

# Daily News - June 9

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Good Morning All,

Here's what's making news for the Minister today:

## MINISTER'S NEWS

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- Boreal launches local food project – Sudbury Star
- Downtown BIA wants to see RFP for arena management – Sudbury Star

- In joint letter, GSDC chair, proponent push for downtown Synergy Centre project – Sudbury.com
- When it comes to an event centre, the answer is in the data – Sudbury.com

## MINISTER'S NEWS

TorontoSun.com: [Why we support the Fair Hydro Act](#) (Top Stories – Editorial)

Unlike Progressive Conservative Leader Patrick Brown and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, we support Premier Kathleen's Wynne's so-called Fair Hydro Act for one reason only. That is that Ontarians need help paying for their outrageous electricity bills right now. Senior citizens having to choose between food and electricity is unacceptable. Businesses having to close because of high electricity bills is unacceptable. Ontarians need immediate help on an emergency basis and we are not going to argue against giving it to them. What we are going to do, heading into next year's provincial election, is to remind you why the Liberals are the last political party anyone should trust to fix the mess they've made of the electricity file. When the Liberals say that unlike them, the opposition parties have no plan to address skyrocketing hydro rates, they sound like a child who, having murdered his parents, asks the court for mercy because he's an orphan. It was the Liberals who created the electricity crisis by blundering into so-called renewable energy, without a clue as to what they were doing. Everything they've touched on this file — from their Green Energy Act, to the FIT contracts, to the Samsung deal, to smart meters, to the cancelled gas plants that were supposed to back up unreliable and absurdly expensive wind and solar power — has turned into a disaster. None of which was necessary to replace coal-fired electricity, which the Liberals actually did with nuclear power and natural gas. All you have to do is read the annual reports of Ontario's auditor general to understand the incredibly reckless way the Liberals have managed the hydro system. So much so that to give people emergency relief, the Liberals have simply kicked the crisis down the road. This by giving Ontarians a temporary break on their hydro bills that could cost up to \$93 billion, according to Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer, for \$24 billion of rate relief. Given this, the idea that the Liberals are the best qualified party to clean up the mess they've made following next June's election is laughable. But for now, Ontarians should have no qualms about accepting the emergency aid the Liberals are offering, before kicking them to the curb next year.

TheStar.com: [New legislation ensures workers can take at least 10 sick days a year without a doctor's note](#) (Top Stories – Queen's Park)

Sick notes for the boss could soon be a thing of the past in Ontario. Employers will be banned from asking staff for a doctor's note if they take 10 or fewer days a year under legislation proposed to take effect next January. The measure, part of the workplace reform law Premier Kathleen Wynne's administration has put forward, means fewer wasted appointments for doctors and nurse practitioners, allowing workers to stay home and get well instead of spreading their germs around, Health Minister Eric Hoskins said Thursday. "This becomes one less thing to worry about when you're not feeling well," Hoskins, a family physician, told a news conference at Women's College Hospital. Labour Minister Kevin Flynn, who is shepherding the labour reforms that include a \$15 minimum wage by 2019, said the law will ensure all workers are entitled to at least 10 personal emergency leave days annually, two of which must be paid. Reasons for personal emergency leave can include illness or taking care of sick family members along with domestic or sexual violence or the threat of it. Flynn said "most employers" no longer require sick notes, but the ban will force others in line with more modern employment practices. As well, it will take precedence over any sick note terms in collective agreements, Flynn added. Dr. Ruth Heisey, chief of family medicine at Women's College, applauded the move, saying it makes "good common sense" from a public health perspective. People will be more likely to take sick days and not drag themselves into work where they could infect colleagues, leading to more absenteeism on the job, and doctors can concentrate on patients who need medical care instead of a note. Hoskins said some patients were required to pay for doctor's notes because they are not covered under provincial health insurance. Employers will, however, be entitled to ask for sick notes if a worker misses more than 10 days a year for illnesses, he added, noting

the "vast majority" of Ontarians don't take that many sick days. In many cases, patients will turn up at doctor's offices seeking sick notes once they're feeling better and ready to return to work, which means the missives have "little if any validity," because physicians write them based on trust in their patients, Hoskins said.

