

BUSINESS VIEW

SUMMER 2006

Saskatoon Falls Back on the Target to Create 8,000 Jobs Over the Next Year

- but the province gains long awaited job growth

The Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey released July 7, 2006 shows that Saskatoon business created 300 net new jobs in one month from May to June 2006. Extrapolated over 12 months, this number means that Saskatoon risks missing our Chamber's objective of a new job opportunity for every Saskatoon grad (8,000) annually. While Saskatoon can still meet this target, it has a long way to go. From June 2005 to June 2006 Saskatoon lost 1,200 jobs, so the last half of 2006 will need to see big job growth to achieve the Chamber target.

At the provincial level, the job numbers turned positive, but Saskatchewan still falls short of the numbers necessary to arrest and reverse job exodus. Too many Saskatchewan youth are still leaving the province to find opportunity elsewhere.

"Saskatchewan's year over year increase of 5,400 net new jobs is good news for 5,400 young people, but our province graduates 19,000 people from our high schools, post secondary institutions, and apprenticeship programs annually. Saskatchewan's job creation must reach these levels in order to arrest youth exodus in this province. It's clear more government policy changes are necessary," said Kent Smith-Windsor, Ex-

ecutive Director of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce.

With Saskatchewan's oil, gas, and mineral resource activity levels at or near all time highs, and agricultural commodities showing some improvement, Saskatchewan should be at the head of the pack in job creation in Canada.

"Saskatchewan's recent tax policy changes haven't fully worked through the business community yet, but these job level numbers are way short of what Saskatchewan needs to see," stated Coni Evans, Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce President.

"Even with the recent changes, the provincial government's policy mix doesn't yet set the stage to arrest youth exodus from this province", Smith-Windsor observed. *"The fact that Saskatchewan still isn't tax competitive even after all the tax changes just shows how out of line our previous provincial government policies were and still are. This lack of tax competitiveness is a major root cause of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan losing thousands and thousands of young people from this province over the years,"* Smith-Windsor concluded.

To become the economic powerhouse Sas-

katchewan is capable of being, many changes will be required at the provincial level. These changes include: changes to the province's business input sales tax policies; reduced education property capital tax levels; elimination of resource base capital taxes; SaskPower needs to adopt a productivity agenda in order to get commercial power rates in line with competing jurisdictions; resource royalty rates need further fine-tuning; personal income tax levels and exemption levels need adjustment; and a fair and equitable government approach to labour issues needs to be established. This province now has the fiscal room to start making these adjustments. *"When the province moves on these changes, Saskatchewan and Saskatoon youth exodus will stop,"* stated Evans. *"Some of those who left this province will even return, and the employment levels will improve for our First Nations people,"* Evans continued.

"Saskatchewan has to believe in itself, that it can grow, that it can prosper, and that it can be exciting and optimistic. Young people need to see that success and growth is supported and celebrated. That's the message our young people are yearning to hear.... Come on Saskatchewan let's get growing!" Evans concluded.



Photo Courtesy of Stuart Kasdorf Photographics Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S VIEW

It's hard to believe that we are a month into another summer in Saskatchewan. Everywhere I go people are still "busy". This is a great sign that our business community is still booming...even in the midst of summer!

September will soon be upon us, and with September comes a "fresh start" and the desire to conquer the world after a couple of months in relax mode.



Our motto lately at the Chamber has been "an opportunity for every young person." Logically, this should be very feasible given the many exciting things happening in our economy...however; it is readily apparent that we have not yet managed to find the so-called "magic bullet" that compels our youth to apply their optimism and capacities in Saskatchewan after graduation.

With a new school year approaching and an inflow of new students into Saskatoon, it is an opportune time to reflect upon how we harness our future graduates. To maximize our success, it is evident that our youth must establish a vested interest in our businesses and community before they graduate.

Establishing a vested interest must start as early as possible in the "education life-cycle." It is the job of each business to act in a self-serving manner to identify and establish a relationship with these future graduates. If you do not, you will be at a competitive disadvantage in retaining their services after graduation.

I encourage each of you to take some time over the rest of the summer to establish how you will fine tune your strategies to "funnel" youth into your business to satisfy your future employment needs.

This may be as simple as getting to the high school students and university students first thing in the fall and offering them a tour or a work placement to showcase the abundance of opportunities we possess in our business community.

Due to the vast information at their fingertips, today's youth acquire and retain more knowledge per day than any generation in history. Meet them in their domains – at the schools, in cyberspace and other popular venues. If you take the first step to establish an ongoing relationship with these future stars, they will embrace your organization with vigour so that upon graduation, they wouldn't think of working anywhere else.

