



# MEDIA Release

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## **CA Study Shows Manitoba is Improving as a Place to Work** **Gains in real wage required to offset pending skills shortage**

WINNIPEG – A new study by the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba shows that the province has improved as a place to work over the past decade. The *MB Check-Up, Edition 2002* assesses the province in the five areas of employment rates, wages, hours worked, gender equity, and job stability.

“In our analysis of the province as a place to invest, live, and work this is the area where Manitoba has performed the strongest,” said Gary Hannaford, CEO of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba.

Manitoba has consistently shown one of the highest employment rates over the past decade, and was second only to Alberta (95.4 per cent) in 2001. In 2001, Manitoba’s employment rate was 95 per cent, higher than Saskatchewan (94.2 per cent), British Columbia (92.3 per cent), Ontario (93.7 per cent) and the national average of 92.8 per cent.

“A key reason for Manitoba’s consistently low unemployment rate is the high level of economic diversity,” Hannaford said.

“Manufacturing is one of the province’s largest industries, there’s a well established mining sector, a competitive and growing hydro-electric sector, and the agricultural sector has diversified. All of which puts the province in an enviable position to maintain economic stability,” he added.

Real average hourly wages, however, have declined over the past decade across Canada, with the exception of British Columbia. The real average hourly wage in Manitoba was \$17.03 in 1992 and \$16.12 by 2001. The 5.4 per cent drop in the real wage rate was the second highest decline of all the provinces compared.

“Several factors contribute to the decline,” Hannaford said. “The relatively high inflation rate in the province, an increase in low-paid service sector jobs, a loss of traditionally high-paying jobs in the resource sector, as well as some skilled and semi-skilled workers leaving the province will bring down the average.”

Hannaford also noted that wage adjustments arising from collective wage agreements in the public and private sectors may have been instrumental in stabilizing the real wage since 1997, but they did not succeed in reversing the downward trend.

Manitoba performs well when it comes to the gap in wages paid to females compared to wages paid to males. Female workers in the province earned approximately 83 per cent of the wage rate of male workers in 2001, which, along with British Columbia, was the highest across the jurisdictions studied.



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The *MB Check-Up* also shows that Manitoba's job stability has increased over the past decade. The average number of months a person worked for his or her employer in 2001 was 103.9, second only to Saskatchewan at 116.6. Alberta has the lowest average tenure at 82.6 months in 2001.

"Generally speaking, longer tenures are great for employers because lower turnover rates mean they incur less costs in recruiting and training new workers," Hannaford said.

"From a worker's perspective longer tenures can reflect either greater job security or fewer opportunities to find other employment," he added.

"Overall, according to our study Manitoba has improved as a place to work," Hannaford said, "Although gains in real wage will be required to attract and retain workers in the province."

Today's release of the study of Manitoba as a place to work is the third of three studies on the province. The entire *MB Check-Up* report is available on the Internet at [www.cacheckup.com](http://www.cacheckup.com).

The 2,700 CAs and over 200 CA students in Manitoba provide expert advice to a variety of small and large businesses; are key members of management teams; or consult to private industry and the private sector. As members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, they adhere to a strictly enforced code of conduct and ongoing professional development.

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