



# WEST AT A GLANCE INNOVATION

*A strengthened western Canadian innovation system*

Winter 2018

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Cat. No. Iu92-2/1E-PDF  
ISSN 2561-3863



## Inside this Issue

News and Analysis	1
Innovation Success Stories	11
Look Ahead	15
Upcoming Events	16
Key Economic Indicators	18

## About Western Economic Diversification Canada

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) was established to promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada and to advance the interests of the West in national economic policy, program and project development and implementation.

The Department plays a key role as co-investor, convener, and champion for the West, making strategic investments that strengthen the West's traditional economic drivers while accelerating the development of new opportunities.

WD's strategic investments help researchers and businesses move new ideas from the test bench to the market, support skills development and foster business innovation. WD also advocates on behalf of western Canadian industry, working to ensure that businesses are strong, competitive, and poised to take advantage of opportunities in the global marketplace.



# NEWS AND ANALYSIS

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### ***Cascadia innovation initiative gathers momentum***

In September 2016, the Business Council of British Columbia, the Washington Roundtable and Microsoft Corporation launched the initiative to leverage the complementary strengths of Seattle and Vancouver's technology sectors with an event in Vancouver entitled the Emerging Cascadia Innovation Corridor Conference. Cascadia refers to the Pacific Northwest region, including British Columbia and the states of Oregon and Washington. The initiative was based on the idea that Seattle, Vancouver and other cities in the region share attributes that are considered indicators of innovation potential – progressive political environments, well-educated populations and high-quality research universities – and that this potential could be better realized through improved integration and collaboration.

The event resulted in a number of agreements

and joint projects. The governments of BC and Washington State committed to work closely to “enhance meaningful and results driven innovation and collaboration”. Three healthcare organizations – the BC Cancer Agency, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and the Seattle Care Alliance – also committed to develop a “master collaboration agreement” to advance patient care, research and training. Improving transportation linkages was another area of focus, with Washington State and Microsoft committing funding to a feasibility study for a potential high-speed rail line to connect Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. Harbour Air and Washington-based Kenmore Air also agreed to work together on a new seaplane route between Vancouver and Seattle – a connection that Microsoft is keen to access.

The second annual Cascadia Innovation Corridor Conference was held in Seattle in September 2017. The event saw the Cascadia concept broadened to include the State of Oregon, and led to further



collaborative agreements and projects. The British Columbia Institute of Technology, Lake Washington Institute of Technology and Oregon Institute of Technology agreed to leverage their applied education offerings in high-demand fields in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Global Innovation Exchange, an international advanced education partnership co founded by the University of Washington and Tsinghua University in Beijing, expanded to include the University of British Columbia (UBC) as an academic network member.

Most recently, in December 2017, 48 organizations from BC, Washington and Oregon announced the Cascadia Venture Acceleration Network to increase cross-border collaboration and foster the development of a regional innovation hub. The partnership of incubators, accelerators, universities, investors and industry associations will initially focus on innovation in life sciences, information technology and cleantech. The key goals of the new partnership are to introduce innovators to cross-border funding and support opportunities, facilitate trade and collaboration for innovators, and share activities such as workshops, seminars, and

other educational and networking events. BC signatories include Accelerate Okanagan, BC Innovation Council, BC Tech Association, Foresight CleanTech Accelerator, Kensington Capital Partners, LifeSciences BC, Mitacs, UBC, Simon Fraser University, Wavefront and others.

Consistent with the Government of Canada's Innovation and Skills Plan, these developments are helping to realize BC's economic potential and further positive Canada US relations through cross-border collaboration. WD is an active participant in the Cascadia Initiative, using venues such as the Cascadia Innovation Corridor Conferences and Pacific NorthWest Economic Region to engage with technology stakeholders and provincial and state-level counterparts, and by funding projects that support the growth of BC's innovation economy, including through the commercialization of new technologies. The Cascadia initiative is enhancing regional competitiveness by boosting the linkages between high tech stakeholders, forging opportunities for business growth and innovation, and reducing connectivity barriers.



