

Minimum Wage (RENEWAL)

Issue:

Currently, the minimum wage is \$11.00 per hour in most industries in Manitoba. It makes Manitoba one of the highest cost locations in the country for businesses with minimum wage employees.

Province	Wage
Alberta	\$12.20
BC	\$10.85
Manitoba	\$11.00
New Brunswick	\$10.10.65
Newfoundland	\$10.50
NWT	\$12.50
Nova Scotia	\$10.70 (experienced workers) \$10.20 (inexperienced workers)
Nunavut	\$13.00
Ontario	\$11.40 (general workers) \$9.90 (liquor servers) \$10.70 (students under 18)
PEI	\$11.00
Quebec	\$10.75 \$9.20 (if gratuities apply)
Saskatchewan	\$10.72
Yukon	\$11.07

Source: Payworks.ca

Looking at the matter objectively, having regard to Manitoba's relative position on average weekly earnings, it would seem debatable that Manitoba should have a minimum wage which is higher than Saskatchewan or B.C., both of which have higher average weekly earnings than Manitoba. This can be understood even more clearly when consideration is given to minimum wage expressed as a percentage of average weekly earnings.

Minimum Wage (cont'd) **(RENEWAL)**

A review of this table indicates that minimum wage expressed as a percentage of average weekly earnings is much higher in Manitoba than in any of the provinces with which we are most usually compared, namely Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and B.C.

	AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS						MIN WAGE AS % OF AWE 2016 (40hr wk)
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Up to Nov 2016	
Canada	\$874	\$896	\$912	\$936	\$952	\$955	N/A
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$879	\$927	\$952	\$991	\$1,017	\$1,012	41.5%
Prince Edward Island	\$719	\$738	\$752	\$774	\$801	\$818	53.8%
Nova Scotia	\$765	\$788	\$798	\$820	\$835	\$847	50.5%
New Brunswick	\$787	\$807	\$805	\$832	\$855	\$875	48.7%
Quebec	\$804	\$823	\$833	\$850	\$868	\$876	49.1%
Ontario	\$893	\$906	\$920	\$938	\$963	\$971	47.0%
Manitoba	\$801	\$823	\$827	\$863	\$880	\$889	49.5%
Saskatchewan	\$875	\$918	\$945	\$975	\$982	\$982	43.7%
Alberta	\$1,034	\$1,070	\$1,108	\$1,149	\$1,146	\$1,146	42.6%
British Columbia	\$841	\$866	\$875	\$896	\$910	\$917	47.3%

The current way the minimum wage is set is too political, arbitrary and unpredictable for both employers and employees. While Manitoba's minimum wage is not tiered, many provinces have a tiered minimum wage, and others are considering that option. Many have the minimum wage tied to an economic indicator or a bundle of indicators that takes into account changes in the cost of living. Many jurisdictions tie the minimum wage to the national or sub-national Consumer Price Index (CPI), an economic indicator that measures inflation, with changes to the minimum wage typically occurring on an annual basis.

While not perfect, this process has been adopted by Alberta, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon. It was being considered by Newfoundland and Labrador, but they have yet to move on a new formula. Some in that province have called for a "living wage policy." Alberta uses an average of changes to the province's annual average weekly earnings and modifications to the CPI. Nova Scotia's minimum wage is tied to the percentage change in the CPI for Canada for the preceding calendar year. Yukon ties their minimum wage to the previous year's CPI for Whitehorse.

Resolution:

That the Provincial Government establish an indexing formula which considers increases to CPI and average weekly earnings as of January 1 and then applies an equally weighted average of those increases to the calculation of minimum wage to be effective the following October 1.

Submitted by Altona & District Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Core Municipal Infrastructure (RENEWAL)

Issue:

A common ground, principle-based Manitoba solution with which to invest in core municipal infrastructure which includes trade and transportation assets, in the broader context of funding municipal infrastructure in a sustained manner, is required to support growth and prosperity throughout Manitoba.

A well-funded and maintained, seamless multi-modal transportation system in Manitoba ensures the ability to attract new areas of economic growth, and sustain and/or enhance existing nodes of economic activity. Implicit in its mandate is recognition that without core municipal infrastructure including a transportation plan each of which is strategically and permanently funded, we place our economic stability and hence our social well-being at risk.

