

ON NEWS

YOUR ONTARIO NORTHLAND EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



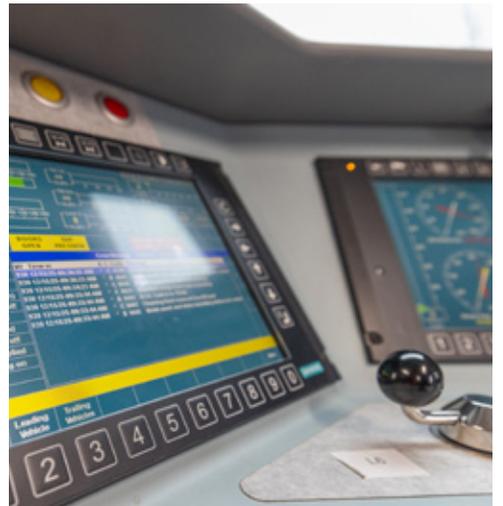
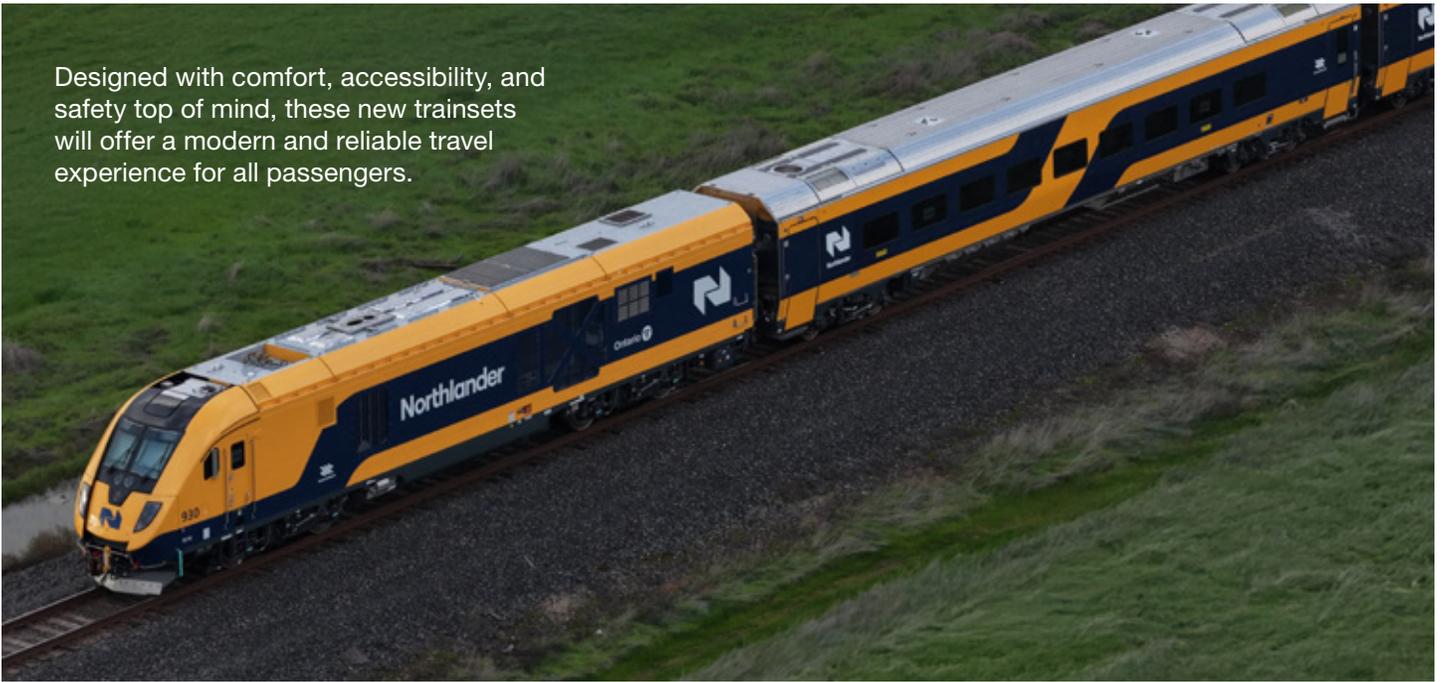
All Aboard, A History Making Moment at Ontario Northland.