## ***Innovation at the intersection of BC's cleantech and mining industries***

The push towards Canada's low carbon future is creating opportunities and a need for innovation in many sectors of the Canadian economy, and the mining industry is emerging as a key contributor. The development of new, clean technologies and clean energy sources – from windmills and solar panels, to high-density batteries and electric vehicle components – requires the use of minerals and metals found in mines across Canada. For example, the production of a solar photovoltaic (PV) panel, requires 19 mineral and metal products, 14 of which can be

found and produced in Canada. Six of these metals are deemed 'critical materials' owing to their importance in the production of these technologies and to their scarcity.

As demand for clean technologies increases, so too does the demand for these minerals and metals. The recent reopening of several BC mines, new extraction projects moving through regulatory processes, and the emerging cleantech commodity market are promising signs that BC mining companies are benefiting from a cleaner economy. Combined with the province's emergence as a technology hub, BC mining companies are connecting with some of the world's leading cleantech innovators to reduce the environmental impacts of mining practices.



These efforts to 'green' the mining industry will be key to meeting Canada's goals to increase its supply of clean energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This past year, BC's mining industry was increasingly engaged with the local cleantech community. In November 2017, the Mining Association of BC participated for the first time in Clean Energy BC's Generate conference, which brought together innovators and administrators from across sectors. Earlier in the year, WD collaborated with the Advanced Resource Clean Technology Innovation Centre to host the Mining for Solutions event in January 2017, which promoted innovation in the mining sector by convening key industry stakeholders and exposing them to innovative

solutions to address environmental challenges.

Industry leaders continue to advocate for greater collaboration between universities and the cleantech, clean energy and natural resources sectors as a way of generating innovative solutions to environmental challenges. WD will continue to support the development of innovative clean technologies across Western Canada through the Department's funding programs and through convening activities that promote adoption of these new solutions.



# ALBERTA

## ***Activity building in Alberta's clean technology innovation space***

Several government and industry initiatives are promoting innovation in Alberta's clean technology sector, particularly innovation related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by the energy industry. According to the [2017 Canadian Clean Technology Report](#) produced by Analytica Advisors, Alberta's sector grew from 98 clean technology companies in 2013 to 112 in 2015, and has continued to grow. The [2018 Cleantech Directions](#) report found that the energy sector is the main target market for 39 percent of the province's cleantech companies.

The provincial government is working to support the cleantech sector through its efforts to position Alberta's oil and gas industry as a key part of a low carbon economy. On December 5th, 2017, the Government of Alberta [announced](#) a \$1.4 billion Energy Innovation Fund that will use the province's carbon levy to help the energy industry increase economic growth, create jobs and reduce carbon emissions. Specifically, it includes \$225 million in funding for innovation projects across sectors to develop emissions reduction technologies. It also contains \$240 million for energy-efficiency projects in large industrial, agricultural and manufacturing operations, \$63 million for bioenergy projects, and \$400 million in green loan guarantees to help reduce risk for financial institutions that



investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Fund also includes \$440 million to support innovation that helps oilsands companies adjust to a new regulatory framework for large emitters. These new rules were announced on December 6th, and replaced the Specified Gas Emitters Regulation on January 1, 2018. Known as the Carbon Competitiveness Incentives (CCIs) plan, the regulations provide an incentive to reduce emissions by rewarding credits to facilities with relatively low emissions while penalizing those whose emissions are above an industry benchmark. The Government of Alberta expects the CCIs to reduce emissions by 20 million tonnes by 2020, and 50 million tonnes by 2030. The levy will be gradually phased in over three years, with industry expected to pay 50 percent of their obligations in 2018, rising to the full amount by 2020.

