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THE TOWN OF ATIKOKAN 2017 COMMUNITY PROFILE



Atikokan Economic
Development Corporation



TABLE OF CONTENTS

cover photos by Mike McKinnon, Cami Lind, Chris Stromberg

ATIKOKAN, ONTARIO	2
VISION STATEMENT AND MISSION	3
ATIKOKAN DEMOGRAPHICS.....	4
EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE	5
LABOUR AND INCOME PROFILES	6
TAX BASE	7
INDUSTRIAL LAND.....	8
TRANSPORTATION	9
TELECOMMUNICATIONS.....	9
UTILITIES.....	10
GEOGRAPHY	11
BUSINESS INFORMATION.....	12
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND LENDING.....	13
EDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	14
LIFESTYLE.....	15
RECREATION AND CULTURE	17
A TOWN STEEPED IN HISTORY	18
CONTACT US.....	23



PHOTO CREDIT CAMI LIND

ATIKOKAN, ONTARIO

courtesy www.immigrationnorthwesternontario.ca

Welcome to Atikokan, Ontario – the Canoeing Capital of Canada and gateway to Quetico Provincial Park.

The Town of Atikokan encourages people to come and live in, work in, invest in and play in our community.



Our job is made so much easier by the fact that our economy is becoming one of the most diverse in northwestern Ontario, with a growing workforce and unprecedented business succession leading to new and exciting opportunities every day. And it's all set against some of the most spectacular landscapes in North America – it's why we're known to be Naturally Wild.

Atikokan is quickly becoming a model town for regeneration. So impressive is our creativity and commitment to regeneration that we are poised for future community growth in many diverse sectors.

Mining, energy development, the manufacturing of value-added wood products and tourism are all contributing to the diversification of our local economy. The service sector is also a growing force in Atikokan with hospitality services, recreational outfitters, and government services leading the growth. Easily accessible and surrounded by northwestern Ontario's beautiful lakes, rivers and waterfalls, the Canoeing Capital of Canada is the gateway community to outdoor adventures in the renowned Quetico Provincial Park and the White Otter Wilderness Area. Designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a safe community, our residents enjoy the many benefits of living in tranquility; extremely affordable housing, access to social services, opportunity for growth, and an unprecedented community of inclusion and spirit are just icing on the cake!



photos credit Chris Stromberg

Find out more about the Atikokan lifestyle, our heritage as the Canoeing Capital of Canada, our economy, and why it pays to invest in Atikokan.

VISION STATEMENT AND MISSION

VISION: The Canoeing Capital of Canada is a safe, healthy community with a diverse economy, strong ties to the wilderness and a creative spirit.



photo credit Carol Gosselin

MISSION: Atikokan will continue to provide for its citizens by offering efficient services, with a focus on economic development and infrastructure maintenance while preserving our positive lifestyle opportunities.

VALUES:

1. *Harmony with the land:* Historically, the overall health of Atikokan has been dependent on the extraction of natural resources. It is in the best interest of the community to make long term decisions based on sustainability in balance with economic viability.

2. *Friendliness and generosity:* Our spirit, attitude and ability to help each other are vital to the fabric of this community. We have many volunteer groups working to contribute to the overall success of the community. Our friendly nature will help to support our tourism interests also.



photo credit Christian Holmann

3. *Healthy and Nurturing Lifestyles:* Physical health in this community is supported through recreational services and our outdoor lifestyle.

4. *Independence and tenacity:* We support and promote an entrepreneurial spirit in our community. Our tenacity stems from our past experience of overcoming great obstacles.

5. *Our citizens:* Our decisions and our planning must be guided by what is best for all of our citizens.

ATIKOKAN DEMOGRAPHICS

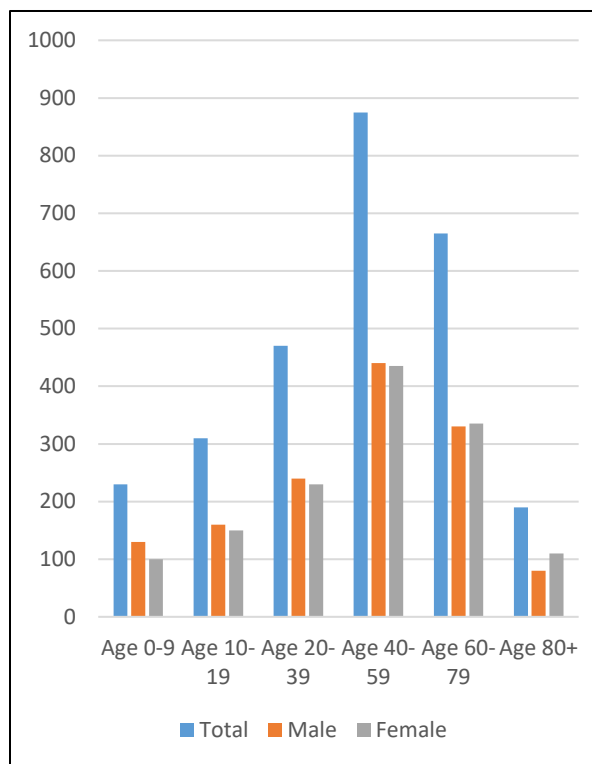
TOWN OVERVIEW (2016 CENSUS)