After years of anticipation and determination, the arrival of the first of three new passenger trainsets in December 2025 signifies a major milestone for Ontario Northland.

The Northlander will travel across 740 kilometres connecting communities and improving access to essential services across the region.



Designed with comfort, accessibility, and safety top of mind, these new trainsets will offer a modern and reliable travel experience for all passengers.







Message From the CEO

Now that we have settled in to a new year, I am filled with excitement and pride. Having recently welcomed the first of three new Northlander trainsets to Ontario, it's hard not to feel inspired by this moment as our team brings the new era of the Northlander from vision to reality.

At the same time, 2025 has laid the foundation for success in the upcoming year across the organization. With Wave 3 of the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) program now well underway, we are continuing on a path to data-driven decision making and more refined inventory management.

Our Remanufacturing and Repair Centre continues to achieve milestones and garner a reputation for excellence, while providing in-house services to our own equipment. Having delivered a total of 41 cars as part of the bilevel contract in addition to our locomotive and engine work for customers, we are returning high-performing equipment in fast turnaround times. Overall, work continues to become more streamlined, deliberate and coordinated in all our shops.

Rail freight and infrastructure continue to pave the way for future development in the region. With nearly 1 million legacy rail ties collected in the past three years, as well as upgrades to track, culverts and bridges, Ontario Northland is helping to power a new era of prosperity for northern Ontario.

With a new year now in full swing, there is much to celebrate and much to look forward to. Ontario Northland is a modern, future-ready organization because of our dedicated employees.

I'm looking forward to shaping this landmark year together.

- Chad





Out and About: Celebrating Our Connection to Community Festival of Lights

In December, Ontario Northland participated in the annual Thunder Bay Police Association Parade of Lights. This tradition raises funds for four local charities in the Thunder Bay area and employees were on hand to help make the event a success.

Pictured Aiden MacCormack, James MacCormack, Ann MacCormack, Janice Soule, Ellen Ramsey, and Kevin Roper.



Building Strong Connections

Ontario Northland continues to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations across the province, an effort marked by meaningful conversations, collaboration, and progress.

Meetings across Ontario Northland's service territory have helped foster open and transparent communication, gather valuable feedback, and ensure that Ontario Northland's transportation services reflect the needs and priorities of Indigenous communities. The organization's engagement approach remains proactive and adaptable, built on listening, collaboration, and continuous learning. By integrating feedback into planning and decision-making, the organization strengthens long-term partnerships rooted in respect and shared goals.

A highlight of 2025 included a well-attended Indigenous Transportation Roundtable a recurring meeting that brings together Indigenous elected officials, delegates from James Bay Coast communities and representatives from Ontario Northland service areas. The most recent roundtable served as a space for open discussion on transportation topics, including rail freight, the Polar Bear Express, the Northlander, and broader regional transportation needs.

The meetings are organized by Janie McLeod, Indigenous Engagement Coordinator, who shared, "Since its launch in 2023, six meetings have taken place, each producing clear action items and tangible next steps. The Roundtables have proven to be a cornerstone of Ontario Northland's engagement work, helping to ensure community voices continue to guide future transportation planning."

Beyond formal engagement, Ontario Northland also celebrated the opportunity to connect in more informal and community-focused ways. The organization proudly supported and participated in events such as the Gathering of Our People, the Mushkegowuk Cup, the Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Opportunities, as well as numerous powwows and local gatherings throughout the North.

These moments reinforced what Ontario Northland's team already knew, that connection goes beyond transportation. It's about showing up, listening, and working together to create lasting, positive changes for the communities we serve.



Pictured Nicole Zettler.

A Promise Delivered: The EAM System Launch Story

Over 80 employees gathered at the Nipissing Student Centre this past December to mark a milestone in Ontario Northland's Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) program.

The EAM Program is a multi-year initiative aimed at enhancing our asset management practices through improved processes, technology and information. Wave 3 of the program focused on expanding the implementation of Hexagon to include additional areas of our operations (such as RRC and Rail Mechanical).