So as you're sipping a cocktail on your chaise lounge, overlooking the lake...or as you are meandering on the golf course....I encourage you to take a few minutes to ponder how you are going to embrace the opportunity to recruit our best and brightest during their "education life-cycle." Remember, there is no concerted effort required here. Each member acting in a self-serving manner will accomplish our motto of "an opportunity for every young person."

Have a fantastic summer!!

Coni Evans, President

"Hub" Cities Drive Economic Growth Nation-Wide

-Saskatoon included on list

Canada should strategically focus municipal investments in its hub cities instead of spreading funds across the country on a per-capita basis, according to a new Conference Board report released recently.

"Supporting hub cities creates a win-win for all communities and regions across Canada," said Mario Lefebvre, Director, Metropolitan Outlook Service. "When the economically leading city in a province prospers, so does the rest of the province as a whole. Economic growth in a provincial or regional hub has a 'coat-tail effect' driving an even faster rate of growth in small communities within that province."

The study, Canada's Hub Cities: A Driving Force of the National Economy, identifies eight economically-leading large cities that function as 'hub cities' for their province—Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton, Regina and Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal—and a ninth city, Halifax, that functions as a hub city for the Atlantic provinces.

By tracing real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for each hub city and for other communities within a province or region between 1987 and 2004, the Conference Board's research found that smaller communities are closing the economic gap with—or converging to—their hub cities in every case. This means that when the economies of hub cities prosper, other cities and towns do so too, growing at an even faster pace than the hub cities themselves.

The research also found that convergence does not operate strongly among communities in different provinces (a major reason being limited labour mobility, an important inter-provincial trade barrier). This means that focusing investments in just a few hub cities will not be enough to boost economic growth nation-wide. A wider program of hub city investment would be more effective in achieving that aim.

"We are not saying that the nine hub cities, representing 46 per cent of Canada's population, would monopolize funding to municipalities," said Lefebvre. "We are saying they would receive a share of funding that corresponds to their individual needs. For example, public infrastructure deficits are often concentrated in the larger cities. Funds should be strategically focused to help big cities thrive, because doing so will produce benefits for all Canadians."

Source: The Conference Board of Canada Media Release, July 12, 2006

Manufacturing in Review

The shift in momentum to the West in Canada's manufacturing sector intensified in 2005, according to a new report by Statistics Canada.

Alberta and Saskatchewan led growth in shipments for the second consecutive year on the strength of dramatic gains in resource-based industries.

This report analyzes trends in manufacturing in 2005, focusing on shipments by industry and provinces. It also examines recent movements of other key variables such as employment, profits, capital investment, capacity utilization and productivity.

Increases in manufacturing shipments from the two Prairie provinces far exceeded growth in the industrial heartland of Central Canada.

Shipments rose only slightly in Ontario, due, in part, to a weaker auto sector. Factories in Quebec fared somewhat better as the aerospace industry continued to rebound and the province's petroleum refining and the chemical products industry made large gains.

Nationally, manufacturers closed the year with shipments hitting \$611.5 billion. This was a 3.0% gain from 2004 on the heels of the healthy 8.5% boost posted in the previous year. Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province to report a decline in shipments in 2005.

There were clear winners and losers in the manufacturing sector last year. Soaring industrial prices contributed to record high shipment values for most resource-based industries, such as petroleum products and primary metals.

On the other hand, wood products and clothing manufacturing, coupled with the all-important motor vehicle industry, posted sharply lower shipment activity in 2005.

Alberta led all provinces with a 12.0% jump in shipments. Although resource-based industries contributed to the gain, the province's well-diversified manufacturing sector improved substantially overall, thanks to its general economic boom.

Manufacturers in Saskatchewan came a close second with an 8.2% increase, also largely the result of resource-based industries.

Labour productivity in manufacturing increased 5.7% last year, but it came, in part, at the cost of jobs. On average, there were 85,000 fewer jobs in manufacturing in 2005 than there were a year earlier, equivalent to a 3.7% decline.

A 5.4% rebound in investment in plant and machinery contributed partly to this increased labour productivity.

Despite last year's gain in shipments, profits for manufacturing companies fell 6.9%, compared with exceptional growth of 34.8% in 2004.

Factories faced myriad challenges on several fronts last year. Not the least was the Canadian dollar, which, relative to the US dollar, sailed past a 14-year high in December, hurting exporters of Canadian manufactured goods in particular. These challenges continued during the first part of 2006.

Source: Statistics Canada, The Daily, June 28, 2006

Saskatoon Launches BizPaL:

New service provides one-stop access to information for businesses

The Honourable Maxime Bernier, the Federal Minister of Industry, recently welcomed the launch of BizPaL in Saskatoon. BizPaL is an innovative project designed to help Canadian businesses save time when accessing licensing and permit information from multiple levels of government. This unique partnership between federal, provincial, territorial, regional and municipal governments provides entrepreneurs and business people in Saskatoon with simplified access to the information they need to launch or grow their businesses.