Population	2,755
Total private dwellings	1,477
Population density per square kilometre	8.6
Land area per square kilometre	319.52



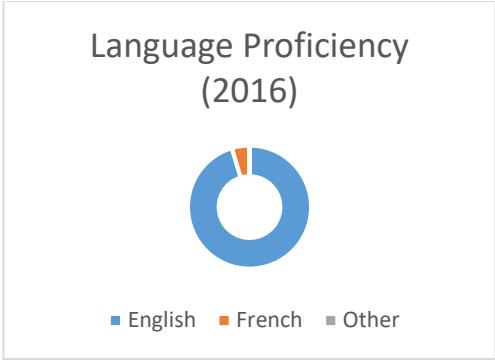
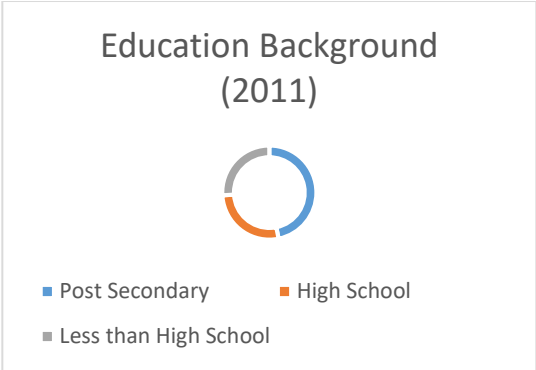
photo credit Kim Cross

DEMOGRAPHICS BREAKDOWN (2016 CENSUS)



Age Characteristics of Atikokan's Population (2016 Census)	Total	Male	Female
Total - All Persons	2,755	1,365	1,385
Age 0-4	100	55	45
Age 5-14	270	145	130
Age 15-19	170	90	80
Age 20-24	115	65	50
Age 25-44	495	245	250
Age 45-54	440	210	235
Age 55-64	530	290	240
Age 65-74	285	135	150
Age 75-84	330	160	170
Age 85 and over	95	35	60
Median Age of the population	46.2	45.1	47.2
% of population ages 15 and over	86.4	85.7	88.0

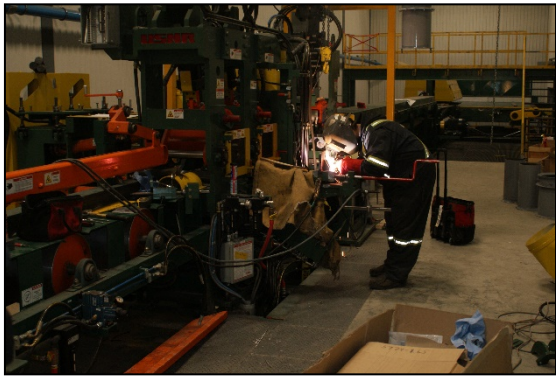
EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE



Education Background (2011 Census)	Total
Total Population, aged 15 years and over by highest certificate, diploma or degree	2,310
No certificate, diploma or degree	600
High school diploma or equivalent	630
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	1,075
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	310
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	465
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	55
University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above	250
Bachelor's degree	190
University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	60



Language(s) First Learned & Still Understood (2016 Census)	Total	Male	Female
Total - All Persons	2,705	1,345	1,360
English only	2,575	1,290	1,290
French only	5	0	0
Both English and French	120	60	65
Other Languages	5	0	0

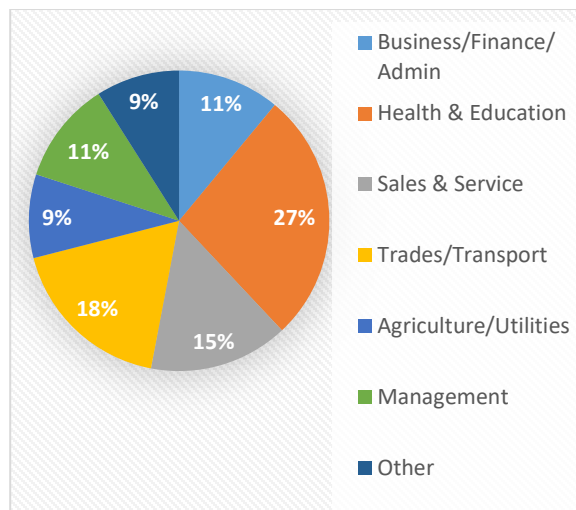


LABOUR AND INCOME PROFILES

LABOUR PROFILE (2011 Census)

Labour Force Indicators	Total	Male	Female
Participation Rate	56.5	53.9	58.6
Employment Rate	51.7	48.3	55.2
Unemployment Rate	8.4	10.5	6.6

Family and Household Income	
Average Household Income	\$71,679
Median Household Income	\$58,598
Average Family Income	\$79,399
Median Family Income	\$83,200
Incidence of Low Income	13.4%