New functionality and feature enhancements have been introduced with a focus on improving processes, reporting, and enhancing efficiency and communication across teams.

"Teams across departments came together, each bringing their expertise and dedication," says Nicole Zettler,

Manager of Enterprise Asset Management. "From planning and data readiness to training and cutover, everyone showed grit, humility, and partnership," she added.

The EAM platform (Hexagon) is already helping employees plan and complete their work with confidence, and its ongoing use will support broader asset management planning and reporting, leading to improved decision making. Achieving this significant milestone supports our commitment to be a modern, future-ready organization.

"We turned complexity into momentum and momentum into results," says Sean Conroy, Chief Administrative Officer. "Thank you to everyone involved for your resilience and commitment; this success belongs to you."





Work Safe Recognition and Awards Program

The following individuals were presented with Safety Star Awards for going beyond their normal job duties to improve health and safety in the workplaces.



Daniel Potruff

Potruff was nominated for his suggestion of using a new line of tools for sanding cars. Since implementation, the new tools have helped with both safety and production time. The power sander he suggested pulls the particulate through the sanding pad, resulting in a nearly dustless process. This further reduces the potential for sand and silica to become airborne. This engineering control has also removed the need to seal the car with plastic, and reduced time required to clean up the workspace.



Steph Perron

Perron was recognized for his dedication to safety and positive contributions to Ontario Northland's workplace culture. Providing Forklift and Engine Attendant training to employees, Perron continues to demonstrate an approachable teaching style, a commitment to caution, and a genuine concern for the well-being of colleagues and the public. He independently designed the Forklift Program, and his training has consistently been well received by his peers. Perron's positive attitude and unwavering focus on safety remains an example for all employees. His leadership in creating and maintaining important safety programs makes him a deserving recipient of this award and recognition.



Jordyn Vaillancourt

Vaillancourt was nominated for taking action to prevent a potential hazard in the car shop. When a car is jacked up in the air, the vestibule door openings are either blocked with quick supports or hazard tape, but it does not stop an employee from falling through the opening. Vaillancourt enhanced the protection around the doors by putting together plywood blockades across each door, to further prevent any potential falls. He marked each one with an X to give his co-workers a visual cue to the hazard.



Dwight Wagner and Neil Way-White

Wagner and Way-White have been presented with the Work Safe Champion Award for the support they provided fellow employees. This award is in recognition of their commitment to peer support.



Online Nomination

If you know someone who has gone above and beyond for safety, nominate them for a Work Safe Award on the Junction.



