

■ Appendix 1: MANITOBA'S NORTH

In 2012, a special celebration hosted by Premier Greg Selinger focused on 100 years of success since northern Manitoba officially joined the province in 1912. The vision and determination of Aboriginal people, pioneers and the strength of communities have created a strong and diverse region, rich in natural resources, including clean, hydro-electric power.

New economic opportunities are opening up in northern Manitoba and across the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, pointing to a new era of investment, development and wealth creation.

The Manitoba government introduced the Northern Development Strategy in 2000 to build on the strengths of the north and invest in the future. A new strategy, Opportunities North, will continue the important focus on the north for the benefit of the province and northern residents.

In 2000, the Northern Development Strategy focused on five key areas: housing, health, transportation, employment and training, and economic development. The resulting investments have provided tangible benefits for the north and its citizens including:

- establishing the University College of the North with facilities in 14 communities to offer training closer to home;
- establishing dialysis treatment centres in Garden Hill, Norway House and Berens River;
- investing in the Port of Churchill and pursuing trade opportunities with Nunavut;
- devoting an increased share of the provincial highways budget to northern roads;
- developing an all-season road network to connect isolated communities east of Lake Winnipeg;
- investing in the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund, the Metis Economic Development Fund and expanding the Communities Economic Development Fund to support Aboriginal and northern entrepreneurs and job creation;
- launching the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative which has produced 800 gardens, 60 greenhouses, poultry and livestock operations, and a community freezer program to promote harvesting and preserving traditional foods in the north; and
- supporting the establishment of the Northern Manitoba Mining Academy in Flin Flon.

The Northern Development Strategy highlighted the value of partnerships between Aboriginal communities, the Manitoba government and private enterprise. The government's new Opportunities North strategy will continue to build on strong partnerships, ongoing consultations and efforts to ensure future development is sustainable and beneficial to northern residents. The continued development of clean hydro-electric power, the partnerships being developed on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and a thriving mining industry are key areas that will help drive future economic successes that benefit northern communities.





Hydro

In July, the Wuskwatim generating station on the Burntwood River officially opened. The 200 megawatt generating station was built through a unique equity partnership between Manitoba Hydro and Nisichawayasihk Cree First Nation community, which included training, employment and economic development for First Nations communities and northern residents.

Since 2000, Manitoba Hydro has increased the number of Aboriginal employees and now 42 per cent of its northern employees are Aboriginal. Between 2008 and 2012, Manitoba Hydro entered into contracts worth over \$200 million with Aboriginal and northern companies.

Planning is continuing to develop the proposed

695 megawatt Keeyask station and the 1,485 megawatt Conawapa dam. Over the next five years, Manitoba Hydro is expected to invest \$18 billion or more in capital spending, and recruit between 2,500 and 3,000 new employees. Contracts with local businesses, jobs, training and equity partnership will directly benefit individual northerners and support a thriving economy.

East Side Road Initiative

In March 2013, a fourth bridge was officially opened on the east side of Lake Winnipeg over the Red Sucker River. The bridge will be part of the permanent road system currently under construction, and extend the length of time local residents and commercial truck drivers can use the winter road network.

The development of the east side road system will link isolated communities and provide training in construction, skilled labour and heavy equipment operations for local communities.

Skills training and local investment were part of the \$5 million Red Sucker River bridge project, which was undertaken under a community benefits agreement employing approximately 28 local residents. Community benefit agreements worth a total of \$64 million are in place with 13 east side First Nations to ensure local residents benefit from job training and economic opportunities related to the construction of the all-weather road networks.

Additional new bridges were recently opened to coincide with this year's winter road season at Loon and Longbody Creeks on the all-season road between PR 304 and Bloodvein First Nation. Bloodvein First Nation will be the first remote community connected to the permanent road network since 1979 when construction of this section of the all-weather road is completed in 2014. Last year, the Wanipigow River bridge was opened to coincide with the start of the 2012 winter road season.



Mining

Mining and petroleum is the largest primary resource industry in Manitoba's economy, with 2012 production value exceeding \$3.0 billion and estimated capital expenditures of \$1.3 billion. The sector provides jobs for approximately 5,700 Manitobans, plus additional jobs generated through the service sector and spinoff businesses.

Manitoba is committed to supporting a strong mining sector through competitive mining tax rates and tax credits, as well as the Mineral Exploration Assistance Program and Manitoba Geoscience Advantage Program. Renewed efforts will be undertaken this year to reach out to local and First Nations communities to increase participation in this industry. These efforts may include initiatives such as joint venture partnerships, resource revenue benefit sharing, or job and training opportunities.

Other activities that will help drive northern development include completing the work of the Churchill Task Force, in partnership with the federal government. With the opening of Arctic shipping routes and the expansion of mining, tourism and research activities in the north, the Port of Churchill is poised to become a major hub in the next phase of northern development. Links to Nunavut and the northern territories are an immediate priority. The 2010 memorandum of understanding signed with Nunavut set out a framework to promote development and strengthen shipping and transportation links. Discussions are also underway with the federal government to develop a winter road to connect Manitoba and Nunavut.

Opportunities North

Opportunities North has a strong base on which to grow future success in the north. It will address the unique challenges and emerging issues of the north, and ensure northern communities and stakeholders have a direct role in shaping the strategic direction of the plan. The following principles will guide the new strategy:

- ensure economic development in the north benefits northerners
- reflect northern community values
- promote economic diversity and environmental sustainability
- reduce economic disparity
- respect Aboriginal rights and further reconciliation
- provide clarity in how development will proceed in the north.

The region's young population, natural resources and strong communities will be integral to a strong and dynamic northern region that provides a high standard of living for northern residents, attracts business investment, and brings in new residents and tourists. Opportunities North and its future partnerships will play an important role in new and ongoing development efforts.