Income Levels (2015)	Total	Male	Female
Under \$5,000	275	145	130
\$5,000 to \$9,999	130	60	75
\$10,000 to \$14,999	180	80	105
\$15,000 to \$19,999	135	45	95
\$20,000 to \$29,999	165	65	95
\$30,000 to \$39,999	140	50	85
\$40,000 to \$49,999	130	75	55
\$50,000 to \$59,999	85	55	35
\$60,000 to \$79,999	75	50	25
\$80,000 to \$89,999	60	40	20
\$90,000 to \$99,999	50	40	10
\$100,000 and over	120	105	20

TAX BASE

The majority of operating finances collected by the Town of Atikokan are dependent upon the annual taxes levied on its property owners. These funds are applied towards the administration of all municipal departments for the provision of many essential services: police and fire protection, road maintenance, sewage and drainage, parks and recreation, economic development and tourism.

2017 Tax Rates	Mun. Tax Rate	Ed. Tax Rate	Total Tax Rate
Residential/Farm	0.03145085	0.00179000	0.03324085
Managed Forest	0.00786272	0.00044750	0.00831022
Multi-Residential	0.06290170	0.00179000	0.06469170
Commercial and Commercial New Construction	0.06088149	0.01140000	0.07228149
Commercial and Commercial N-C Vacant Land	0.04261704	0.00798000	0.05059704
Commercial and Commercial N-C Excess Land	0.04261704	0.00798000	0.05059704
Industrial Residual and Ind. Res. New Construction	0.06615874	0.01140000	0.07755874
Industrial Residual & Ind. Res. N-C Vacant Land	0.04631111	0.00798000	0.05429111
Industrial Residual & Ind. Res. N-C Excess Land	0.04631111	0.00798000	0.05429111
Large Industrial & Large Ind. New Construction	0.10752301	0.01140000	0.11892301
Large Industrial & Large Ind. N-C Excess Land	0.07526611	0.00798000	0.08324611
Pipeline	0.07607731	0.01140000	0.08747731
Landfills	0.03145085	0.01140000	0.04285085
Farmland	0.00786272	0.00044750	0.00831022
Managed Forest	0.00786272	0.00044750	0.00831022

For more detailed tax information, contact the Town of Atikokan at (807) 597-1234 Extension 225.

REAL ESTATE

There are a variety of available options for a company or business looking to establish operations in Atikokan. Available locations range in size, zoning, and features. Lease rates and sale prices are very attractive and competitive. A full listing of available industrial, commercial, and office space is readily available by contacting the Town of Atikokan Office.

OPERATING COSTS

Industrial and commercial lease rates in Atikokan are extremely competitive. These competitive rates make Atikokan a low-cost centre to do business. To view available local residential and commercial opportunities, visit www.kathyboyda.com

EXISTING SPACE

Currently, there are a number of commercial spaces available in Atikokan; the size and type of these commercial spaces vary. Some of these spaces offer, high traffic, high profile locations in indoor and strip malls, while others offer locations on Highway commercial zones, or modern industrial park space. Town staff are willing to organize a confidential tour of available land and spaces.

OPTION TO BUILD

If building a new facility is what you're looking for, Atikokan has locations to suit your industrial or commercial needs. For a list of surplus property available in Atikokan, visit www.atikokan.ca/content/surplus-property

INDUSTRIAL LAND

The Town of Atikokan owns and maintains a 3.11 acre, fully serviced Industrial Mall in the northern limits of the municipality.

For more information on these lots please contact the Town of Atikokan or the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation.



The Mall is zoned for industrial usage, and services provided on industrial land include piped water, sewer/septic systems, communications hook-ups, and electrical power.

The Industrial Mall is strategically located to an immediate transportation network. This network includes:

- Highway 11, approximately 2 km south
- Atikokan Airport, within town limits
- Canada National & Pacific Rail, within town limits

Industrial Mall Specifications	
Zoning	Industrial M1 Regulation
Area	3.11 acres
Water	Town of Atikokan
Sewers	Town of Atikokan
Telephone	Bell Canada
Telecommunications	Shaw Cable, Bell Canada
Energy	Atikokan Hydro, Union Gas
Transportation	Road
Current Industrial Mall Activities	Veterinarian Health Centre Atikokan Fire Rescue Fix-It Club FJS Holdings Atikokan Public Works

TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAY

Atikokan has access to two major highways, Hwy. 17 (TransCanada) and Hwy. 11. These two highways can be reached by the use of secondary highways. Hwy. 17 can be reached by travelling 135 km north on Hwy. 622 and Hwy. 11 can be accessed by travelling 3.2 km south on Hwy. 11B. All the highways are generally in good condition.

AIR

The Town of Atikokan owns and operates a small municipal airport that has a 3,500 foot runway and is open and maintained year round. Aircraft parking and fuelling is available.

For after hours fuelling please contact the on call foreman at (807) 597-2135. The municipal airport is located just 2 kilometres from downtown Atikokan. For a list of current airport fees please visit www.atikokan.ca/content/atikokan-municipal-airport

FREIGHT TRANSPORT

Atikokan is serviced by Gardewine North; contact (807) 598-0206 for inter-provincial and international transportation services.

