



Media Release

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NEW ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM THAT SUPPORTS ECONOMIC GROWTH IS GOOD FOR THE NORTH

The Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce (NOACC) President, Barry Streib, is pleased with the announcement Minister Gravelle made this afternoon. "This latest Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) program will offer entrepreneurs from our communities up to \$125,000 to put their ideas for new business into action," stated Streib.

"It has been a challenge for many of our communities as we all need business to grow. This initiative is aimed at entrepreneurs who can create businesses and jobs, and this funding can provide opportunities for new and existing businesses in a number of areas. This is a step in the right direction for growth in our communities" added Streib.

In addition to the funding for NOHFC, Minister Gravelle also spoke to the renewal and expansion of vital highway infrastructure as an integral part of the Ontario government's vision for a prosperous Northern Ontario. We will see an investment of \$648 million in the Northern Highways Program for highway rehabilitation, expansion and safety improvements.

The Province of Ontario and Government of Canada have partnered to four-lane 10 kilometers of the Trans-Canada Highway 17 starting at the Manitoba-Ontario border, subject to receiving the necessary environmental approvals. With an estimated cost of \$100 million, construction is stated to begin by 2010 and will create 720 direct and indirect construction jobs.

These have been recognized as recommendations from the Dr Rosehart report "Northwestern Ontario, Preparing for Change". NOACC has provided input into many of these recommendations. "We have consulted with the business leaders in Northwestern Ontario, and NOACC understands that working together not only strengthens our communities, but increases our ability to accomplish goals through collaborative efforts." stated Streib. "Business is the backbone of our communities; they provide the jobs, investment, and support. We need to work together to ensure that Northwestern Ontario will be strong and attractive for investors."

NOACC has been the Voice of Business in Northwestern Ontario since 1931, and represents every active Chamber of Commerce stretching from Marathon to the Manitoba border. The membership represents over 2000 businesses and member corporations in the region.

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For more information:

Barry Streib, President NOACC
Tel: 807-684-3509
Email: barry.streib@tbaytel.com

Mary Long-Irwin, Chief Operating Officer - NOACC
Tel: 807-624-2626
Email: maryli@tb-chamber.on.ca