

# Blue Sky News



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

JUNE 8, 2003

## The Township of Bonfield Hosts 2003 FONOM/NEOM Conference

The Annual Federation Of Northern Ontario Municipalities/ North Eastern Ontario Municipalities Conference of 2003 was hosted by the Township of Bonfield at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Champlain Provincial Park on May 7th to 9th. The Conference covered a vast range of topics relevant to life in the north.

The three day event had many highlights including the Minister's Forum which featured panel discussion from, among others, Jim Wilson - Minister of Northern Development & Mines, Jerry Ouelette - Minister of Natural Resources and Norm Miller- Parliamentary Assistant for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Also, Premier Ernie Eves hosted a luncheon on Friday at the Ecology Centre and fielded questions from the delegates. Throughout most of the events at FONOM/NEOM economic development in the Northeast seemed to be a ubiquitous theme.



© Township of Bonfield  
Blue Sky EGC's display at FONOM

"I think it was really successful" said Tanya Vrebosch, FONOM Conference Coordinator. "Out of 114 member municipalities, 60 were represented at the conference, that's a great turnout" she continued. Vrebosch said that there were approximately 180 delegates representing the 60 municipalities and other governmental bodies. In addition, there were 60 other exhibitors that put up static displays around the Ecology Centre featuring a wide variety of topics.

Vrebosch also believes that cooperation with other area communities was the secret to their success. "We all worked together as a group to get it done" she said, indicating that partnerships were crucial. Delegates of the conference stayed either at the Canadian Ecology Centre or in just about every town between North Bay and Mattawa.

**Please see Vrebosch/ P3**

## Mining Week 2003

Several years ago, the mining industry in the area received a large organizational boost with the formation of the Blue Sky Mining Sector Cluster. Over the last several years, the Blue Sky Mining Sector and the Northern Gateway Branch of the Canadian Institute of Mining (CIM) have organized several information sharing sessions, none larger than the events taking place during the annual event called Mining Week.

This year, Mining Week took place from May 12 to May 17 and there was a clear focus on public education and awareness about the impact of the industry as a whole in the Blue Sky Region. For example delegates from Regional mining companies visited a number of area schools and spoke to children of a variety of ages. In total, the group visited 20 schools and talked to approximately 1500 students from grades 3 to 12.

**Please see Mining/P3**

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### BLUE SKY REGION'S WATER TRIVIA:

1. The largest island-less lake in the world is in the Blue Sky Region, name the lake.
2. What is the English translation of the name "Mattawa"?
3. What is the largest water body in Blue Sky? Nipissing or Temagami
4. What industry(ies) in the Blue Sky Region rely on our waterways?

See page 4 for trivia answers!

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## New Maps Focus on Region's Heritage

Friends of the Mattawa River, a volunteer based organization has published their second map that highlights heritage sites around the Region. The new map entitled "North Bay's Heritage and Tourism Map" presents information in a variety of ways about a wide range of subjects.

"There is detailed information for the visitor, including telephone numbers and website information along with a variety of interesting, heritage attractions and sites in and around the city," said Bill Steer member of the Friends of the Mattawa River and the map's creator.

Steer says that the map is aimed at "two distinct, but connected audiences." The number of attractions listed on the map is obviously useful to visitors of the City and Region. Information regarding North Bay's history and the more "up-to-date information will be useful to area businesses who deal with questions about the city.

On the back of the map, you will find a picture taken in 1925 of "Memorial Park" featuring some of the residents of North Bay. The picture commemorated the incorporation of North Bay as a city on that day; Aug 3rd. Many of the homes in the picture still stand today, as does the North Bay Normal School (now part of the Correctional Services Building).

The map also provides information about the namesakes of some major city streets, especially in the downtown core. Duncan McIntyre, James Worthington and John Ferguson all played very important roles in the development of the young community.

The first map produced by the group was a similar project focusing on the history of the Mattawa River. The proceeds of the North Bay Heritage Map will go towards the production of "365 things to do in the Blue Sky Region"



*North Bay's Heritage and Tourism map is available at many area businesses*

## What's "Growing" On?

(With files from "The Daily", Statistics Canada, May 27, 2003)

Statistics Canada reported in a recent press release that the total net cash income for farmers in the country dropped 10.6% to \$7.7 billion in 2002 after a record setting high in 2001. Cash receipts fell for the first time since 1998 mainly due to two consecutive drought years, in fact the effects are expected to impact operating through the first two quarters of 2003.