Infrastructure is not of passing interest or unimportant to our collective progress. It enables and underpins our economy, and therefore the quality of life. Investment in infrastructure, including a focus on trade enabling and supporting transportation systems on a permanent basis, is our economic and social healthcare program.

Resolution:

That the Government of Manitoba, in partnership with municipal governments and the private sector, establishes a core municipal infrastructure plan that:

- **Is permanent *yet flexible*, not unlike our '*permanent*' investment in healthcare, education, recreation, public safety and the like;**
- **Invests in a sustained and strategic manner in assets which enable, create and open new opportunities for economic growth, without ignoring maintaining or rehabilitating key assets that already enable economic activity;**
- **Embraces innovation, from composite fibers, fiber optics, remote sensing systems, new grades of asphalt and concrete products, to awarding projects based upon innovation and service life costing;**
- **Seeks partnerships with the private sector which is the engine of innovation, growth, jobs, prosperity, taxes and revenues to government;**
- **Mandates, through legislation, that any new revenue streams - preferably growth based - be dedicated to these purposes in a clear, transparent, transitional and accountable manner; and**
- **Legislates periodic transparent public reviews enabling experience-based improvements and adjustments for the future.**

Submitted by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Manitoba Budget Planning (RENEWAL)

Issue:

If Manitoba is to achieve the level of prosperity needed to take the provincial economy to the next level the government will need to increase its focus in the budgeting process to ensure economic growth is the driving force behind decisions that are made. There are a number of key economic indicators that the provincial government should take into consideration when making decisions in regards to their Budget deliberations. During their budgetary process, the government should ask itself whether those decisions positively influence the following economic indicators:

- GDP per capita
- Provincial Government Spending
- Debt indicators
- Labour force growth – Public and Private
- Average weekly wages
- Interprovincial Migration
- Number of head offices in Manitoba
- Entrepreneurial Intensity

If the provincial government is focused on increasing Manitoba's economic opportunities and prosperity, these indicators will be positively influenced.

Resolution:

That the Provincial Government focuses on the following economic indicators in the budgeting process:

- **Ensure Manitoba's GDP per capita is competitive with other Western provinces.**
- **Contain annual increases in program spending to two-to-three percent (in line with inflation plus population growth);**
- **Have Manitoba's annual spending as a percentage of GDP level among the top three most competitive when compared with other provinces;**
- **Ensure Manitoba's annual labour force growth is competitive with other Western provinces.**
- **Have Manitoba's weekly wage rates among the top five most competitive in comparison with other provinces;**
- **Annually have a positive interprovincial migration number;**
- **Increase the number of businesses in Manitoba by 50% over the next decade; and,**
- **Double the number of head offices in Manitoba over the next 10 years.**

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Resolving Canada's Skills Crisis through Increased Immigration

(RENEWAL)

Issue:

According to a 2010 study by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, "The proportion of our population aged 60 and over is expected to mushroom from roughly one-fifth of Canadians today to nearly a third by the mid-2020s." The baby boom generation is ready for retirement: seniors over 65 comprised 14.8 percent of the 2011 Canadian population.

There is good news in that the population of children aged 4 and under increased by 11 percent from 2006 and 2011, the highest growth rate for this age group since the baby boom. Effectively, there will be a second baby boom when this new generation joins the workplace in another 20-25 years. But, for short and medium-term labour needs, Manitoba, much like Canada, must look internationally to provide the sheer number of workers required. Our province is now in direct and steep competition for those workers with our growing neighbouring provinces, like Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The solutions to the labour shortage may not be the same for each region, but the needs are no less urgent and important. The overarching problem is that the current immigration admission levels (set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) are insufficient to meet the labour market needs of the entire country. Provinces with the strongest representation gain a larger share of the immigrant numbers while other provinces may be overlooked regarding targets and federal resources.

The Manitoba Chamber is encouraging both the federal and provincial government to sign updated immigration agreements that are tailored to meet our province's specific immigration needs. It is time to re-address the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement of June 2003, which responds to the specific and strategic labour needs of Manitoba. This agreement is comprehensive, promotes the sharing of research, and has resulted in tremendous economic success in Manitoba. The needs of Manitoba's skilled industries have changed in the past ten years. Other provinces have improved their ability to recruit workers and have removed the red tape in transferring training credentials.