CBC.ca: [Energy Minister defends Fair Hydro Plan after Hydro One applies for rate boost](#) (Top Stories – Sudbury News)

Ontario Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault says Hydro One customers shouldn't be concerned about a rate increase any time soon. Earlier this week, Hydro One applied to the Ontario Energy Board for an increase in its distribution rates. This could cause customers to pay an increase of \$2 per month over the next five years. But Thibeault says the application does not necessarily mean rates will rise. "It's an application, it's not a rate increase," says Thibeault. "It's only a decrease — we passed the Fair Hydro Plan. Especially for Hydro One customers, they're going to see a 40 to 50 per cent reduction." Thibeault says the application still has to be reviewed by the Ontario Energy Board. "If you look at the OEB's decisions in the past, they've been very clear that they're always going to keep the interest of rate payers first and foremost, and they've denied applications." A public hearing on the matter will take place, but a date or location has not been announced. Intervenors have until June 14 to make a request to appear at the hearing.

## LOCAL NEWS

CBC.ca: [Reducing hospital trips: Ontario government to overhaul ambulance system](#) (Top Stories – Sudbury News)

Fewer patients in Ontario could end up in hospital next year when they call 911 for medical care. The provincial government is planning to revamp the Ambulance Act in a move that would see more patients treated on-scene, and referred to primary or community care instead of the hospital — if deemed appropriate. The idea behind the proposed changes is to reduce overcrowding and wait times at emergency departments. Nickel Belt MPP France Gelinis, who is the province's NDP health critic, told CBC she thinks the government is moving in the right direction, but she wants to make sure people are not discouraged from accessing urgent medical treatment. "If this becomes a barrier, where people won't feel that it's worth calling 911 because an ambulance won't come, then I have serious problems with that," Gelinis said. "I don't want this to be a barrier to access. I don't want this to be a barrier to care." Gelinis said she will be following up with the government to get more information before modifications to the ambulance system start in March 2018. Fred Hahn, the president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in Ontario, is concerned the strategy could lead to paramedic and fire services frequently responding to medical 911 calls together. "This is actually not a solution, and it could in fact create more problems," Hahn said. "Would it be fine to just send a paramedic who happened to arrive on a fire truck, who gave you a few tablets and left you at home? No, no, no. People expect and should expect the kind of medical supports that we've had for generations in this province." Hahn said he would rather see more funding go towards paramedicine. The provincial government claims only one per cent of patients who were transported by land or air ambulance in 2015 were critically ill, and needed emergency transportation.

SooToday.com: ['We are not Aboriginal Canadians. We are Anishinabek'](#) (Local News – News Release)

This year, Canada will celebrate 150 years since the formation of the Canadian state. There is a long history prior to and since this time with First Nations across Turtle Island. This history cannot and should not be forgotten. However, it should not impede finding a new path forward. The Anishinabek Nation Government continues to extend its invitation to renew alliances and partnerships with the newcomers to our lands, represented by the Government of Canada. The Anishinabek Nation expects that meaningful co-existence between the Government of Canada and the Anishinabek Nation must be based on mutual

recognition, mutual respect, sharing, and mutual responsibility. Without the contributions of First Nations during the War of 1812, there would be no celebration of 150 years. Assimilation policies and a blatant disregard for the human rights and the inherent rights of the Anishinaabe Peoples have caused unmentionable suffering, humiliation, and the deaths of countless people. Now is not the time for celebration, but a time for reflection, acknowledgement and a meaningful commitment to change these discriminatory policies and legislation. The settler governments have committed cultural genocide against our people. While there has been great upheaval in our Nation, we have endured and we will prevail. We did not disappear, become extinct, become assimilated, and we are not 'Aboriginal Canadians'. We are Anishinabek. Anishinabek First Nations will continue lead and build alliances and relationships with their neighbours through constructive dialogue and actions that support reconciliation and healing. For the next 150 years and beyond, we must have a collective and determined focus to elevate healthy relationships needed in this country between First Nations and Canadian citizens – let's build towards something to truly celebrate. We are all Treaty People.

