



## Latchford Mayor voices concern with rising municipal insurance rates

By Jamie Mountain  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

LATCHFORD – Latchford Mayor George Lefebvre has let his frustration be known when it comes to the current situation surrounding insurance for municipalities.

Municipal insurance rates have been on the rise and the matter has been a growing concern across the province.

One specific area that Lefebvre says he has an issue with is the fact that the legal system allows municipalities to be sued for accidents that occur on major highways, which he feels shouldn't have any bearing on the municipalities.

Lefebvre says those frivolous lawsuits alone are enough to help drive up the rates when the insurance companies are forced to defend the municipalities.

"That (the accidents) is something that has absolutely no bearing (on us) whatsoever," he said at Latchford council's regular meeting on February 18.

"We all know, we've seen a number of these accidents

recently. Two of them have occurred in Temagami on Highway 11 and they're suing the Town of Latchford. It's just absolutely ridiculous. Some people on an ATV (all-terrain vehicle), crossing the railroad track and caught trespassing on the pipeline and trespassing on the tracks, flipped the ATV and sued the Town of Latchford. Now where the Hell is the justice in that?"

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the province's Attorney General have been looking into the matter of rising municipal insurance costs for the past couple of years, but actions were delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One municipality reported seeing their premium increase from \$120,000 to \$225,000.

Englehart was among the lowest, seeing their insurance rate go up eight to nine per cent this year while the Municipality of Charlton and Dack saw an increase of 36 per cent.

Latchford clerk-treasurer Jaime Allen told The Speaker in an email message that the town's rate increased by 13.5



## PINK SHIRT DAY

Bullying is a pervasive problem found in many sectors of society. On February 24 St. Patrick School in Cobalt raised awareness about bullying by wearing pink shirts during Pink Shirt Day, held annually on February 25 marked by 180 countries around the world. From the left in the back row are child and youth worker Mairead O'Shea, Jaymie Ausman, Dominic McLaren, Xavier MacFarlane, Ramona Warren, Colt Johnson, Axton Bourassa and Holly Sedore. In the front row from the left are Avery Lawrence, Sofia Olson, Jada Snider and Alyssa Cantin making hearts with their hands. "Pink Shirt Days is a great reminder to students about the importance of treating everyone with dignity and respect. It is also a wonderful example of how even the simplest of actions can make a huge difference in the lives of those around us," said principal Lori Hurtubise in an email message to The Speaker. (Staff photo by Sue Nielsen)

per cent.

"We had to change our provider several years ago to attempt to control the increases, so (we) fully appreciate and

support the effort by the other municipalities," said Lefebvre later in an email interview.

Back at their regular meeting on January 21, Latchford

council passed a resolution to support Charlton-Dack's resolution that stands up against the rising municipal insurance rates.

## DID YOU GET The Speaker THIS WEEK?

Here are some of the stories in our March 3 edition...

- A second dose of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to long-term care residents in the Temiskaming region.
- Food insecurity at three area food banks was on the donation menu of the 100 Women Who Care Temiskaming Shores and More group.
- Zack's Crib will now call 183 Broadwood Avenue in New Liskeard its new home.
- Englehart council is now seeking a new councillor to replace Lorie Allin, who recently tendered her resignation.
- The Bunker Military Museum has received a donation to cover its operational expenses for the coming year.
- Ducks Unlimited has named Kerns Township youth Lucy Harrison a Wetland Hero.
- Pete Gilboe is now representing the Town of Englehart as its bylaw officer.
- Stop signs were stolen and vandalized in Earleton according to the town's acting public works foreman.
- A new PSW program is being offered at Northern College under the province's new accelerated program.
- News of a pair of snowy owls rescued from a Kerns Township farmer's silo has the female owl not surviving, but the male is recovering nicely.
- The Temiskaming Shores Minor Hockey Association Puckhounds will play out the rest of the 2021 season.
- It's game over for the New Liskeard Cubs and New Liskeard Lions who play U18 league hockey.



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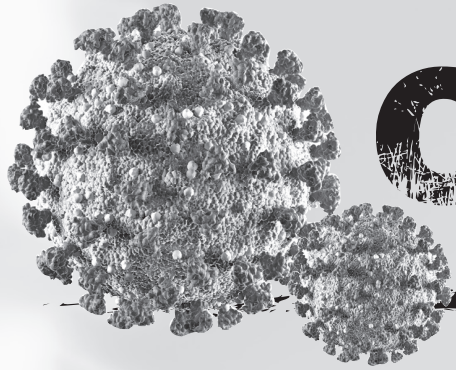
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# COVID UPDATE



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## Green does not mean go!

With our small population, it only takes a few cases for us to move zones. That is why even in the green zone it is still imperative that you practice all public health measures and continue to be COVID smart.

### Physical distancing

When someone breathes, talks, laughs, sings, coughs, sneezes, etc., they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the novel coronavirus if the person coughing has COVID-19. Practicing physical distancing slows the spread!

Physical distancing means keeping a space of 2 meters from people you don't live with. It reduces the opportunity for the virus to spread from person to person.