Energy industry stakeholders have also been taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean technology innovation. Recent examples include Calgary-based Titanium Corporation Inc., which is partnering with Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL) to reduce methane emissions at CNRL's Horizon oilsands site by building the first commercial installation of Titanium's technology. The technology works to recover bitumen, solvents and minerals from froth treatment tailings streams, responsible for an estimated 90 percent of methane emissions from tailings ponds. As the technology can also be used at other oilsands operations, the results of the project will be shared through Canada's Oil Sands Innovation Alliance (COSIA) – an alliance of oilsands producers focused on improving environmental performance by developing and sharing new technologies and innovations. Calgary-based Imaginea.io, has recently rebranded itself and embarked on a new Clean Hydrocarbon Ecosystem (CHE) initiative that aims to accelerate the energy company's goal of producing clean

hydrocarbons without emissions, pollution or the use of fresh water. The CHE initiative involves partnering with clean technology companies, acting as a technology accelerator, developing a digital twin of the regulatory system on blockchain, and using data analytics from the data collected from the digitization of the oilfield.

WD supports industry efforts to develop clean technology solutions for the province's energy sector, and is directing its funds to leverage industry contributions to this area. On December 20th, WD announced nearly \$3.5 million in funding for several Calgary-based organizations to develop emissions reductions technologies and promote Alberta clean technology companies at high-profile events. The funding will support projects at the University of Calgary, Tecterra Inc., CMC Research Institutes Inc., the Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada, the CapitalRoad Foundation, the Alberta Clean Technology Industry Alliance and the Canadian Global Exploration Forum.

According to the 2018 Cleantech Directions report, 68 percent of Alberta cleantech companies said that "legislation, regulation or government policy changes associated with climate change" have increased interest in or demand for their technology. This alignment of climate policy, funding and industry support has helped to create the conditions necessary for growth of the clean technology sector in the province. Alberta is uniquely positioned in this regard, given the innovative nature of the energy industry and the opportunities presented by the shift towards clean resource development.

# SASKATCHEWAN

## ***Saskatchewan releases climate change strategy***

In December 2017, The Government of Saskatchewan released its climate change strategy, which proposes climate resilience policies related to natural systems, physical infrastructure, economic sustainability and community preparedness. The strategy also outlines regulatory measures for Saskatchewan's electricity sector and the upstream oil and gas sector, and proposes new emissions intensity standards for large industrial emitters outside of these sectors.

Under the strategy, large emitters that emit above their allowable level will have a number of compliance options, including: making improvements to reduce emissions intensity at their facility, purchasing offsets, using credits purchased from another facility, using internationally transferred mitigation outcomes, and paying into a provincial technology fund. As such, the strategy contains elements of carbon pricing for large emitting facilities (though it does not include an explicit price on carbon). Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change noted that the price implied by Saskatchewan's plan will likely not meet the carbon pricing standard put forward by the Government of Canada because it does not establish an economy-wide carbon price. Beginning on January 1, 2019, jurisdictions that will not meet the federal standard, will be subject to the federal carbon pricing backstop (in whole or as a "top up") at a price of \$20 per tonne.

The strategy's impact on Saskatchewan's economy will depend on the stringency of any new regulations, and on whether emissions-intensive sectors are able to reduce emissions through new innovations. New regulatory requirements for emitters and the establishment of a provincial clean technology fund can help to increase both

demand for clean technologies, as well as the supply of capital to support clean technology innovation in Saskatchewan. WD supports the development of innovative clean technology clusters in Western Canada. The Department will continue to work with stakeholders in Saskatchewan to support the development and commercialization of innovative clean technologies that improve economic competitiveness and reduce environmental impacts, such as greenhouse gas emissions.

