FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29, 2026

FROM: The Town of Fort Frances

TO: Residents

RE: Regional Economic Development through Immigration (REDI) Initiative

The Town of Fort Frances and communities across the Rainy River District are pleased to share the exciting news that the region has been selected to participate in the Regional Economic Development through Immigration (REDI) initiative, a provincial program designed to help address labour shortages by attracting skilled foreign workers and supporting pathways to permanent residency.

A collaborative regional application, filed earlier in 2026, brought together municipalities, economic development organizations and community partners from across Northwestern Ontario, to successfully implement a much needed workforce development initiative.

The region was selected as one of only six successful applicants across Ontario, highlighting the strength of the regional partnership and its shared commitment to developing innovative solutions to labour market challenges.

The REDI initiative is a partnership between the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP), through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, and participating communities across Ontario. The program aims to help regional employers attract and retain skilled workers in positions where local labour market demands cannot be met through the existing workforce.

Participation in REDI represents an important opportunity for Fort Frances and the Rainy River District to support local employers, strengthen key industries, encourage economic growth, and contribute to the long-term prosperity of our communities. By connecting employers with immigration pathways and resources, the initiative can help build a stronger, more sustainable regional workforce. The program was restarted on October 16, 2026 and is expected to run until December 31, 2027.

“The Town of Fort Frances is incredibly pleased that Fort Frances and the Rainy River District are included in the 2026/27 REDI intake,” stated Mayor Andrew Hallikas. “This program will address employment needs of local businesses while creating opportunities for newcomers. It will support local employers and economic growth. We are grateful to Confederation College

which led a coalition of Municipalities, including the Town of Fort Frances, Indigenous organizations, Economic Development organizations, Educational Institutes, Healthcare providers, and Community Partners in lobbying the Provincial Government to include the Rainy River and Kenora Districts in this innovative program."

As part of this initiative, regional employers are invited to attend an upcoming information session:

Workforce Solutions: Immigration Pathways for Employers

Date: November 6, 2026
Time: 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Location: Fort Frances Civic Centre, 320 Portage Avenue, Fort Frances, ON

The session will provide an overview of temporary and permanent immigration pathways that can support the recruitment and retention of skilled foreign workers, with a focus on the new Ontario Workforce Priority stream of the OINP.

Representatives from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) will provide valuable information on temporary and permanent immigration pathways available to employers seeking skilled foreign workers.

Regional employers are encouraged to attend to learn more about how immigration programs can help address their workforce needs and support their organization's future growth.

Register today: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/workforce-solutions-immigration-pathways-for-employers-tickets-2003617155849

Together, we are working toward a stronger workforce and a more prosperous future for Fort Frances and the Rainy River District.