From Serendipity to Planned Practice

Welcoming Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon, Manitoba

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Outline

- Overview of Brandon
- Recent Immigration Trends
- Moving from serendipity to a planned process
- Highlight current welcoming community research initiatives

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Brandon, Manitoba

- Population = 41,511
- Second largest city in Manitoba
- Surrounded by rural and agricultural communities
- Relatively homogenous population over time

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Recent Immigration Trends in Brandon

- 1991 - 2000
  - 410 immigrants to the city
- 2001 - 2006
  - 780 immigrants to the city
- 2007
  - 642 new immigrants
  - Highest rate of immigration growth in the province

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Industry

Maple Leaf Foods Brandon

- 1999: Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened
- 2001: MLF began foreign recruitment campaign
- 2008: Second shift fully operational
- Approximately 1,500 international recruits employed at MLF
  - 70% of employees are international recruits
  - From Mexico, El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, Honduras and Mauritius.

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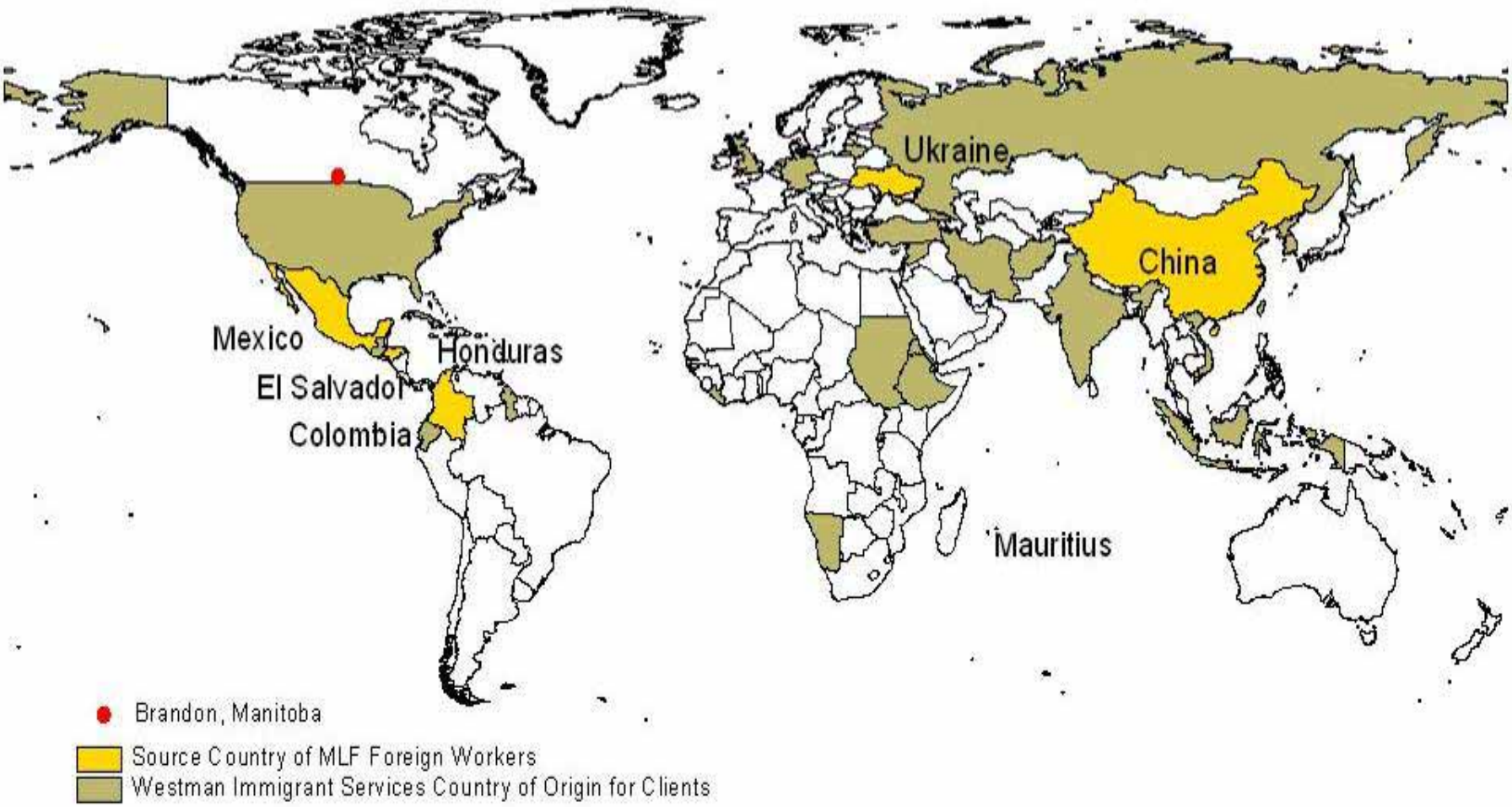
Source Country of New Residents in Brandon



‘Transitional’ Foreign Workers

- Reality is that temporary foreign workers are staying
- ‘Temporary’ implies temporary needs for service provision
- Need *local* strategies that recognize transitional nature of temporary foreign workers
- Resources for rural immigration planning are difficult to locate

