2020, if those workers are not replaced, Canada could be short one million workers.

At the same time, the knowledge-based global economy demands highly skilled workers. The accelerating pace of technological change means their training cannot stop at age twenty-two. It will be necessary to continuously educate and re-train workers throughout their lives to update or transform their skill set to use new technology and meet new needs.

Most of the new pool of Labour must be drawn from immigration. Currently, Immigrants represent 30% of all new Labour market entrants and according to the Ontario Ministry of Finance; new Canadians may be the only source of net Labour force growth within the next decade.

Eliminating barriers for internationally trained professionals and trades people is essential to enhancing Ontario's workforce. It is important that the Government of Ontario continue to support and expand programs that allow foreign trained professionals and trades people to be recertified quickly and integrate quickly into their field in the Ontario workforce.

The need for skilled employees exists across all industries and sectors across the province. Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario are well positioned to provide bridging programs, ESL instruction, employment and placement linkages to Ontario employers, and other resettlement supports in communities across the province.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Develop and fund a postsecondary education process model for the integration of immigrants that would encompass a comprehensive suite of programs and services including information access, assessment services, advising and counseling and education and training programs for immigrants, which each postsecondary institution can implement when facilitating the integration of immigrants within the communities they serve.
2. Work with municipalities, settlement agencies, business organizations and other stakeholder groups across the province to develop incentives and supports to industries and municipal governments to enable the resettlement of immigrants throughout the province.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

ENHANCED FUNDING FOR HEALTH SERVICES

Background:

Due to certain financial realities, the funding for health care services within the Northwestern Ontario region has not been able to keep pace with the need of the communities found therein. As a result, many health-care providers such as doctors, nurses and the various support staff have been stretched to their limits in providing the best health care possible under the circumstances.

However, while this dedication by the health-care providers is commendable, the fact remains that the provision of health care within Northwestern Ontario is seriously below the level available in the southern part of the province; this is unacceptable.

It must be noted that within Northwestern Ontario there are many communities that have large First Nation population. This large First Nation population directly accesses health care from the available health care providers, thereby place a corresponding large demand on these health care providers. The provision of health care services is a provincial matter and is funded accordingly while the provision of health care services to First Nations, as a federal matter is funded accordingly. However, federal funds to provide core health care services to First Nation people accessing such services from the provincial health care system are not provided to the province.

Issue:

The health care system in Northwestern Ontario is unable to provide health care services on par with similar services within the southern portion of the province due to the demand for such services out-matching the financial ability to provide such services. In many communities, there is a large population of First Nation people accessing such health care services. The federal government, whose responsibility it is for providing health care services to First Nation people, does not provide any funding to the province to account for the large proportion of First Nation people accessing core health care services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the federal government be strongly reminded of its responsibility in the provision of health care services to First Nation people, and to direct its attention to the factual situation occurring in Northwestern Ontario where a large proportion of the First Nation population accesses core health care services through the provincial health care system; and further that:

That the federal government provides transfer payments to the province to directly fund those communities in Northwestern Ontario that has a high First Nation population for the provision of such core health care services.

Submitted by: Kenora & District Chamber of Commerce

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

MADE IN ONTARIO POLICY

Issue:

Ontario Businesses competing in the transportation sector find themselves at a real disadvantage on their home territory, as the Provincial authorities have not established minimal requirements for Provincial content when public funds are used. It's not a well-known fact that Provincial manufacturers and suppliers face an uphill battle when bidding for projects against competitors from other countries – even when the competition is within our own Province. This is an issue that impacts Provincial manufacturers and suppliers. The businesses that provide the jobs in Ontario and economic impacts in communities across the province, face restrictions when dealing with foreign markets like the US but don't have the same considerations when competing for contracts at home.

Background:

Most other countries have policies that encourage local content when awarding a public transit contract. These countries employ policies requiring certain levels of local content in projects that use public funding. These policies encourage the use of domestic-based suppliers who, in turn, create jobs, tax revenues and other economic benefits in local communities. The objective of these policies is to ensure that domestic businesses and communities experience some positive impact from public expenditures on infrastructure projects. Policies of this nature often provide in-country suppliers with a distinct competitive advantage over qualified suppliers from other nations.

