

# 'Hot-line' phone service established to answer students' questions

Graduating secondary school students across Ontario are counting the days until June 15. No, it's not the last day of school, but rather the first day students may expect to receive an offer of admission to an Ontario university.

A record high 55,000 applicants have submitted their choices for three universities and three programmes, almost ten per cent more than last year. The question is: will the province's universities have room to absorb them all?

The provincial government is providing supplementary funding to help accommodate the students, but it is debatable whether ad hoc financing alone can achieve the desired end, when system capacity is so close to full exploitation.

Some of the high school students' worries will be lightened, however, by the hot-line service that will again be offered by the Ontario Universities' Application Centre in Guelph.

Students who do not receive a satisfactory offer of admission from the three applications they made last fall will be able to call a toll-free number (1-800-265-8341) to enquire about other possibilities.

On the basis of data continuously updated by the universities, students will learn which institutions still have places available. If they are interested in a specific programme, the data base will provide information on which universities continue to have openings in that area.

Students will also be able to use their grade average as an indicator and learn which universities have places in which programmes for applicants with their specific level of qualifications.

In this way, the universities hope to keep the number of disappointed students to a minimum. With the large number of applicants and the high level of competi-

tion, however, many students will not receive offers from their first choice of universities and programme.

In many cases, the students' ability to take advantage of a place offered will depend on willingness to live away from home.

Although a portion of the increased number of students applying for entry to university can be attributed to the first group of "fast-trackers" who have taken advantage of curriculum reforms in high school to graduate in four years instead of five, it appears that the real upward pressure on numbers stems from a higher participation rate; that is, a greater percentage than ever before of high school students is seriously interested in university studies.

This represents a fundamental change in the attitudes of Ontario residents to post-secondary educa-

tion. There is good reason to think that this demand for places will continue to rise.

Will Ontario be able to afford to meet the educational aspirations of all these students, in terms of providing the necessary level of funding and adequate instructional equipment and space, but, more importantly, of providing an education which is both of high quality and attuned to the working world its graduates will enter?

These are difficult questions that urgently need to be answered. Ontario residents as well as the government and the universities have a stake in the answers.

In the meantime, this year's crop of graduates will be looking to their mailboxes. And if the mailboxes don't provide the answers they want, let's hope that the hot-line to Guelph does.

## Education program hopes to boost confidence and skill

The printing press brought about an astounding cataclysm of technological advance, and on a smaller scale a "revolution" is occurring in the field of education.

Through the use of modern equipment such as audio visual tapes, facsimile machines, telewriters and conventional computers, educational opportunities are now available to students in remote areas of Northwestern Ontario.

Interested students can now remain in their own supportive environments as these expanded scholastic options become avail-

able. The General Vocational Preparation Program being offered this fall by Confederation College is one such option. Students will improve their basic scholastic skills and, at the same time, boost their confidence levels as a result.

these two factors have long been recognized as essential ingredients for success in mainstream education, should that be the student's educational goal.

This information was shared last month by participants at the "Native Priorities for Distance Education Workshop" held at Confederation College in Thunder Bay. Keynote speakers for this event were: Lindy Loutitt, Deputy See "Needs" on page 14



By Norm Gladish  
MNR Fire Prevention Technician

Hot and dry conditions continue to plague northwestern Ontario. Coupled with recent heavy lightning activity, a number of small fires have occurred west of Terrace Bay District.

For example, June 2 saw 70 new fires start in a 24-hour period, 62 of which were caused by lightning. As of June 5, 30 new fires were burning in Ontario. 15 of these were in the Northwest and only three in our region.

This pattern of fire distribution was expected due to drought conditions in the northwestern part of Ontario and western Canada in general. Lake Nipigon appears to be the easterly boundary, as only four of the total 735 fires in Ontario to date have occurred in Terrace Bay District.

However, forests here are rapidly drying after several days of hot, dry weather. Due to the large number of new fires occurring every day, the province is also facing a depleted supply of available manpower and equipment to fight forest fires. For these reasons, the North Central Region was declared a Restricted Fire Zone. When this happens, all burning permits are cancelled and campfires are not allowed.

Further prevention measures included the modification of Forest Operations. This entails a restriction on work during the hottest and windiest time of day, from noon until 6.00 pm. This may be followed by the more severe measure of total closure of harvesting operations.

This final step is not taken lightly by the MNR. It is appreciated that small, independent owner/operators cannot economically survive extended periods of closure. Neither do larger operations contribute to the economy when forced to be inactive. Therefore, serious consideration is made before either modified hours or closure is deemed necessary.

A number of factors contribute to determine the cut-off point.

Firstly, the fire season is divided into spring and summer periods of risk. This recognizes the fact that more moisture is held in the forest in summer after deciduous trees have leafed out and the softwoods have begun new growth.

Before this happens, spring can be the driest, most dangerous period for forest fires. This has been shown by the numerous fires already handled this year. Because of greater moisture content in the summer, it takes a longer period of drying to cause the fire danger to climb.

Communication links by telephone or radio between an operator and the MNR are other deciding factors. The reason for this is that the first 20 to 30 minutes after a fire has started are critical as to whether it is readily contained or not. Without instant communication, it could be hours before a fire report is received and acted upon with crew arrival at the site.

If an operator has workers who are trained in forest fire fighting techniques and has equipment available for their use, they may be able to contain a fire without immediate help.

Therefore, operators with good communications and trained personnel may be given extended operator status, which allows them to continue work when others have already been required to shut down.

Other considerations are: the type of equipment used; rubber-wheeled skidders or steel tracked harvesters and the condition of the site being worked; dry and rocky versus low and wet; etc.,.

When current and forecasted weather conditions are added to the list, Forest Operations Managers at the MNR have the capability to decide where and when woodlands operations should be discontinued.

Anytime a Restricted Fire Zone or Modified Forest Operation is in effect, woodlands workers and the general public should be extremely cautious. These restrictive measures are taken only when the need is absolute. They are effective only with full cooperation.

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