

FORUM

Would immigration make Sault's jobless rate higher?

A first glance it might seem bizarre that Sault Ste. Marie city council would consider formulating a plan to attract and retain immigrants on the same night it discussed a local unemployment rate pegged at 12.2% by Statistics Canada.

Why try to bring in new people when so many already there can't find jobs? And the Sault's jobless rate seems to be rising. According to StatsCan, it has doubled since last August and the employment rate has dropped from 58.0% to 47.1%.

Yes, the StatsCan estimate is highly suspect because the sample size, 205 households, might be too small.

At Ward 1 Coun. Steve Budland remarked, it seems implausible that the Sault would not have noticed if it really had lost about one-fifth of its workforce in a year and was subsequently in a deep depression.

Sault has been many, many years since the Sault was a job-seeker's haven. Signs at city entrances trace a population decline that probably would seem even more severe if those tallies were kept up to date.

The too-common experience for Sault families is for children to go away to university or college and not return, even if they want to, because the city doesn't offer enough jobs suited to their newly acquired skills.

Many a lifelong citizen has left the city as well, heading south or west to be closer to children and grandkids.

Job prospects would be even worse for young workers if a high percentage of the city's aging population had not headed into retirement and left job vacancies behind.

So if there are considerably fewer than enough jobs to go around, should the city look at bringing in immigrants who are looking for jobs?

Shouldn't council be trying to foster high-quality jobs that would keep our young, educated native sons and daughters in the city?

Well, yes. And yes.

Obviously when city council endorsed Ward 5 Coun. Ross Romano's initiative Monday to launch an immigration committee, consisting of himself, Budland and community members, it was a punt of all its eggs in the immigration basket.

A succession of councils and various local organizations have tried and are trying various ways to lure businesses and industries to the city.

However, despite numerous job-creation efforts, the Sault's population continues to decrease and age. Budland noted the local birth rate is 1.52 children per family but the replacement rate to grow the city is 2.1.

The Sault clearly needs younger people to do the work that needs to be done, pay taxes, buy things, own a car, play sports, play on sports teams, attend events, run a restaurant, start businesses — everything that makes a city tick.

Immigration could supply some, perhaps reversing the Sault's slow decline.

Of course, the fear is that immigrants will take jobs away from native-born workers. Understandably, that fear is most acute when unemployment is high.

But that's not the case, according to the American Immigration Council, a non-profit group dedicated to lobbying that country's immigrant past and shaping how the country views future immigrants.

Jobless rates don't rise in areas with large numbers of recent immigrants, even in hard economic times, it says.

Immigrants tend to fill different jobs with different skills than native-born workers do, at all education levels.

Native-born workers, with better English-language skills, generally get the higher-paying jobs.

Immigrants and native-born workers usually complement each other rather than compete, he says.

What's more, immigrants foster job-creation merely by spending what they earn in their new community.

And immigrants are 30% more likely than the native-born to start their own businesses, according to the AIC.

The Sault could use an injection of entrepreneurial spirit.

But there are immigrants and then there are immigrants.

Some bring skills, education and financial resources that make them immediate assets to their new communities.

Sault Ste. Marie boasts some fairly recent immigrants who have made huge contributions.

The most visible immigrants today, however, are refugees such as those fleeing Syria. These are people whose need for Canada might exceed the contribution they can make, at least right away. That and the fact that they might bring cultural and religious values that seem to conflict with those of the Sault mainstream has some people scared.

All the more reason the city should have a policy and a plan. Instead of rejecting Romano's committee, maybe these Saulters of immigration and refugees should be embracing it because it gives those who are already here a measure of control.



Local Perspective
TOM MILLS

Romano told council he has lined up "a motivated group and we're well-equipped to move forward."

Factor in unique challenges of immigration and have a strategy to attract people who will contribute to the community that to let things happen and complain about them later.

Canadians and Sanitians in particular, pride ourselves in being compassionate. The current refugee situation calls for us to put our principles into action. Having a plan in place would boost the odds that newcomers would be productive and part of the community as quickly as possible.

It's ironic that all of us who have mis-given about immigration come from immigrant stock. Look back far enough in history and even the First Nations who were here or the line of European contact once came from somewhere else.

Many who consider the Sault to be their home have their lineage to ethnic or national groups that were treated as second-class citizens, reduced to a necessary evil by those who lived here before them.

That's not a good model to follow.

Sure, not all of our ancestors were political refugees and a few were well-loved where they came from.

But all left someplace worse with the hope of finding someplace better. The Sault should continue to be that some place better.

Email tom.mills@starmedia.ca to contact Tom Mills.



SAULT STAR FILE PHOTO
Ross Romano, ward six councillor for the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS OF ALGOMA POWER INC.

Algoma Power Inc. has applied to adjust the rates it charges for the distribution of electricity.

Learn more.

Algoma Power Inc. has applied to the Ontario Energy Board to change its rates in a way that would decrease the amount it charges for distributing electricity by approximately \$1.39 for a typical residential customer that uses 800kWh of electricity per month. The changes would take place starting on January 1, 2016. Other customers, including businesses, may be affected as well.

The requested rate change includes an adjustment using a formula which is tied to inflation and other factors intended to promote efficiency.

