

# ON NEWS

YOUR ONTARIO NORTHLAND EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



## Diesel Shop Recognition

“They come into work and get the job done. Every day.” says Kevin Yank, Supervisor of Motive Power Internal Mechanical, speaking about the entire team in the North Bay Diesel Shop.

Diesel Shop employees include mechanics, fabricators, electricians, engine attendants, pipe fitters, and cleaners who focus on various jobs related to repairing and maintaining locomotives, while keeping the Diesel Shop operating.

Those jobs include general maintenance to overhauls and rebuilding locomotives from the ground up.

“You name it, we do it here,” says Yank. “We do wheel change out, full overhauls, car body repair and paint and inspections. The Diesel Shop does the metal and the body work for Ontario Northland’s fleet and external customers.”







“On any given day I could have 10-12 locomotives in the shop, and they all have a different task,” says Yank. “We’re constantly rotating through new locomotives and every day or every other day we could have two new ones that we need to start working on.”

Yank is a fourth-generation employee at Ontario Northland. His great grandfather was a track labourer, his grandfather worked in the shops and his father was a supervisor in the Wheel Shop, before moving over to a role at head office in North Bay.

“The railway is in my blood, I’ve seen this place evolve,” says Yank who says the Diesel Shop itself is currently evolving to become more modern and efficient. Windows, offices and a new heating and an air purifying system were installed and upgraded, while the women’s washroom and change room were expanded.

There is still work to be done, with plans to upgrade the men’s change room on the main floor for greater accessibility and a new sand tower.

“The way people speak about this place is so positive and there is always so much going on,” Yank says. “I want to recognize the quality workmanship and the extra effort the employees at the Diesel Shop put in every day. We are like a family here, we look out for each other, and it shows in the quality of our work and in how efficiently we work without injuries.”



## ON VIEWS

Scan this QR code for online photo galleries and more.







## GOing home! GO Transit Cars Revitalized.

In 2019, Ontario Northland was tasked with modernizing 15 bi-level GO Transit cab cars. The objective was ambitious: a comprehensive overhaul including new seating, side sill replacements, enhanced electrical components, and upgraded HVAC and door systems.

In April 2024, the team at Ontario Northland's Remanufacturing and Repair Centre (RRC) celebrated the successful completion of this project.

In 2022, Ontario Northland was awarded a second contract to refurbish an additional 56 bi-level coach cars, which demanded meticulous attention to detail, with each coach undergoing a thorough overhaul to meet modern standards of comfort and safety.

On March 22, 2024, we captured photos as Ontario Northland's Car Shop marked a milestone as employees bid farewell to not one but

TWO GO Transit cars on the same day. The first coach from the 56-car bi-level coach car project and the 13th car from the 15-cab car project embarked on their journey back to Metrolinx in Toronto for GO train service.

Congratulations to the entire team at RRC! The success of these projects is a testament to the team's commitment to excellence and the dedication of their workforce.





## Recruitment Feature: Working Together to Attract Talent

Over the past few years, one of our agency's biggest challenges has been recruiting to support our company's growth. The Human Resources and Marketing and Communications departments have been working together to address this challenge. Our recruitment team has been attending job fairs at high schools, colleges, universities, and communities across the province.

And many of you have also seen "The Company You Keep" advertising campaign, which has been instrumental in highlighting Ontario Northland as a desirable employer.

Given the increasingly competitive job market, these teams will continue to be very busy, ensuring we attract and retain the best talent to support our ongoing growth.



Our team coordinated a "Career Day" at a recent Battalion playoff game. Special thanks to father/daughter duo Tony Costello and Tanya Forget dropped the puck for the ceremonial face off!

