



Chamber efforts help foreign workers get here faster

January 29, 2008

In mid January, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada Monte Solberg announced changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program making it easier for employers to hire much needed staff.

"The federal government has been very responsive to new ideas and solutions to address Calgary's labour shortage," says Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs.

In meetings with Minister Solberg, the Chamber proposed expanding the list of occupations in the federal government's Expedited Labour Market Opinion (LMO) Pilot Project to include as many of the occupations from the governments Occupations Under Pressure List as possible.

As a result of this announcement, employers are able to receive expedited LMOs for a broader range of occupations, including those in the construction industry, as well as engineers, steamfitters, pipefitters, ironworkers, and heavy-duty mechanics, among others.

Employers who want to hire foreign workers must apply for a LMO to assess the impact the foreign worker would have on the Canadian labour market. Under the expedited LMO project, applications for foreign workers to fill positions under pressure will be processed within five days by Service Canada.

"Temporary foreign workers are an important part of solving our labour shortage," says Pradella. "These are the people that are helping to build Alberta."

In previous meetings, the Chamber has also recommended that the federal government:

- Increase staffing and resource levels at Canadian embassies to improve the processing of visas and work permits for permanent residents, temporary foreign workers and international students;
- Prioritize visa and work permit applications based on Canada's "Occupations Under Pressure List" to help speed applicants in the most needed occupations;
- Examine the immigration policies and processes from successful countries (such as Australia and New Zealand) and adopt their most effective practices; and
- Work with the Alberta government to increase the number of candidates they can bring in through the provincial nominee program, an employer-driven initiative, which fast tracks the process for new immigrants to come to Alberta.

"Chamber members are working hard to recruit and retain workers," says Pradella. "They don't have time to come up with solutions to the labour shortage. That's our job. Look for more ideas in the future."

More Chamber initiatives to solve Calgary's labour shortage

[Chamber provides labour shortage solutions to the Federal Human Resources Minister](#)

Dec 11, 2007 - The Chamber's Human Resources Committee and policy staff offered new ideas to increase the supply of workers during a meeting last week with the federal Minister of Human



Resources and Social Development Monte Solberg. "We view underrepresented groups in the workforce such as older workers, aboriginal people, and new immigrants as critical to solving the labour shortage," said Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs.

Chamber Unveils 3-Point Provincial Budget Strategy to Attract the Next Wave of Talented Workers

Nov 30, 2007 - The Calgary of Commerce advises the Government of Alberta in its 2008 budget to make personal income and small business tax rates more competitive, institute a budgeting and savings framework that secures the 'Alberta Advantage' for the future and ensure quality and sustainable service delivery through controlled spending policies, to attract the next wave of highly skilled workers.

Engaging older workers: The Chamber's approach

Jul 30, 2007 -The Calgary Chamber of Commerce recommended changes to the Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and RRSP programs to remove disincentives and encourage older workers to continue in the labour force, as part of a submission to the Federal Expert Panel on Older Workers.

Chamber Welcomes New Canada-Alberta Immigration Deal

May 15, 2007 - A new Canada-Alberta immigration agreement aims to welcome 5,000 more newcomers to Alberta per year. Particular initiatives that the Chamber has advocated for, and the government has taken action on, include:

- Improved processes for temporary foreign workers to speed up approval times;
- Increased use of the provincial nominee program; and
- Expanding the trade investment and labour mobility agreement (TILMA) signed between Alberta and B.C.