

## Northwestern Ontario should make its own economic decisions: Canfield

The Thunder Bay District Municipal League's annual meeting and conference continued Saturday morning with a presentation from Kenora's Mayor David Canfield.

28

Oct 30, 2016 3:11 PM by: Nicole Dixon



THUNDER BAY – NOMA president hopes to see Northwestern Ontario gain control over their own economic decision making.

The Thunder Bay District Municipal League's annual meeting wrapped up Saturday morning with more presentations at the White Water Golf Club.

Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association president David Canfield believes Northwestern Ontario would benefit from having control over its own decision making in regard to its economy.

“Our province is so big and we’ve been professing this for years, the fact that we really need to have our own decision making in Northwestern Ontario,” Canfield said.

“It wouldn’t only be beneficial to Northwestern Ontario it would also be beneficial to the province as a whole, because we could make decisions that make sense.”

Canfield said it's an option that would benefit Northwestern Ontario, and in the end would benefit Toronto as well.

"We can make decisions that aren't made out of Toronto," he said.

"They think they know what's right and there's no way. There's a lot of smart people there but they've never walked the walk, so they really can't talk the talk."

Canfield added that Toronto has been making the decisions for years, but it's time for a change.

He believes the support they've received from the Northern Policy Institute proves it.

"It could be a regional style of government where we would be given certain powers," Canfield said.

"We're not talking about taking over Medicare or things like that, really the natural resources of our communities in our areas."

Northwestern Ontario would work in a way that would extract those natural resources, and manage them in a sustainable manner.

"These are things that we can make decisions on a lot faster, and we could set up our old environmental standards for Northwestern Ontario done by people who know what they are talking about."

Canfield said concerns from other communities across Northwestern Ontario stemmed from the economy, infrastructure and energy.

"We have the highest electricity rates in North America, and that's not something to be proud of," he said.

"The Premier has made some announcements in the last week or two that are going to somewhat help mitigate that, but the problem is you can't put a Band-Aid over a huge cut, it's not a Band-Aid solution."

Canfield said there needs to be some dramatic changes in the energy issues as far as the region is concerned.

The changes aren't going to occur over night, but Canfield said his colleagues understand and would like to be part of the solution.

"We are quite willing to come up with some solutions to help everybody, and make things work better not only for Northwestern Ontario, but for the province as a whole."