Resolution:

That the federal and provincial governments:

- **Continue to examine and increase the number of economic immigrants to this country; commensurate with need.**
- **Renegotiate and sign new memorandums of understanding to increase provincial caps for Provincial Nominee Programs.**

Submitted by Morden & District Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Youth and Literacy (RENEWAL)

Issue:

The primary business of colleges and institutes is an education for employment. Many of these facilities have had a long history of high quality continuing education programs. However, it is assumed that students who are enrolled in applied technical programs have a level of essential skills required to learn technical skills. Recent research projects have found that for a significant portion of youth and adults entering these programs this is not the case.

Past testing of college students at various stages of training in the college system have found that close to 67% were below a level 3 achievement rate required to be successful in technical industries. Level 3 is thought to be a standard in reading, writing, and numeracy that in professional training would make a successful employee.

Resolution:

That the provincial government, which provides the majority of support to these institutions insist, that persons entering the college system are tested for essential skills and refer students that require upgrades to pre-requisite or remediation programs prior to entry into their technical training programs.

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Areas of Focus for Manitoba's Healthcare System Improvements (RENEWAL)

Issue:

The MCC Health Care Committee's work identified three key areas for focusing improvements in Manitoba's health care system.

1. Economic Sustainability
2. Patients as Partners

The third priority outlined was directed towards wellness. In November of 2013, the province announced the Wellness Works campaign, developed in partnership with the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce along with representation from employers and labour. The campaign is designed to encourage Manitobans to choose healthy alternatives in every aspect of their lives – at home and work. With the goal of seeing benefits in employee's health and attitudes contributing to a better bottom line, and that's good for business.

As of February 2017, more than 60 companies have signed on. Once committed, employers can select from a series of pledges to better support the wellness of their staff. The implementation of commitments will vary depending on the workplace but could include things like encouraging staff to increase physical activity, improve work-life balance, offer healthy food options and make support available to staff trying to quit smoking.

The committee, led by chair Dale Lacombe, has developed a good working relationship with government and sees the need for continued dialogue with the Manitoba Government to integrate the other two areas outlined into its long-term health care strategy for Manitoba.

Resolution:

That the provincial government includes, implement and establish the following:

1. **Economic Sustainability** - include economic sustainability as a key pillar of its Health Innovation Network, and that the outputs of this committee are communicated to public and private sector leaders and the citizens of Manitoba on a regular (at a minimum, annual) basis.
2. **Patients as Partners** - implement a 'Patients as Partners' program whose mandate will include increasing the use and promotion of citizen engagement, education, awareness, ownership, and accountability of our health system.

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Churchill and Northern Manitoba (RENEWAL)

Issue:

The Province of Manitoba has been presented with a visionary opportunity to see the North fulfill its immense potential especially in the areas of transportation and commerce, tourism and heritage, sustainable economic development, export, mining and health care for the indigenous peoples.

The announcement in summer 2016 of layoffs and the closure of the Port of Churchill, it is apparent that time is of the essence to develop a plan for the future of the north.

The Port of Churchill is not the powerhouse port it once was and is not the only port shipping grain in this country. The Port's viability is more than Manitoba's issue alone and more than the movement of grain. It is the Gateway to the Central Arctic, and its future is important to all of Canada. Part of this strategic direction would be to work on the enhancement of the Port and the surrounding areas and to look for innovative solutions and opportunities together with some collaborative partnerships.

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce (MCC), along with the government, stakeholders, and Northern leaders have spent many hours engaging residents and business owners on the best steps forward to identify the next steps required to inject new and sustainable life in a critical portion of our province. In late 2016, the province announced a new Northern Economic Development task force, co-chaired by MCC's President and CEO. Their mandate is to lead the implementation of the provincial government's Northern Economic Development Strategy.

Working in partnership, aboriginal communities and northern businesses will look to models that have been successful in other northern and remote regions of Canada and the world and will move forward on a new path toward the expansion of existing sectors and the development of new economy-building enterprises. Northern Manitoba has always been viewed as a key asset and a region full of growth and opportunity to support the provincial economy. There is an urgency to develop a forward-looking and proactive approach that will unleash the north's real potential.