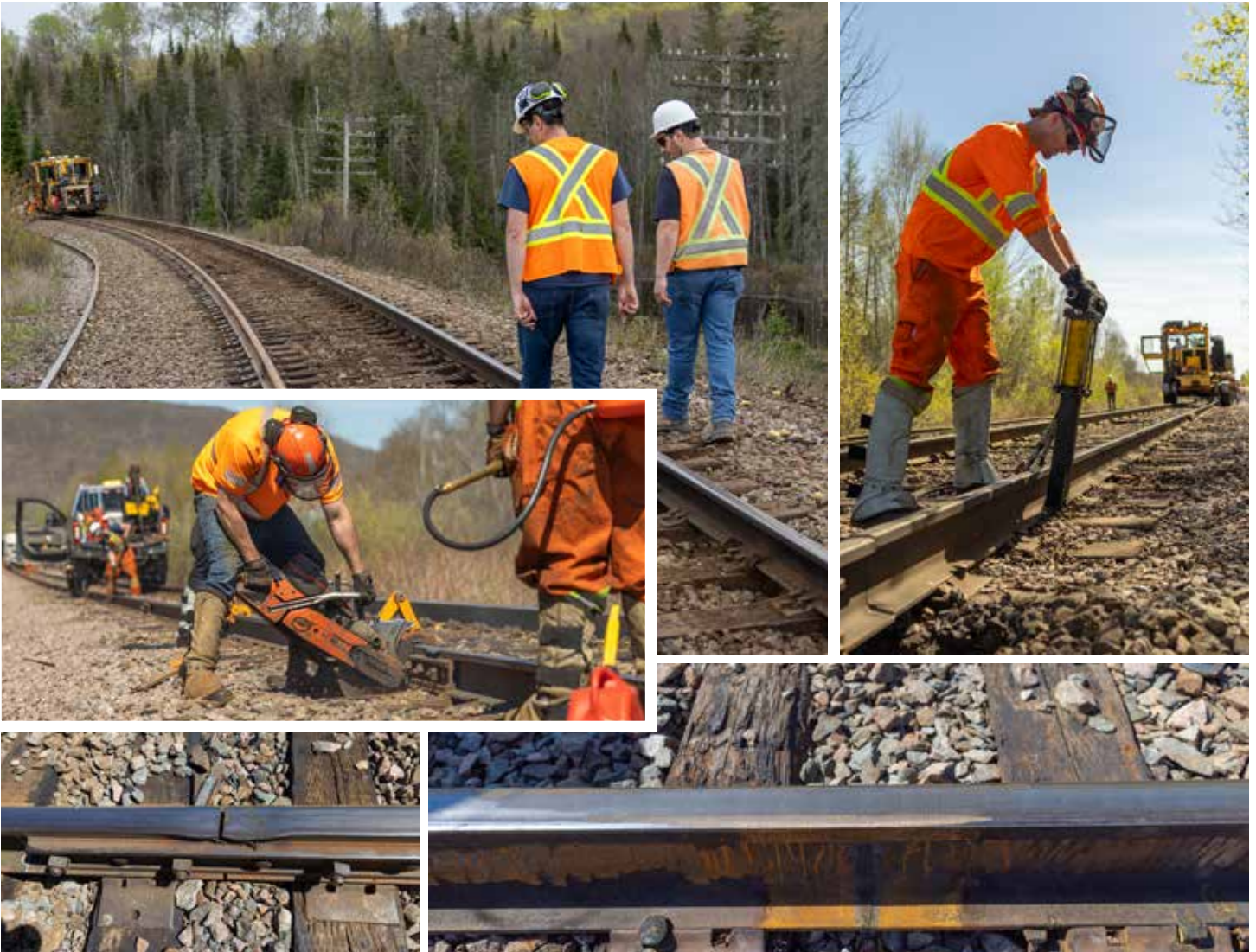
### What should new employees know about Ontario Northland?



Here are three tips:

- 1. Employees get a discount in the promo store:**  
Enter your work location in the "Order special instructions" box and on the checkout page, select the pickup option and use discount code **EMPLOYEE25**.
- 2. The Claimsecure app makes access to benefits easy:**  
Download the Claimsecure app to submit your claims, track your reimbursement status and manage your benefits with ease.
- 3. Travel pass:**  
Employees get to travel for free on Ontario Northland bus and rail services after six months of service, while spouses and dependents are eligible for free rail service and 50% off bus fare. Refer to the Employee Pass Policy on MyPolicies for all the finer details.