## ***Saskatoon's technology sector attracting international attention***

Saskatoon's technology sector has recently witnessed a series of high-profile acquisitions (for example, Solido Design Automation and Noodlecake Studios) and investments that highlight the success of key firms and the sector's growing importance in Saskatoon. While Saskatchewan's technology sector is still relatively small, leading Saskatoon-based technology firms have recently experienced strong growth. Solido and Vendasta Technologies have both been featured on Deloitte's list of fastest-growing technology companies and are in the midst of expanding their operations in Saskatoon. Solido was recently purchased by a subsidiary of Siemens AG. According to Solido's President and CEO, Siemens AG plans to carry on with the expansion currently underway at Solido's Saskatoon office.

According to the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA), growing Saskatoon's technology sector will support economic growth and diversification and job creation. Additionally, the knowledge and high earning power of technology sector

workers provide broader community benefits. However, SREDA also notes that Saskatchewan's technology sector faces challenges related to capital funding, business scale-up support and access to talent.

WD is helping technology firms in Saskatchewan to overcome these challenges with funding support through the Western Innovation (WINN) Initiative, which offers repayable contributions to small and medium-sized enterprises to move innovative new technologies to the marketplace. Through WINN, WD has supported technology companies in Western Canada, including Solido and Vendasta. WD has also assisted technology firms with high growth potential through the Government of Canada's Accelerated Growth Service (AGS). The AGS provides firms with access to federal government services to help them expand and become more globally competitive.

## ***Growing opportunities for Saskatchewan agricultural producers and food processors***

A growing global population and middle class are driving increased demand for plant-based protein. According to the Canada West Foundation (CWF), the global market for plant-based protein is expected to grow from roughly \$8 billion USD to \$14.8 billion USD by 2023. Plant-based protein and ingredients are used in human food, and are also increasingly being used in animal feed and pet food. The growing demand for plant-based protein and ingredients presents a significant opportunity for Western Canada, as the Prairie Provinces are leaders in the production of key crops such as pulses, canola and oats.

The CWF also notes that the region's strengths in pulse production will create opportunities for value-added processing in Western

Canada, as shipping costs for processed crops are typically lower than for bulk crops. Recent investments in processing capacity reflect demand for plant-based protein and ingredients. There are also several additional pea processing facilities currently being planned or built in Western Canada. New facilities will help to create stable demand for Western Canadian peas and reduce reliance on exports of bulk crops.

Saskatchewan is also a leader in livestock research and production. For example, the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence at the University of Saskatchewan is engaged in research related to all aspects of raising livestock, including cattle production, forage production and environmental sustainability. A&W Canada recently donated \$5 million towards the Centre.

Protein Industries Canada (PIC), a consortium of over 60 innovation partners, is working to seize opportunities related to plant-based protein in Western Canada. According to its mission statement, PIC aims to "Position Canada as the world's paramount supplier of plant-based proteins and related products." PIC has applied for funding under the Government of Canada's Superclusters Initiative, an initiative that will invest up to \$950 million between 2017 and 2022 to support business-led innovation superclusters. PIC is one of nine applicant organizations that have been shortlisted for funding by the Government of Canada. The establishment of a plant-based protein supercluster would help to create new opportunities for Western Canadian producers and food processors, and further grow and diversify the region's economy.



# MANITOBA

## ***Made-in-Manitoba emission plan announced***

The Government of Manitoba has decided to bypass the federal carbon tax proposal and come up with its own: the Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan. The Made-in-Manitoba plan focuses on the four pillars of climate, jobs, water and nature. In the press releases accompanying the plan, Premier Brian Pallister said that Manitoba should be acknowledged for having one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, and the Made-in-Manitoba plan reflects the investment in clean energy that Manitoba has already made.

According to the published Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan (2017), the strategy includes a \$25 per tonne carbon tax instead of the \$50 per tonne the federal government is implementing; a 5 percent biodiesel mandate for all diesel sold at pumps in Manitoba; a stand-alone agency dedicated to curbing emissions; electric buses; coal phase-out implemented ahead of schedule; and the adoption of measures to implement a low-carbon government.

The Government of Manitoba believes it can reduce more emissions than the projected federal plan at lesser cost to Manitobans. The projected cumulative emissions reductions are between 2.3 and 2.6 megatonnes.



