



**Media Release
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SASKATOON WORK FORCE & EMPLOYER NEEDS STUDY COMPLETE

(Saskatoon, Canada): The Saskatoon Labour Market Committee (SLMC) is pleased to release the findings of the *Saskatoon Work Force and Employer Needs Study*. The study found that Saskatoon's economy is strong with 95% of employers surveyed indicating their company is stable or growing.

The study provides a comprehensive profile of the Saskatoon labour market, identifies issues and challenges facing employers and highlights successful recruitment and retention strategies. Nineteen industry sectors were included in the survey which found that almost 60% of respondents describe their current stage of business to be stable, while 38% indicate that their business is in a growth phase.

"This study confirms that the majority of companies in the construction, health services and primary industries are in a growth phase," said Ted Mitchell, Co-Chair, Saskatoon Labour Market Committee. "With 2,000 employment positions upcoming in the next year, the recommended recruitment and retention strategies outlined in the study will assist employers in their efforts."

The Saskatoon Labour Market Committee commissioned Fast Consulting to conduct the *Saskatoon Work Force and Employer Needs Study*. The study serves to profile the Saskatoon labour market, identify issues and challenges facing employers and highlight successful recruitment and retention strategies. The study involved a survey of 750 employers, 4 focus groups and 22 high-level interviews. Data was collected throughout February and March of 2004 and covers 20% of the Saskatoon labour force. The complete study is available at www.saskatoonwork.com.

The Saskatoon Labour Market Committee (SLMC) was established in January 2000. Its focus is to coordinate and share the analysis of labour market needs. One of the primary objectives of the committee is to address the needs of local employers and to foster economic growth.



BACKGROUND – 2 Pages

Saskatoon Labour Market Committee

Saskatoon Work Force & Employer Needs Study

Saskatoon's economy is strong with 95% of employers surveyed either stable or growing

38% of employers are in the growth stage

Top growth sectors are Construction, Health Services and Primary Industries

22% of the employees within the survey group are under the age of 25, while 23.5% are over the age of 45

40.5% of respondents are planning to hire additional workers within the next 12 months

The Saskatoon Labour Market Committee commissioned Fast Consulting to conduct the Saskatoon Work Force and Employer Needs Study. The study serves to profile the Saskatoon labour market, identify issues and challenges facing employers and highlight successful recruitment and retention strategies. The study involved a survey of 750 employers, 4 focus groups and 22 high-level interviews. Data was collected throughout February and March of 2004. The results of the survey are summarized below:

Industries

- ❖ The Employer Needs study represents the following 19 industry sectors: Manufacturing, Retail & Wholesale, Finance/Insurance, Business Services, Transportation & Warehousing, Tourism, Accommodation & Food Services, Food & Value Added Ag Processing, Primary Industries, Information Technology, Not-For-Profit, Metal Fabricating, Printing/Publishing, Biotechnology/Pharmaceuticals, Construction, Film/Video, Health Services, Education and the Public Sector.

Stage of Business

- ❖ Almost 60% of survey respondents describe their current stage of business to be stable, while 38% indicate their business is in a growth phase.
- ❖ The majority of respondents in the following industries indicate that their business is in a growth phase: Construction (61.1%), Health Services (72.7%) and Primary Industries such as Mining, Oil & Gas and Agriculture (51.5%).

Number of Employees

- ❖ The number of employees covered by this survey was 25,603, which represents approximately 19.9% of the Saskatoon labour force.

Labour Force Characteristics

- ❖ Approximately 22% of the employees within the survey group are under the age of 25.
- ❖ Three-quarters (76.5%) are under the age of 45, while 23.5% are over the age of 45.

Occupation Vacancies

- ❖ Of the 750 respondents, 40.5% (or 304 respondents) expect to have job vacancies within the next 12 months. This translates into 1,945 jobs.
- ❖ Approximately 37% of vacant positions are general labour, 16.2% are sales/consultant positions, 13.0% are retail or customer services jobs and 12.9% are business services positions.

Recruiting Employees

- ❖ Respondents in the Health Services, Construction, Printing/Publishing and Tourism sectors report having the greatest difficulty attracting employees to specific occupations.

Shortages of experienced and skilled workers is a challenge faced by the majority of employers (66.9% and 64.4% respectively)

54.3% of respondents think that word of mouth is an effective means of recruitment

86.5% of respondents are not concerned with their turnover rates

Only 13% of respondents have experienced an increase in employee out migration

Top retention strategies employed include competitive wages & salaries, commissions & bonuses and a positive work environment

20% of respondents require information or support services on training employees

- ❖ Over two-thirds of respondents indicate that a shortage of experienced workers (66.9%) and a shortage of skilled workers (64.4%) are challenges they sometimes face when trying to find employees, while 33.2% say it is out migration of workers.
- ❖ The majority of respondents in all industries except for the Not-For-Profit, Food & Valued Added Ag Processing and Public Sector industries, indicate that a shortage of experienced and skilled workers is a challenge.
- ❖ Word of mouth continues to be the recruitment method used by most employers.
- ❖ Approximately one-half (54.3%) of respondents think that word of mouth is an effective means of recruitment, while professional journals (29.4%) and trade unions (26.5%) are also considered by to be effective or very effective.

Retaining Employees/Turnover Rates

- ❖ Although recruitment is a challenge for most employers, the majority (86.5%) are not concerned about their turnover rates.
- ❖ Over one-half of respondents (52.0%) say employees leave for better opportunities, which includes better jobs and/or jobs that offer full-time work.
- ❖ The majority (56.9%) of businesses have not experienced a change in the number of employees leaving for employment out of the province and/or country, while 13.0% have experienced an increase.
- ❖ The most common retention strategies used include competitive wages and salaries (24.9%), competitive commissions and bonuses (19.1%) and providing a positive work environment (18.3%).

Information or Support Services Requirements

- ❖ One in five respondents (20.0%) require information or support services for training employees, and 18.0% require information or support services on recruitment, hiring and retention of employees.

Action Plan

The study suggests the following future directions the Saskatoon Labour Market Committee (SLMC) may choose to pursue:

- ❖ Partnerships with the government, businesses and educational institutes to develop and implement job creation strategies;
- ❖ Partnerships with employers, industry associations and the government to develop employer-friendly programs that support training;
- ❖ Relationships with industry associations and training institutes to mitigate the skills gaps, lack of experience and inadequate training issues facing some employers;
- ❖ Positive promotion of undervalued vocations;
- ❖ Exploring options around recruitment of foreign and immigrant workers;
- ❖ Increased promotion and advertising of the SLMC and the services it offers;
- ❖ Distribution of human resources-related material to employers;
- ❖ Development of a human resources toolkit for employers;
- ❖ Promotion of Saskatoon success stories; and
- ❖ Development of a promotional recruitment package to aid employers in recruiting employees from out of province.