## Northlander Update: A Focus on Joint Elimination

Multiple workstreams are currently in motion for the Northlander program. Environmental assessments are underway for the construction of the new station being built in Timmins, assessments for grade crossing work has started and joint elimination is underway.

As part of the construction projects planned for this summer and the next, joint elimination is a pivotal initiative aimed at enhancing rail infrastructure. This project will be carried out by Remcan Ltd. and will focus on eliminating

rail joints from North Bay to Cochrane to enhance safety measures, reduce maintenance requirements, mitigate risks, and ultimately provide future Northlander passengers with a smoother and quieter travel experience. Integrating joint elimination into the next two construction seasons, Ontario Northland is ensuring a coordinated approach to upgrading our rail systems.

This paves the way for improved efficiency and reliability, bringing the return of the Northlander one step closer!



## Recognition and Awards Program Winners



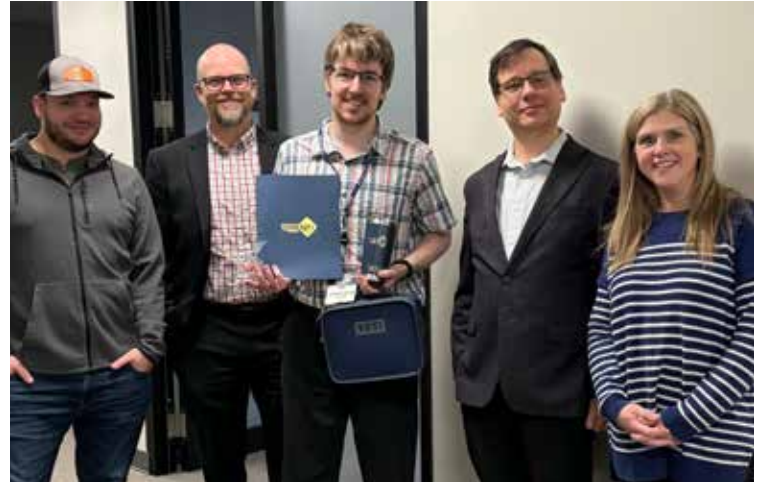
### **Congratulations to our recent Work Safe Recognition and Awards Program winners.**

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



**Jason Falldien**, Conductor  
Rail Transportation

While on duty aboard the passenger train, Jason dealt with an emergency. One of the passengers was having multiple seizures and he quickly jumped into action, helping them for an hour and a half. Jason made sure everything was coordinated smoothly by guiding the assistant conductors and a security guard on managing the train's movement, all while keeping in constant communication with RTC, ensuring they were up to speed on the critical details. His level of professionalism, empathy, and safety-first approach contributed to a positive outcome. Jason was widely recognized by his peers and other passengers as an unwavering leader in an unpredictable circumstance.



**Devin Rotondo**, Programmer Analyst  
Information Technology Services

Devin's exceptional ITS knowledge and commitment to the Intelx Enhancement project played a crucial role in promoting a safer Ontario Northland. Devin helped implement advanced security measures and robust data management protocols, ensuring the integrity and confidentiality of this critical application. His dedication to the Intelx Enhancement project drives the continuous improvement of safety protocols and procedures, resulting in enhanced safety measures for all employees.

## Online Nomination Form



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







**Wyatt Cross**, Engineer  
Rail Transportation

While working as a Locomotive Engineer, Wyatt noticed that a bulkhead car had rolled off the rip track towards the yard and quickly responded by applying the handbrake. This quick action prevented the car from running through a switch. In addition to this notable incident, Wyatt also enhanced safety through his outstanding work ethic and by reporting hazards.



