



# NewsRelease

---

February 17, 2009

## PROVINCE COMMITS \$1 MILLION FOR NEW JOB TRAINING FOR NORTHERN WORKERS

---

### **Forestry, Mining Training and Workforce Retention Initiative Designed to Help Workers Through Difficult Times: Doer**

THE PAS—The province is immediately committing \$1 million to a special training initiative that will help workers in northern communities adjust to the difficult economic times, Premier Gary Doer announced here today.

“Because of the extreme turmoil in the global economy, workers in resource industries in northern Manitoba are facing job stresses that also profoundly affect their families and their communities,” Doer said. “This special training initiative will help these Manitobans weather tough times and prepare for new opportunities as the economy shifts gears.”

The forestry and mining sectors around the world, including Manitoba, have been experiencing severe market pressures associated with the global economic downturn as well as the U.S. housing market collapse and record low commodity prices. Both sectors have had to reduce production and lay off workers, causing serious distress for workers and their families and hurting local economies, the premier said.

At the same time, First Nations are expressing growing interest in training for employment and business opportunities associated with potential future mine developments. The province is committed to providing enhanced training supports to assist aboriginal and non-aboriginal workers and communities in transition.

The new Forestry and Mining Training and Workforce Retention Initiative will:

1. Work with forestry and mining companies and their employees to implement customized training and workforce retention initiatives to help bridge periods of downtime specifically to:
  - help retain existing workforce through up-skilling or re-skilling opportunities that match current and future job demands; and
  - support apprentices to complete their apprenticeship programs.

These initiatives will better position industry to ramp up production when market conditions improve and help keep workers in the north.

2. Work with Aboriginal communities to train greater numbers of people for the employment and business opportunities presented by future mine developments. This will improve employment readiness, ensuring that Aboriginal communities are better positioned to benefit from local resource developments.

Today's announcement will allow Manitoba to make an immediate investment to work with Tolko and affected employees on training and initiatives to support worker retention and productivity, with additional funding to be made available as needed based on evolving industry conditions.

Funding for the new Forestry and Mining Training and Workforce Retention Initiative comes from Manitoba's share of the federal government's Community Development Trust Fund.

During the coming weeks, Manitoba will work with the Northern Sector Council, forestry and mining companies, affected workers and Aboriginal communities to discuss the best strategies to meet their specific needs.

This new initiative complements supports already available to individuals through Employment Manitoba Centres (Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson), as well as through Manitoba Competitive, Training and Trade's new \$4.5-million Northern Essential Skills Training Initiative. The initiative helps lower-skilled, unemployed and under-employed people with pre-apprenticeship essential skills training.

For more information on training opportunities or to apply for training program, contact Manitoba Industry Workforce Development at 204-945-1052 or you local Employment Manitoba Centre.