### Social gatherings

Limit close contact to people you live with and stay at least 2 metres apart from everyone else. If you live alone, you can have exclusive close contact with one other household.

Social gatherings are now allowed. With people who don't live with you, maintain a distance of 2 meters or wear a mask if physical distancing isn't possible. Note that social circles, or exclusive "bubbles" of up to 10 people, have not been allowed in Ontario since October 2020.

### Gathering limits are:

- Indoors: 10 people
- Outdoors: 25 people

### Stay home if you're sick

Have a cough or runny nose? If you aren't sure what the symptoms for COVID-19 are or if you should get tested, take the online Self-Assessment. The tool is easy to use and you will get a recommendation on what to do next. Find it here!

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

### Wear a mask

Masks are required by law in all indoor public spaces and in indoor workplaces. Masks and face coverings should be worn when it's difficult to maintain a distance of 2 meters from people who don't live with you. You should wear a mask inside and outside when physical distancing may be a challenge.

Même si notre district passe à la zone Vert-Prévenir, cela ne veut pas dire qu'on reprend nos habitudes courantes. Puisque notre district comprend une population plus petite, il ne nous faut que quelques cas pour changer de catégories. C'est la raison pour laquelle il est important que tout le monde pratique toutes les mesures de santé publique et continue à être prudent contre la COVID même si nous sommes dans la catégorie verte.

### La distanciation physique

Lorsqu'une personne respire, parle, rit, chante, tousse, éternue, etc., elle projette des gouttelettes de liquides de son nez ou de sa bouche. Si vous êtes trop près, vous pouvez respirer les gouttelettes, y compris le nouveau coronavirus si la personne qui tousse a la COVID-19. Pratiquer la distanciation physique ralentit la propagation!

La distanciation physique signifie de garder un espace de 2 mètres des personnes en dehors de votre domicile. Cela réduit le risque de propager le virus d'une personne à l'autre.



### Les rassemblements sociaux

Limitez les contacts étroits à votre domicile et restez à au moins 2 mètres de distance de toutes les autres personnes. Si vous vivez seul, vous pouvez avoir des contacts étroits avec un autre domicile seulement.

Les rassemblements sociaux sont maintenant permis. Si vous vous réunissez avec un autre domicile, maintenez une distance physique de 2 mètres ou portez un couvre-visage si la distanciation physique n'est pas possible. Notez que les cercles sociaux, ou « bulles » exclusives de 10 personnes maximum, ne sont pas autorisés en Ontario depuis octobre 2020.

Nombre maximal de personnes est :

- À l'intérieur : 10 personnes
- À l'extérieur : 25 personnes

### Restez à la maison si vous êtes malade

Vous toussiez ou vous avez le nez qui coule? Si vous n'êtes pas certains des symptômes de la COVID-19 ou si vous devez faire un test de dépistage, faites l'auto-évaluation en ligne. L'outil est facile à utiliser et vous obtiendrez une recommandation de la prochaine étape à suivre. Trouvez-le ici!

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/autoevaluation/>



### Portez un masque

Selon la loi, les masques sont exigés dans tous les espaces publics intérieurs et dans les lieux de travail intérieurs. Les masques et les couvre-visages doivent être portés quand il est difficile de maintenir une distance de 2 mètres ou plus avec des personnes en dehors de votre domicile. Vous devez porter un masque à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur quand la distanciation physique peut être un défi.

# Living Temagami offering free seniors community programming

**By Jamie Mountain**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

TEMAGAMI - Through a Ministry of Ontario Seniors Community Grant, Living Temagami – Arts and Culture is offering the community free digital programming for seniors throughout March and April.

The main purpose of the program is to “highlight senior artists and engage seniors and elders with interesting digital programming during the pandemic,” explained Living Temagami – Arts and Culture artistic director Chandel Gambles.

“Although many may have had an opportunity to explore digital tools during this pandemic, not everyone is comfortable with new technology and online programs,” she said in an email message to The Speaker.

“With everyone spending more time at home this year, many members of our community will feel isolated and disconnected with their families, friends, and community supporters. This emotion is often exacerbated for those who are not familiar with new digital technologies available to them. This winter, together, we will help break down communication barriers in our region by inviting everyone to share their skills and knowledge.”

Gambles explained that the grant funding will specifically go back into the hands of the community’s artists, creators, and wellness workers to provide the regional community with programming that is accessible for everyone.

Throughout March and April, Living Temagami is hosting over 25 free arts workshops, performances, and wellness sessions in which everyone can participate.

With the support of the Municipality of Temagami, Gambles said some of the April events may even take place in-person at COVID-safe outdoor and indoor community spaces, depending on health and safety restrictions at that time.

“Not only are the events free, but we also have free art supplies and workshop kits available for our hands-on digital arts workshops, for those who may not have art supplies at home,” she noted.

“We look forward to ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in the fun.”