"Canada's new government is proud to be a partner in the new BizPaL initiative — a service that will speed up the licensing and permit processes for businesses and entrepreneurs," said Minister Bernier. *"By working with the Province of Saskatchewan and the City of Saskatoon, we are launching a very useful technological initiative that will simplify government paperwork processes."*

"BizPaL is an important part of our new provincial regulatory and service enhancement initiative to make it easier for entrepreneurs to start and expand their business in Saskatchewan," said Eric Cline, Saskatchewan Minister of Industry and Resources. *"Over the next year, we will continue to partner with municipalities to expand the BizPaL service to more of the province."*

"We are excited to be able to offer BizPaL to the business people in Saskatoon," said Donald Atchison, Mayor of the City of Saskatoon. *"This innovation reinforces the city's philosophy that 'we're open for business.' Customer service is so important to us, and BizPaL is just another example of cutting through the red tape."*

"Streamlining permits and licences for entrepreneurs will reduce the complexity of the approval process and save entrepreneurs valuable time and money," said Marilyn Braun-Pollon, Saskatchewan Director, Canadian Federation of Independent Business. *"It is our hope that other Saskatchewan municipalities will soon adopt BizPaL."*

Business owners and entrepreneurs can access the service by visiting <http://www.bizpal.gov.sk.ca> and <http://www.saskatoon.ca>. Based on the responses to a number of interactive questions on the nature and location of the business, the online service generates a customized list of required government permits and licences. The list includes basic information about the permits and licences, the order in which they should be obtained, contact information and, in some cases, links to begin the application process.

The BizPaL system in Saskatoon was developed with Industry Canada support, in collaboration with the City of Saskatoon and the Province of Saskatchewan. The province is looking forward to expanding BizPaL to Regina, Moose Jaw and other Saskatchewan municipalities over the next year. To date, BizPaL has been launched in the Yukon Territory with the City of Whitehorse; in British Columbia with the City of Kamloops; and in Ontario with the Regional Municipality of Halton. Please visit <http://www.bizpal.ca> for additional project history and information as well as to access the websites of participating partners.

Source: Industry Canada Media Release, June 12, 2006



Food for Thought

by C.M. (Red) Williams

An Opportunity Awaiting

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has its tail in a knot over the introduction of individual farm and animal identification. Organizations are springing up to protest the invasion of privacy and cost of maintaining such a registry. It is not surprising that most of the push back comes from the most conservative of industries, the beef producers. The logic put forward by the USDA that for the US to re-establish its export position for beef requires trace-back capabilities is ignored.

The USDA hopes to have their program in place by 2009, or more likely 2012, which grows more unlikely with every example of protest. Their poultry and pork industries understand and support the program fully, but many cowboys are balking.

In Canada it is quite different. The beef industry took the lessons from the BSE crisis to heart and is anxious to have a fully operational trace-back in place almost immediately. Quality assurance programs are nearly complete for the three main meat industries. This is where the opportunity comes into play. Step one is to be able to assure our domestic, but particularly our export markets, that we can ensure the food safety of our meat products. Step two for the beef industry is for the private or public sector, or a combination of the two, to organize the beef supply system from the field to plate with a branded products. The consumer is given a superior product, the intermediate processors have a flow of uniform animals and the producer received a reward for breeding, feeding, managing and marketing his or her herd in order to initiate the program. We had such a Saskatchewan experience in the Beef Stabilization Program and can readily do it again.



Resource Sector Fuels Industrial Real Estate

The Saskatoon Industrial market continues to grow in 2006 as companies servicing the booming resource sector have been expanding. Vacancy rates have dropped slightly from 3.5% in December 2005 to 3.4% in April 2006. Two significant trends are emerging which will impact the industrial market. First, soaring construction costs are limiting construction of new product being built. This should continue to drive the leasing market and put upward pressure on leasing rates. Secondly, there is a lack of available industrial land for development within the city for larger users. As a result, many companies have been looking to the surrounding municipality of Corman Park for industrial land to satisfy their needs for expansion.


Overall, strong economic indicators suggest a trend of positive growth will continue throughout 2006. These indicators are:

- 7% growth in GDP in 2005 and continued growth in 2006.
- Provincial corporate tax rate is being phased down from 17% to 12%
- Provincial capital tax is being phased out
- Decreasing vacancy rates to 3.4%

FORECAST

Economic indicators suggest that Saskatoon will continue to grow and be the recipient of spin-offs from flourishing mining and oil sectors. Companies looking to expand have been purchasing existing buildings, but demand for industrial properties exceeds supply. The shortage of land along with the continually increasing servicing and construction costs will result in a decreasing vacancy rate as the leasing of existing buildings becomes more economically viable than new construction. Strong demand is expected to continue for existing properties, resulting in increased pricing as new supply will be limited.

