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February 2026

## Construction Industry Leadership Position Available in Thunder Bay

The Construction Association of Thunder Bay (CATB) is launching a search for its next General Manager, a pivotal leadership role that will guide the organization into a more strategic and influential future. As CATB represents contractors, suppliers, consultants, and industry partners across Northwestern Ontario, the Association is shifting from an operational service model to a more externally focused, industry-leading presence in response to major infrastructure investment and evolving member needs.

This senior role is designed for a relationship-driven leader who will serve as CATB's chief industry advocate, trusted advisor to the Board, and strategic driver of the Association's vision. Key responsibilities include leading the implementation of CATB's strategic plan, building member value, advancing workforce development, representing the industry at all levels of government, and providing steady organizational and financial leadership. The General Manager will also play a central role in strengthening governance practices, expanding training and professional development, and ensuring CATB remains responsive to emerging industry, economic, and regulatory trends.

Ideal candidates bring 7–10+ years of progressive leadership experience, strong communication and relationship-building skills, and demonstrated comfort working with Boards and overseeing budgets. Experience in advocacy, public policy, construction, infrastructure, or association environments is considered a strong asset. With a competitive salary range of \$100,000–\$130,000, this opportunity offers meaningful influence and the chance to help shape the future of Northwestern Ontario's construction sector. Interested applicants are invited to submit their materials by March 13, 2026.

[Click here to view the complete job posting](#)

## Don Marks Announces Retirement



At the Association's Annual General Meeting on January 15th, OIRCA Executive Director Don Marks—now in his 30th year with the Association and his 50th year in the ICI roofing industry—announced his plans to retire at the end of 2026.

The OIRCA Board of Directors has formed a Search Committee to begin the process of identifying Don's successor. We are [sharing a Career Opportunity bulletin for the position](#). If you know someone who meets the qualifications and may be interested, please encourage them to contact the OIRCA office.

## FAO Forecast Accuracy Improving

The Financial Accountability Office (FAO) has released its review of forecast accuracy for Ontario's 2024–25 fiscal year, showing improved precision in several key areas. The report compares FAO projections for the provincial budget balance, revenue, and spending against the actual results published in the Public Accounts of Ontario. It also examines historical forecast performance and contrasts FAO results with government forecasts.

For 2024–25, the FAO projected a budget deficit of \$6.4 billion, which ultimately came in at \$1.1 billion, leading to a \$5.3-billion underestimate. Revenue projections were \$15.2 billion below actuals, driven mainly by underestimated non-tax revenue and lower-than-expected income and corporate tax estimates. On the spending side, FAO projections were \$9.9 billion lower than actual spending, a variance influenced by new government policies, wage and legal settlements, and underestimated program costs.

A review of historical one-year forecast accuracy since 2016–17 shows an average absolute variance of \$8.5 billion for the budget balance. While pandemic years significantly affected results, the FAO's forecast deviations have been smaller in more recent years. Revenue forecasts consistently fell below actuals, while spending projections showed a modest downward bias.

In comparing FAO forecasts with government forecasts, the FAO generally demonstrated greater accuracy over both one-year and three-year outlooks. Notably, for the 2024–25 year, the government's projected deficit differed from actual results by \$8.7 billion, a larger miss than the FAO's estimate.

Overall, the review aims to strengthen fiscal transparency and help legislators better understand the reliability of financial projections. The findings also support ongoing improvements in the FAO's forecasting methodology.

[Click here to read the full report](#)

## COCA Releases Updated Prompt Payment & Adjudication Resources



The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) has announced significant updates to its Prompt Payment and Adjudication resources as major changes to Ontario's Construction Act come into force in early 2026. These updates reflect new provisions introduced through Bill 216, the Building Ontario for You Act (Budget Measures), 2024, and refined by Bill 60, both aimed at strengthening payment certainty and improving dispute resolution in the provincial construction sector.

[Click here to visit COCA's Prompt Payment Page to view the toolkit and download the fact sheets.](#)

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## Post Secondary Funding Review Supported by COCA

In November 2025 COCA sent a letter to the Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security, Nolan Quinn, expressing concern for the funding challenges being faced by the province's community colleges. The letter was in support of a campaign by Colleges Ontario.

Minister Quinn subsequently announced that the funding model for post secondary institutions would be reviewed.