COURIER

National courier services guarantee immediate, bonded delivery from Atikokan to most destinations across Canada and North America. Servicing Atikokan and the surrounding region are several locally operated firms providing a range of delivery and direct mail services at rates competitive to national suppliers.

Canada Post Corporation
203 Burns Street
Phone: (807) 597-6979

Courtesy Freight Systems
Toll Free: 1-800-267-0598

Purolator Courier Ltd.
109 Gorrie Street
Toll Free: (807) 597-4552

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A number of communication companies have operations and services offered in Atikokan. Services range from telephone services, to high speed Internet telecommunications, to LTE & 4G cellular phone service. All of these services provided make Atikokan a fully connected community with the ability to perform business competitively in the global marketplace. Atikokan is one of few regional players that is fibre-ready and able to bring new technology into your space at a fractional cost.

	Telephone	Cellular	Internet	Television
Bell Canada	•	•	•	•
FIDO		•		
Koodo		•		
Shaw / Shaw Direct			•	•
TBayTel/Rogers		•		
TekSavvy	•		•	
Telus		•		
Vianet			•	
Virgin Mobile		•		

UTILITIES

HYDRO – RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

Atikokan’s major energy source is electricity. It is provided through the services of Atikokan Hydro. Rates for are set through agreements with the Ontario Energy Board. To obtain residential consumer and business information, visit www.athydro.com or call 807-597-6600.

HYDRO - INDUSTRIAL

Large operations requiring bulk amounts of hydro must apply to the Independent Electricity Market Operator to become market participants. To obtain more information visit www.theimo.com or call 1-888-448-7777.

WATER

Atikokan has an excellent ground supply of water that pumps 1,792 cubic metres of water per day. Atikokan’s water reservoir has a capacity of 3,389 cubic metres.

PROPANE

Superior Propane Inc. provides bulk propane fuel distribution in Atikokan, and also disburses on a smaller scale via local vendors, including Johnson’s ESSO and Voyageur Bait & Tackle.



The Atikokan drinking water system is classified as a large municipal residential system, and it is composed of a raw pumping station. The system is owned by the Corporation of the Town of Atikokan and is operated and maintained by Northern Waterworks Inc.

NATURAL GAS

Natural Gas services are provided by Union Gas.

GASOLINE, BULK FUELS & FUEL OIL

Johnson’s Esso
2 Mercury Avenue

Quetico North Outfitters
Highway 11 East

Voyageur Bait & Tackle
Highway 11B

Warburton Holdings
105 Goodwin St.

2017 Rates (per residence)	Water	Sewer	Total Tax Rate
Residential	\$506.40	\$337.60	\$844.00
Commercial (1-5 Employees)	\$511.30	\$341.41	\$853.52

GEOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: Longitude 91 37' W • Latitude 48 45 1/2' N

ALTITUDE: 393 m above sea level

LAND AREA: 330.66 km² • 3,068 hectares • 128 sq. miles • 81,709 acres

ACCESSIBILITY: Atikokan has access to two major highways, Hwy. 17 (TransCanada) and Hwy. 11. These two highways can be reached by the use of secondary highways. Hwy. 17 can be reached by travelling 135 km north on Hwy. 622 and Hwy. 11 can be accessed by travelling 3.2 km south on Hwy. 11B. All the highways are generally in good condition.



photo credit Cami Lind

Road Distance and Direction from Atikokan to Various Centres

CENTRE	DIRECTION	KILOMETERS	MILES
Thunder Bay	East	202	126
North Bay	East	1,294	804
Sudbury	East	1,202	748
Toronto	Southeast	1,570	1,033
Ottawa	Southeast	1,664	1,035
Montreal	Southeast	1,890	1,175
Fort Frances	West	136	84
Winnipeg	West	533	331
Regina	West	1,083	673
Calgary	West	1,833	1,170
Vancouver	West	3,010	1,870
International Falls (US Entry Point)	West	137	85
Pigeon River (US Entry Point)	Southeast	263	164
Duluth	South	519	323
Minneapolis	South	765	476
Chicago	South	1,264	786

BUSINESS INFORMATION

There are various sources of information and resources for businesses or entrepreneurs looking to establish operations in Atikokan.

The Atikokan Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), a Community Futures organization, is the primary office responsible for assisting business and industry to locate, relocate or expand operations in or around Atikokan, Upsala and the First Nations of Seine River, Lac La Croix and Lac Des Milles Lacs. In a situation where other agencies or organizations - notably the municipality and stakeholders at the provincial and federal levels - have a role to play in the process, Atikokan Economic Development Corporation staff facilitate meetings with key officials responsible for the programs or services involved.

The AEDC also administers a Community Investment Fund on behalf of FedNor for entrepreneurs looking to start or grow their businesses, and operates the Atikokan Employment Centre, who holds services on behalf of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to facilitate employment services.

The AEDC is in place to assist new and existing businesses and industry locate or expand in the Town. The office provides detailed and current information to companies wanting to make informed decisions on site selection. AEDC works closely with regional and national companies including the Business Development Bank of Canada, Metis Development Fund, Aboriginal Business Canada, PARO and the CEDC to deliver specialized client programs and access to funding to entrepreneurs and industry.