Each event will link to one of five focuses, including seniors’ digital concerns, health and wellness, intergenerational

learning, sharing and mentorship, First Nations culture and skill sharing, professional arts and culture performances and arts, crafts and culture workshops.

Gambles said that some of Living Temagami’s free programming planned for Zoom technology and Facebook Live this month includes the Northern Voices Professional Play Reading series this week and next.

“This includes family friendly shows next week, co-presented with Pied Piper Kidshows,” she said.

Other events on tap this month include Jerry the Magician – a magic show and magic

workshop co-presented with Temiskaming Art Gallery’s Open Studio Libre, a free music performance by Wayne Potts through the Raven’s Nest series, Girl’s Night Out Goes Virtual- a music event hosted by Mary Laronde, a writing workshop with northern professional playwright Matthew Heiti, and a number of free art drawing, painting, cellphone photography, and traditional craft workshops.

As well, in honour of Women’s History Month, Living Temagami also will host a pre-International Women’s Day online event on March 7, to align with celebrations for women all around the world.

“We also encourage folks to connect with a number of other amazing community offerings, like the Cyber Seniors hotline at 1-844-217-3057, to receive free digital tech support through one-on-one mentorships,” said Gambles.

“The volunteer digital mentors will happily help seniors setup video calls with friends and attend digital community events. We also hope folks will enjoy the free Senior Centre Without Walls program at this time, which has over-the-phone social activities for those without internet access.”

Gambles added that in unison with the support of many local and regional organizations,

Living Temagami is working to bring joy, art, and community back into everyone’s homes during an unprecedented time in history.

“We hope those of all ages will join us online over the coming months,” she said.

For more information on Living Temagami’s free seniors digital programming, you can check out their Facebook page.

To get involved as a volunteer or workshop presenter, or to receive some technical assistance to help you attend the free online events, you can send an email to [livingtemagami@gmail.com](mailto:livingtemagami@gmail.com) or call 705-650-1191.

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## Mr Wright sent his teeth in to be cleaned.



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## EDITORIAL

### Public health support

As the bright and beautiful snow moon shone in the night sky marking the end of February last weekend, we welcomed the beginning of March this week.

Despite the month marching in like a disgruntled lamb bringing cold windy temperatures and freezing rain, we know the end of winter is finally in sight.

And with the COVID-19 vaccine making its way around the region to the most vulnerable, we can find comfort and hope in the fact we are taking steps to finally get a handle on the virus.

A big thank you goes out to our local Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Glenn Corneil and all the THU employees, who are putting in extra hours managing the daily challenges of the pandemic.

We have seen an alarming trend happening around the

province and further afield whereby public health officials are being threatened and harassed for simply doing their jobs.

This is totally unacceptable and any harassment of a public health official can be attributed to a lack of understanding of public health and a general decline in civility.

Certainly people are allowed to criticize public health officials, but not to abuse, threaten and malign them, which is what is happening too often across the globe during the pandemic.

Public health officials must be free to follow the science and speak uncomfortable truths.

Public health officials are working in our best interests to keep us all safe and secure and we must support them at every turn.

## The road less travelled

*"Roads? Where we are going we don't need roads."* Doc Brown

Staring out at the Boreal forest, your campfire snapping and crackling piercing the still of the night air. All day the wind has blown against the canoe making the trip more difficult than normal. Unrelenting were the elements, but in the quiet of your campsite in the "spirit forest," nothing moves. Nothing disturbs the quiet of your experience, under a sky with a billion stars. This is what it's all about. The pull and tug of backcountry travel, the smell of the campfire, the open waters and the clear skies.

You have disconnected to connect and it feels so good.

Wait, what's that I hear, a dog barking, a television turned up loud, a drunken camper cursing?

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has opened people's eyes to the nurturing power of nature and that's wonderful.

It seems staffers at Ontario Parks are overwhelmed with requests for bookings in 2021.

So far, they have seen an almost 100 per cent jump in reservations made between January 1 and February 5 over the same time last year.

In the first few weeks of this year, 58,475 campers booked reservations, up from 29,504 reservations in 2020 at Ontario's 340 parks.

The park experience is something I wish to avoid as that amount of people seek, ironically, the peace of wild things.

Truthfully, my Ontario Parks experiences haven't been that inspiring.

I found the campsites small, too close together with people who seem to have brought not only the kitchen sink but also large screen TVs, air conditioners and the ame-

nities of home.

I paid what I think was a considerable fee to experience the call of the loon but instead I heard rowdy campers, late night parties and endless barking dogs.

What bothers me is people will pitch tents and full-sized trailers, leaving them at a campsite through the week.

Ontario Parks should put a stop to this kind of abuse so everyone gets a prime campsite.

Campers I know prefer to use crown land, which has free 21-day access limits and not many campers around.

For thousands of people, Ontario Parks are a godsend, but I prefer the road less travelled and it has made all the difference.

My outdoor experience isn't about conquest or the domination of nature and wildlife.



Sue Nielsen

It really is about getting away from it all (screens, pandemic stress) to enjoy wild places, heavy emphasis on the wild.