## **Manitoba Look North Program released**

The Manitoba Look North Program is a program designed to promote social and economic development in Northern communities. The program is based on engaging with northerners and putting their primary opinions into government action. The Look North task force gathered research from December 2016 to June 2017, which included tours, meetings with locals and stakeholders, and online engagement. The task force also held economic summits in Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Thompson and Churchill, which informed many of the program recommendations.

The program found that mining is the most likely source of economic success. There are also opportunities in hydro, forestry, fishing and tourism. Indigenous engagement and partnerships will also contribute to the success of local economies. The study also found that better infrastructure is vital to the success of northern Manitoba, as well as education, training and workforce development.

Tourism North and Travel Manitoba have drafted a companion strategy called the 'Northern Manitoba Tourism Strategy: 2017-2022'. The tourism and Look North strategies will work together to ensure that Northern Manitoba's interests and needs are included in provincial government actions.

# INNOVATION SUCCESS STORIES



## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### ***WD supports Indigenous communities in B.C. working to advance clean energy projects***

Indigenous communities across British Columbia are gaining support to adopt innovative clean energy infrastructure that will help create jobs, stimulate local economies and produce sustainable energy.

These communities are receiving support under the British Columbia Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) which is being implemented by [New Relationship Trust](#) (NRT),

an independent non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening, First Nations in BC. Funding for the BCICEI, totalling \$4.2 million over three years, comes from WD through the Strategic Partnerships Initiative.

Since 2016, the BCICEI has provided \$2.26 million for micro-hydro, solar, geothermal, bioenergy and innovative demand side management projects in 18 Indigenous communities across the province. In 2017-18, NRT supported 10 clean energy projects, totalling \$1.26 million. A third intake for the initiative is scheduled for early 2018.



Photo Credit: Serious Labs

# ALBERTA

## ***Serious things happening at Serious Labs***

Mention mandatory training to your employees and you can expect groans and eye rolling. However, an Alberta company has discovered how to make this sometimes-unpopular activity effective and enjoyable at the same time.

Serious Labs has transformed corporate training into a truly interesting experience, while still taking worker and worksite safety seriously. The company has created interactive and engaging courses using simulation and virtual reality. In collaboration with United Rentals (UR), the world's largest equipment rental company, Serious Labs has created many multi-faceted, industry award winning, training courses for UR's United Academy training network.

In 2014, Serious Labs' innovative, creative and smart approach sparked the interest of WD. The company received approximately \$1 million in WINN funding to develop seven interactive courses on worker and worksite safety and safe equipment operations. The funding also helped develop a cutting-edge collaborative learning management system and delivery platform that will allow employers and employees alike to store, track, access and share their training electronically.

The approach taken by Serious Labs is getting noticed. In August 2017, the company announced that it had received an investment of \$5 million USD in Series A equity funding from UR and Brick and Mortar Ventures to continue developing heavy industry training programs to make workers more competent, productive and safe. Serious Labs is also now leveraging the power of virtual reality.



Photo Credit: Solido Design Automation Inc.

# SASKATCHEWAN

## ***WINN applicant Solido Design Automation acquired by German Conglomerate***

Solido Design Automation Inc., based in Saskatoon, SK, is a world leader in variation-aware design and characterization software powered by proprietary machine learning technologies. Solido has successfully hired – either directly or indirectly – 46 engineers, computer scientists and mathematicians in Saskatoon, thanks in part to two projects with the WINN Initiative.

In November 2017, Deloitte's Technology Fast 500™ announced that Solido ranked 425th among the 500 fastest growing technology, media, telecommunications, life sciences and energy tech companies in North America. From 2013 to 2016, Solido grew 185 percent. Since 2009, Solido has been growing

by between 50 and 70 percent per year.