In addition to the Community Profile – a comprehensive information publication - and listings of available real estate, the staff of the AEDC can assist clients in all phases of the site selection process. Local and prospective firms can take advantage of the resources and expertise to source the information and contacts necessary to succeed in today’s competitive global economy.

For further information on the excellent prospects for doing business in Atikokan, contact the staff of the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation or visit www.atikokaninfo.com

Atikokan’s Largest Employers (as of 3/01/17)	Total Employees
Atikokan General Hospital	110
Resolute Forest Products	104
Ontario Power Generation	70
Town of Atikokan	58
Rainy River District School Board	51
Atikokan Foodland	28
Rentech Inc.	22
Northwest Catholic District School Board	22
Atikokan Family Health Team/FHT Outreach	21
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources	12
Atikokan Economic Development Corp./Atikokan Employment Centre	10

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND LENDING



RBC (Royal Bank of Canada)
112 Main Street West
PO Box 1120
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
(807) 597-6905

Atikokan Economic Development Corporation is a Community Futures Development Corporation funded by FedNor. Core activities include business counselling and information services, community economic development and small business loans.

Atikokan Economic Development Corporation
214 Main Street West
P.O. Box 218
Atikokan, ON
P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-2757
Toll-Free: 1-888-334-2332

Business Development Bank of Canada is a Crown corporation which promotes and assists in the establishment and development of most types of business enterprises within Canada by providing financial aid (equity investment and long-term loans) and management services.

Business Development Bank of Canada
102-1136 Alloy Drive
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6M9
Toll-Free: 1-800-974-0005



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Atikokan offers three schools. North Star (JK-6) and the Atikokan High School (7-12) are public schools, while St. Patrick's School (JK-8) is a Catholic public school. All three schools consistently rank near the top of regional rankings and excel for their sports, academics and specialized programming, including the High School's Outers program, world-renowned for its uniqueness in connecting students to the outdoors.

Atikokan High School

324 Mercury Avenue P.O. Box 2460
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-2703

North Star Community School

209 Hawthorne Road P.O. Box 869
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-6640

St. Patrick's Separate School

160 Hemlock Avenue P.O. Box 2580
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-2633

Contact North is the focal point of advanced training in Atikokan, a distance education network that facilitates the delivery of secondary and post-secondary courses to communities throughout northern Ontario. Contact North uses modern communications technologies to enable existing educational and training institutions to deliver courses to students in their home communities.

Contact North

324 Mercury Avenue P.O. Box 520
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Toll-Free: 1-877-999-9149

Atikokan's Adult Learning Centre is a non-profit, charitable, board run, community based Literacy and Basic Skills program dedicated to helping all adults in our community improve their basic reading, writing and math skills in a supportive environment. Their goal is to promote a learner-centred approach to academic upgrading and essential skills training for employment readiness.

Atikokan Adult Learning Centre

25 Rawn Road P.O. Box 2116
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-1242

The Atikokan Employment Centre provides employment related services to unemployed and underemployed individuals and to assist individuals make applications to Employment Ontario funded programs and provide advanced and specialized training that meets client needs, as well as industry.

Atikokan Employment Centre

214 Main Street West P.O. Box 116
Atikokan, ON P0T 1C0
Phone: (807) 597-2485

Atikokan is within two hours of post-secondary centres in Thunder Bay - they offer a variety of training, education and research programs and services in a number of different fields, including medicine, law, forestry, engineering and more.

Confederation College

1450 Nakina Drive
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4W1
Toll Free: 1-800-465-5493

Lakehead University

955 Oliver Road
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1
Phone: (807) 343-8110

LIFESTYLE

Atikokan has an extremely competitively priced housing market, with one of the lowest costs of living in Canada. Residential housing is affordable, while offering quality homes and rental units.

In addition, Atikokan is an exceptionally safe and enjoyable community to live in, and an excellent place to raise a family, with ample parks, schools, churches, outdoor activities and programs aimed at ensuring an excellent quality of life in Atikokan.



photo credit Atikokan Progress

Housing Characteristics (2016)	
Total Occupied Private Dwellings	1,305
Number of Owned Dwellings	1,195
Average monthly payments for owner-occupied dwellings	\$644
Number of rented dwellings	105
Average gross monthly payments for rented dwellings	\$686
Number of dwellings constructed before 1991	1,220
Number of dwellings constructed between 1991 and 2001	85
Average value of dwelling	\$101,375

- Atikokan Family Health Team staffs five physicians and has five full time staff. The Family Health Team’s outreach staffs a nurse practitioner, a pharmacist (through OTN) and nine full-time staff.
- Two dental offices operate in Atikokan, a full service optometrist, as well as chiropractic services.
- Visiting specialists to Atikokan offer services in ophthalmology, orthopaedics and audiology, among others.