As required by the Ontario Energy Board, Algoma Power's application also includes the transition to a new residential rate structure for only the residential customers in the R1 class. Current residential electricity distribution rates are based on a combination of fixed and variable charges. Beginning in 2016, all electricity distributors are required to structure residential rates so that all the costs to distribution service are collected through a fixed monthly charge. As the Ontario Energy Board discusses in its policy paper (ontarioenergyboard.ca/ratesdesign), this is a fairer and more transparent way to recover costs related to power distribution.

This policy applies only to the cost of distributing electricity. It does not affect the cost of the electricity itself, or other electricity-related charges, which together make up most of a typical customer's bill and will continue to be charged based on how much electricity a customer uses.

The change in rate design will not change the total amount of money your electricity distributor recovers from its residential customers. In fact, most residential customers in Ontario will see little change on their bill after the new policy is fully implemented. The impact of this change on your bill will depend on the amount of electricity you use, but the changes are being made over a longer period than the four-year default transition period established in the Ontario Energy Board's policy to mitigate the impact of any increases.

THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will hold a public hearing to consider Algoma Power's request. We will determine whether Algoma Power has used the applicable models and formulas as required by the OEB and whether to approve Algoma Power's proposal for applying the change in rate design. At the end of this hearing, the OEB will decide on the appropriate rate change.

The OEB is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a financially viable and efficient energy sector that provides you with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

BE INFORMED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

You have the right to information regarding this application and to be involved in the process:

- You can review Algoma Power's application on the OEB's website now.
- You can file a letter with your comments, which will be considered during the hearing.
- You can become an active participant (called an intervenor). Apply no later than **September 25, 2015** or the hearing will go ahead without you and you will not receive any further notice of the proceeding.
- At the end of the process, you can review the OEB's decision and its reasons on our website.

The OEB intends to consider cost awards in this proceeding that are in accordance with the *Practical Direction on Cost Awards* and are in relation to Algoma Power's process for applying the change in rate design.

CITY INFORMATION
The Corporation Of The City Of Sault Ste. Marie

Watch City Council live on Stan TV Cable 10 and Local 2 on
Council info available at SaultSteMarie.ca/CityCouncil

MUNICIPAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE HERITAGE AWARD

Nominations for the 2015 Municipal Heritage Committee Heritage Award are now being accepted by the Sault Ste. Marie Municipal Heritage Committee. This award recognizes individuals, groups or community organizations for outstanding contributions to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of the City's heritage resources as defined in the City's Cultural Policy.

Awards may be given for the following contributions:

- A heritage property that has been maintained or that is an enhancement to a neighbourhood or the community.
- An addition to a historic property or new construction (infill) that is sensitive to the historic context of the property of a neighbourhood or the community.
- Restoration or adaptive reuse project.
- Other contributions to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of heritage resources.

The heritage activity must directly relate to the community of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. An individual, group or community organization may make one nomination each year. The nomination package is available online at saullterheritage.ca and at the Community Services Department - Level 2, Civic Centre, 99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6.

Completed nomination forms should be submitted to the Municipal Heritage Committee, c/o Virginia McLellan, Manager of Recreation and Culture, Level 2, Civic Centre, 99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6.

Deadline for nominations is 4:30 p.m., Friday, October 30, 2015.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION & PUBLIC MEETING

Date: October 13, 2015
Time: 5:30 PM
City Centre, Council Chambers
99 Foster Drive

181 OLD GARDEN RIVER ROAD
Application No. A-18-15-ZOP
Applicant: Ark Developments Inc.

PURPOSE: To rezone the subject property to allow the property to be used for parking, as well as access and egress, in conjunction with the commercial development constructed at 700 Second Line East.

PROPOSED CHANGE: The applicant, Ark Developments Inc. is seeking to rezone the subject property from "R2" (Single Detached Residential Zone) "C4S.340" (General Commercial Zone with a Special Exception). The effect of the rezoning is to merge the southerly portion of 181 Old Garden River Road and 700 Second Line East under a common zoning.

HAVE YOUR SAY
Input on the proposed application is welcome and encouraged. You can provide input by speaking at the public meeting or by making a written submission.

MORE INFORMATION:
The application may be reviewed in the Planning Division, Level 5, Civic Centre, 99 Foster Drive. The Report of the Planning Division will be available for review on Friday, October 9, 2015, during regular office hours in the Planning Division. Inquiries should be directed to Steve Turco, Planner, Planning Division, at 705-759-5279 or stturo@cityssm.on.ca. Please refer to the application file number.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION
To provide input in writing or request notice if the proposed application is approved, please submit a letter to Steve Turco, Planner, Planning Division, 99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5X6, or email stturo@cityssm.on.ca with your name, address and application file number on or before **Tuesday, October 13, 2015**. If you wish to be notified of the Council of the City of Sault Ste. Marie decision to adopt or refuse the approval of an application, you must make a written request to the Planning Division Planner at the address noted above.

LEGAL NOTICE CONCERNING YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL
Pursuant to Section 54 of the Planning Act, 1990
If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the City of Sault Ste. Marie before the By-Law is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Council of the City of Sault Ste. Marie to the Ontario Municipal Board. If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting, or make written submissions to the City of Sault Ste. Marie before the By-Law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Municipal Board unless, in the opinion of the Board, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

PO Box 589, 99 Foster Drive, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5N1
705-759-2500 • SaultSteMarie.ca • @CitySSM



Planning Application: A-18-15-ZOP