It was also announced in November 2017 that Siemens AG, Europe's largest industrial manufacturing company, had purchased Solido. Financial details have not been disclosed, however, it is speculated that this could be the largest technology deal in Saskatchewan history. Solido will remain at Innovation Place and continue to draw on the innovation talent of the University of Saskatchewan's engineering and computer science programs.

Exciting times are ahead at Solido as they conduct further research and development in other areas of automating electronic chip design and the digitalization of full systems.





Photo Credit: The Great GORP Project Inc.

# MANITOBA

## ***The Great GORP Project: How one woman's passion to fuel adventures turned into a business***

As a busy parent and avid triathlete, Colleen Dyck was looking for a convenient way to fuel her body. After doing some research, Colleen knew she could create an alternative to existing energy bars by using nutritious ingredients from her family's farm.

The result was The Great GORP Project Inc. – producing energy bars that could keep up with busy lives. What started as a passion project has grown into a business that employs 25 people and has tripled sales over three years.

Colleen was named “2016 Mompreneur of the Year” by the Mompreneur Showcase Group Inc. GORP energy bars were even featured at the 2017 Academy Awards. GORP customers include members of the Winnipeg Jets, Toronto Maple Leafs and Buffalo Sabres,

as well as Canadian Olympic cyclist Raphaël Gagné.

On May 13, 2017, The Great GORP Project Inc. received Western Innovation (WINN) Initiative funding to create a new product: ready-mix energy bars. Colleen is transforming the same local, quality ingredients into a dry goods product that consumers can customize with supplements before mixing into an energy bar. This innovative approach also helps fans access GORP's nutritious blend for a fraction of the price of ready-to-eat bars.

“Without the funding I received from WINN, I'm certain that I would not have been able to move forward with my new product development and equipment purchase,” Colleen says. “I am extremely grateful for the opportunity this funding has opened up. I will be able to grow my company and create more job opportunities in my community because of it!”

# LOOK AHEAD

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## NEW REPORT ON DIVERSIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES

In early 2018, the Government of Alberta is expected to release a report prepared by the Energy Diversification Advisory Committee, which was established in 2016 to explore opportunities for increasing the value of Alberta's resources and creating more jobs through ideas such as partial upgrading, refining, petrochemicals and chemicals manufacturing. The report will provide recommendations to the Minister of Energy on diversification opportunities in the province. WD anticipates that the report could also include some recommendations for how a variety of key stakeholders, including the federal government, might support value-added resource development in the province.

## ALBERTA'S THIRD QUARTER UPDATE

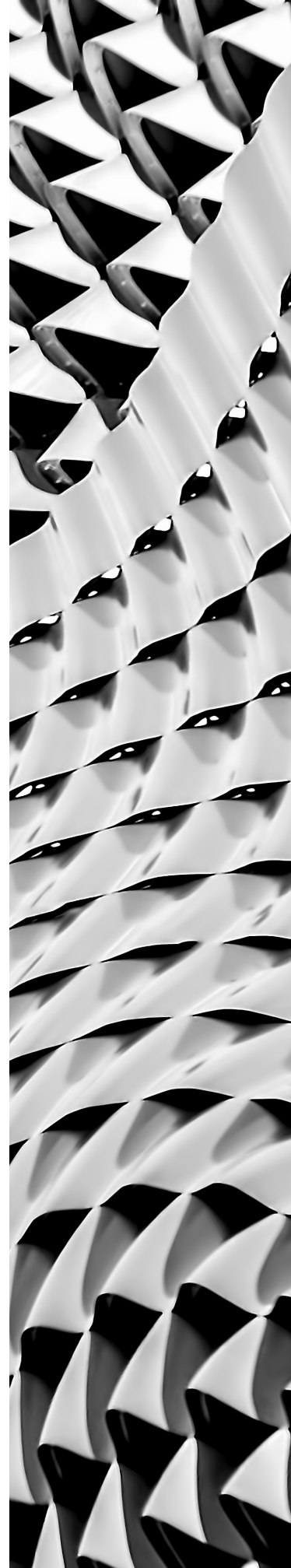
The Government of Alberta will release its Third Quarter Report, including a fiscal and economic update, in February 2018. This will be the final update before Budget 2018 is released in the spring.