- The town is serviced by a modern hospital that houses 41 beds and employs 110 people.
- Rainy River District EMS operates a base in Atikokan and has nine paramedics on staff. Volunteer firefighting services are located in Atikokan and Niobe Lake, and policing is provided by the Ontario Provincial Police.
- A branch office of the Northwestern District Health Unit is also located in Atikokan.

RECREATION AND CULTURE

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Snowmobile Trails

Atikokan Sno-Ho Snowmobile Club grooms over 500 kilometres of travels traveling to Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, and Ignace or south to Minnesota trails. Atikokan offers some of the best trails in northwestern Ontario with some amazing scenery including the White Otter Castle. OFSC trail permits are required to be on the trail system.



Cross Country Ski Trails

The Beaten Path Ski Club promotes cross country skiing as an affordable healthy lifestyle activity in a pristine wilderness environment. Beaten Path has developed and maintains 35 kilometres of a cross country ski trail system utilized by skiers of all ages and abilities for classic and skate skiing, provides instruction, conducts clinics, and hosts participation and race events for local and area skiers.



Downhill Skiing & Snowboarding

Mount Fairweather is located just outside of Atikokan. For skiing and snowboarding, there are 1.6 km of slopes available ranging in degree of difficulty with two machines to transport the guests (T- bar lift & Rope tow). The winter sports area is situated between the elevations of 100 and 206 m.

Outdoor Rinks

Atikokan is home to three outdoor rinks which are run by volunteers. Any time, day or night you can use these public rinks, whether your pleasure is hockey, figure skating or just for fun. The Hemlock Sportsplex has an asphalt surface for street hockey, basketball, skateboarding and more in the summer months. There is also a beach volleyball court at this complex.



Parks & Playgrounds

Atikokan has numerous parks and four playgrounds for children and the child at heart. There also is a toboggan hill located at the entrance of Bunnell Park. Atikokan is also home to two Baseball Diamonds.

Golf Course

The Little Falls Golf Club is a public nine hole golf course that opened in 1975. This golf course is nestled away in the Wilderness of northwestern Ontario which features a picturesque view of the water falls from the signature Hole 7. Come and play this challenging course and enjoy the breath-taking views.



Charleson Recreation Area

This recreation area is home to the Motocross club, Mountain bike club, Mudslingers 4X4 club, Horse club and the ATV/UTV club and home to the Snowmobile club in the winter. The organizations within this recreational area host public events throughout the year. Surrounding the area are many trails for walking or snowshoeing, and surrounding lakes provide fishing and canoeing opportunities.

Bunnell Park Campground

Located within walking distance of Little Falls Golf Course and picturesque Little Falls, Bunnell Park offers convenient camping for tents and trailers. Drinking water, electrical hook ups, a sewer dump station, and a clean washroom/shower facility are all available for our guests. Walking trails take you to Little Falls and to the golf course.

INDOOR FACILITIES

Curling Club

Little Falls Curling Club offers a four sheet rink, featuring Men's, Ladies Curling's, Little Rockers Curling Program, afternoon curling and has been included in the Atikokan High School Sports curriculum. There are many Bonspiels throughout the curling season.

Atikokan Health and Wellness Complex

This complex - newly renovated and modernized in 2017 - is home for both Atikokan's arena and pool. The complex offers one ice surface, and one 25 metre, five-lane pool. This 25,000 square foot facility also contains a canteen, and a community use fitness room.



A TOWN STEEPED IN HISTORY

The “country beyond the height of land” was the description of the Atikokan area by its first settlers, the Ojibwa Indians. The Natives supported themselves on land that was characterized as having an abundance of forests, lakes and rivers, small game and woodland caribou. The Natives that inhabited the Atikokan area, Oschekamega Wenenewak - The People of the Crossridges, lived in peace and harmony with nature.



photo credit David Black

In 1688, Jacques de Noyon was the first white man to travel through the “country beyond the height of land”. After de Noyon travelled through the area, a rush of exploration and expansion took place and within 200 years the Ojibwa population had greatly diminished. The remaining natives signed the Northwest Angle Treaty, Treaty No. 3, covering the Atikokan-Quetico area in 1873. With the signing of the Treaty some natives retired to reserves, while some remained to live the lifestyle of hunting and trapping in the area.

While the Ojibwa natives struggled to maintain their harmonious lifestyle, the fur trade was becoming a major industry. Due to boundary disputes between Canada and the United States, fur brigades travelled extensively through the heart of the Atikokan-Quetico area. However, in the 1850s the fur trade ceased in this area due to other means of transportation, namely the railroad.

Confederation in 1867 brought with it a need to improve communication with the west. This demand triggered the construction of the Dawson Trail, which began at Prince Arthur’s Landing and went through to Winnipeg. When the Dawson Trail was completed in 1874, the route west could be travelled for \$15. This reasonably priced trip included riding in open wagons, and crossing lakes and rivers in an open rowboat. Accommodation was a large platform raised off the ground, on which everyone slept. However, in 1882, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway resulted in the closure of the Dawson Trail.