Source: Colliers International Market Report Saskatoon, Quarter 2, 2006



September 14, 2006
TCU Place, Saskatoon

Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership is pleased to be celebrating 10 years of providing services to Saskatchewan exporters. We hope you will join us on September 14, 2006 as we showcase the success of our member companies. In addition to this "birthday" celebration and networking, we will provide a thought provoking look forward to living in these turbulent times.

See you there!


Dale Botting, President & CEO

STEP's 10th Anniversary Celebration

Highlights

- "Everything I need to know about Business... I learned from a Canadian" opening keynote luncheon address by Mr. Leonard Emly.
- "Canada: Are we Still On the Road to Per?" keynote address by Mr. Michael Levy, Financial Analyst, Custom House
- Saskatchewan Leaders of Globalization Panel
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For more information visit the Anniversary Website at: <http://www.sasktrade.sk.ca/anniversary.shtml> or contact: Cristall Boudry, Membership and Communications Specialist, Saskatchewan Trade & Export Partnership
 Phone: 306-787-7319 Email: cboudry@sasktrade.sk.ca



CUSTOM HOUSE

Government Expands Job Start / Future Skills

More than \$2.5 million in extra funding will go into the province's JobStart/Future Skills program to provide an additional 1,375 work-based and institution-based training opportunities, Advanced Education and Employment Minister Pat Atkinson announced recently.

"JobStart/Future Skills is a strategic program that assists individuals and businesses to be more competitive through skills training and human resource planning," Atkinson said. "The program offers hands-on training that is relevant and responsive to the needs of learners and business while strengthening the province's labour force to meet the needs of our growing economy."

The program provides skills training through partnerships among businesses, industry associations and training institutions. This year, an estimated 5,500 trainees are expected to participate in JobStart/Future Skills opportunities. More than 41,000 Saskatchewan people have received employment-related training since the program began in 1995.

"Increased investment in JobStart/Future Skills is good news for both employers and participants," SIAST senior vice president, academic, Claude Naud said. "The program benefits employers by providing just-in-time training, and it benefits participants by expanding their skills set. For many, it also provides an excellent opportunity to receive SIAST credit."

JobStart/Future Skills provides funding for the following options:

- Work-based Training for the Unemployed so employers can train unemployed individuals for new, full-time positions in the work place;
- Work-based Training for the Employed that allows businesses to retrain current, permanent employees in response to changes in the workplace;
- Saskatchewan Skills Extension Program and Quick Skills Training through SIAST, regional colleges and Dumont Technical Institute that provide individuals with courses that increase their ability to find work; and
- Sector Partnerships Program assists industries identify and respond to current and future labour market needs.

For more information about the program, please visit www.aee.gov.sk.ca/jsfs/.

Source: Government of Saskatchewan Media Release, June 8, 2006



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Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce

2006 / 2007

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Figuratively Speaking ...

Compiled by John MacIntyre

- Between 1999 and 2003, number of doctors gained through interprovincial migration by the three richest provinces, according to a recent report by the Health Council of Canada: 1052
- Number who went to British Columbia: 466
- Number lost by Quebec and Saskatchewan: 263 each

- Rank of Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick as the provinces/territories with the most comfortable weather in Canada, according to an Environment Canada study measuring 72 categories: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

- Percentage of farmers' incomes in Ireland that are accounted for by all types of agricultural subsidies, according to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development): 69
- Percentage of Swiss farmers' incomes accounted for by subsidies: 68
- Percentage of Canadian farmers' incomes accounted for by subsidies: 21
- Percentage of US farmers' incomes accounted for by subsidies: 18

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Business Showcase 2006

Building For The Future

The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce is proud to present Business Showcase 2006: the only B2B exposition of its kind in the Saskatoon area focusing on bringing together business and business leaders.

This year Business Showcase 2006 will showcase Saskatoon businesses in the CALGARY marketplace. Calgary is one of the fastest growing economies in Canada and has the highest number of head offices in Western Canada, with 9 ranked among the top 50 in Canada. SO WHY NOT CALGARY?? With the growing economy of Alberta, and the need to attract workers from other jurisdictions, The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce saw an opportunity to take the “Saskatoon Advantage” outside the Saskatoon marketplace.

October 25th and 26th, 2006

Executive Royal Inn, Calgary, Alberta
(north eastern area of Calgary)

For more information, contact:

Jim Zaiachkowski @ (306) 664-0713 OR jzach@eboardoftrade.com