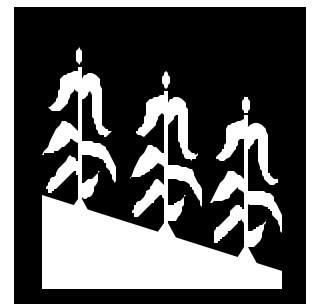
Of course, these numbers were influenced to a large extent by the poorest growing season in a quarter century in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Some growers in these provinces experienced worse seasons than in the Great Depression of the 1930's. Many farmers were forced to draw heavily on crop inventories in 2001 and 2002 to support sales as weather conditions cut grain production substantially.

Despite these poor growing conditions, cash receipts from livestock were still 12.3% above the previous five year average. High grain prices and dwindling supplies put considerable pressure on cattle and hog farmers. In 2002 Alberta cattle producers sold a record 3.1 million head for slaughter, substantially influencing the numbers for the year while reducing their inventories. It is suspected that cash receipts from livestock farms will reflect this decrease in stock for the next several periods.

Fortunately, the impact of a few poor growing years did not seem to effect Ontario and Quebec and other Eastern Provinces quite as adversely as the Prairies and Alberta. In fact, the numbers show that some crops even recorded increases on eastern farms.

The picture of farm operating costs versus profits are not clear yet in the Blue Sky Region. The Agriculture Sector led by Chair Frank Giguere is in the process of producing a study using 2001 Census of Agriculture data as a follow up to 2001's "Economic Impact Study of the Agriculture Sector in the Blue Sky Region" which used 1996 Census data. The completion date of this project is not yet known.

2001's report can be found at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture Website at [www.ofa.on.ca](http://www.ofa.on.ca) or through the link provided through Blue Sky EGC's Website at [www.blueskyegc.ca/agriculturelinks.htm](http://www.blueskyegc.ca/agriculturelinks.htm)



*The average net income of farmers decreased 10.6% in 2002*

## Mining Industry Gaining Recognition

Three different presentations were developed to give to area students. A very interactive talk was given to the younger group with samples of coins and precious metals on hand. The intermediate presentation focused on the overall mining process with a clear concentration on operations in Northern Ontario. The presentation given to secondary school students focused on potential careers in the mining industry.

“It is very important to educate the general public about our industry” said Linda Malcolm, chair of the Mining Week Committee. “Many people have the misconception that working in the mining industry means that you have to work underground where it is dirty and unsafe. Our industry today is very focused on technology, one doesn't even have to set foot underground and still be part of this great industry. Mining is very interesting because there are so many facets to it.”

Static displays at the North Bay Mall and Northgate Shopping Centre were used to illustrate the scope of the mining industry in the Blue Sky Region. The Mining Supply Industry is made up of 65 area businesses, the Region's location between the GTA and major mining operations in the north gives these businesses a strategic advantage.

“I would say most people are truly unaware of the local mining industry. We've been more visible in the past 4 years through Mining Week and its Committee and I believe we are finally reaching people” Malcolm said referring to the fact that the local mining industry produces \$280 million in annual output and employs 1300 people (over 2000 indirectly) in North Bay alone.



*Mining week was May 12-17*

## TORC Hosting Public Forum

(With Files from The Ontario Rural Council)

In a recent press release, The Ontario Rural Council stated that current global influences are forcing resource-based communities and regions to change in order to face demands.

“When the external, political, regulatory, and market forces of a global economy have more control over resource-based communities than the availability and quality of the product, how do rural communities position themselves to thrive in spite of their vulnerability?” asks Pat Smith, chair of The Ontario Rural Council.

A public forum hosted by TORC will be held on June 24 and hopes to outline how rural communities and regions have responded to these recent trends and how other sectors can learn from these changes. TORC's answer to the demands of globalization on small markets is similar to BSEGC's sectoral clusters approach to economic development and this forum will be an important information sharing session.

The forum is open to the public with a registration fee of \$30 (\$10 for students). Participants are asked to pre-register by contacting Emily Brockie at (519) 826-3418.