And while the path of least resistance might be easier, it sometimes doesn't yield the true benefits of wilderness travel.

Because you can't put a price on that type of peace and I totally agree with Sigrid Olson who said, "The way of a canoe is the way of the wilderness, and of a freedom almost forgotten."

We have forgotten how to be in nature, and more importantly how to leave nature, with no trace of our being there.

# Tightening regulations around gun ownership

HUDSON TOWNSHIP (Staff) - Legislation has been introduced by the federal government to further tighten regulations around gun ownership.

The new regulations are part of an ongoing commitment by the federal government to address gun violence.

The legislation has not yet been finalized, and discussion and comments are being voiced across the country.

Peter McNaughton, president of the Temiskaming Bulls Eye Club in Hudson Township, commented on behalf of the club that "there are already many levels of scrutiny and safety before even obtaining a firearm licence before a person can purchase a firearm."

The Bulls Eye Club wants the government to "address the criminal element and not the law-abiding Canadians."

They are also concerned about how the regulations impact paintball, Airsoft, BB and pellet airguns, and worry how much further restrictions could go.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the introduction of new legislation to amend the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act on February 16.

Stating that the intention is to combat intimate partner and gender-based violence, the legislation would create "red flag" and "yellow flag" laws which would allow concerned friends or relatives to apply to the courts for the immediate removal of an individual's firearms, or to ask a chief firearms officer to suspend and review an individual's license to own firearms.

The new legislation would also increase criminal penalties

for gun smuggling and trafficking.

Municipalities would be allowed to ban handguns through bylaws restricting storage and transportation in their jurisdictions.

The legislation would also be set up to "protect Canadians from gun violence by creating new offences for altering the

cartridge magazine component of a firearm and depicting violence in firearms advertising, introducing tighter restrictions on imports of ammunition, and ensuring the prohibition of imports, exports, sales, and transfers of all replica firearms," according to the federal press release on the announcement.

The government also intends

to complete the prohibition of assault-style firearms to ensure these weapons cannot be legally used, transported, sold, transferred, or bequeathed by individuals in Canada.

The federal government also stated it intends to move forward with a buyback program in the coming months for the safe removal of firearms.

## Police urge public to beware of fraudsters

TEMISKAMING SHORES (Special/Staff) - Police are warning businesses that fraudsters are active once again in the Temiskaming area.

In a recent investigation, Temiskaming OPP say an out-of-country fraudster emailed a local business with an offer to make a large purchase.

Police say the business requested a scanned copy of the potential buyer's driver's licence.

Police say a scammer will often email a photo in which the identification appears legitimate, but is in fact fraudulent. However, the tactic gains the recipient's trust.

Police say the fraudster will then request the business' financial information in order to transfer funds, but may then use a variety of scams to avoid payment:

- Spoofed payment.

In this case, a seller receives notification that payment is pending. But to receive the funds, the seller must provide a tracking number for the shipment. Only after the item is shipped does the seller discover that the payment notification is spoofed and no payment is pending.

- Account problems.

In this instance, police say a fraudster may claim they can't send a payment because of a problem with your account. In order to complete the transaction, you must pay a fee to get a business account with a selected payment provider.

The scammer will offer to pay this fee, with the intent that you reimburse them. After you remit the fee to the money service they directed you to, you discover there is no payment pending.

- Counterfeit merchandise.

When you're purchasing items, be wary of websites that may resemble those of legitimate suppliers, but offer deeply discounted merchandise.

Police say the goods may be counterfeit and even pose health risks. For example, they say counterfeit jackets have been found to be contaminated with bacteria, fungus and mildew.

Police advise the public to be suspicious of online offers to pay more than the asking price, and to confirm that the payment is legitimate before sending the product.

Police urge anyone who suspects they may have been the victim of fraud or tricked into divulging personal or financial information to contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre, at 1-888-495-8501 or through its online reporting tool.



## SCOUTING CONDITIONS

After an hour on Lake Temiskaming, nine-year-old Joshua Rousseau-Ripley and dad John Ripley had yet to catch even a nibble. But spirits remained high as Temiskaming Shores Cub Pack members, parents and leaders took in their first ice fishing outing, under foggy conditions, on the weekend. (Staff photo by Diane Johnston)

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## LEARNING IS FUN

There's no better time than the present to learn how to skate, especially outdoors on the skating path near the New Liskeard Pool and Fitness Centre. Chloe McLean, 5, did her best to get comfortable with being out on the ice during an outing February 7. (Staff photo by Jamie Mountain, LJI Reporter)

# Putting out the Northern welcome mat

**Diane Johnston**  
Speaker Reporter

TEMISKAMING SHORES – Northern Ontario needs people.

But it needs to make itself more welcoming – to newcomers from other parts of the world, the country and the province, and to the people who already live here.

Those findings underpin a new report by the Northern Policy Institute.

*Come North – Population Growth in Ontario's Northern Regions* was released in January.

It follows twin Come North conferences hosted by Temiskaming Shores and the Lake of the Woods Business Centre in Kenora in February 2020. They drew more than 300 participants from almost 100 organizations.