Canadian and Ontario-based manufacturers do not benefit from similar policies enforced by their own government. There are no minimal requirements for Provincial or Canadian content in publicly funded transportation projects. This means Provincial manufacturers are at a distinct disadvantage pursuing contracts in other nations, and they also have no particular advantage at home. The reality is that there is very little preventing foreign suppliers from winning Provincial contracts and then taking the work offshore to benefit laborers, businesses and regions in other nations.

Provincial suppliers and manufacturers deserve to compete on an equal footing in the global marketplace. Ontario businesses, communities and citizens deserve to enjoy some economic benefit from public projects funded by their own tax dollars.

Many countries around the world employ government policies encouraging or dictating local content levels. This is particularly true for transportation projects. For example, in the United States, which represents 90% of the North American passenger rail market, the "Buy America Act" imposes strict regulations for local content. In the area of rail rolling stock, for example, 60% of all components used to manufacture vehicles must come from the United States. Final assembly of vehicles must also be performed there. In addition, state governments can impose their own local content requirements as well. New York, one of the biggest rail markets in the world, imposes strict requirements for state-based content. Requirements like these limit the ability of Ontario suppliers to access the largest rail market in North America. They also keep suppliers from using Ontario sub-suppliers on any contracts they do win. There are no government policies, however, requiring local content when US enterprises competing for contracts in Canada.

Most other countries have employed similar policies. Most of these policies provide for local content regulations or a mix of incentives and regulatory requirements. The Province of Ontario currently has no incentives for local content.

RECOMMENDATION:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Implement a policy for the mass transit industry, where the Province is funding portions of mass transit projects, mandating “Provincial Content Levels”, that still provide competitive pricing and is consistent with NAFTA policies and guidelines, similar to the policy adopted by the Province of Ontario in the road construction industry.**
- 2. Encourage the Federal Government to implement a policy, which is consistent with NAFTA and WTO policies and guidelines, to take into account Canadian content levels for public transportation projects, is specification requirements can be met, to ensure that public funds are used to provide the best value to Canadians**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE PROVINCE

Issue:

Ontario businesses see the provincial government as an important market for their products and services. However, it is commonly felt that the Ontario Government's procurement process is unduly costly and complicated, and that it excludes participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's). Businesses experience difficulty in understanding the process, identifying the point of contact and complying with government regulations.

Background:

Specific issues include:

- A considerable cost burden for SME's that wish to submit a bid because they are required to have \$5. million in liability insurance in order to participate, regardless of level of risk or the successful outcome of the bid
- Other financial requirements, such as large performance bonds, that are not indexed to the value of the contract;
- A lack of information from government to assist SME's in identifying opportunities
- Difficulty for SME's to gain entry into the process because they do not have an established track record

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Prorate the level of liability insurance with the level of risk, and the amount of other financial requirements (e.g. performance bonds) to the value of the contract.

2. Incorporate a clause into the terms and conditions to state that:

- Awarding of the contract is subject to the successful bidder having satisfactory insurance coverage; and/or
- Bids must be supported by an "undertaking of insurance letter" from the bidder's insurance provider confirming their insurability to the level required by the contract.

3. Provide more transparent guidelines and province-wide marketing of the government procurement process.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Issue:

An aging workforce, combined with a shortage of young people entering the skilled trades, threatens the future prosperity of Ontario's economy.

Background:

For Ontario's manufacturers, as well as economic sectors like the construction industry, one of the biggest problems today is the shortage of skilled labour. This problem is particularly acute in trades that have traditionally developed new workforce entrants by means of apprenticeship programs. The supply of young people entering the workplace is decreasing; the total labour force is aging; and the immigration to Canada of skilled trades-people has declined. Parents have not encouraged their children to enroll in job training programs such as apprenticeship programs, and instead want them to grow up to be lawyers, doctors or accountants. Statistics also show that employers do not invest in skilled trades training at the same levels as their competitors in other industrialized countries.

The provincial and federal governments are aware of these issues, and have launched a number of programs designed to inform and educate young people about opportunities in the skilled trades and apprenticeship, and to support and encourage employers to participate in apprenticeship programs. Businesses and business groups have also joined in promoting the skilled trades and apprenticeship programs, particularly in educating employers regarding existing programs to support such training.