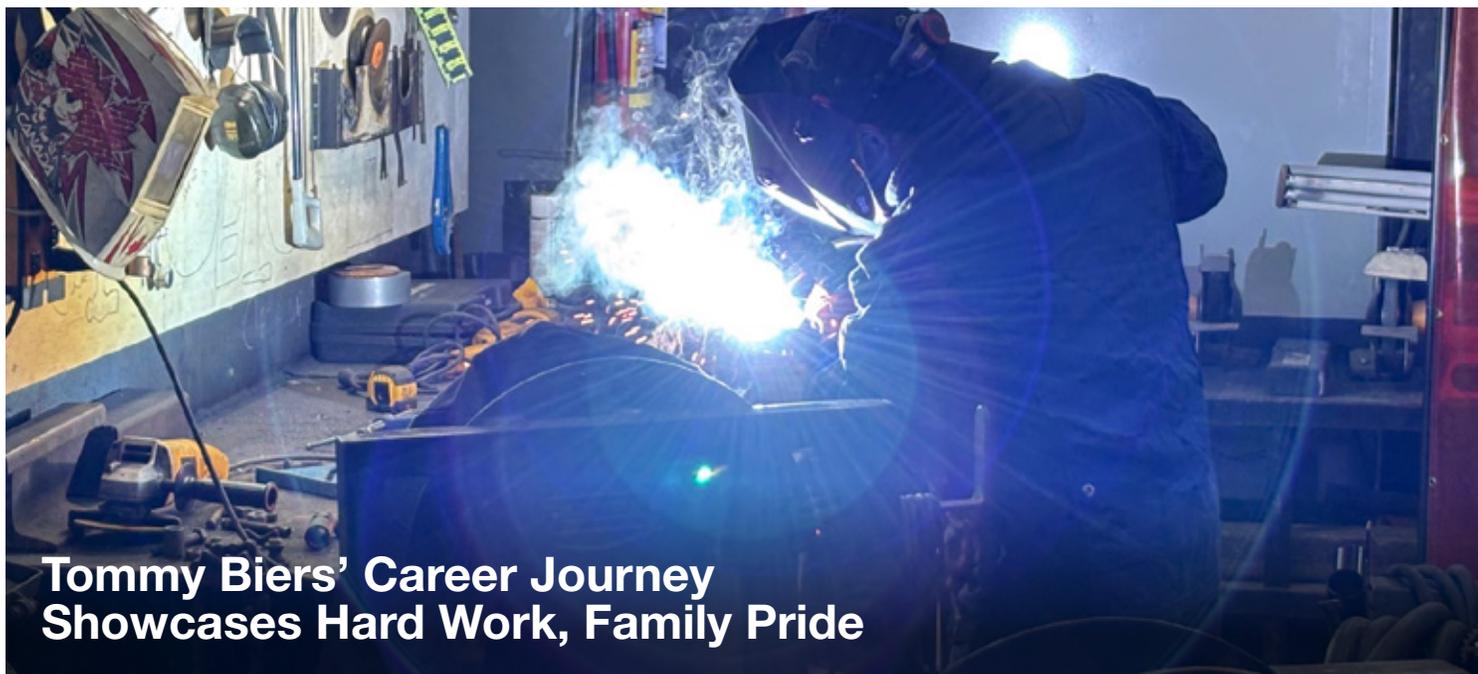
Pictured Shaw Dungate, Micheline Rochefort, Jill Dunlop, and Nicholas Tibollo.



Pictured Micheline Rochefort, Janie McLeod Kate Bondett and Ashley Commanda.

ANEDO Forum in Orillia

The Anishinabek Nation Economic Development Opportunities forum is an annual event focused on economic reconciliation, business development and networking opportunities for Anishinabek First Nations and industry partners. Ontario Northland was on hand to talk to stakeholders about the upcoming Northlander passenger rail service that will have a stop in nearby Washago.



Tommy Biers' Career Journey Showcases Hard Work, Family Pride

Ontario Northland has many employees who can track their family's lineage by their work along the rails. Tommy Biers is one of those employees, whose family has been in this industry for four generations.

"It's kind of cool to see it continue on," Biers said. "My dad was a railroader, his father was a railroader, and on my grandmother's side, her dad worked for the railroad too. Rail has been in our family for a long time."

Biers didn't step straight into a skilled trade role. He started as a cleaner, working midnight shifts and learning the basics while getting his first exposure to operations.

"We'd come in at midnight and be assigned coaches to clean so they looked presentable for the public in the morning," he said. "It was a good opportunity, it got my foot in the door."

From there, he began taking on other tasks, like operating a forklift, and those experiences sparked a desire to further his skill set.

"You start wanting more," he said. "People started telling me to apply for the apprenticeship opportunities.

I did, and I was lucky enough to make it through the process."

He is now a Railway Car Technician based in Cochrane.

As part of the Sunday-to-Thursday crew, Biers inspects inbound and outbound freight, checks for defects, gauges wheels, changes brake shoes, and performs brake tests.

"What I enjoy most is the hands-on, physical work," he said. "It's rewarding to go home tired because you know you actually did something that day."

He also appreciates learning skills that apply beyond the shop floor.

"There's stuff I use day-to-day at home, basic carpentry, a little plumbing," Biers said. "I never did any plumbing beforehand, but now I can solder a joint."

Seeing repaired equipment roll back onto the line is also a highlight.

"It's cool to see cars you worked on go back into action. It's certainly rewarding."

Brian Malherbe, Director of Rail Mechanical, says Biers excels

because of his initiative and independence.

Biers's father, Dan Biers, now retired, spent his entire career in railroading, starting with CN before moving to Ontario Northland. Seeing his son succeed has been a point of pride.

"I'm proud of the trust Tommy has gained working here," the elder Biers said. "At the end of the day, you're all in it to keep the railroad going."