The 37-page report recommends short-term actions and longer term projects to retain current residents and attract – and keep – newcomers.

“Should the North promote itself as one thing to bring people north? Yes,” said James Franks, economic development officer in Temiskaming Shores.

If the communities can then pool their resources to promote the region to newcomers, “we may actually be heard and people may actually understand where we’re talking about,” said Franks.

The conference also found a need, he said, for contact with an actual

person who could refer people contemplating relocation to the specific resources they require.

If you’re considering a significant move – maybe from another part of Ontario but certainly from outside the country – “you’re probably going to want to ask some questions before you make that decision,” he said.

However, the next step in putting a plan into action is on hold.

Last year’s conferences were held just before the pandemic brought an end to large gatherings.

Franks said the conference attendees had hoped to meet now to discuss the future, with the report in hand. Organizers had contemplated holding a virtual follow-up, but decided the format wouldn’t work for such a large number of participants.

“I think this will sadly be pushed back a year. But that is the intent, get those same people to come back, because we think the people we had were the right people.”

Now it’s up to the communities and organizations that were involved, he said, “to say, ‘who’s leading?’”

Ironically, he said the report is coming on what may have been the best year in many for attracting new residents to the city and the North in general.

The influx is pandemic-related as people seek out smaller communities, he said.

“But we do need to take advantage of the interest.”



**JAMES FRANKS**

## COVID-19 vaccine clinics / cliniques pour le vaccin contre la COVID-19

We are in the process of planning to offer the Moderna vaccine to the groups indicated below.

Prioritization is based on direction from the province and other factors. **Dates may change and will depend on vaccine supply and shipments.**

Nous sommes présentement à la planification d’offrir le vaccin Moderna pour les groupes ci-dessous. La priorisation est basée sur la province et autres facteurs. **Les dates peuvent changer et dépendront de la disponibilité et de la livraison du vaccin.**

First week of March Première semaine de mars	Staff and essential caregivers in long-term care homes	Personnel et fournisseurs de soins essentiels des foyers de soins de longue durée
	Indigenous adults in northern remote and higher risk communities (including on-reserve and urban communities)	Adultes des Premières Nations qui habitent dans les communautés éloignées du nord ou dans les communautés à risque élevés, y compris les réserves
Second week of March Deuxième semaine de mars	Alternate level of care patients in hospitals	Patients hospitalisés ayant besoin d’un autre niveau de soins
	Highest priority health care workers (per Ministry guidelines)	Professionnels de la santé prioritaires (selon la priorisation du Ministère)
Third week of March Troisième semaine de mars	Residents, staff, and caregivers in retirement homes and other care settings for seniors (for example, assisted living)	Résidents, personnel, et fournisseurs de soins essentiels aux maisons de retraite et aux autres soins primaires pour les aînés (par exemple, vie assistée)
	Other prioritized health care workers (per Ministry guidelines)	Autres professionnels de la santé prioritaires (selon la priorisation du Ministère)
	All other on-reserve Indigenous adults	Tous autres adultes autochtones vivant dans les réserves
Mid-March to early April Mi-mars à début avril	Adults 80 years of age and older	Adultes âgés de 80 ans et plus
	Other prioritized health care workers (per Ministry guidelines)	Autres professionnels de la santé prioritaires (selon la priorisation du Ministère)
	Adult chronic home care clients	Adultes bénéficiaires de soins de santé chroniques à domicile
	All other Indigenous adults	Tous autres adultes autochtones

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# Report outlines plan to Come – and stay – North

**Diane Johnston**  
Speaker Reporter



**Giwednong Aakomenjigewin Teg**  
b ΔC2-4σ-4' P-VN.δ' <D'9-ΔbΓ'  
Institu dPolitik di Nor

**TEMISKAMING SHORES –**  
How can Northern Ontario increase its population to fill jobs now and in the future?

Devising a plan was the goal of two Come North conferences held in Temiskaming Shores and Thunder Bay a year ago.

Helping organize them were the Northern Policy Institute, a Northern Ontario think-tank headquartered in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, and the Northwest Local Immigration Partnership.

**THE PROBLEM**

The conferences were spurred by the population dilemma facing Northern Ontario.

“Of the 11 census districts in Northern Ontario, all of them are currently experiencing labour shortages, population decline, or population aging,” the report found.

If they can’t retain current residents and attract more, “our communities will become economically unsustainable in their current form.”

It said the North is falling further behind on a crucial “demographic dependency” ratio – the number of dependents (those under 14 and over 65) per individual of working age available to support them.

A ratio of 0.5 – one dependent for every two workers – or lower is considered the goal.

In 1996, it said that every

Northern census district was at or near that score, and that some in fact were lower.

But the situation has changed.

By 2036, Temiskaming’s dependency ratio is projected to be in the higher range, at 0.85.

That’s above the 0.67 anticipated in Ontario as a whole, and in Nipissing, Greater Sudbury, Cochrane, Thunder Bay and Kenora.

