

MEDIA Release



500-161 Portage Avenue East
Winnipeg MB R3B 0Y4
Ph: 204-942-8248 Fax: 204-943-7119

October 17, 2005

Manitoba's employment rate second only to Alberta

WINNIPEG – The *MB Check-Up*, an annual study by the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, shows that Manitoba's employment rate grew by 0.9 per cent in 2004 to 65.4 per cent, the second highest level of employment compared to the other western provinces, Ontario and the Canadian average.

“In our analysis of the province as a place to live, work and invest, the section on work is an area where Manitoba performs quite well in comparison to the other western provinces and Ontario,” said Gary Hannaford, CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba (ICAM).

The *MB Check-Up* shows that Manitoba added 5,400 jobs to its economy in 2004. Since 1999, the service sector has driven job growth, adding 40,700 jobs, while goods-producing sectors pulled down the province's overall employment growth rate, losing 3,700 workers over the past five years.

The ICAM spokesperson noted that public sector employment has increased by 25,700 workers, representing almost three-quarters of the net growth of 36,000 jobs in the entire provincial economy since 1999, and that many of those jobs were in the areas of health care and post-secondary education.

The study shows that the largest gain in public sector employment was in post-secondary education, which increased by 38 per cent, followed by health and social service employment which increased 17 per cent. General government has seen no growth and primary and secondary education had a decrease of 5 per cent in employment over the past five years.

“These numbers reflect the government's rebuilding of the health care system and its education initiatives such as the Red River College expansion and the University College of the North,” Hannaford said.

The ICAM spokesperson said that the initiatives in post-secondary education are welcome because *MB Check-Up* shows that Manitoba's educational attainment, the percentage of the labour force between ages 25-64 with post-secondary accreditation, dropped to 54.3 per cent in 2004, marking the third year Manitoba has had the lowest rate of educational attainment.

“We have yet to reap the full benefits of the government's education initiatives but we are already seeing record enrolment in the province's universities and colleges. Now the challenge becomes keeping the people we educate in the province,” Hannaford said.

The *MB Check-Up* shows that 1,400 people with post-secondary certificates or diplomas left the province in 2004, the largest educational group to decrease in Manitoba, and that overall Manitoba experienced a net out flow of population to Alberta and British Columbia last year.

“Many of those who left were trades and other technically certified workers heading west to work in the oil and gas or construction sectors,” Hannaford said.

The ICAM spokesperson noted that the province was the only region to see an increase in people with masters and other higher-level degrees and that the jump in higher-level university educated residents is partly explained by Manitoba’s provincial nominee program, used to attract skilled workers in high demand areas such as health care, engineering and information technology.

MB Check-Up shows that Manitoba continued to lose people to other provinces in 2004 but out-migration did slow and international immigration to the province has more than tripled since 1999, reversing emigration losses and showing a net gain of nearly 4,100 people last year.

The work section of *MB Check-Up* also shows that Manitoba led the pack in wage equity (0.89) and that real wage rates had strong growth in 2004 increasing by 2.8 per cent but still lag behind the other jurisdictions studied except for Saskatchewan.

MB Check-Up is published annually by ICAM and provides an independent factual comparison of the four Western provinces, together with Ontario and the Canadian average using 15 key indicators to create a profile of each as a place to live, a place to work, and a place to invest. The study can be found on the Institute website at www.icam.mb.ca.

-30-

For further information contact:

Tanya Beck, Manager of Communications

Ph: 204-942-8248, ext. 215 or E-mail: tbeck@icam.mb.ca