After the fur trade in the 1850s, gold was discovered approximately 45 miles southeast of Atikokan. This finding, in the winter of 1870, started a boom of mineral exploration. Demands for an effective means of communication and transportation in 1886 resulted in the incorporation of the Ontario and Rainy River Railroad to be built from Port Arthur to Fort Frances and westward. In addition, roads were being built in the region to assist in developing the mining areas.

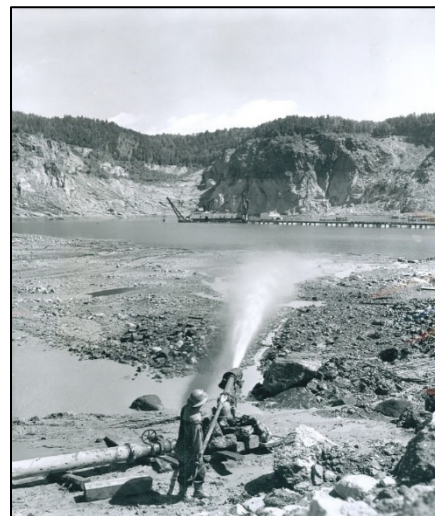


photo credit Charles Dobie

Active mining operations commenced in the Atikokan area in 1899. That same year, Tom Rawn settled in the Atikokan area after the completion of the Canadian Northern Railroad, which included Atikokan. Tom Rawn, Atikokan's first settler, was one of the first to stake claims for iron ore in the Steep Rock area. In 1940, Tom Rawn sold 109 mining claims to the Midwest Iron Mining Corporation. With the sixty claims that still remained he formed Rawn Iron Mines Ltd. Unfortunately, shortly after the formation of his mining company, Tom set out to do some prospecting in the Sapawe area and was never to be seen again.



photo credit Nancy Moffatt Myers

Julian Cross, a mining professor and prospector, discovered the vast amount of iron ore that lay under Steep Rock Lake. Cross' discovery in 1930 sparked the interest of Joe Errington and Major General D. M. Hogarth. Errington and Hogarth, along with Cross, funded the project and hired a brilliant young engineer named M. S. (Pop) Fotheringham. The team of four men began to probe Steep Rock Lake for iron ore in 1938. However, problems arose with the idea of mining the iron ore that lay beneath the Lake. The ore was buried under 100 feet of water and 300 feet of silt, which made it very difficult to salvage. In addition, Steep Rock Lake was part of the Seine River System, a major waterway. Impossible as it may have seemed to mine Steep Rock Lake, Pop Fotheringham produced a method to mine the Lake because of the ore demands of the war effort in the early 1940s. The Seine River System which flowed through Marmion Lake and then into Steep Rock Lake was dammed and diverted. The water was diverted around the East End of Steep Rock Lake through Finlayson Lake and drained back into the west arm of Steep Rock Lake to continue its flow through the Seine River System. The West End of what was once Steep Rock Lake was drained and dredged. While many consultants thought that the plan was ridiculous, Cyrus Eaton, a financial genius, thought that the mining of iron ore in Steep Rock Lake was a worthy project and raised \$3,500,000 for the project. The determination and perseverance of five men, Cross, Errington, Hogarth, Fotheringham and Eaton, has made Steep Rock unique in Canadian history. The massive engineering project is known as one of the great Canadian engineering triumphs of all time. Steep Rock Iron Mines was a great success, producing 1,400,000 tons of high-grade pellets annually. However, new technologies

that improved the quality of steel made from taconite ore, forced Steep Rock Iron Mines to announce its closure in 1972. Steep Rock Iron Mines could not compete economically and they officially closed in August 1979.

Three ore bodies were discovered during the probing of Steep Rock Lake. Each ore body was initially labelled, A, B and C, but later were named after the founders of the Steep Rock ore bodies. The first ore body was named Hogarth Mine, the second was named Errington Mine and the third ore body was leased to the Caland Ore Company Limited. Caland was a subsidiary of the Inland Steel Company of Chicago. Caland Ore Company Limited was formed in 1949, and in 1959 it initiated its open pit mining operation in the Falls Bay ore body. Similar to Steep Rock Lake, Caland Ore Company was quite successful, producing 25 million tons of iron ore in 14 years of operation. However, in 1980, Caland Ore Company was also forced to close because of new and improved technologies in steel production.

When the mines were in full gear, much attention was also given to the forestry industry because of the large quantities of timber that were being utilized by the mines. In the early 1900s there were numerous



photo credit Nancy Moffatt Myers

lumber mills in the surrounding area of Atikokan. Many lumber companies logged the Quetico area extensively before it was announced that there was no longer to be any commercial logging in Quetico Park. In 1942, the Ontario-Minnesota Pulp and Paper Company Limited situated themselves north of Atikokan and began logging operations. All wood from the plant was driven down the Seine River and Little Turtle River Systems until a road was completed in 1950.

In 1945, the first stationary mill was constructed at Sapawe Lake. The mill was constructed and operated under the direction of J.A. Mathieu Limited company. In 1958, J.A.'s grandson Jim incorporated Jim Mathieu Lumber Limited and took over the Sapawe mill. Jim Mathieu completely renovated and updated the mill. Sawmill and planing mill equipment was renovated, a dry kiln was erected and new equipment to strip the bark from logs and convert slabs and edging to pulpwood chips was installed.