Given the strategic importance to our economy of the skilled trades, and the fundamental role played by employers in providing education and training in those areas, we believe that more needs to be done. The Ontario government already supports employers by providing training opportunities through the "Co-operative Education" credit that provides up to \$6,000 per student over two years to employers training students in industries identified as "leading edge technologies". We believe that the role of employers in ensuring sufficient opportunities for Apprenticeship training in the skilled trades is equally important.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Extend the existing Ontario "Co-operative Education" tax credit from industries defined as "leading edge technologies" to include all employers participating in apprenticeship training programs.**
- 2. Assess the economic impacts of the tax credit to determine if it is adequate to contribute positively to the desired outcome of reducing the skilled trades shortage.**

Submitted by: Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce & NOACC Policy Development Committee

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

APPRENTICESHIPS

Issue:

The current education and training system in Ontario is not producing enough skilled trades people to meet current industry demand and this shortage could impede Ontario businesses' ability to compete and grow.

Background:

Apprenticeship training allows employers to provide apprentice employees with on-the-job training and is based on provincial standards developed by the industry and endorsed by the Ontario government. Currently, there are over 200 apprenticeship trades in Ontario and employers assume about 85 per cent of the cost of training apprentices through wages and time invested into training.

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) allows high school students to complete studies for their high school diploma while they work at an apprenticeship for co-operative education credits.

Industry groups such as Ontario Forestry Association, the Auto Parts Manufacturers Association (APMA) and the Canadian Tooling and Machining Association (CTMA) have reported that approximately one-third of skilled trades people will need to be replaced, over the next 2 to 5 years, due to retirements. More needs to be done to ensure that Ontario has the necessary skilled workers to remain globally competitive.

We have traditionally relied on immigration to meet our shortage of skilled trades people. However, a "Made in Ontario" solution would allow the province to produce more of our own skilled workers through apprenticeship programs and would provide a better solution to the current skilled trade shortage.

It is interesting to observe that our government substantially funds our colleges and universities, but private industry bears the majority of apprenticeship training costs. In Europe, up to \$5,000.00 per employee is available from the government for training, and even larger credits are available in the southern United States.

The availability of skilled labour is a key factor when industry decides where to locate new investment.

Furthermore, more needs to be done to enhance the image of skilled trades. Skilled trades workers earn above average incomes and career earnings rival those of many accredited professions. Statistics Canada indicates that the unemployment rate for tool and die makers is less than 0.7 per cent, indicated a high demand.

The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce believes that a review of the current funding for technological equipment at the elementary and secondary school level is required to ensure the competitiveness of Ontario's education system. The current funding benchmarks were set at 1997 levels and must be adjusted to reflect the advancements in technology, and the increased demand for computer and other similar learning materials, which represents an important component of student curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Sponsor a coordinated effort among all stakeholders to enhance the image of the skilled trades, with our youth, their parents and teachers.
2. Redirect and target funds for technical education in Ontario's schools, including investing in pupil places, qualified teachers and modern equipment and technology, so that Ontario is positioned to provide world-class programs in technology education.
3. Encourage business to offer experiential learning opportunities for cooperative education students (high school and college/university) and provide new opportunities and incentives to business to participate in providing classroom infrastructure and technical support.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

UNITED STATES PASSPORT/TOURIST CARD

Background:

The present economic atmosphere Northwestern and Northern Ontario is at best very fragile. The forest industry is being decimated with pulp and paper facilities and sawmills either making dramatic cut back in operations or shutting down indefinitely. It is likely this trend will continue. With this down spin of one of the major industries in the North it is important that other major industries such as Tourism are supported and encouraged to grow.

Issue:

The Government of Ontario has not supported tourism industry in the North over the past several years. Issues such as elimination of the spring bear hunt are crippling the industry. The initiative by the United States requiring passports or identification cards will add another blow. All Canadians entering the USA and all Americans returning to the USA after a visit in Canada would be required to have an ID card or a passport.

The requirement for new ID cards will essentially result in erecting a wall between the two countries. This will lead to potentially grim implications for commerce, as Americans and Canadians will likely not purchase the new cards. A survey release March 14, 2006 by Zogby International suggests that 68 % of Americans and 54% of Canadians would be unlikely to purchase a card. About one third of people surveyed in each country who don't have passports said they would be less likely to cross the border if the ID card initiative became a requirement.