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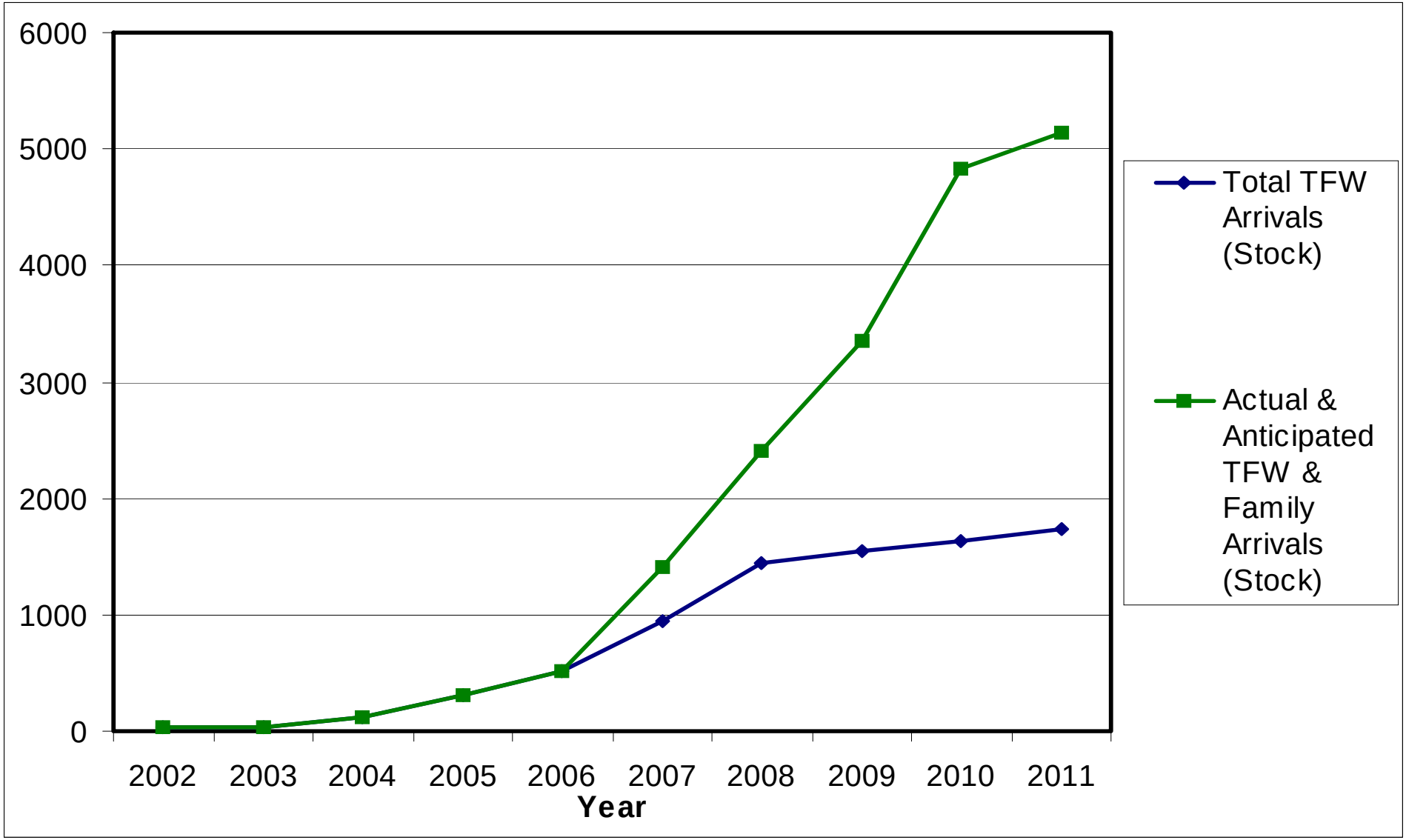
Temporary Foreign Workers and Family Arrival Estimates



Moving to a Planned Process – Welcoming Community Initiatives

- Pre-registration of school children for international workers
  - School Division held a series of pre-registration events at MLF
  - Assists school in planning for the arrival of new students
  - Assists international workers prepare for bringing family members to Brandon
- Community meetings
  - Co-hosted by MLF and Economic Development Brandon to provide updates to the community

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Temporary Foreign Worker Dialogue Group

- 2007: First meeting
- Forum for community organizations, industry, government, and researchers
- Bridge information and communication gaps
- Information sharing

Membership

- Economic Development Brandon
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Rural Secretariat
- Service Canada
- Brandon School Division
- Brandon Regional Health Authority
- Westman Immigrant Services
- Maple Leaf Foods

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Current Welcoming Community and Rural Immigrant Research Initiatives

- Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies
  - Designed to understand intercultural relations from the perspectives of recent immigrants and long-time residents
- Welcoming Community
  - Capacity building and benchmarking welcoming community indicators
- Ethnocultural Organizations in Rural Manitoba
  - Increase the understanding of ethnocultural groups

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A copy of the presentation is posted on the RDI website