On February 12th, the Minister announced \$6.4 billion over four years in new funding to ensure the sustainability of Ontario's colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes, to prepare graduates with the in-demand skills they need to secure rewarding careers, and to keep costs down for students and their families.

The government's announcement stated that the province's plan to build a stronger postsecondary sector is based on three principles:

- Preparing students for rewarding, in-demand careers that meet labour market needs
- Preserving Ontario students' ability to access high-quality postsecondary education, while supporting their ability to appropriately invest in their education and success
- Providing Ontario's postsecondary sector long-term sustainability, while continuing to ensure funding for the sector is being used to further Ontario's position as a centre for world-class research excellence while meeting student and labour market needs

The announcement went on to say,

"A new long-term funding model will see universities, colleges and Indigenous Institutes focused on delivering programs that align with student and labour-market demand supported by increased, predictable funding. This new long-term funding

model will bring an additional \$6.4 billion into the sector over four years and raise annual operating funding to \$7 billion, a 30 per cent increase and the highest level in the province's history. It will also fund 70,000 more in-demand seats, while better meeting the needs of small, rural, northern, French-language and Indigenous Institutes.

An updated tuition framework will support the postsecondary sector's long-term sustainability while maintaining one of the lowest rates of tuition increase in Canada. Ontario will allow publicly assisted colleges and universities to raise tuition by up to 2 per cent per year for three years, then up to 2 per cent or the three-year average rate of inflation, whichever is less, in the years following. This rate of increase will be among the lowest of any province in Canada, including comparable jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Manitoba.

On average, this change will result in an additional cost of \$0.18/day for college students and \$0.47/day for university students. Low-income students will have this cost absorbed through an enhanced Student Access Guarantee (SAG).

A stronger, more sustainable OSAP system will ensure financial assistance remains available for future generations while supporting students' appropriate investment in their education and success. To strengthen the long-term sustainability of OSAP and bring it in line with other provinces, Ontario students will be eligible to receive a maximum of 25 per cent of their OSAP funding as grants and a minimum of 75 per cent of their funding as loans. OSAP will no longer offer grants to students at private career colleges, in alignment with changes made by the federal government to its own student support funding."

[Click here for the full text of the government's news release](#)

## Third Northern Ontario Mining Project Fast Tracked

Here are selected highlights taken from an Ontario government news release dated February 17, 2026:

- On February 17th Ontario's Minister of Energy and Mines, Stephen Lecce, announced that Kinross Gold Corporation's Great Bear Project will be fast-tracked under the One Project, One Process framework (1P1P framework)
- The 1P1P framework is a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to streamline permitting approvals, end bureaucratic delays, and attract global investment in which the Ministry of Energy and Mines acts as a single point of contact to coordinate all necessary provincial approvals and Indigenous consultation to reduce government review time by 50 per cent
- It is the first gold mine and the third project accepted under the 1P1P framework
- The Great Bear Project is located 24 kilometres

southeast of Red Lake in northwestern Ontario

- It is a high-grade combined open-pit and underground mine with an initial mine life of 12 years
- The project represents a more than \$5 billion capital investment and is expected to create 900 jobs during its operational life
- Thousands of additional construction and indirect jobs will also be created during the build-out phase in 2027 to 2029
- The announcement was lauded by regional political leaders and by industry heads

For the full text of the Ontario government's news release, click on the following link:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007051/ontario-fast-tracks-one-of-canadas-premier-gold-mines-under-one-project-one-process>

## Poll Shows Tory Lead Narrowing

A survey of 1,000 Ontarians using interactive voice response technology conducted between February 20 and February 22, 2026 by Liaison Strategies revealed the following results:

- If an election was held at the time the survey was taken, 40% of decided and leaning voters would vote PC, 36% Liberal, 17% NDP and 5% Green
- The PCs dropped from 47% to 40% in just 4 months
- There is consolidation around the leaderless Liberals, particularly in the 416 and 905
- Premier Ford's approval rating across all respondents saw 30 % approving while 66% disapprove

This suggests that the competition for votes in the Ontario political arena is tightening, particularly as Tory leader Doug Ford's popularity wanes in the North, South Central and 416.