It’s lower than projections in Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Algoma and Rainy River.

In order to slow the decline and match Ontario projections, the report’s authors said the North would have to not only retain everyone here now, but also attract some 1,700 people a year for the next 20 years.

To return to the region’s “historical, healthy” ratio, it must attract 8,100 newcomers every year for the next two decades.

**ACTION PLAN**

But when it comes to resources for prospective newcomers, the report found they were fragmented and difficult to find. Also lacking was an awareness, particularly in rural areas, on how to access existing help.

It has drafted an immediate action plan.

It recommends that immigra-

tion agencies support efforts to facilitate reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and that newcomers be included in reconciliation efforts.

The report recommends that online immigration portals in the Northeast and Northwest be updated.

They would be rebranded as “welcoming” portals to reflect a shift in focus from immigration alone to retention, reconciliation, and migration.

The Indigenous population is growing, said James Franks, economic development officer in Temiskaming Shores.

Retaining Indigenous youth in the North can help meet the region’s employment challenges, he said.

It proposes that the Timmins Local Immigration Partnership in the Northeast and its Northwestern counterpart seek funding to hire a staffer who would keep information and profiles of individual communities up to date.

The organizations would also work with a partner organization on reconciliation and retention information.

Also recommended is the development of a coordinated marketing plan for the entire

region.

Individual communities are now spending “nickels and dimes, and nobody hears us,” Franks said.

But if everyone pooled their marketing dollars, he said the region could approach the government “to say, ‘hey, look, we’ve got this much money. You match it.’”

The report also proposes the creation of “matchmaker” and “connector” positions in rural and remote areas of the North. They would coordinate access to existing services and fill service and knowledge gaps as needed.

The complete report and conference proceedings can be found at [northernpolicy.ca](http://northernpolicy.ca).

## Free virtual FONOM conference

DISTRICT - FONOM has different plans for its 2021 conference.

Danny Whalen, president of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), said in a telephone interview that FONOM has 18 speakers lined up for the virtual conference.

Member municipalities will be invited to send in a question, which will be addressed by the speakers.

“This is all going to be pre-recorded. It’s going to be open to all of our member municipalities on a no-charge basis,” explained Whalen.

He said FONOM recognizes that some municipalities are having a financial struggle at this time, due to the pandemic. It is felt by FONOM “that should not eliminate their opportunity to speak to their provincial counterparts.”

The event will take place May 18 to 21.

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# Social services board passes 2021 budget

**DISTRICT (Staff/Special)** - Municipalities across the district will be seeing an average zero per cent increase in their District of Timiskaming Social Services Administration Board (DTSSAB) levy this year.

The budget, passed February 17, has an increase of 1.25 per cent, but the board voted for money to be withdrawn from its working fund reserve to be used to supplement this year's budgeted costs, in order to offset an increase in the municipal levy, which would otherwise be required.

The levies differ from municipality to municipality based on factors such as their assessments, and the number of Ontario Works cases within the municipality. The average increase is zero per cent.

This year, due to the differing factors in each of the municipalities, 11 municipalities will see a decrease in their levies and 12 will see an increase. Of those seeing an increase, only six have an increase greater than one per cent.

Board chair Doug Jelly stated through a press release that, "in 2021, as in every year, the DTSSAB is cognizant of the impact of our budget on our municipal partners. The pandemic has been particularly hard for municipalities and we worked diligently on maximizing the financial contributions from the senior levels of government to minimize the impact on the municipal budget."

The overall 2021 budget was \$35,313,048. The budget funds the following four pro-

grams in the district: Ontario Works (\$10,323,965), children's services (\$9,773,958), housing services (\$7,144,615) and Emergency Medical Services (\$8,030,410). The increase in the overall budget is due to a shift in Emergency Medical Services to 24/7 supervision that will help improve response capacity across the district. This results in a two per cent (\$131,274) increase to the municipal apportionment. This year the board chose to remove monies from its working fund reserve in the amount of \$166,100 to reduce the billing impact to municipalities and the unincorporated townships, DTSSAB stated in its press release.

## GOOD NEWS

"This is good news for our municipal partners," Jelly continued.

"The DTSSAB delivers these services on behalf of the district municipalities and we strive to ensure that our operational costs do not exceed the expectations of the municipalities and this year we were able to deliver a zero per cent increase."

He stated that was possible "despite much higher increases to costs to operate our programs, especially with increased costs due to the pandemic."

The municipal share of the overall budget is \$6,702,894 (19 per cent). The Territories Without Municipal Representation contributes \$1,774,587 (five per cent). The federal/provincial share is \$26,532,567 (75.1 per cent) and contributions from reserves of \$303,000 (0.9 per cent) consists of revenue sources, DTSSAB stated.

"Over the years the board has kept the municipal apportionment as close to zero per cent as possible despite increases in salary and benefits and operating costs such as hydro and fuel, by using contributions of our reserves," Jelly concluded.

"Since 2008 we have used \$2,124,100 from our working fund reserves."