**Clayton Sisco**, Engineer  
Rail Transportation

Clayton was awarded a Safety Star Award for his diligence as a Locomotive Engineer. While working, he took the time to check the switch targets, ensuring the proper route for his movement. Clayton recognized that the switch was damaged and, by taking the time to stop and assess, he avoided the damaged switch. This was significant as it prevented a potential incident.



**Dave Bond**, Conductor/Locomotive Engineer Trainer  
& **Craig Smith**, Engineer  
Rail Transportation

While traveling to Moosonee, this duo encountered a stretch of track that they suspected was damaged due to how it felt as they passed over it. Knowing that there were no infrastructure employees in the area and that a passenger train would soon be travelling on the same stretch of track, Dave and Craig decided to back up and investigate, discovering that the track was indeed severely damaged. Working with the RTC, they stopped and held all train movement within the area until the Rail Infrastructure group could repair the track. By taking the time to stop and assess, they helped to avoid what could have been a major rail incident involving a passenger train.





# Enterprise Resource Management: What is it? What does it mean for you?

## What is Enterprise Resource Management?

Ontario Northland uses many different systems for day-to-day operations, like the AS400 for inventory, Infinium for Finance, OOSS for time tracking, and manual excel files. We are now in the process of pulling all this information into one, centralized system called an “Enterprise Resource Planning” (ERP) system.

All our organization’s essential information, from inventory and payroll to customer orders and financial records, will live in a centralized hub. Having information in one centralized system will help us as we grow by providing easier access to more information and modern technologies to support work. Many of the technologies and systems we currently use are no longer being supported or require complex custom integrations to meet our needs.

## What does it mean for employees?

Upgrading our ERP system means eventually saying goodbye to outdated processes and legacy systems, evolving as we discover ways to become more efficient.

The team is now in the procurement phase of finding an ERP system that meets Ontario Northland’s needs. Employees can expect to learn more about how this will impact them in their roles as the project progresses.







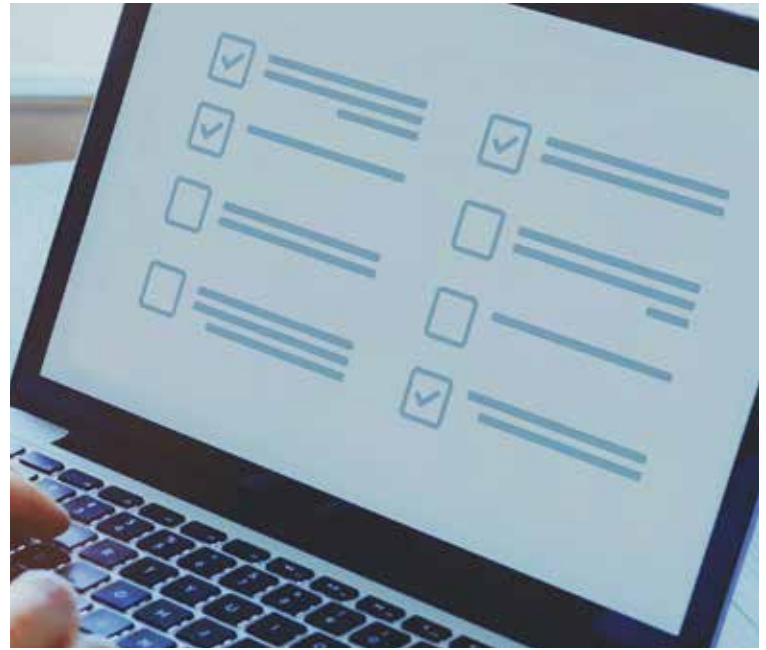
## Your Voice Matters: Insights from the ON Voice Survey

This past December, Ontario Northland conducted its ON Voice survey as part of our broader initiative to continuously improve.

This survey helps us understand which factors most influence employee engagement, allowing us to prioritize initiatives that will have the greatest impact and identify key areas for improvement.

Employees had just over two weeks to provide their feedback, with a participation rate of 53%.

Here are some of the results!



