

Media Release

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North Central Enterprise Region Labour Market Strategy Unveiled *“The Region With the Labour Force Wins”*

(Prince Albert, SK): With the participation of stakeholders, employers and partners, the North Central Enterprise Region (NCER) has begun the implementation of a Labour Market Strategy to address the future labour shortage within the region.

“Now is the time to deal with the labour market shortage in order to seize future opportunities in our regional economy”, said North Central Enterprise Region CEO John Ondrusek.

Three core strategies are central to addressing labour market requirements in the region:

1. Increase the participation rates of underrepresented groups, notably Aboriginal people, in order to expand the size of the North Central Enterprise Region labour pool.
2. Increase the number of people moving to the region from other parts of Canada, again to increase the size of the labour force.
3. Attract new immigrants to the region.

“Any one of the above strategies on its own is very unlikely to produce the results, in terms of labour force growth, that will be needed to address the upcoming demand. We have launched a plan that addresses all three priorities,” stated Mr. Ondrusek.

The recommended Labour Market Strategy Work Plan includes the following components in order of planned launch date. Implementation of selected components will begin immediately.

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| 1. Communicate NCER Labour Market Study results | 10. Execute an internal marketing campaign |
| 2. Establish and track key benchmarks | 11. Increase immigration marketing |
| 3. Categorize employment availability information | 12. Address employment restraints |
| 4. Expand the expatriate marketing program | 13. Enhance immigrant support |
| 5. Expand succession planning | 14. Work toward policy changes that will impact labour force participation |
| 6. Establish a Labour Market Committee | 15. Increase school completion |
| 7. Increase Aboriginal labour force development | 16. Increase underrepresented worker groups’ participation |
| 8. Increase training capacity in the region | |
| 9. Implement an employer readiness program | |

“By initiating these strategies, the North Central area can successfully supply the labour force required, thereby enabling the economic growth that is coming to the region,” said John Ondrusek.

North Central Enterprise Region Regional Labour Market Strategy

The Issue:

The North Central region is susceptible to a significant labour shortage going forward. Despite the “cooling” of labour demand in the past year, the labour shortage issue is expected to return with a vengeance across most of Canada. As well, the shortage is expected to be general and widespread across virtually all sectors.

The Project:

This project addresses the issue of access to qualified labour in the region. Through analysis of statistical data in conjunction with primary data gathered through surveys, focus groups and interviews, the project team has recommended a series of specific strategies to deal with the upcoming, and most certain, labour shortage.

What the Statistical Analysis Told Us:

- An integrated strategic workplan that involves a wide range of stakeholders is required.
- While the pressure on labour force access has abated during the past year, according to the statistical analysis, it will return with greater force than what was seen in the past.
- The North Central region is more susceptible to labour supply pressures than other parts of the province due to: educational levels that are slightly below other parts of Saskatchewan, an expected rebound in resource activity and an historical pattern of the region not being able to supply the quantity of qualified labour expected by employers even at times when employment growth has stagnated.
- The continuation of historical patterns combined with expected economic growth will result in an annual labour demand of just over 1,000 new workforce entrants per year.

What the Focus Groups, Interviews and Discussions Told Us:

- The labour shortage is alive and well, albeit not nearly as acute as it was one to two years ago. This is causing some, but not all, employers to believe the worst is over. It isn't.
- Development of the regional workforce, provincial in-migration and international immigration must move ahead concurrently. Acting on only one will not be sufficient.
- Access to qualified labour is a deterrent to the growth of regional employers.
- The job market is seen by those attempting to move into it as limited in opportunity.
- There is a higher level of focus by employers on employee recruitment and retention but even that is not meeting their overall labour access requirements.
- The region must address the issue of access to qualified labour if it hopes to capture upcoming development opportunities.

The Net Result is as Follows:

- Annual labour force intake requirement of 1,014 qualified persons
- At current rates, if no action is taken, there will be a shortage of over 400 qualified workers per year in 2011, an annual gap almost 1,000 by 2016 and almost 1,600 per year by 2021.

What Needs to be Take Place::

1. Increase the workforce participation rates of underrepresented groups, particularly Aboriginal people.
2. Increase the number of people moving to the region from other parts of Canada.
3. Attract more immigrants from other countries to the region.

Note: All of the above strategies must be implemented concurrently. Any one on its own is insufficient.

What We Are Going to Do About it:

A detailed Workplan has been developed to enact the strategy – **(OVER)**

<u>NCER Labour Market Workplan</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Launch</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Primary Activity</u>
Communicate NCER Labour Study results	Convey labour shortage	Mar-10	Initial	Hold media conference, direct communications to large number of stakeholders
Establish key benchmarks	Ongoing measurement and trendlines	Apr-10	Annual	Gather benchmark information - vacancies, trends, labour availability
Categorization of SaskJobs information	Local opportunities assessment	Apr-10	Quarterly	Analyze the jobs available in the region and categorize by experience and skill requirements
Expatriate Marketing Program	Attract key skills	May-10	Annual relaunch	Through reaching expats, market the amenities and employment opportunities in the region
Succession planning	Turnover of businesses	May-10	Annual event	Provide advice to business owners on mechanisms for turning over their companies
Establish a Labour Market Committee	Labour data analysis Program planning	Jun-10	Ongoing, annual Ongoing semi-annual	1. Be the focal point for regular labour market analysis and updates 2. Be the focal point for the exchange of information between all organizations involved in labour market
Aboriginal labour force development	Greater participation	Sep-10	Ongoing	Increased training, workplace readiness
Increase training capacity in region	More training access	Sep-10	Ongoing	Increase availability of training seats
Implement Employer Readiness Program	Increase recruitment, retention success	Sep-10	Ongoing, as demanded	Provide training to employers that will make their workplace more accommodating to Aboriginal employees
Internal marketing campaign	Encourage employee retention in region	Sep-10	Ongoing, quarterly updates	Communicate categorized job market information to workplace aspirants
Immigration marketing	Address employer requirements	Sep-10	Ongoing, annual relaunch	Supply employment market and regional amenity information to companies and immigration consultants
Address employment restraints	Increased employment	Sep-10	Ongoing	Address issues that restrain employment in region
Immigrant support	Retention of immigrants	Oct-10	Ongoing	Provide cultural, network and support services to immigrants in the region
Policy changes labour force participation	Work entry transition	Jan-11	Annual	Lobby for legislative changes that ease transition from assistance to the workforce
Increased school completion	Workplace readiness	Jan-11	Ongoing	Increase the rate of high school completion
Underrepresented participation increased	Greater participation	Jan-11	Ongoing	Increased participation of underrepresented workers

For more information on the origin of the Workplan, see (OVER).

For a copy of the full report, check out the North Central Enterprise Region website at www.ncer.ca