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TON Summit a success

Framework for Northern prosperity achieved

COCHRANE, ONTARIO: Today, leaders from Northern Ontario's Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities prepared a historic framework that will be used to bring communities, industry and government together with a common goal to achieve sustainable and shared economic development prosperity.

The Transforming Ontario's North (TON) Summit used a grassroots approach to engage Northern leaders and experts in industry, economics, policy, government and education. The three day event distilled a broad spectrum of experience, traditional knowledge and multiple disciplines to produce a Statement of Common purpose and a framework Accord.

The Statement and Accord will be shared with communities across Northern Ontario and the Federal and Provincial government in the very near term and will be used to build consensus and collaboration on Northern Development.

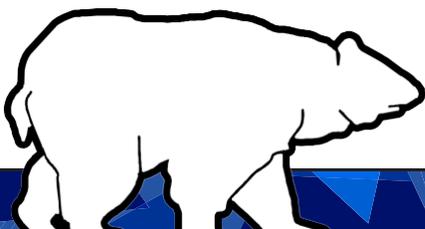
"The path forward is now much clearer and comprehensive. What has come out of the Summit is visionary and it is inclusive. We have every confidence that, as we bring the Statement and Accord to other community leaders, support will grow and the momentum we need to achieve our economic development goals will be achieved," states Mayor Peter Politis whose community hosted the Summit.

Among the key statements coming out of the Summit is a foundational principle that consultation (on economic development) with Indigenous communities is not enough. Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities must walk together on the basis of friendship, respect, trust and reconciliation.

The Summit also built consensus on addressing energy and human resources needs that will be integral to future Northern economic development. And, the Accord is unique in that it takes a much longer multi-generational view, adds Mayor Politis.

The framework is truly inclusionary and is designed to build consensus and momentum as future TON Summits are held across Northern Ontario.

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Background:

With over 87 percent of Ontario's landmass, one of the most diverse populations in Canada, and holding a treasure trove of mineral wealth, forestry resources, natural attractions, water and energy, Northern Ontario is the future of the province's economy and prosperity.

Over 50% of Northern Ontario's diverse population lives in five larger urban centres. The rest of the North resides in one of the 300 rural communities including 106 Indigenous communities. The TON Summit will engage both the rural and urban north grassroots with the agents of economic development, namely government, business, regulatory agencies and entrepreneurs. Facilitated dialogue will lead to identification of key priorities in overcoming challenges and embracing opportunities in the path ahead for Northern Ontario.

Employing an inclusive approach, the Summit will bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, business leaders, experts, legislators and regulators in a northern, grassroots driven approach. The outcome will be a visionary set of well informed and articulated recommendations.

The Summit has evolved from the typical plenary and speaker approach utilizing a unique format that will engage experts and audience together in a facilitated, informed dialogue. The audience will be comprised of three main pillars of economic development; regulators, regional leaders and the economic development practitioners from both community and business sectors.

The TON Summit is fully endorsed by the Northern Policy Institute, a non-partisan, federally registered charity that provides fair, balanced, objective and evidenced-based analysis of policy issues that impact Northern Ontario.

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