

STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS

Manitoba is ranked fifth in population growth in Canada. Since 2001, we have increased in population at a rate of 2.6%. Our current population stands at 1,148,401.

- The southeast portion of Manitoba makes up for 7.6% of the 2.6% increase.
- The Interlake has increased at a rate of 5.4%
- The South-Central region increased at a rate of 4.1%.
- Steinbach, with a growth rate of 19.9%, is the fastest growing city in the Province.
- Winnipeg has had a 2.2% increase.

WABANONG NAKAGUM OKIMAWIN RECEIVES \$2.5 MILLION

The Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation, recently announced a five-year, \$2.5 million transfer agreement between the government of Manitoba and Wabanong Nakagum Okimawin (WNO) Council of Chiefs.

The \$2.5 million will be distributed in payments of \$500,000 over the next five years ending in 2011. First Nations people will apply to the WNO to receive funding for their individual land-use plans.

“The priority for First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples is the well-being of its people, protecting traditional ceremonies

and practices, and making sure the land is properly cared for,” said **Nelson Keeper**, chair of WNO.

The top priority for the WNO is to provide protection to the environment and boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Sustainable land and resource development are also included in the long-term plan.

MANITOBA LEADS THE WAY IN GEOTHERMAL TECHNOLOGY

The Honourable Jim Rondeau, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, recently announced that Manitoba is at three times the Canadian average in geothermal installations. Rondeau made the announcement while attending the first conference of the Manitoba Geothermal Energy Alliance (MGEA). Manitoba Hydro’s Power Smart Loan program has been a factor in the acceleration of geothermal installations. Although the initial installation cost of geothermal units is higher, the operating costs for these units is about half of the cost for a high efficient furnace or electric baseboard heat.

“The success of geothermal has been due to a combination of Manitoba’s highly skilled and entrepreneurial geothermal industry, promotion of the technology by Manitoba Hydro and attractive economics,” said **Brent Laufer**, president of MGEA. “Geothermal simply saves money by reducing heat bills for Manitoba.” MGEA membership has doubled in the past year.

EXTENDED COVERAGE FOR GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Honourable Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health, recently announced the Province would extend coverage of inter-facility medical transport into neighbouring provinces or states.

The Province will now provide extended coverage to the cost of ground ambulance service:

- If a Manitoba resident who regularly sees a physician across the border is admitted to a hospital in that community and subsequently requires an inter-facility transfer (IFT) back to a hospital in Manitoba;
- If a resident is in a Manitoba border hospital and requires services best accessed from a hospital across the border in a neighbouring province or state; or
- If a resident in an accident close to a border in Manitoba is transported to a hospital across the border but subsequently requires an IFT to a hospital in Manitoba to access specialized services or to recover.

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IFT transfers will apply to those situations that are deemed medically necessary as determined by a physician. Restrictions related to out-of-province travel still apply. Manitobans should have travel insurance for travel outside the province, whether for business or pleasure.

HOMETOWN MANITOBA PROGRAM POPULAR

The Honourable Rosann Wowchuk, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, announced provincial funding for the Hometown Manitoba program has reached record proportions. Funding for 267 rural and northern community improvement projects is at \$479,400. This in turn will generate an additional \$2.4 million in community investments.

The Hometown Manitoba program provides funding for two categories:

1. Meeting Places Projects – where the focus is on exterior public meeting places, main street enhancements, green space development and community signage;
2. Main Streets Projects – assist non-profit organizations, co-operatives, and businesses to complete enhancements and upgrades to their buildings and the surrounding green spaces.

The Hometown Manitoba program was introduced in 2004 with 176 projects approved sharing more than \$300,000. In 2005, 190 projects shared over \$350,000 and in 2006 there were 168 projects sharing just over \$312,000.

Hometown Manitoba program information and applications for funding is available through any GO office at toll-free 1-800-567-7334 or at the Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/ri/community/ria01s04.html>.

FARMERS' MARKETS ENCOURAGE MANITOBBANS TO BUY LOCAL

Manitobans and visitors to the province are encouraged to look for the famous farmers' markets and roadside stands that are once again appearing in neighbourhoods and communities province-wide, providing an excellent selection of Manitoba's fresh foods, Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk said recently.

"Supporting farmers' markets is a great opportunity to meet people who produce some of the best food available and a chance to experience the flavours of homegrown goodness," said Wowchuk. "Consumers benefit from the quality of fresh, locally-pro-

duced foods while supporting the livelihoods of Manitoba producers."

In support of local farmers, the Province has produced two brochures identifying the locations and dates of farmers' markets, roadside stands and U-pick businesses: *Your Guide to Farmers' Markets in Manitoba 2007* and *Enjoy the Great Taste of Manitoba Vegetables 2007*. The brochures are available at all Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives GO offices and online at <http://www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/consumer>.

"A trip to the farmers' market means you get the pick of the crop," said Wowchuk.

"Celebrate summer with foods fresh from Manitoba fields." 🍷



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