

## **CREATING OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN**

The Creating Opportunities Action Plan will build on the government's success in forging links between provincial government departments, stakeholders, communities, industry and other levels of government. Together, an even stronger and more comprehensive rural economic development plan will be built.

This action plan will use the findings and recommendations of the Creating Opportunities consultations to build on the government's achievements and find new ways to create new economic development in rural and northern Manitoba.

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Recent Success**

- Significant investments have been made in the redevelopment of the Food Development Centre at Portage la Prairie and the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals at the University of Manitoba.
- \$6.6 million has been invested under the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement to support the growth of an internationally-competitive composites industry in Manitoba.
- Manitoba, Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives was reorganized, creating 10 GO teams designed to provide specific expertise to help Manitoba producers capture more value from the primary products they produce.
- 30 per cent of immigrants through the Provincial Nominee Program are going to rural Manitoba, helping to address human resource needs in rural communities.
- New scholarships funds were created at the University of Manitoba and Brandon University to support Manitoba's next generation of community economic development and agricultural leaders.
- During the BSE crisis, the government spearheaded two successful campaigns to promote Manitoba meat.

#### **Specific New Action**

- The province is launching a campaign and website to encourage Manitobans to seek out quality Manitoba-grown food products so that Manitobans can become their own best customers.
- Building on the successful Growing Opportunities initiative, the government will provide agricultural producers the tools they need to help capture more value from the products they produce.

- The government will take steps to increase urban understanding and appreciation of rural Manitoba including the establishment of an urban GO Centre in Winnipeg.
- The province will make legislative changes to encourage new and expanding agricultural opportunities such as organic production.

## **ALTERNATIVE ENERGY – Biofuels**

### **Recent Success**

- The province's 10 per cent ethanol mandate has resulted in the expansion of Husky Energy's operations in Minnedosa with a new ethanol plant.
- Last year, the government announced the province's biodiesel action plan including elimination of the 11.5 cent per litre tax on pure biodiesel.

### **Specific New Action**

- The province will work with rural communities to develop new biodiesel production opportunities in the province that will affirm Manitoba's standing as a national biodiesel leader.
- The government will update the Biofuels Act to ensure Manitoba motorists have access to quality biofuels.
- Manitoba is also conducting a long-haul demonstration to promote the benefits of biodiesel and will work with industry to ensure biodiesel blends are available throughout the province.

## **ALTERNATIVE ENERGY – Wind**

### **Recent Success**

- The province's plan to develop wind has resulted in the development of a 99-megawatt wind farm at St. Leon and the government has committed to a request for proposals later this year to develop 300 megawatts in new wind development, enough energy to power 100,000 homes.

### **Specific New Action**

- The province will be introducing a Green Energy Manufacturing Tax Credit to promote the development and manufacture of clean energy technology.
- The government remains committed to working with industry and Manitoba Hydro to develop 1,000 megawatts of wind over the next decade.

## **TOURISM**

### **Recent Success**

- The province's successful cottage lots program has given Manitobans access to 1,000 new cottage lots, encouraging economic activity in rural Manitoba.
- The government has made significant investments in provincial parks including developing a successful new made-in-Manitoba parks reservation system.
- Travel Manitoba was created, an arms-length agency of government to promote tourism opportunities in Manitoba.
- The government has invested \$1 million for Trans Canada Trail development in Manitoba to promote tourism and recreation opportunities.

### **Specific New Action**

- The government will enhance the experience in Manitoba provincial parks by making new investments in parks infrastructure.
- Further improvements and enhancements to the Manitoba cottage lots program will be made.
- The province will make new investments to promote tourism in rural and northern Manitoba.

## **INDUSTRY – Services And Manufacturing**

### **Recent Success**

- The government recently announced a new \$4 billion long-term commitment to Manitoba highways, to help ensure industry has the infrastructure necessary to get products to market.
- To help build quality of life and attract investment to rural and northern Manitoba, the province has made significant investments in amenities such as the Keystone Centre in Brandon and recreation centres in rural and northern Manitoba including Dauphin, Thompson and The Pas.
- To bring training opportunities closer to rural Manitobans, the government made a \$1-million investment in the Eastman Education Centre in Steinbach and is redeveloping the Assiniboine Community College in Brandon.
- The government provided a new \$420,000, four-year funding package to Junior Achievement Manitoba to help train the next generation of Manitoba entrepreneurs.

### **Specific New Action**

- The government will make changes to the Rural Entrepreneur Assistance Program to provide more opportunities for rural businesses.
- This year, the Building Manitoba Fund will provide \$7 million for new recreation options in rural and northern Manitoba.
- The new department of competitiveness, training and trade will lead a campaign to reduce red tape in government, focusing on the creation of a single window service for businesses.
- The government will expand Manitoba's sector council network to develop new opportunities in areas such as apprenticeship, co-op education programs, improving recruitment from colleges and universities into the workforce and introducing new vocational options at the high school level.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Recent Success**

- The province has moved forward in protecting Manitoba's diverse natural landscape. The provincial network of protected areas includes 45 partially- or wholly-protected wildlife management areas, 21 ecological reserves and two provincial forests. As well, there are 44 partially- or wholly-protected park reserves and provincial parks.
- The government has invested more than \$100 million in 100 water-quality projects in Manitoba since 1999.
- Manitoba recently announced over \$4 million to support provincial drainage programs.

### **Specific New Action**

- Recognizing that clean water has significant economic as well as environmental benefits, the government will continue in efforts to protect Manitoba's water quality.
- The province will continue to make water infrastructure a priority in jointly-funded federal/provincial initiatives.
- The government will continue to expand the number of conservation districts.
- Through the provincial Agro-Woodlot program, the government will continue to provide technical advice and support for sustainable management and promotion of woodlots.
- The government will continue to protect wildlife and natural spaces, and cleanup contaminated sites. This year, the province listed woodland caribou as threatened under Manitoba's Endangered Species Act. In the upcoming year, the province will list two bird and three plant species. The government will also work with First Nations and stakeholders to enact permanent protection for Poplar River and develop special protection measures for Little Limestone Lake.

## **ABORIGINAL AND NORTHERN**

### **Recent Success**

- The 200-megawatt Wuskwatim generating station near Nelson House will create nearly 800 jobs over the next six years.
- The government has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote the production and availability of healthy, affordable food under the province's Northern Healthy Foods Initiative.
- The province has moved forward with the University College of the North, an innovative institution that educates northerners in their own communities and contributes to the next generation of northern nurses, teachers, tradespeople and social workers.
- The government has made major road improvements in the north to reduce the costs of transportation.

### **Specific New Action**

- The province will develop the Conawapa dam, which will build on the more than 800 jobs the Wuskwatim generating station will create under the unique partnership between Manitoba Hydro and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.
- In co-operation with the Northern Forest Diversification Centre, the government will work to develop new markets for non-timber forest products.
- Manitoba will work with the communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg on developments that are sensitive to the environment of the region and to the needs and wishes of the people who live there.
- The province will continue to promote the use of the Port of Churchill including defending the port's largest user, the Canadian Wheat Board.
- The government will build on the historic investment to rehabilitate abandoned mine sites, creating employment opportunities for northern communities while protecting the environment and human health.
- The Northern Healthy Foods Initiative will be expanded from the initial 15 communities in the pilot and the province will test a new form of truck transport, Rocky Mountain Doubles, designed to reduce northern freight costs.