**TimminsToday.com:** [Back road fire protection could cost \\$14M](#) (Top Stories – Main Page)

The issue of fire safety in rural residential areas was a hot topic this week at city hall. Councillor Joe Campbell pointed out two serious fires that have occurred in the Delnite area over the past few years that have caused catastrophic damage to homes. He said in both cases, the fires were reported by neighbours well after flames were established. "It's probably safe to say, that because of the lateness in reporting these fires, the resulting outcome may not have been much different even with hydrants," said Campbell. "However, due to the lack of hydrants, it was necessary to shuttle water from the Vipond pumping station to the Delnite property, a distance of 4.2 kilometres. Also water from a swimming pool on the property was used, as was the assistance of the Ministry of Natural Resources who ran hoses from a pond about one half kilometre from the blaze," he said regarding the most recent fire in the area on May 19. As councillor for the area, Campbell has previously mentioned the need for improved fire protection along the Gold Mine Road corridor which includes Delnite, Buffalo Ankerite, and sections of MacDonald Hill. "I realize this is an expensive item. We've heard figures in the \$12 to \$14 million dollar range. Obviously this is not going to be able to be done in a period of a year, or two years, or three years, or maybe even four years," he said. Campbell said that there are at least 61 residences who have a vested interest in the matter, and didn't care for the notion that it is a 'rural area'. "This is not a cottage area. Along Gold Mine Road there are some very expensive houses that pay some very expensive taxes," he said, adding that the majority of the homes in the Delnite area have been paying taxes to the city for 42 years since amalgamation, and that the homes pay additional funds for insurance due to the lack of pressurized fire hydrants in the area. Campbell said he asked if a report on a list of concerns and logistical possibilities could be ready by September but was advised by city CAO Dave Landers that it was unrealistic given the staff's current workload. Ultimately, he wants to see a multi-year plan put together which would tackle the fire safety issue head on.

**TBNewsWatch.ca:** [Attorney general announces changes for justice system](#) (Top Stories – Main Page)

Ontario's Attorney General was in Kenora this Wednesday morning to announce the province's plan to speed up and provide fairer justice in the Northwest. Yasir Naqvi said the province will be rolling out several initiatives aimed at providing more legal resources in the region. The province will hire two new assistant Crown attorneys in Kenora, along with two extra lawyers to oversee the bail process in that community. The province also announced it will provide 20 bail beds in Thunder Bay for people awaiting trial, who require enhanced supervision in the community. There will also be improvements in bail verification in Thunder Bay and other parts of the region. "We have been working closely with Indigenous friendship centres, Grand Council Treaty 3, Nishnawbe Aski legal services and First Nation communities to develop a unique Indigenous bail verification program across northern Ontario," Naqvi said during the announcement. "These programs are built to provide services for Indigenous peoples by incorporating culturally appropriate programming, treaty and case management, so they can remain in their community

while awaiting trial.” Naqvi says these initiatives were made possible through cooperation with several indigenous groups.

## SUDBURY ISSUES

### **Labour:** [Health care workers push for increased hospital funding at Sudbury rally](#)

Health care workers from hospitals and long-term care facilities across Ontario gathered in Sudbury for a rally to push for an increase in hospital funding. The Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions has been lobbying for increased funding for some time. The groups say overall health-care funding will decline as a percentage of total program spending by the province in 2017. According to CUPE and OCHU, total program spending is budgeted to increase 4.9 per cent while health care funding is budgeted to increase just 2.9 per cent. Program spending excluding health care is budgeted to increase from \$71.3 billion to \$75.7 billion – a 6.2 per cent increase. Health care falls a full 3.2 per cent behind the overall program spending increase of other ministries. Funding cuts have equalled 30 per cent over eight years while population has grown and aged. The death of a long-term care resident en route back from hospital after being denied admission was highlighted as an indication the province needs to do more. “This and other stories just like it are the result of the provincial Liberal government’s years of cuts to hospital funding and care,” said Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU) president Michael Hurley at the rally. “Many frail, sick patients and long-term care residents are not being given the care they deserve. The elderly are disproportionately affected. It’s a horrible legacy for a government to leave.” Hurley said the goal of the rallies is to attempt to influence the three main political parties when it comes to their platforms on health care. “Our rally is calling for all three parties to come to their senses on hospital funding and to stop the cuts,” said Hurley. The Sudbury rally is the fourth in a series of similar events that have already been held in Kingston, Hamilton and Kenora.