Tommy Biers said watching his father's career had a major influence on him.

"He provided for us, gave us a great childhood," Biers said. "Knowing a job could do that was confidence inspiring. When I struggled to find work in my first field after school, I was thankful the railroad was local and offered good opportunities."

Biers believes Ontario Northland is a place where a person can grow and build a long-term career, as long as they're willing to put in the effort.

"Through hard work, you can plan the next step in your career," he said. "Show that you're here to work and get things done, and you can move up."



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Unifor Local 103 Annual Toy Drive, A Huge Success

On December 4, 2025, Unifor Local 103 hosted the 31st Annual Toy Drive at the North Bay Shops, Head Office and Bus Garage. Thanks to their efforts, employees collected over four truckloads of toys and \$4000 in cash donations for LIPI.

Congratulations to everyone involved!



Cochrane and Englehart Station Improvement

Ontario Northland's station revitalization work in Cochrane and Englehart has reached an important stage, with major upgrades nearing completion and teams preparing for next steps. Stations will benefit from accessibility and operational upgrades to best meet passenger needs.

At the Cochrane Station, interior construction is approaching the finish line. Project Manager of Facilities, Alain Tremblay, says the focus now is on completing the detailed work inside the building.

"We'll be finishing the interior, then start moving employees back into the station so they can get comfortable with the new layout," he explains.

The renovations were driven largely by the need to meet AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) standards. As Tremblay notes, working with an older building brought its share of surprises.

"Once you open the walls of a decades-old structure, you find things you need to address. We've cut through

heavy brickwork to create accessible washrooms, installed new seating and created pathways for easier movement. Automatic doors and improved accessibility features will make the station far more user-friendly."

For customers, the changes will be immediately visible. Senior Manager of Polar Bear Express Services and Hospitality, Eric Rochon, says the new space feels completely different:

"It's much more open. A clean layout, with a visible customer service counter," he says. "The separation between the hotel and the ticket office will be clear, which will help direct new and returning passengers."

Employees will also notice other improvements. While the workspace stays in the same general area, Rochon says it's significantly enhanced.

"It's going to be larger, brighter, and more modern. Better lighting, new flooring and overall, an enhanced workspace for staff," he says.

The project also includes work outside the building in anticipation of the Northlander service. Tremblay says customers and employees can feel the momentum building.

“We’re modernizing the facility and the platform together. There are a lot of moving parts, but this work brings everything to the next level.”

Rochon adds that consistency across stations is a major priority.

“Historically, every station looked different. New designs create a recognizable Ontario Northland experience, no matter where passengers board.”

Manager of Creative Services Brooks Tuckett says, “After working closely on the design of the equipment, there was an opportunity to incorporate some of these elements to the waiting areas and public spaces. It’s truly exciting to see everything come together and to see a connected brand experience reflected at every station.”

In Englehart, similar upgrades are underway.

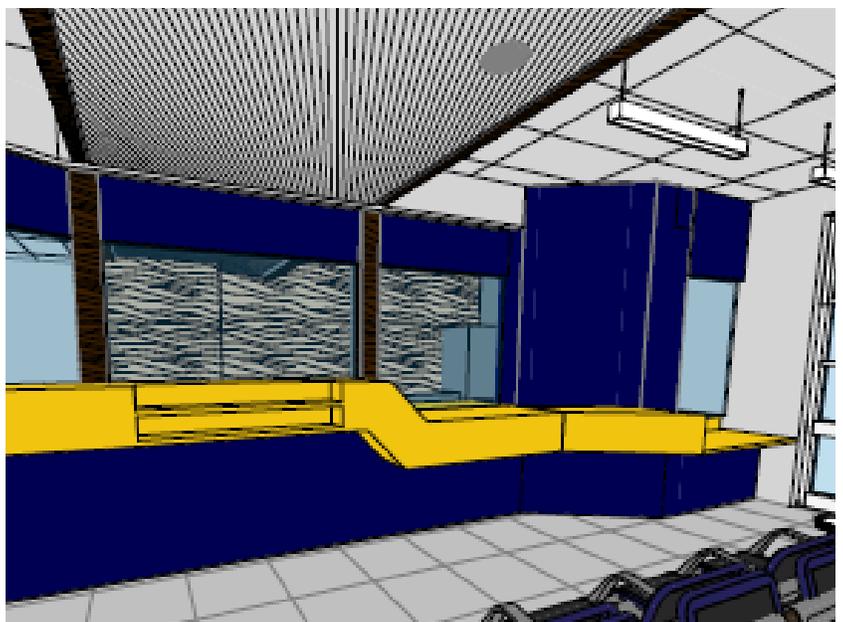
Project Manager of Facilities Abigail Green says the goal is the same: bring the station up to AODA standards while giving employees and customers a modern, welcoming space.

