



# MEDIA Release

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October 14, 2003

## CA Study Shows Manitoba Improving as a Place to Work

Further gains in wages required

**WINNIPEG** – The *MB Check-Up*, an annual study by the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, shows that Manitoba has improved as a place to work over the past year.

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

The *MB Check-Up* shows that Manitoba’s economy grew by 3.1 per cent in 2002, adding 9,100 new jobs, and the province had the highest employment rate in Canada at 94.8 per cent, although it declined slightly from the 2001 rate of 95 per cent.

“While this is a good thing, we should be cautious about this statistic,” Hannaford said.

“Manitoba’s low unemployment rate is partly due to the steady loss of its labour force to other provinces.”

The *MB Check-Up* states that the net out-migration of Manitoba residents to other provinces totaled 5,300 in 2002, an increase of 23 per cent from 2001. On a net basis, 57 per cent of these residents went to Alberta, 20 per cent to Ontario, 19 per cent to British Columbia, and 4 per cent to other provinces.

“The outflow of workers results in a smaller pool from which to draw and so more workers are employed which gives us such a high employment rate,” Hannaford said.

Despite this flow of people to other provinces, Manitoba’s population increased by 5,685 between 1996 and 2001, due to natural population growth (births minus deaths) and international immigration.

“The details of Manitoba’s increase in population over that time period show an interesting demographic trend,” Hannaford said.

He noted that from 1996 to 2001 all of the province’s population growth was based on growth in the Aboriginal population which increased by 21,360 while the non-Aboriginal population decreased by 15,675.

“Here is an area with tremendous potential for the province,” Hannaford said, “For example, the recent launch of the Representative Workforce Strategy by the Aboriginal Employment Initiative is an excellent way to create meaningful employment opportunities for the growing Aboriginal population in the province,” he added.

Manitoba was the only jurisdiction to show an increase in real wages from 2001 to 2002, but the study also shows that Manitoba has one of the lowest average real wage rates in the country, at \$16.22 per hour in 2002. This rate is approximately 9 per cent below the national average.

“Traditionally, the low wages have been off-set by lower prices of housing and other consumer goods,” Hannaford said. “But a recent study by the Royal Bank of Canada has called this into question. The fact of the matter is that we’re still losing people to other provinces. We need to not only keep individuals here, but attract them to the province as well.”

Manitoba performs well when it comes to the gap in average wages paid to females compared to average wages paid to males. Female workers in the province earned approximately 85 per cent of the wage rate of male workers in 2002, which, along with British Columbia, was the highest across the jurisdictions studied.

“Manitoba has had increases in demand for health care services and other female-dominated service industries, creating job openings for women in higher wage positions and helping to close the wage gap,” Hannaford said.

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 2002 was 105.2, second only to Saskatchewan at 116.0. Alberta has the lowest average tenure at 84.5 months in 2002.

“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.”

“Overall, Manitoba has improved as a place to work,” Hannaford said, “But in order to be competitive with the other provinces we need to make even more progress.”

Today’s release of the *MB Check-Up* looking at Manitoba as a place to work is the second of three sections and considers the five areas of employment, wages, hours worked, gender equity, and job stability. Manitoba’s performance is compared against BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and the national average. Next week, the CAs will release their assessment of Manitoba as a place to invest. The report is available on the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba’s website at [www.icam.mb.ca](http://www.icam.mb.ca).

The primary mission of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba is to protect the public interest. It does so by ensuring that its members have the highest level of competence and integrity as a result of demanding standards for admission to the profession, its continuous learning policy and its inspection and discipline process.

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