



# Release

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For Immediate Release

## HISTORIC ANNOUNCEMENT COMMEMORATES START OF CONSTRUCTION ON THE EXPANSION OF THE RED RIVER FLOODWAY

### Government of Canada Re-Affirms Funding Commitment to Complete Red River Floodway Expansion Project

**Grande Pointe, MB** – Premier Gary Doer and Reg Alcock, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, along with former Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin, Gord Steeves, Acting Deputy Mayor, on behalf of Mayor of Winnipeg Sam Katz and the Rt. Honourable Herb Gray, Canadian Chair of the International Joint Commission of Canada and the United States (IJC) today officially kicked off construction on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project.

As part of this historic announcement, the Government of Canada reaffirmed its commitment to the joint pledge with the province announced on April 3, 2003 to complete the expansion of the Red River Floodway over the next several years. This project will provide a 1-in-700 year flood protection for the residents of Winnipeg, West St. Paul, and East St. Paul. The cost of completing the full project is estimated at \$665 million. The Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba have already contributed \$240 million toward that total.

“The Red River Floodway has protected the residents of Winnipeg from major flooding on many occasions since its construction, saving Manitobans more than \$8 billion in flood damages,” said Doer. “Today, we are building on the benefits and legacy of the original floodway to ensure that Winnipeg is protected for generations to come.”

“The expansion of the Red River Floodway ensures that Winnipeg and surrounding communities will continue to be protected from the significant social, economic and environmental devastation of flooding,” said Alcock. “The Floodway expansion project will not only provide flood relief, but will also protect the environment, create more than a thousand jobs and stimulate local economic development opportunities. The Government of Canada is pleased to partner with Manitoba on this critical flood protection project.” Alcock also noted that the Government of Canada endorsed the floodway expansion project as a national priority in August 2003.

“Canada’s and Manitoba’s decision to expand the floodway is a tribute to all of those workers who provided their hard work and dedication to the construction of the original floodway,” said Roblin. “Over the years, their work has proved its worth on many occasions and today’s announcement means that the floodway will continue protect to the residents of Winnipeg long into the future.”

“Without floodway expansion, there is a significant risk that Winnipeg would be flooded within 50 years,” said Steeves. “This project will protect the residents of Winnipeg and prevent the enormous economic, environmental and emotional trauma that could result from major flooding of our city. We are very pleased that Canada and Manitoba are moving ahead with this critical flood protection project.”

After the 1997 “Flood of the Century”, the International Joint Commission reviewed flood protection in the Red River Valley and concluded that: “the risk of failure of Winnipeg’s existing flood protection infrastructure is high under flow conditions similar to or greater than those experienced in 1997.” In response, Canada and Manitoba reviewed various flood protection options and determined that floodway expansion to the 1-in-700 flood level provided the maximum cost-benefit.

Construction on the project began last week with the excavation of the floodway embankment east of Grande Pointe. The excavation will create an opening in the floodway embankment that will facilitate the efficient movement of water into the floodway channel, thereby improving flood protection in the area. It is estimated that the excavation will increase flow into the floodway channel by 31,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). This excavation work and the construction of a third “notch”, builds on two previous notches constructed on the floodway embankment by Manitoba Water Stewardship after the 1997 flood. The contract for the project was awarded last month to a joint venture between Strilkiwski Contracting Ltd from Dauphin, Manitoba, and Nelson House Forest Industries, a firm owned by Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.

“Over the last two years, the MFA has undertaken an extensive environmental review and public consultation process on the project,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA). “We would like to thank all those Manitobans who participated in this process for their input.”

In July, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) received an environmental license from Manitoba Conservation and the Government of Canada provided approval under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act that allows funding and regulatory authorizations for the project to proceed. Gilroy indicated that MFA is fully committed to taking federal and provincial licensing conditions for environmental approval fully into account in the project.

By improving flood protection to the 1-in-700 year level of protection, floodway expansion is estimated to protect more than 450,000 Manitobans, over 140,000 homes, over 8,000 businesses and prevent more than \$12 billion in damages to the provincial economy. The estimated budget for the floodway expansion is approximately \$665 million. The project is scheduled to provide a 1-in-700 year level of flood protection for the spring of 2009 with associated bridge and related work being completed in 2010.

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**BACKGROUNDER**  
**THE RED RIVER FLOODWAY EXPANSION PROJECT**

- The Red River Floodway expansion project will protect more than 450,000 Manitobans, over 140,000 homes, over 8,000 businesses, and prevent more than \$12 billion in damages to the provincial economy in the event of a 1 in 700 year flood.
- The risk of Winnipeg Flooding with the existing floodway is 37 per cent over the next 50 years. Floodway expansion will reduce this risk from 37 to 7 percent for the 50 year period.
- The 1997 “Flood of the Century” was a 1-in-100 year flood while floodway expansion will provide a 1-in-700 year level of flood protection.
- In the event of 1-in-700 year flood, approximately 2/3 of Winnipeg would be inundated with sewer and overland flooding with the existing floodway. This flooding would be significantly reduced to isolated areas along rivers in Winnipeg after the floodway is expanded.
- In the aftermath of the 1997 “Flood of the Century”, the Governments of Canada and Manitoba invested \$130 million in flood protection measures, including \$110 million for rural Manitoba communities in the Red River Valley.
- After the 1997 “Flood of the Century”, Canada and Manitoba provided approximately 245 million in Disaster Financial Assistance.
- The existing Floodway was constructed between 1962 and 1968 at a cost of \$63 million. Since its completion, the floodway has saved Manitobans more than \$8 billion in flood damage losses.
- The floodway channel is approximately 48 kilometres long and runs from the Inlet Control Structure south of Winnipeg to Lockport, MB.
- The expansion project will divert more water around Winnipeg during major floods by increasing the capacity of the floodway channel from 1,700 cubic metres (60,000 cubic feet) of water per second to 4,000 cubic metres (140,000 cubic feet) per second.
- Floodway expansion involves a major expansion of the existing floodway protection system including modifications to the Floodway Channel, replacement of 12 bridge crossings, improvements to the Inlet and Outlet control works, modifications to utilities and services and the expansion of the West Dike. 12 bridge crossings (6 highway and 6 rail bridge crossings) that cross the floodway will be completely replaced or modified with upgraded structures as part of the floodway project.
- To protect groundwater, the floodway channel will be widened rather than deepened. It is estimated that the width of the channel will be increased by 110 metres (350 feet).
- The estimated amount of earth required to be excavated from the channel is approximately 21 million cubic metres (27 million cubic yards).
- 100 million cubic yards of earth was excavated for the construction of the original floodway resulting in the largest excavation project of its kind in North America at the time. The volume of earth excavated for the original floodway exceeded the excavation for the Suez Canal and was exceeded by only the Panama Canal.
- It is estimated that over 1000 jobs will be created over five years for the floodway expansion project. To apply for work on the project, all interested individuals are required to register with the Job Referral Service through any of the 17 ETS Centres located throughout the province. For more information, please contact ETS at 945-0575 (in Winnipeg) or toll-free at 1(866)332-5077 or visit the Floodway Job Referral Service at [www.gov.mb.ca/jobreferral](http://www.gov.mb.ca/jobreferral).