Resolution:

That the provincial government:

- **Develop a strategy and mobilize investment in the Port of Churchill as a strategic transportation hub for Northern re-supply, Arctic sovereignty, and as an Arctic Gateway to international markets; and**
- **Establish an economic partnership with Nunavut that builds on current agreements between the province and the territory to seek mutual opportunities to servicing remote northern communities via an efficient supply chain.**

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Promotion of Mineral Exploration - Mining as a Positive Economic Engine for Manitoba (RENEWAL)

Issue:

Exploration is vital to a healthy and sustainable mineral resource industry and province. It has been a significant source of revenue for all Manitobans by creating jobs, paying taxes, and producing service companies.

Junior exploration lacks operating cash flow; therefore they are dependent on equity financing, leaving them vulnerable to investors seeking the jurisdictions/provinces with the best policies.

Natural Resources Canada has reported that since 2011, exploration and deposit appraisal expenditures in Manitoba have declined by nearly 50%. Mineral exploration within Manitoba requires a competitive provincial policy to contribute to the economy.

As extremely well described in the book "Resource Rulers" aboriginal peoples have had over 150 legal wins, many in the Supreme Court, clearly establishing their role related to resource development. There is a well-documented legal standard requiring consultation with aboriginal people.

The mineral resources industry in Manitoba has been negatively impacted by a lack of Provincial Government leadership on the required consultative process with Aboriginal people. This lack of positive action by the province is having a deep economic impact, not only in Northern communities but to the well-being of the province as a whole.

Resolution:

That the provincial government:

- **Increase direct support to prospectors and junior exploration companies.**
- **Take leadership steps to move Manitoba from 21st place to restore to the #1 position on the Fraser Institute Survey of Mining Companies identifying Manitoba as a global leader in mining exploration policies.**

Submitted by Snow Lake Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Northern Transportation Infrastructure (RENEWAL)

Issue:

The City of Thompson and regional communities recently completed a process called the Thompson Economic Diversification Working Group (TEDWG), supported by contributions from local employer Vale. The TEDWG process involved a huge amount of information gathering and planning, with consultation across the entire region (including all 33 communities in the region representing Industrial, Municipalities, First Nations, and Northern Affairs communities. The planning approach identified transportation and economic linkages within the region, from the region to the outside, and economic activity travelling through the region, all requiring infrastructure. Examples:

- **Trade Within the Region** – the region under discussion represents approximately 30% of Manitoba's land mass. Local trade routes tend to flow through Thompson and Norway House. The major trade center is Thompson
- **Trade Outside the Region** – Communities conduct a huge volume of trade with Manitoba and Canada – in many cases largely dependent on a series of Winter Roads whose reliability has been tested in recent decades.
- **Trade Through the Region** – straddling the Northeast of the Province, the region is home to Manitoba's only seaport, accessible only by rail. To the north of the region is Nunavut, long a target for increased trade within Manitoba and currently generally served by the East.

The plan has resulted in the formation of the Thompson and Area Roundtable and a number of Action Plans. Among the plans is the Thompson and Region Infrastructure Plan (TRIP). Of the 33 communities involved in the plan, only three are identified as having "High" levels of service in transportation. Seven are identified as having "Low" levels of service; while of the 23 considered at "Medium"; 13 of which are one rating point above "Low." Clearly, there is a need to improve Transportation to and from these communities to encourage economic opportunity for the TRIP area and the rest of Manitoba.

In addition, there is the need to develop links to the North. Recognizing that the rail link remains vital for bulk and other goods transfer there is the opportunity to shift trading patterns with road construction north to Churchill and Nunavut. In addition to the business benefits, the reduced cost of living for local residents would be an enormous benefit shifting spending to goods and away from transportation costs.

We recognize that the East Side Road Authority has been doing a large amount of work to improve transportation to communities in the southeast of the region through the installation of permanent bridge crossings on the winter road system and with the construction of all-weather roads, but the pace is too slow. Manitoba needs partners.

Northern Transportation Infrastructure (cont'd) (RENEWAL)

Resolution:

That the Government of Manitoba and the Government of Canada:

Commit to an overall Northern Manitoba transportation and infrastructure strategy to bring road and other needed forms of transportation to the North East Region and through the region to Nunavut.

Submitted by Thompson Chamber of Commerce

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, April 2014

Renewal