

## **Ontario Government Expanding Bus Service Across the North**

*Province Increasing Travel Options in Underserved Areas*

December 1, 2017 11:00 A.M.

Ontario is making it easier and more convenient for people to get where they need to go by improving transportation services within and between communities across Northern Ontario.

Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation, made the announcement in Thunder Bay today alongside MPP Bill Mauro.

The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) will increase bus service in the Northeast and will work in collaboration with existing private carriers to introduce service to communities in the Northwest. The communities that will benefit from this collaboration include Hearst, Hornepayne, White River, Red Lake, Emo, Rainy River, Fort Frances, Atikokan, Red Rock and others. Improved services will provide vital links between communities that will help people living in Northern Ontario travel to medical and personal appointments, attend school, visit with friends and family, and access other essential services.

Return service will be offered five days a week between all communities serviced by the ONTC or private carriers. Ridership will be monitored regularly to ensure customer demand is met and service is expanded as needed.

Ontario is also launching a new [Community Transportation Grant Program](#) to help municipalities, Indigenous communities and other organizations throughout the province provide more travel options in areas that are not served, or underserved by public transit and intercommunity bus. The program will make it more convenient for seniors, students, persons living with disabilities and others to access essential services in their communities, connect with other transportation services, and travel between cities and towns.

Improving bus service in the North is part of Ontario's plan to create fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change. The plan includes a higher minimum wage and better working conditions, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable child care, and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25 through the biggest expansion of medicare in a generation.

## **QUOTES**

" The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) connects communities and residents to essential services in Northern Ontario. Investing in service options through the ONTC and in collaboration with private carriers demonstrates the province's commitment to increasing travel options in underserved areas."

- Michael Gravelle

Minister of Northern Development and Mines

" Our government is committed to building stronger communities by making transportation options more convenient and better connected. This funding will help more people in rural and remote areas get to and from their appointments, access important services and maintain an active and independent lifestyle."

- Steven Del Duca

Minister of Transportation

" I am pleased that our government is improving intercommunity bus services for Northern municipalities. Having a reliable transportation system in smaller remote communities will enhance the quality of life for Northern residents who will now have access to services, medical facilities and family in other communities."

- Bill Mauro

Minister of Municipal Affairs

" Ontario Northland has a long history of connecting communities and providing vital transportation. We are proud to expand our motor coach services as part of the Province's integrated transportation system."

- Corina Moore

President and CEO, Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

" Through collaboration with the ONTC, a reliable and effective transportation service will be made available to many Northern residents."

- Kasper Wabinski

President and CEO, Kasper Transportation

## **QUICK FACTS**

- Ontario is investing \$5.2 million in new buses and technology enhancements to improve intercommunity bus services delivered through the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC).

- The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission is an operational enterprise agency of the province providing intercommunity bus, Polar Bear Express passenger rail, rail freight, and remanufacturing and repair services in Northern Ontario.
- In 2016-17, 243,482 passengers used ONTC bus services.
- With the Community Transportation Grant Program, up to \$30 million over five years is available to municipalities, who can [apply for grants](#) starting today. An additional \$10 million will be available to Indigenous communities, Indigenous-led organizations and not-for-profit organizations starting in summer 2018.
- Improving intercommunity bus service in Northern Ontario is a key part of the province's [Northern Ontario Multimodal Transportation Strategy](#).
- Improving intercommunity bus service is part of Ontario's Aging with Confidence plan to support seniors by helping them remain independent, healthy and active, safe and socially-connected.

## LEARN MORE

- [Ontario Northland Transportation Commission](#)
- [Community Transportation Grant Program](#)

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