### **Agriculture:** [Boreal launches local food project](#)

College Boreal in Sudbury is one of four Ontario colleges launching pilot projects aimed at having more locally grown food available for students on campus. The pilot projects are part of a local food procurement initiative led by Mohawk College in Hamilton, with financial support from the government of Ontario, in partnership with the Greenbelt Fund. “Given the unique challenges our Northern sites face in regard to local food procurement, College Boreal is excited to be conducting a food origin audit as part of the local food procurement initiative led by Mohawk College,” Lyne Michaud, vice-president academic for College Boreal, said in a release. “We are grateful for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the contributions from the Greenbelt Fund, and hope our project helps us to identify ways to better support our regional economies, ensure our practices are more sustainable and improve our student experience. “We also have the expertise to help address some of our unique challenges and hope the audit identifies opportunities for future applied research projects.” The initiative is aimed at encouraging colleges to buy their food from local suppliers in their communities. The initiative would promote healthy food options for students, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing transportation, and support local food producers. Also taking part are Algonquin College in Ottawa, Fleming College in Peterborough and Humber College in Toronto. They will carry out pilot projects to replicate and validate local food initiatives used at Mohawk and to also develop new initiatives. Results from the pilot projects will be used to help build the province's first local food procurement framework for Ontario's 24 public colleges in early 2018. The framework will support colleges in improving the student experience, enhancing the sustainability of campus food services operations, and supporting local farmers and economies.

### **Culture and Tourism:** [Downtown BIA wants to see RFP for arena management](#)

Dario Zulich wants to take over operations of the Sudbury arena on Elgin Street, but Downtown Sudbury says no decisions should be made until a request for proposals is made public. “He’s going from tenant to landlord,” Jeff MacIntyre, chair of the BIA, said Thursday. “I don’t know any other circumstance where someone can walk in off the street and say I want to do it myself and not put it out to tender.” Shannon

Dowling, a communications officer with the city, said the agenda item going to council next week is simply an amendment to the current operating agreement. But MacIntyre is not convinced. "It's an extension beyond what they're doing right now," he said. "They're going from being the tenant of the event centre to the landlord. That's not going from renting the place three days to 50 days, that's going from having use of the space maybe 100 hours per year to managing the entire space." The other issue, MacIntyre said, is that the city will likely be issuing an RFP in late June for the new events centre. It would make sense to combine the two projects, so that whomever wins the tender takes over on Elgin Street on Jan. 1, 2018 and then assumes control of the larger events centre when it is ready. "This is just jumping the queue," MacIntyre said. "They're building a new one and as part of that build, they're saying we (the city) shouldn't be managing this. ... Why not just extend it?" The city does a lot of things well, MacIntyre said, but managing the Sudbury arena seems to be an ongoing challenge. The city has already said it would like to operate the new events centre as a public-private partnership, with a private firm taking over day-to-day operations. Zulich has said he would like to manage the new centre, if it ends up being on his property on The Kingsway. Currently, the arena operates at an annual deficit of about \$800,000. In a report headed to council next week, city staff recommends that Zulich, through a numbered company (1930178 Ontario Ltd.), which is essentially the Sudbury Wolves hockey club, take over operations of the Elgin Street barn. "The city's corporate strategic plan speaks to stimulating growth and increasing conferences, sports and events tourism," the report indicated. "A private venue manager has the potential for access to the entertainment industry and more effective event branding and marketing strategies, which could result in additional sports and events attracted to Greater Sudbury." Essentially, Zulich would manage the box office and operations of the arena, which includes hockey and non-hockey related events. He would assume control over expenses and revenues, and is asking the city to contribute financially.