For the full story, click on the following link:

<https://press.liaisonstrategies.ca/ontario-4-point-race-ford-pcs-40-leaderless-liberals-36/>

## Work Commences on Another Contract Section of the Ontario Line

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- The Ontario Line is a 15.6-kilometre stand-alone rapid transit line in Toronto that will connect the Exhibition Place near the waterfront southwest of the downtown, through the downtown core to a station at the corner of Eglinton Avenue and Don Mills Road (near the former site of the Ontario Science Centre) to connect to the Eglinton Crosstown/Line 5
- The project is owned by the Greater Toronto Transit Commission (Metrolinx) with Infrastructure Ontario (IO) acting as the procurement and commercial lead
- The Ontario Line - Elevated Guideway and Stations project is one of many separate projects that will deliver the Ontario Line
- The Ontario Line – Elevated Guideway and stations project will be delivered by a consortium called Trillium Guideway Partners (TGP) using IO's progressive design build procurement model
- According to IO's website, "The scope of work includes three kilometres of an elevated guideway (bridge structures); five elevated stations (Riverside-Leslieville, Gerrard, Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park, the likely to be renamed Science Centre), one emergency exit building, interface with the operations and maintenance storage facility as well as with the Eglinton Crosstown LRT Line 5 and sections of existing Metrolinx-owned rail corridor where Ontario Line trains will operate"
- On February 18th the Ontario government announced that ground had been broken on the project and that crews had begun work along the three-kilometre elevated guideway, a raised stretch of track that will connect Don Valley, Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park stations, where ground has also now been broken.
- Completion of the Ontario Line is currently targeted for the early 2030s

More information about the project is available on IO's website

<https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/en/news-and-media/news/subway-ontario-line-elevated-guideway-and-stations/agreement-signed-for-ontario-line-elevated-guideway-and-stations/>

You can access the government's news release by clicking on the following link:

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007053/province-breaks-ground-on-ontario-line-elevated-guideway-and-four-new-stations>

## Eglinton Crosstown LRT Finally Opens

- Eglinton Crosstown LRT (light rapid transit) is a public transit construction project in Toronto that runs along and under Eglinton Avenue from Mount Dennis (Weston Road) in the west to Kennedy station at the eastern end
  - The project owner is the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority, a crown agency of the government of Ontario also known as Metrolinx; Infrastructure Ontario (IO), another crown agency of the government of Ontario, served as the procurement and commercial lead on the project using its design, build, finance, maintain (DBFM) procurement model; it was developed and built by a large complex consortium comprised of multiple Canadian and international companies called Crosslinx Transit Solutions
  - It is a 19 km line with 25 stations and 10 km underground between Keele Street in the west and Laird Drive in the east
  - It links to 3 subway stations, various bus routes and GO Transit lines
- Construction on the Eglinton Crosstown LRT began in 2011 and was expected to be completed in 2020 but experienced delay after delay for technical and other reasons; it was finally opened on February 8, 2026
  - IO's website places a contract value of \$8.25 billion/ \$9.1 billion (including inflation) on the project; in 2018 the cost was forecast at \$11.78 billion but the latest estimates are around \$13 billion
  - The Eglinton Crosstown is operated by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and is also referred to as Line 5 in TTC parlance
  - Service improvements will be phased-in over the next several months including transit signal priority and the number of trains will be increased from 24 to 28
  - It is expected to be fully functioning by the end of May

## Liberal Candidate For Scarborough Southwest By-Election

Although he has the authority to appoint his party's candidate for the yet-to-be-scheduled Scarborough Southwest by-election, Ontario Liberal Party Interim Leader, John Fraser, stated he will not. He stated that holding an open nomination process is the right thing to do.

The by-election was caused by the resignation of then NDP MPP for the riding, Doly Begum. The Liberal Party of Canada then announced that Begum would be their candidate in the federal by-election in the same riding, also yet-to-be-called, that was caused by the resignation of Liberal MP and cabinet minister Bill Blair.

The provincial seat was held by the Tories back in

the days of Premier Mike Harris but it turned Liberal during the McGuinty and Wynne Grit administrations. In 2018, when the Wynne led Liberals were swept from power, the Scarborough Southwest electors in significant majority chose the NDP's Begum to be their representative at Queen's Park. Begum was re-elected in 2022 and again in 2025.

Fraser's decision means there will be an open nomination process held in Scarborough Southwest. Nate Erskine-Smith, currently the federal Liberal MP for Beaches-East York and Qadira Jackson, will be candidates in the open nomination process.