### Strengths

**80%**  
FAVOURABLE

**“I am proud to work for this company.”**

**80%**  
FAVOURABLE

**“I feel safe while I’m at work.”**

**75%**  
FAVOURABLE

**“I am treated with respect at work.”**

**82%**  
FAVOURABLE

**“I have access to the resources I need to do my job effectively.”**

**72%**  
FAVOURABLE

**“I would recommend this company to people I know as a great place to work.”**

### Areas of Opportunity

#### **Employee Compensation and Benefits:**

Employees highlighted what industry standards and employee expectations need to be considered.

#### **Communication of Change:**

Employees seek more timely information about upcoming changes, suggesting a need for improved communication strategies.

#### **Accountability of Performance:**

Enhancing accountability and having regular performance discussions can strengthen our team’s effectiveness and satisfaction. Survey results indicate we can do better in this area.

#### **Training and Staffing:**

Feedback calls for better training programs and adequate staffing levels to support our operations and employee development.

The ON Voice survey will continue to be distributed every other year, ensuring we keep a pulse on employee sentiments and make necessary adjustments to our strategies. By listening to our employees and acting on their feedback, we remain committed to continuous improvement and maintaining a supportive and dynamic work environment.

Watch for the notification on the Dispatch App for the release date for the full report on the Junction.





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[merch.ontarionorthland.ca](http://merch.ontarionorthland.ca)

## Embracing Innovation: The Future of GIS Tools in Data Collection and Inspection



Geographic Information System Mapping (GIS) will play a significant role in modernizing Ontario Northland. GIS Specialist Vincent Konadu has spearheaded an initiative to improve field data collection and inspections within the Rail Infrastructure department.

Those improvements include using digital forms in the field to collect data.

Before the introduction of GIS generated field maps and digital forms, managers and field inspectors relied heavily on paper-based forms for culvert inspections, track inspections, and environmental

inspections. This traditional approach came with several disadvantages, including devoting considerable time to cumbersome paperwork, while challenges persisted in maintaining comprehensive records.

The introduction of these innovative GIS tools marks a significant leap forward in our organization's field data collection and inspection processes which will streamline workflows and achieve greater efficiencies.





## **Bubble Wrap Redemption: Cochrane Coach Shop's Recycling Effort Supports Local Food Bank**

The recent installation of Wi-Fi on the Polar Bear Express created some additional waste for the Coach Shop in Cochrane.

Diana Crouch, Lead Hand Cleaner, helped to point out a perfect opportunity to reuse the excess waste and support the community in the process.

The packaging from the equipment installation had accumulated about 18 extra-large garbage bags of bubble wrap alone. "I asked if anyone at our shop wanted any and, with no takers, I started thinking of local businesses that may want it for packing," Diana shared. "Our food bank accepts donations of all kinds, so I reached out to the manager who excitedly said she would take it all," says Crouch.

The food bank will reuse the bubble wrap to safely package the dishes and glassware they sell.

This story is a fitting example of how, with a little creative thinking, we can extend the life of our products and help divert waste from landfills.





# Shop Talk: Progress on the Englehart Expansion Project

The expansion project at our Englehart Shop is well underway! This monumental project will add an additional 90'x120' to the existing Maintenance of Way repair shop. Director of Rail Infrastructure Paul-Andre Lajeunesse says it is an exciting time for the team in Englehart, "Over the past few years, we've been looking at how we could give our Signals and Rail Mechanical employees more indoor space."

Lajeunesse adds, "This expansion will allow our work equipment, locomotives, and rail cars to be repaired and maintained more efficiently and will also house the new Signals Shop."

The construction will also see enhancements to the lunchroom, provide new locker spaces, a new training room for employees and new office spaces.

Richard MacPherson, Manager of Work Equipment Maintenance, says the tight knit group at the Work Equipment Shop is looking forward to the upgrades. "The expansion will allow us to work on our larger pieces of equipment indoors, protected from the elements"



## THE DISPATCH

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