



For Immediate Release

In Cochrane District, putting people to work will not be enough

September 13, 2016 – The second installment of the *Northern Projections: Human Capital Series*, reveals a bright future for the Cochrane District hinges on much more than just a jobs strategy.

The new report, a partnership between Northern Policy Institute and the Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards, brings to light several key trends that are projected to have a significant impact on the district moving forward.

The Aboriginal population in Cochrane District is projected to rise by 34 percent in the next 25 years; the Aboriginal labour force by 26 percent over that same period. Currently, the Aboriginal population, especially on reserves, is notably under-represented in the labour market.

“Enhancing labour force participation rates among the Aboriginal population will be a key component to strengthening the local economy”, stated Julie Joncas, Executive Director of Far Northeast Training Board.

Similar to other regions in Northern Ontario, a declining and aging population is one of the most fundamental challenges facing the Cochrane area. Between 2002 and 2015 nearly 11,000 individuals moved out of the region, while in 2015, the district attracted only 33 immigrants. An aggressive and focused migration attraction effort is needed to slow down this trend.

Additionally, the report points to several opportunities that could provide the basis for targeted attraction efforts.

“The region has many opportunities and signs of growth linked to natural resources, writes authors, James Cuddy and Bakhtiar Moazzami.” For example, there is a large amount of arable land as well as a number of operational gold mines that remain a key source of employment and economic growth. In fact, from 2001 to 2011, the mining and oil and gas extraction industries grew by nearly 40 percent.”

There is also early indications that the knowledge economy may be taking hold in the area with small but positive changes in the areas of professional, scientific, and technical services; administrative and support, and arts, entertainment and recreation.

Based on these trends and opportunities, the report offers three key recommendations to promote the long-term sustainability of the district:

- 1. Implement a well-rounded migration strategy** - It is important that the region seeks to enhance its population levels by implementing strong immigration strategies, in combination with strategies to attract domestic in-migrants.
- 2. Enhance Aboriginal labour market participation** - Cochrane district should seek to enhance participation rates among the Aboriginal labour force population. This can be achieved by enhancing collaboration between municipalities, Aboriginal communities and industry; increasing education levels and access in rural areas; and connecting the population with important local services and programs that are available.



3. *Leverage industrial clusters to identify new opportunities* - The region should continue to build on its natural resource clusters, but at the same time, recognize the importance of economic diversification for smoothing out the cyclical nature of these industries.

The full report, *Northern Projections: Human Capital Series – Cochrane District*, is available on our websites:

Northern Policy Institute www.northernpolicy.ca

Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation www.awic.ca

Far Northeast Training Board www.fnetb.com

The Labour Market Group – Nipissing Parry Sound www.thelabourmarketgroup.ca

Northwest Training and Adjustment Board www.ntab.on.ca

North Superior Workforce Planning Board www.nswpb.ca

Sudbury and Manitoulin Workforce Planning Board www.planningourworkforce.ca

Northern Projections: Human Capital Series highlights all of the 11 districts in Northern Ontario, and is part of an ongoing, collaborative effort between the *Northern Policy Institute* and *Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Board* to provide evidenced based advice for effective decision making in the region.

Reports examine past and present characteristics and trends in each district's economy in order to forecast future challenges and opportunities.

Media Interviews: Northern Policy Institute President and CEO, Charles Cirtwill and Executive Director of Far Northeast Training Board, Julie Joncas, are available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

Katie Elliott
Communications Coordinator
705-542-4456
kelliott@northernpolicy.ca

About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern Communities. Our Operations are located in Kenora, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.

About Northern Ontario Workforce Planning:

Workforce Planning Ontario is a network of 26 Workforce Planning Boards covering four regions across the province. Workforce Planning Boards gather intelligence about the supply and demand side of the local labour market and work in partnership with employers, employment services, educators, researchers, economic development, government and other stakeholders to identify, understand and address labour market issues. This includes supporting and coordinating local responses to meet current and emerging workforce needs.



Given the unique geography and labour market issues that impact Northern Ontario, all 6 planning boards in the north have collaborated to form Northern Ontario Workforce Planning. They include: Algoma Workforce Investment Corporation (AWIC); Far Northeast Training Board (FNETB); The Labour Market Group (LMG); Northwest Training and Adjustment Board (NTAB); North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB); and Workforce Planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin (WPSM). FNETB and NSWPB are currently pilot sites for Local Employment Planning Councils (LEPC).