#### **Culture and Tourism: [In joint letter, GSDC chair, proponent push for downtown Synergy Centre project](#)**

In a joint letter to the media, the chair of the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation (GSDC) and the chair of the Synergy Centre steering committee pushed the merits of having a convention centre downtown. The group behind the Synergy Centre has been relatively quiet for some time on the project. When Sudbury.com last reported on the project in April 2016, the proponents were putting forward a proposal for a \$65-million, 127,000-square-foot multi-use event centre that could be used to stage arts and culture events such as concerts, as well as be used as a convention centre. These numbers are supported by documentation on the Synergy Centre website. Paul Finley, the project manager, told Sudbury.com at the time that the financing plan called for federal and provincial funders to contribute \$15 million each with private sector contributions and sponsorships — like venue naming rights — amounting to \$15 million. On its website, the group said there would be no direct cost to taxpayers as the project would "be paid for through a combination of public and private investment." Finley said the city's exposure would be limited since no operating subsidies would be needed. Those behind the project argue Greater Sudbury, the North's largest city, is missing out on business tourist dollars because the city has no venue to host business conventions and the like, as well as arts and culture events. Using Sudbury Tourism figures from 2010, Synergy Centre proponents said the city hosted more than 90 events, attracting 200,000 participants who needed 25,000 hotel nights, which provided more than \$40 million in direct spending and job creation. But for business tourism, the city attracted just 101,903 people, only three per cent of those visitors were in the city for a convention. However, across Northern Ontario, business tourism for conventions, meetings and the like represents some 420,000 visitors, Greater Sudbury Synergy project said in a final report PDF on its website. Greater Sudbury only attracts 59,000 of those, or a market share of 14 per cent. "Our lack of ability to attract large conferences is impairing business opportunities for all hotels in this community right now," Finley said at the time. "There are conferences galore that would come here that could fill three or four or more hotels."

**Culture and Tourism: [When it comes to an event centre, the answer is in the data](#) (Editorial)**  
We'll know in a matter of weeks the recommended location for Greater Sudbury's new event centre. The

process has been long and it's been emotional. As a news organization, we haven't seen Nickel City citizens this engaged in municipal decision in years. It seems everyone you talk to has an opinion. While there have been, ostensibly, three locations on the table — Dario Zulich's True North Strong project on The Kingsway; Dalron's South End proposal; and downtown — really, the debate has centred on only two: downtown and The Kingsway. Northern Life/Sudbury.com sees merit in both proposals. Downtown is central. The project would allow for the upgrading of core infrastructure. It fits with the city's in-filling approach to development to minimize urban sprawl. And paired with the other proposed big projects, a downtown event centre would make the city's core an arts and entertainment hub that would be the envy of the North. But downtown poses construction challenges. Land would have to be expropriated. A big contingency fund would have to be built into the cost of the project because when you dig in the wet, swampy ground of the core, you never know what you'll find. Parking is an issue. While it may be true there are thousands of parking spaces downtown, they're not central or convenient — they're spread all over the place. On the other side, Zulich's stated goal is to create an entertainment district that would draw crowds year-round. He wants Greater Sudbury to be the sports and entertainment capital of Northern Ontario and his proposal for a massive development is ambitious. However, it could be argued the project contributes to sprawl. Since the city OK'd the big box development on The Kingsway, the retail sector has been steadily spreading east. True North Strong would capitalize on that, but also help spread it farther afield. Concerns the city has hit or is approaching peak retail (that is to say the total square footage of retail space within a community versus the population to make that space profitable) is real. If True North Strong draws businesses to it, many will be existing businesses picking up stakes and relocating, leaving blank holes in other areas of the city that may or may not be filled.

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