This could potentially be an impending blow to tourism in Northern Ontario. If tourist visits are cut significantly in Northern Ontario the impact on the Tourism Industry and the economy of the Northern communities will be devastating. It is important that NOACC start strongly supporting the Border Crossing Business Coalition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That NOACC support the Border Crossing Coalition on this issue both financially and through active lobbying participation. This issue has to be give a top priority with action taken immediately.
2. That NOACC strongly encourage the OCC to direct the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to take a lead on this issue until an acceptable solution is obtained.
3. That NOACC actively lobby the relevant Provincial Regulatory bodies to work with the Federal government to resolve this issue quickly.

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

MARKET VALUE ASSESSMENT AND PROPERTY TAX

Background:

In 1997 the Ministry of Ontario Finance introduced "Market Value Assessment" with its subsequent excessive increase in taxation ramifications to various classes of properties and businesses in Ontario. This was done without consultation with many types of properties and occupying business that would be affected without researching the impact to these businesses.

An example is within department of the Ontario Finance Ministry offices. They admitted being unaware the classification on Mini-Storage had been settled by an Ontario Supreme Court Decision in 1982 (*Canadian Mini-Warehouse Properties Limited v. R. A. C., Region No. 12*) when the regulations were rewritten in 1997. The Ontario Finance Ministry still has not moved forward on this decision. The manner in which these regulations are currently still written is costing property owners and the Ontario and Federal Governments millions of dollars each year.

Issue:

Pre 1997, Mini storage facilities were assessed as per a ruling by the Ontario Supreme Court which pointed out where no business is conducted no business tax should apply. Mini-Self Storage is unlike a Mini-Mall where business tenants occupy the latter. Mini-Self Storage facilities are more like apartment facilities where both contain personal and household items, not for re-sale. Both should be assessed and taxed similarly. The Assessment Body of the day challenged the court decision in the appeals court and the decision was upheld. In 1997, with the advent of Market Value Assessment, new regulations were written ignoring the Ontario Supreme Court decision, and by default, changing the category of the classification without going back to court where the Government Agencies lost each attempt. The ramification of this change was Province-wide Property Tax increases of as much as 50% for 1998 and the continuance of this increase on an annual basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) That the Ontario Government adhere to the Supreme Court decision and regard Mini-Storage facilities for what they are, rental units for personal property storage, and establish a fair assessment and subsequent taxation as well as classification of Mini-Storage facilities for assessment purposes and further that the notion that the Business Occupancy Tax (BOT) was eliminated, be revised for all Ontario commercial properties, as the BOT is now unnamed but still very much present.
- 2) That the Ontario Government Support the Ombudsman recommendations in its report "Getting it Right" and these recommendations be Implemented

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

IMPLEMENTING THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE (WHTI) AND MAINTAINING ONTARIO BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Issue:

To minimize the anticipated impact of loss of trade and American visits to Ontario, the Province must provide leadership and financial support as communities attempt to manage the new border crossing security change mandated by the US Congress to commence January 1, 2008.

Background:

After September 11, 2001, the United States government created the Department of Homeland Security with a mandate to create secure entry points into the country. The result has been the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. Under the WHTI, travelers entering the U.S. by sea and air need a passport beginning in 2007. This proof of citizenship will be extended to land border crossings Jan. 1, 2008. U.S. citizens will have the option of showing a passport or a proposed People Access Security Service (PASS Card).

Although the Department of Homeland Security has moved from its initial position of a passport as the only accepted form of identification for Americans re-entering the country towards a "pass-lite" card, the DHS has been legislated to produce some form of secure identification.

The federal and provincial governments have been working with counterparts in the United States government to move towards a form of identification that ties into existing ID as a means to reduce the cost to Americans. As well, government officials are working to extend the timelines for implementation of the WHTI.

Many border chambers across the country have been actively involved at the local level working with politicians and government officials to further encourage the United States to create a security system that has the least amount of economic impact on travelers.

Ontario's Minister of Tourism, Jim Bradley explains that the WHTI could decrease U.S. visits to Canada by more than 12 per cent by 2008. In Ontario alone the potential loss is \$570 million (U.S.) and close to 7000 jobs. This initiative will affect the U.S. economy, as the 35.9 million Canadians that visited the U.S. last year injected over \$11.7 billion (U.S.), will be less inclined to cross the border. More specifically, Canadian travel to the U.S. is expected to drop by 3.5 million visits by the end of 2008 resulting in a loss of \$785 million for the U.S. economy.