The board, which consists of seven appointed municipal representatives and two elected representatives from the territories without municipal representation, bring the viewpoint of the local taxpayer and their municipality to the table and ensures that the budget is fair and responsible in delivering the services that the DTSSAB has been mandated to deliver. The focus is always on maintaining or increasing services without having a negative impact on the municipalities, the press release explained.

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## Forestry advocacy branching out online

**TEMISKAMING SHORES (Special/Staff)** - A glimpse of the district's forestry sector can now be seen on the small screen.

A seven-minute video, *The Forestry Industry in Temiskaming*, has been produced as part of a larger advocacy project for the economic sector.

It touches on the history of the industry before moving on to look at contemporary forestry practices, from planning to operations on the ground and behind the scenes.

It includes footage showing the transformation of the district's trees into products and of replanting activities, and features interviews with district residents who work in forestry.

The video can be seen on

YouTube, at <https://youtu.be/bLligT7nahc>.

The video was produced by Good Gauley Productions of Temiskaming Shores.

It involved EACOM in Elk Lake, Georgia Pacific in Englehart, and South Wabi Sawmill, Resource Tech Management, First Resource Management Group and Barton Consulting, all in the Temiskaming Shores area.

It's part of a broader project that has included articles in The Speaker, workforce attraction at Forests Ontario's annual general meeting, and a day-long forestry tour that took elected officials from the Temiskaming area to industry sites and businesses.

Late last year, the City of Temiskaming Shores erected a Highway 11 billboard taking note of the role of forestry in combatting climate change.

The sign was produced in partnership with Forests Ontario and the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, which hopes to install more billboards across the North.

The city is a partner in the project, which has received FedNor support.


In a news release, Mayor Carman Kidd expressed hope that the project would educate local residents "about the importance of the forestry industry to our region."


But he also hoped it would "promote awareness that the industry is sustainable and uses forestry management techniques to ensure that our forests will be here for Ontarians to enjoy for years to come."

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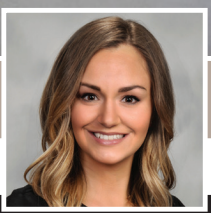





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# Earlton airport continues to fly through lockdown

**Darlene Wroe**  
Speaker Reporter

ARMSTRONG TOWNSHIP - The Earlton-Timiskaming Regional Airport is still operating as usual, says Airport Authority chair Carman Kidd.

The runway and apron are being maintained and air ambulance flights are still coming in, although the number has dropped off since the lockdown, he said.

“The t-hangars are full, but the private plane owners are not flying as much,” said Kidd in an email interview.

“Any charter flights have stopped, so fuel sales are very limited,” he outlined in the update information.

“Any capital work has been cancelled over the past year, and any reduced revenue funding that we have applied for from federal agencies has not been approved as of yet.”

To keep the airport running while funding applications are being considered, “we are dipping into reserves to top the municipal contributions,” he added.

On an optimistic note, Kidd is hoping to see an increase in medical and charter flights as the lockdowns ease.

“Hopefully medical surgeries will return to pre-COVID levels, and contractors return to chartering to job sites in the near future.”

# FedNor helping chamber help businesses

**Diane Johnston**  
Speaker Reporter

TEMISKAMING SHORES – The Temiskaming Shores and Area Chamber of Commerce is expanding its suite of services for small businesses, with some help from FedNor.

The regional economic development fund has come up with \$200,000 for a multifaceted project.

The initiative is “a good example of how our government is helping communities recover and grow,” said Terry Sheehan, Sault Ste. Marie MP and parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for FedNor, at the online announcement February 11.

The project is a partnership involving the City of Temiskaming Shores and the New Liskeard Business Improvement Area group, said chamber president

Paul Crombeen.

“Small businesses are at the heart of the economy in the North,” he said.

The funding has enabled the chamber to hire a project coordinator who will provide direct support to local businesses, help them reopen safely, and assist with marketing the area to tourists and potential newcomers.

“As a regional chamber, this project allows us to impact business throughout the South Temiskaming region, from Englehart to Latchford, and from Elk Lake to the Quebec border,” he said.

“The goals here are to support businesses to identify and resolve hurdles, to undertake a successful recovery.”

They also include promotion of the “shop local” message and marketing the area to tourists, skilled workers and other poten-

tial newcomers, he said.

The funding will also offset marketing costs and help supply personal protective equipment to businesses in need, said Lois Weston-Bernstein, the chamber’s business manager, in an interview.

She said project coordinator André Brock will also work with local businesses to improve their online presence.

She said they could work with the Shopify platform, for example, or use Google My Business, an online tool that helps potential customers find them.

The assistance comes at a “critical” time as the pandemic forces businesses to shift online, she said.

Because the project is a regional one, she said businesses need not be chamber members to access help.

# TTF taking part in Healthy Communities Initiative

**Sue Nielsen**  
Speaker Reporter

DISTRICT — Almost \$700,000 in funding is being allocated for Northern Ontario to improve and transform public spaces.

The Temiskaming Foundation (TTF), alongside other Northern foundations, will work to-

ward improving public spaces in response to COVID-19.

