



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Employees Unveil Plan to Revitalize Ontario Northland, Connect Ring of Fire

Proposal includes new rail line to massive mineral deposits in James Bay Lowlands

NORTH BAY, ONTARIO (October 19, 2012) – The General Chairperson’s Association (GCA), representing unionized employees at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC), today announced a plan to revitalize the company while creating significant new job and economic opportunities in Ontario’s North.

“This is a new deal for Northern Ontario,” declared GCA representative Brian Stevens. “Not only will we save transportation services and hundreds of existing jobs in the North, but our plan will also create thousands more jobs by providing access to the Ring of Fire.”

The proposal calls for transferring ownership of the railroad and other assets of the provincially-held ONTC to a new ports authority to be operated under the Canada Marine Act. The first step in this process was recently completed with the creation of The James Bay & Lowlands Ports Trustee Corporation.

ONTC operations will be strengthened to ensure that they are economically sustainable. The new Ring of Fire rail line will be designed and built to ship thousands of tons per day of chromite, nickel and other minerals and finished products to markets around the world. ONTC employees, with a long tradition of providing rail services in Ontario’s North, will provide their energy and leverage their position as a significant creditor toward this New Deal.

“The employees have significant investments in pensions, benefits and their various collective agreements,” Stevens said. “We will leverage those investments with the provincial government as the New Deal moves forward. We intend to meet again with Ministers Chiarelli and Bartolucci and staff from Infrastructure Ontario to outline the New Deal, and look forward to their help in accomplishing our plan while reminding them of their obligations and policy commitments.”

The initiative enjoys strong support from a wide array of key stakeholders including First Nations communities, Nipissing-Timiskaming MP Jay Aspin, Northern Ontario communities, and mining and various business interests, among others.

“I am very pleased about the opportunity for First Nations people to get involved in the development of the Ring of Fire,” said Leo Friday, Deputy Grand Chief, Mushkegowuk Council. “We are ready to work together for the benefit of First Nations people. An important part of this will involve training and education so that Aboriginal workers can gain access to the full range of future employment opportunities at Ring of Fire mines.”

Roy Hains, CEO of The James Bay & Lowlands Ports Trustee Corporation, has facilitated advanced discussions on this initiative with First Nations in the James Bay Lowlands, the unions, and Ring of Fire claim holder Canada Chrome Corporation.

“With broad and building support, I am confident that this initiative is well on its way to success,” Hains stated. “We are particularly excited about providing access to the Ring of Fire with a rail solution that is by far the most economic and environmentally friendly solution. This plan also keeps these important infrastructure assets in public hands for the benefit of all stakeholders.”

Canada Chrome has made a significant investment to study and secure a viable right of way to mining operations in the Ring of Fire.

“Canada Chrome’s work has been instrumental in building a solid base from which our plan can move forward,” Hains said.

The plan was developed in response to the Ontario government’s March 23, 2012 decision to divest the ONTC, which was followed by the shutdown of ONTC’s Northlander passenger train service on September 28, 2012.

The ONTC has played a significant role in transportation and economic development in Northeastern Ontario for more than a century. Ontario Northland employs more than 950 workers in the region and has an estimated annual economic impact of almost \$210 million in Northeastern Ontario.

“The plan being proposed is ambitious, far sighted and has positive long-term implications for my region and for Canada,” commented Jay Aspin, MP, Nipissing-Timiskaming. “It will provide jobs, economic growth and long-term prosperity as well as a mechanism for maintaining and developing the rail infrastructure in Ontario’s North.”

About the General Chairperson’s Association

The General Chairperson’s Association (GCA) represents the interests of the unionized employees and their families at Ontario Northland. We are proud of the work we do and proud of the significant contributions our members make to the value of ONTC and for the overall growth of Northern Ontario. Our members include the Steelworkers Union (Local 1976 Lodges 1826/2008), Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (Division 910), International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local 2061), CAW Canada (Local 103) and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference Maintenance of Way Employees (Division Lodges 2697/003). For more information, visit www.developingthenorth.com.

For more information, contact:

Brian Stevens (GCA spokesperson)
E: brian.stevens@ontera.net M: 416-567-8281

Roy Hains (The James Bay & Lowlands Ports Trustee Corporation)
E: royhains@ontera.net

Don Hogarth (media relations)
E: don@hogarthpr.com M: 416-565-8920