Since the inception of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the U.S. economy has come to rely on its Canadian counterparts. Facilitating trade amongst NAFTA partners is now more important than ever. As the competitiveness of trade blocs such as the EU and emerging Asian economies increase, NAFTA partners must work together to find an effective solution to border security and trade. A collaborative effort to find a solution to enhance border security will ensure North American economic security.

Each Country has much to lose if the WHTI change is not well understood and communicated. While on conference call with Canadian and USA Chambers of Commerce January 17, 2006, US Department of Homeland Security explained that they would devote substantial dollars to the communication and education of its citizens resulting from these documentation changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Continue to work with the federal governments of the United States and Canada to quickly prepare alternative, low-cost, secure travel documents for land border travel to the USA, continuing to pursue the idea of a dual purpose existing document held by citizens.**
- 2. Create an economic tourism strategy that addresses and attempts to mitigate the impact of a decline in American travelers. In the 2007 Ontario Budget allocate significant marketing dollars for cooperative tourism marketing, with enriched support for border community Destination Marketing Organizations, designed to educate US and Ontario citizens on travel to USA and Ontario in 2008.**
- 3. Encourage the federal government to allocate resources to communicate 2008 changes nationally and financially assist provincial efforts.**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICE

Issue:

The number of small businesses across Northwestern Ontario, including our First Nation Communities continues to grow. This growth requires access to high-speed Internet service, which is a necessary and critical tool for the success of any business effort especially in the areas of marketing, communications, productivity and competitiveness.

Background:

The growth of small business throughout the Northern area of our province is rapidly surpassing the availability of the existing infrastructure and services required to be competitive in today's global market place, in particular our First Nation communities. The ability to operate a business successfully through the use of modern technology, as well as, the convenience of having many employees work from home as opposed to using office space in business centers, suggests that it is in the best interests of the Province to have a safe, secure and dependable high-speed internet service available throughout Ontario and the rest of Canada.

Also it is recognized that high-speed Internet availability is one of the site selection criteria for the location of new businesses, and thus places Northwestern and First Nation communities at a distinct disadvantage when marketing their community as a place to do business.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

NOACC urges the Government of Ontario to:

- 1. Support municipalities, in such a manner as not to be competitive with private sector enterprise, in the building of community based high-speed Internet infrastructure through all means available, including enabling regulation and the funding of infrastructure using such mechanisms as low-interest loans and matching grants.**
- 2. Work with private sector investors to further develop a broadband network and related facilities across Ontario with special emphasis on rural areas.**

NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT

Background:

Program: Adjustment Advisory Program (AAP)

Source: Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities

Community Adjustment

Where there is evidence of downsizing within a community, a community adjustment process may be implemented. The Adjustment Advisory Program works with another committee, which addresses the future sustainability for the area. This would involve several other public and private partners and government reps, contributing additional financial and advisory assistance to the process.

The committees' purpose would be to develop a multi-functional action plan for the broader community as a whole – beyond the workers needs. This plan could include addressing issues regarding the local economy, community infrastructure, social development, labour force development, education and training development, and business retention and expansion for the community, etc.

Once an agreement is reached between the "Community Adjustment Committee" and MTCU, funding is provided to support the adjustment process, i.e., identifying the potential impact on businesses, housing, youth retention, education etc. Eligible expenses can include, staff wages, overhead costs, honorariums and travel cost reimbursement for committee members, etc.

Regional Recovery Program Committee

Northwestern Ontario Communities with Adjustment Committees are experiencing challenges with MTCU's reluctance to share CAC final reports throughout the region. The Committees feels that resources and information from different organizations/groups need to be shared so that they may learn from other experiences and avoid making the same mistakes or pitfalls that others have encountered. They also feel that the *Adjustment Action Summit* will be a good venue for this to happen.

The breadth of Community Adjustment activities in our region is relatively new. There is however a few reports and these are housed in Toronto. There was one other committee in Thunder Bay that had some initiatives from softwood lumber issues. There were three reports written (White River, Dubreville and Chapleau) and these were sent to Toronto.

The groups are drafting a template for community recovery for capacity building models. The MTCU is reluctant to share information about other models/templates because they don't want a cookie cutter plan and they say that the formula for what works in one community may not work in another.

This is flawed policy and the MTCU is viewing the north through southern Ontario urban centric eyes where communities are much larger and not natural resource dependent.