Unfortunately, the plant was destroyed in a fire and the Company was out of business for a year before they could resume production. Initially, things went well for the Jim Mathieu Company following the rebuilding of the mill, however, hard times set in and the company eventually went into receivership. In 1967, Domtar Woodlands Limited took over the J.A. Mathieu Lumber Company. Domtar modernized and rebuilt the mill and logging camp facilities.

At this time, controversy started over the question of commercial logging in Quetico Provincial Park. The issue of logging in Quetico Provincial Park along with the depressed lumber markets caused much uncertainty about the fate of Domtar. In 1971, it was confirmed that commercial logging in Quetico Provincial Park was to cease. However, at the same time, it was announced that the lumber mill was to be preserved.

Domtar Woodlands Limited continued to thrive and contribute to the economic stability of Atikokan. In 1981, the lumber company changed hands once again from Domtar Woodlands Limited to Atikokan Forest Products. Atikokan Forest Products continued to operate under the direction of Buchanan Forest Products until its closure in 2007. Resolute Forest Products purchased the land in 2013 and continues to operate a modern sawmill facility on the Sapawe site, employing more than 100 locals.



photo credit Susan Bryk

Pluswood Manufacturing Ltd. – later named Proboard Ltd. began construction in 1974 and commenced operations in January 1976. Originally a U.S. company, it was 100% Canadian-owned since Tom Plouffe purchased it in 1991; in 2004 Fibratech Manufacturing Ltd. purchased and operated the facility and ran it as one of North America’s innovative engineered wood producers, manufacturing and designing quality orientated fibreboard panels. After a downturn in global timber markets, the mill was eventually closed in 2007; however, it gave way for its eventual purchase by Atikokan Renewable Fuels in 2009, who repurposed the site into the production of high-quality wood pellets; it was purchased in

2013 by Rentech Fuels, who continue to operate it with a staff of 22.

While the mining and lumber industries were developing and taking off into full production, Atikokan was expanding at a rapid rate. Within three years of Tom Rawn settling in Atikokan, the Pioneer Hotel was built, a general store opened, the post office was installed and the Atikokan School Section No. 1 was formed. As the years rolled on, the people of Atikokan continued to develop and establish the town. In 1911, Tom built the first bridge across the Atikokan River (O’Brien’s Bridge) and Rawn’s Road. In 1935, the Pioneer Hotel that Tom built to house passing



photo credit Charles Dobie

explorers, loggers, trappers and fishermen caught fire and burned to the ground. To replace the Pioneer Hotel, The Atikokan Hotel was constructed on the same site and still remains in business today.

Shortly after this time Steep Rock was starting to launch into production and Atikokan’s population grew. In 1944, Steep Rock Iron Mines began the construction of roads for the formation of a new town site in



photo credit Maureen Owen Knowles

Don Park. Although Atikokan was developing at a great rate, there was still limited access and communication with the surrounding areas. It was not until 1949, that an Agreement was signed by the Improvement District with the Northern Telephone Company and a phone system was established. It was in 1950, when the population of Atikokan reached 3,000 people, that Atikokan experienced first-hand the result of having only the railroad as access to and from Atikokan. The Canadian National Railway went on strike and caused food shortages in Atikokan. The town went without meat, milk, sugar or green vegetables until a “Mercy Train” from the Lakehead and a seaplane came with some supplies for the hospital and for children. There were numerous demands on the Provincial Government to construct a highway linking Atikokan to Fort Frances and Fort William. In 1954, the Lakehead-Atikokan Highway was officially opened, making access by automobile to Atikokan possible. Nearly 10 years later, a highway linking Atikokan to the west was opened. The little town that started with Tom Rawn and a dream blossomed into a productive town, where people flocked to establish themselves and their families. In 1954, the municipality of Atikokan was incorporated into a Township.

In 1958, a group of citizens from northwestern Ontario created Quetico Centre. The Centre was designed to be an educational institution designed to improve and stimulate the cultural and economic growth of northwestern Ontario. Many organizations held seminars at Quetico Centre so that they can escape the bustle of the city and surround themselves in a natural and peaceful setting. The site was purchased privately in 2012 with plans to repurpose it to a private tuition school.

In 1973, the Atikokan Industrial Development Committee was formed by Town Council to investigate new business opportunities for the community. The two mines, Steep Rock Iron Mines and Caland Ore Company Limited, had announced their pending closures and new industries and services had to be investigated if Atikokan was to continue. Their efforts resulted in industries such as Pluswood, Ontario Hydro Thermal Generating Plant and the Ministry of Natural Resources Area Office to situate in Atikokan. The committee was also instrumental in the construction of a swimming pool, nine-hole golf course, curling rink, airport and a new hospital. In 1986, the Atikokan Industrial Development Committee turned its mandate over to the Atikokan Economic Development Corporation.



Since Atikokan was first settled in 1899 by Tom Rawn, the town and its people have overcome great odds. When most towns would have failed, Atikokan continued to strive for bigger and better things. And it will continue to do so as time marches on.

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