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## NEWS LOCAL

# Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne visiting Timmins

By Len Gillis

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Image: 9 of 10



Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, who is on a tour of Northern Ontario this week, arrived in Timmins Wednesday afternoon where she met well-wishers, took a tour of a new affordable housing development and held private meetings with indigenous leaders and Mayor Steve Black among others.

Wynne has visited several Northern Ontario communities this week. Her visit Wednesday afternoon followed visits to Kirkland Lake and Matachewan earlier in the day. On Tuesday she was in Sudbury. Among those travelling with the premier was Ottawa MPP Nathalie Des Rosier, as well as the premier's usual entourage of staff from her office.

Her arrival was similar to Wynne's first official visit back on June 21, 2013 when she arrived to celebrate the opening of the new location for the Timmins Native Friendship Centre (TNFC). It was the first place she stopped again when she arrived Wednesday.

TNFC president Gary Martin greeted the premier as she stepped out her vehicle, which drove in from the Timmins Victor M. Power airport. Timmins mayor Steve Black was also on hand to welcome the premier on behalf of the city.

The premier was given a quick tour of the friendship centre along with a visit to the day care centre, but media were not invited along. It was also explained that the premier was not taking any questions from the media during the her visit Wednesday.

Several minutes later, Wynne emerged from the main building to take a tour of the new housing development that is being built on the south side of the TNFC property. Just before the tour began, Wynne abruptly stopped and ran back to the vehicle carrying her luggage. She took off the high heels she was wearing and put on a pair of ankle boots.

She was guided around the building site by Timmins builder and developer Peter Beaucage Jr. who explained how the units were designed and being built.

Wynne spent several minutes touring one unit, going from room to room, asking questions and even commenting on the colour schemes, both inside and outside the building.

As the entourage was ready to move on, Wynne grabbed Beaucage and went on to see another unit. The pair then inspected the larger area of the yard surrounding the property.

Beaucage said he was more than pleased to show off the project and said the premier seemed pleased as well.

"She was very impressed with the design, the quality of the workmanship and the general concept of the development," said Beaucage. "It was pretty exciting. It's not everyday you get to meet the premier."

He added he felt a certain pride in being able to show off the work his company was carrying out. Beaucage said he was pleased to be able to develop the new 18-unit complex for the friendship centre clients and for the community as a whole.

At one point in the tour, Beaucage nudged Mayor Black, gave him his phone and posed with the premier for a photo as he wrapped his left arm over her shoulder. Wynne laughed and smiled at the gesture.

After touring the housing units, the entourage moved back inside to see more of the friendship centre and to hold some quick meetings with TNFC officials. Mayor Steve Black also met briefly with the Premier.

The premier and her entourage stayed in Timmins overnight. On Thursday, another event was scheduled to take place at the Timmins Family YMCA where Wynne is expected to make an announcement. No other details were revealed.

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