## SASKATCHEWAN PARTY LEADERSHIP ELECTION

The Saskatchewan Party will elect a new leader at its leadership convention in Saskatoon on January 27, 2018. Candidates running for leadership of the party include former provincial cabinet ministers Tina Beaudry-Mellor, Ken Cheveldayoff, Scott Moe, and Gordon Wyant. Allana Koch, who previously served as Deputy Minister to the Premier and Cabinet Secretary, is also running to replace Brad Wall as leader of the Saskatchewan Party and Premier of Saskatchewan.

## REPORT ON MANITOBA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Manitoba will release a report from Deloitte that undertook a comprehensive review of the province's economic development efforts. In his 2017 State of the Province Address, Premier Brian Pallister noted that an early version of the report calls for a new economic growth strategy, a "Team Manitoba" investment partnership, and a new dedicated economic growth agency with modern and effective business development programs in one shop.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### **Canadian Financing Forum 2018**

Vancouver, BC | March 13, 2018

Hosted by Capital Road, the Canadian Financing Forum 2018 will feature presentations from approximately 25 of Canada's most promising IT and sustainable technology companies as they compete for the attention of top tier investors from across North America.

### **GLOBE Forum & Innovation Expo 2018**

Vancouver, BC | March 14-16, 2018

Hosted by GLOBE Series, the conference will bring together leaders from business, government and civil society to share insights and solutions on sustainability and a clean economy.

## ALBERTA

### **2018 Conference & AGM**

Banff, AB | March 21-23, 2018

Economic Developers Alberta is hosting their annual conference around the theme "Diverse. Determined. Driven."

### **2018 Cities and Climate Change Science Conference**

Edmonton, AB | March 5-7, 2018

The conference brings together government, academia, research organizations and others to assess the state of knowledge related to cities and climate change, and to establish a global research agenda based on the identification of key gaps.



# SASKATCHEWAN

## **Aboriginal Business Match (ABM) Prairies**

Regina, SK | February 26-28, 2018

This event focuses on business development for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal decision-makers regarding improving the bottom line, accelerating economic activity and other topics.

## **Herbicide Resistance Summit**

Saskatoon, SK | February 27-28, 2018

Organized by Top Crop Manager magazine, this event focuses on herbicide resistance where presentations will be given by lead researchers.

## **Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Annual Convention (SARM)**

Regina, SK | March 13-16, 2018

This event gives SARM members an opportunity to discuss issues, attend workshops and engage with Provincial Ministers, among other activities.

## **SustainTech 2018**

Saskatoon, SK | March 22, 2018

Hosted by the Saskatchewan Environmental Industry and Managers Association, this event brings together academia, industry, regulators and consultants to discuss environmental responsibility and sustainability.

# MANITOBA






## **Dare to Compete Conference 2018**

Winnipeg, MB | March 20, 2018

Hosted by Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, this event will explore manufacturing trends, strategies and best practices. It will include three internationally renowned keynote speakers, nine breakout sessions and a case-studies series with real, workplace ready solutions.



# KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	 British Columbia	 Alberta	 Saskatchewan	 Manitoba	 Canada	Last Update
<b>Gross Domestic Product</b>						
<b>Real GDP<sup>1</sup></b> (2007 \$billions, forecast)	\$232	\$314	\$61	\$58	\$1,772	2018
% ch. from year earlier	2.7%	2.1%	1.6%	1.3%	2.1%	
<b>Labour Market</b>						
<b>Employment (SA, thousands)</b>	2,491	2,322	569	646	18,648	Dec-17
Change from previous month	5.6	26.3	5.0	0.7	78.6	
% ch. from previous month	0.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.1%	0.4%	
% ch. from year earlier	3.4%	2.4%	0.1%	2.1%	2.3%	
<b>Unemployment Rate (SA,%)</b>	4.6%	6.9%	6.4%	5.7%	5.7%	Dec-17
percentage points from previous month	-0.2	-0.4	0.4	0.3	-0.2	
percentage points from year earlier	-1.2	-1.6	-0.2	-0.6	-1.2	
<b>Regular EI beneficiaries (SA)</b>	46,300	61,530	17,540	15,060	510,020	Oct-17
Change from previous month	-580	-1,420	-120	-30	-430	
% ch. from previous month	-1.2%	-2.3%	-0.7%	-0.2%	-0.1%	
% ch. from previous year	-18.3%	-38.1%	-14.4%	-3.6%	-12.3%	
<b>Average weekly earnings</b>	\$951.54	\$1,143.46	\$1,008.63	\$909.06	\$983.00	Oct-17
Change from previous year	\$34.04	\$38.99	\$18.70	\$26.95	\$29.56	
<b>Prices</b>						
<b>CPI (y/y)</b>	2.6%	2.5%	3.7%	3.2%	2.1%	Nov-17
CPI (y/y) previous month	2.0%	1.3%	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%	Oct-17
<b>Consumers and Business</b>						
<b>Retail Sales (SA, \$millions)</b>	\$7,302	\$6,812	\$1,675	\$1,675	\$49,919	Oct-17
% ch. from previous month	2.0%	0.8%	3.2%	1.9%	1.5%	
% ch. from previous year	10.5%	7.8%	6.1%	5.4%	6.7%	
<b>Manufacturing Sales (SA, \$millions)</b>	\$4,349	\$6,018	\$1,315	\$1,547	\$53,488	Oct-17
% ch. from previous month	2.1%	4.2%	-0.7%	-2.0%	-0.4%	
% ch. from previous year	8.9%	14.2%	7.1%	6.3%	4.3%	
<b>Building Permits (SA, \$millions)</b>	\$1,329	\$992	\$145	\$218	\$8,225	Oct-17
% ch. from previous month	-7.3%	-24.8%	-5.8%	5.0%	3.5%	
% ch. from previous year	17.1%	-51.2%	-9.7%	9.6%	1.0%	
<b>Housing Starts (SAAR, thousands)</b>	52	23	5	8	217	Dec-17
% ch. from previous month	9.9%	-33.2%	9.8%	11.5%	-13.8%	
% ch. from previous year	24.5%	-12.0%	-9.9%	91.3%	5.4%	
<b>International Trade</b>						
<b>Merchandise Exports (\$millions)</b>	\$3,522	\$8,415	\$2,384	\$1,345	\$42,401	Nov-17
% ch. from previous month	-0.7%	-0.9%	-7.5%	9.5%	2.3%	
% ch. from previous year	-6.2%	7.4%	-6.7%	10.1%	-0.7%	
<b>Merchandise Imports (\$millions)</b>	\$4,639	\$2,757	\$997	\$1,767	\$48,704	Nov-17
% ch. from previous month	7.0%	12.9%	15.3%	1.8%	5.0%	
% ch. from previous year	17.2%	42.8%	54.6%	9.5%	9.1%	
<b>Demographics</b>						
<b>Population (estimate)</b>	4,841,078	4,306,039	1,168,057	1,343,371	36,885,049	Q4 2017
% ch. from previous year	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%	
<b>Largest Cities (CMAs)</b>	Vancouver (2,463,431) Victoria* (367,770)	Calgary (1,392,609) Edmonton* (1,321,426)	Saskatoon (295,095) Regina* (236,481)	Winnipeg* (778,489)		2016

\* Provincial Capital

<sup>1</sup> Real GDP at basic prices, forecast for 2018 (Conference Board of Canada Provincial Outlook Autumn 2017)

SA - Seasonally adjusted

SAAR - Seasonally adjusted at annual rates

Sources: Statistics Canada and Conference Board of Canada