“The Temiskaming Foundation looks forward to supporting projects in our region that will create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options and provide innovative digital solutions to connect peo-

ple and improve health,” said TTF executive director Claire Hendrikx in an email message.

The \$693,150 comes from the Federal Government’s \$31 million Healthy Communities Initiative.

The monies will support community-led organizations in developing local, small scale infrastructure projects such as designing and programming community food gardens providing residents with healthy food options, to creating winter recreation facilities as well as establishing Wi-Fi technology training for women experiencing increased domestic violence so they can access more support.

The TTF and other Northern Ontario community foundations are working alongside Community Foundations of Canada and other partners to help create viable ways to tap into this funding stream.

Organizations can apply for funding between \$5,000 and \$250,000 for projects that create safe public spaces, improve mobility options and provide digital options to help better communities challenged by the pandemic.

The application period for the first round of funding closes on March 9, 2021, at 5 p.m. A second application period for funding will take place starting in May of 2021.

For more information and access to the online application portal, visit the Community Foundations of Canada website at: [communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/chci/](http://communityfoundations.ca/initiatives/chci/)

## Temagami Family Health Team

Submitted by Ellen Ibey

### What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a chronic progressive eye disease characterized by a degeneration of the optic nerve. This can lead to serious vision loss if not detected and treated early. Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in Canada.

#### Who Gets Glaucoma?

Glaucoma most often occurs in people over the age of 40. There is also a greater risk of developing glaucoma when you have diabetes, high blood pressure or a history of eye injuries.

#### Will You Go Blind from Glaucoma?

If diagnosed at an early stage, eyedrops and laser treatment can control glaucoma and little or no further vision loss should occur. If eyedrops are prescribed, they must be used always to control the eye pressure. If left untreated, peripheral vision is affected first, followed by central vision loss during late stages of the disease. Complete blindness may occur.

#### How is Glaucoma Detected?

A thorough eye examination is the first step to detecting glaucoma. Your optometrist will do a simple and painless procedure called tonometry during your routine eye exam, which measures the internal pressure of your eye.

#### How is Glaucoma Treated?

Treatment will depend on the type, severity and progress of the disease. It cannot be cured, but it can be controlled with daily eyedrops. Laser surgery is also an effective way to control glaucoma and maintain your remaining vision.

In more complicated cases, surgery may be needed to completely bypass the eye’s natural drainage system. Once vision is lost due to glaucoma, it cannot be restored. This is why regular preventive eye exams with your optometrist are important.

#### How Often Should You Have an Eye Exam?

Most eye care professionals recommend a comprehensive eye exam every one to two years, depending on your age, risk factors and whether you currently wear eyeglasses or contact lenses. Children need regular eye exams to detect vision problems that may interfere with learning.

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## HAILEYBURY THURSDAYS

Haileybury Curling Club Thursday afternoon curlers on February 18 were Dennis McCarty following sweeper Diane Robitaille, who was named Curler of the Day. Because the region is in the green zone, curling has once again hurried hard to the clubs in Haileybury and New Liskeard. (Staff photo by Sue Nielsen)

## HORNE GRANITE REPORT

Our new Horne Granite Centre Facebook page is live!

Please like and share to be notified of upcoming events and contests!

Please monitor our Facebook page for COVID-19 updates and possible cancellations of upcoming events.

### LEAGUE WINNERS

Tuesday Open February 23: Kristen Koistinen over Josh Landry, Jeremy Landry over Bryan Durant, Gerald Paquette over Brian Flaxey.

Thursday Men's Feb. 25: Dana Loach over Dan Little, Jeremy Landry over Ron Campsall, Gary Wadge over Olivier Bonin-Ducharme, Ryan Sayer over Mario Leveille, Algonquin Variety over Phil Lachapelle, Gerald Paquette over Ray Gravline.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

The next Ladies' Night of Curling at the Horne Granite, sponsored by Tench-MacDiarmid Insurance Brokers is March 10.

Curling at the Horne Granite has been back since the lockdown was lifted on Feb. 16 and we are excited to offer a Ladies' night at the Horne Granite on Wednesday, March 10, sponsored by Tench-MacDiarmid Insurance Brokers and catered by 28 on the Lake!

Please register in advance by email, by texting 705-648-5385, or messaging Patti McKnight on Facebook. Deadline to register is Sunday, Mar. 7.

Get a foursome together - from your bubble for a fun and active night out.

Bring clean shoes, and wear



warm stretchy clothing.

Brooms and sliders are available, but it is preferred that you bring your own.

Register at 5 p.m. - orientation/education to follow.

• six-ends of curling to start at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner (plated or packaged - no buffet line) and prizes to follow.

• Members \$20, non-members \$30.

See our Facebook page for information on the COVID-19 protocol in effect at our club.

### FOR RENT

Anyone interested in renting the Horne Granite Centre lounge, curling surface or the arena surface in the off-season is welcome to call the club at (705) 647-4422 or email rentals@hornegrantite.com for more information.

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