

For Immediate Release

People without jobs, Jobs without people... An avoidable future for Timiskaming District

June 9, 2016 – A new report commissioned by the Northern Policy Institute in partnership with the Northern Ontario Workforce Planning Boards uncovers some serious challenges – and potential solutions - for the Timiskaming District.

The report, the first of a series entitled: *Northern Projections: Human Capital Series*, reveals lower than average education rates combined with changes to the labour market and a decline in overall population threaten the future of the Timiskaming District's economy and standard of living.

The report indicates the news isn't all bad, however. An abundance of natural resources, a growing agricultural sector, access to the large North American market, a history of employment resilience within the mining sector, and a strong immigrant labour market performance all present opportunities to reverse negative trends.

The report argues recent technological change and the emergence of the knowledge economy will continue to increase the number of jobs that require post-secondary credentials to roughly 77.1 percent of all jobs by 2030.

A major challenge for the district is overcoming its lower than average "human capital composition", or the level of skills and education that the working-age population has; figures that are projected to continue declining if educational attainment remain at their current levels.

"It is anticipated that if the skill levels of the workforce in the region remain at their current level or decline in the future while skill requirements of the workforce rise, the region will end up with people without jobs, and jobs without people," write the authors, James Cuddy and Bakhtiar Moazzami.

The report also finds that fertility rates in the Northeast (1.60) are lower than the replacement rate (2.1). Add a rising life expectancy rate, and you end up with a total dependency ratio – the number of mouths to feed relative to the number of working-age persons – that is above the provincial average and expected to get worse.

As in many areas of Northern Ontario, one of the keys to avoiding this grim outlook is found within the district's Aboriginal population. The authors project Timiskaming's Aboriginal population will increase by 26% between 2013 and 2041, while the total population will decline by 7%. In that same period, the Aboriginal labour force will increase by 10%, while the total labour force will decline by 32%.

Based on these findings, the authors make several recommendations to promote the long-term sustainability of the district:

- Bolster population levels by developing a renewed focus on in-migration, immigration and youth retention;
- Improve rural and Aboriginal education;
- Refocus existing resources and stimulate entrepreneurship and economic diversification.



"The history of Timiskaming District and of other regions of Northern Ontario is one of resiliency. Reports like this one highlight that while it is important to recognize the negative trends for the serious alarm bells that they are – it is even more important for local leaders and stakeholders at all levels to look at what can be done to get back on track to long-term prosperity and growth for the region", said Julie Joncas, Executive Director of the Far Northeast Training board.

The full report, *Northern Projections: Human Capital Series - Timiskaming 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 will examine past and present characteristics and trends in each district's economy in order to forecast future challenges and opportunities.

Media Interviews: Author and Northern Policy Institute Economist, James Cuddy is available for comment. Executive Director of Far Northeast Training Board, Julie Joncas is also available for comment.

To arrange an interview, please contact:

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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 Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and Kenora. 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).