“Behind the scenes, we’ve redone all the plumbing fixtures and electrical work. Up front, customers will notice a redesigned ticket booth, more seating, fully accessible washrooms, and automatic doors.”

One of the most noticeable changes is aesthetic. The original pink interior, a distinct mid-century palette, is gone.

“We removed all the pink,” Green laughs. “Now we’re introducing Ontario Northland’s brand colours — blue, yellow, and the new logo — along with wood paneling. It’s going to look modern and aligned with the rest of our stations.”

Across both Cochrane and Englehart, this work sets the stage for consistent customer experience across Ontario Northland’s network.



North Bay Diesel Shop Takes Pride in Locomotive Rebuilds

It's been just over a year since the first F59 locomotives rolled into the Diesel Shop in North Bay to mark the start of a significant project for Ontario Northland. In January of 2025, Ontario Northland was awarded the contract to refurbish 13 locomotives that were purchased from Metrolink. Senior Manager of Operations Troy Hurrell says his team takes a lot of pride in the work they're doing.

"These locomotives are coming in tired," says Hurrell. "By the time they leave here, they're completely renewed — structurally, mechanically, and cosmetically. It's amazing to see the transformation, and it's all thanks to the hard work of our people."

Each of the locomotives is being refurbished from top to bottom. The team is replacing flooring, walls, and

ceilings, installing new doors and HVAC systems, updating the control systems, and repainting the exteriors.

Hurrell says the project has been both technically demanding but very rewarding.

"Every single person in that shop — from trades to engineering to planning — has a role in bringing these locomotives back to life," he says. "You can see the pride in their faces when a finished unit rolls out the door."

With the project well underway, the team has settled into a steady rhythm.

"There's a lot of moving parts in a project like this," he explains. "We've had to adapt our processes, share knowledge across departments, and

find new ways to be efficient. The collaboration I've seen over the past year has been outstanding."

Hurrell says there's a strong sense of pride in showcasing what Ontario Northland's workforce can do as these 13 additional locomotives will be used to provide GO Transit with operational support and spare parts.

"This kind of project shows the skill and capability that exists right here in North Bay," he says. "It's a good example of the scale of work that happens in this facility. These aren't small repairs — these are full-scale rebuilds, done to the highest standards, and it's our team that is excelling at it. Long-term projects like this give us a chance to plan, to grow, and to celebrate milestones along the way," he says.





Meet Your HR Business Partner

Please reach out to the Business Partner representing your division for questions and support in each of the following areas:

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- Labour Relations
- Attendance Support
- Performance Management
- Workforce Planning
- Position Development
- Employee Accommodations
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Attendance Incentive Program for Unionized Employees

Ontario Northland is excited to announce the launch of the Attendance Incentive Program for unionized employees. The Attendance Incentive Program is designed to foster a culture of wellness and responsible sick leave usage.

Program Overview:

Unused Sick Days Payout: Employees who use fewer than 10 sick days in a calendar year (January 1 to December 31) may receive up to 10 days' pay as a lump sum at the start of the following year. Absences for occupational injury or illness (WSIB) do not count toward the total.

Eligibility:

The program applies to unionized employees as of December 31, 2025. Retirees receive a pro-rated payout, and new hires have a 30-day qualifying period and pro-rated calculation.

Ontario Northland is committed to supporting your health and well-being. For more information on wellness resources, benefits, and ongoing health initiatives, please visit the Total Rewards Junction Page. Here you'll find details on the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), wellness challenges, mental health resources, benefit booklets and more.

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