*Visit The Ontario Rural Council's Web site @ [www.torc.on.ca](http://www.torc.on.ca) for more information on the forum and other points of interest.*

## Vrebosch Pleased with FONOM Outcome

Next May FONOM/NEOM will be hosted by the ten municipalities of the Manitoulin (Island) Association. Vrebosch thinks that the Township of Bonfield has set the bar quite high for next year.

“We really lucked-out this year, dealing with Ministers who have such hectic schedules you never really know until the last minute if they'll be there. Hopefully next year the organizers can grab such high profile people. If they choose topics that are priorities to people in the Northeast, Ministers will come back. I think we did so well because they were interested in the issues we wanted to discuss” concluded Vrebosch.

Anyone who attended 2003 the FONOM/NEOM Conference would have to agree that Bonfield Township was phenomenal at FONOM, congratulations!



*FONOM/NEOM 2003, a credit to the Township of Bonfield*

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*Mobilizing the region  
with a shared  
economic vision*

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[www.blueskyegc.ca](http://www.blueskyegc.ca)



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JEFF BUELL, EDITOR



## We're Still Looking for Pictures!

Blue Sky EGC is still looking for pictures of our economy in action! We want pictures of people planting trees, shopping, banking, mining, building, you name it. Be creative with your camera and keep in mind our "big ten" economic sectors while taking those pictures. Send your submissions to:

Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation  
Suite 350, 222 McIntyre St. West  
North Bay, ON - P1B 2Y8  
Or email digital pictures to:  
jeff.buell@blueskyregion.ca

### Blue Sky Trivia Answers:

1. Lake Bernard is the largest fresh water lake without an island in the world.
2. The Algonkian word "Mattawa" translates into 'Meeting of the Waters'.
3. Nipissing is the largest at 832km<sup>2</sup>. However, Lake Temagami has substantially more shoreline and is a much deeper lake.
4. Trick question! Almost every industries in the Blue Sky Region were at one time directly linked to the waterways. Merchant fur traders traveled the rivers hundreds of years ago and rafts of logs could be seen as recently as 15 years ago being driven down the Ottawa River. Nowadays, the Tourism Sector most obviously benefits from the abundance of water in the Region, drawing thousands of visitors each year to enjoy our lakes and rivers.

### Tourism Issues Dominate BSEGC Board of Directors Meeting

The talk at the table at Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation's fifth meeting of the Board of Directors was dominated by the damaging effects on the regional economy due to media coverage about SARS and West Nile Virus.

"Reports from tourism operators have come in indicating that reservations are being cancelled, telephone calls are coming in from folks wondering if its safe to visit our area" reported Mark King, Chair of the Tourism Sector.

King stressed that it is "imperative" that potential visitors know what the situation is in the Region regarding these potential threats.

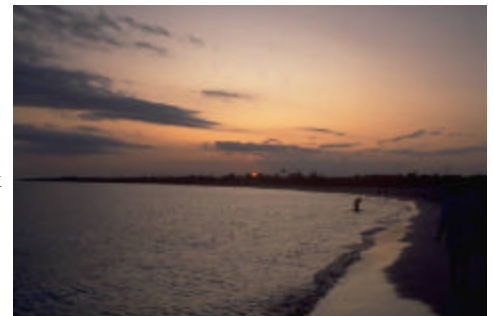
"We do not have reported SARS, or West Nile Virus (cases) in the Blue Sky News" King told Blue Sky News. "If there have been no reported cases, then that message needs to be clearly put forth."

Not twenty four hours after Kings initial statement, *The Nugget* reported that seven people in North Bay have put themselves into "voluntary quarantine" because they visited "SARS-linked" areas in Southern Ontario.

Four of the seven individuals are expected to come out of quarantine today (May 30). King also stated that a further distinction has to be stressed; a self imposed quarantine is quite separate from having a confirmed case in the Region.

Similarly, Frank Giguere, Chair of the Agriculture Sector, reported to the Board of Directors that the fear of Mad Cow Disease has effected the beef industry in the Blue Sky Region. Giguere said that all cattle farms throughout Canada have been impacted by a single, isolated event that occurred on an Alberta farm.

"Hopefully the border (Canada/United States) won't stay closed long. This (injunction) could hurt a lot of people" Giguere said.



*A familiar scene in the Blue Sky Region*