

Province provides funding to recruit second radiologist to Cypress Health Region

Residents in the Cypress Health Region can look forward to the hiring of a second radiologist, thanks to additional resources from Saskatchewan's Ministry of Health.

"In partnership with health regions and the Saskatchewan Medical Association, our government has been working diligently to increase the number of doctors in our rural, northern and urban communities," Premier Brad Wall said. "I am optimistic that the added resources we're providing to the Cypress Health Region will help successfully recruit a second radiologist, thereby helping to bring stability and ensure the continued provision of the best possible health services to residents

of Southwest Saskatchewan."

A radiologist could be hired as early as the spring. The Cypress Health Region is currently served by one radiologist and arrangements for temporary radiology services from other health regions need to be secured when the lone radiologist is ill or on vacation leave. Radiologists are physician specialists trained to interpret medical images created in radiology departments such as general radiology exams, CT and ultrasound images.

The addition of a second radiologist is just one of the initiatives being implemented to improve radiology services. It builds on a recent initiative introduced in Cypress Health Region last year to make health care faster, safer, better and more secure by using a new way to store and transmit digital imaging information, such as patient x-rays and CT scans used by radiologists and other authorized health providers.

The Cypress Regional Hospital, built to be filmless, is the first regional

hospital in the province with the ability to use this new digital imaging system, known as Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS). This hospital and the three hospitals in Saskatoon are the first participants in the provincial PACS.

Benefits for patients include:

- improved service in rural areas;
- decreased waiting times between tests and results;
- the elimination of X-ray film transport between locations; and
- enhanced patient safety.

By 2010 it is expected that 80 per cent of diagnostic images and reports across the province will be available online to authorized caregivers.

Student jobs available in the Saskatchewan public service

Minister Elhard Encourages Students to Consider Public Service

With over 400 student jobs available during the summer, the public service is one of the largest employers of students in the province. Positions are available across the province, and throughout Government of Saskatchewan ministries. Employment is available with the Ministry of Highways, the Ministry of Environment, and the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport to name just a few.

"We have a range of opportunities available to students during the summer and throughout the year," Minister responsible for the Public Service Commission Wayne Elhard said. "We appreciate having students in our workplace because they bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to any project in which they are involved."

Students are encouraged to apply online through the Career Centre at www.careers.gov.sk.ca/studentjobs. Random referrals then match jobs to student interests, including location, availability and qualifications. The randomly-generated student names are forwarded to ministries for assessment and hiring.

Students can also be rehired from the previous year, provided they go back to similar jobs. This allows them to increase their experience and build networks, which may help them compete for future public service jobs.

Jordan Utke, a Petroleum and Natural Gas Technician with the Ministry of Energy and Resources is proof of how summer work experience with the Saskatchewan public service can benefit a young person. While he

was pursuing his Bachelor's Degree in Geography at the University of Regina, Jordan spent his summers doing work that related to his education. "My summer student status definitely helped me get the job I have today," Utke said.

The majority of student hiring takes place in late March and throughout April, and most students are hired to work from May to August. However, there are also opportunities available throughout the year, including co-op work terms, student jobs and internships.

Previously, summer opportunities in the public service have included jobs in research, geology, administration, park and highway maintenance and social services.

University of Regina Business Administration student Allison Weed understands all about student hiring in the public service. She is spending her program work term with the Public Service Commission (PSC), where she is employed as the Student Referral Administrator for the Student Jobs Program.

"My role at the PSC is to be the first point of contact for students and managers for the Student Jobs Program," Weed said. "I respond to inquiries about the program, and refer potential candidates to hiring managers within the public service. I also attend career fairs and information sessions to speak with students one-on-one about jobs in the public service."

Weed appreciates being able to help the public and fellow students with their search for a student job. "I would encourage students to apply as early in the year as possible," Allison said. "There are lots of great opportunities throughout ministries that will provide excellent work opportunities over the summer and throughout the year."

SW Saskatchewan unemployment rate is low

By Gail Jansen
Swift Current Prairie Post

The statistics are in and once again Saskatchewan tops all other Canadian provinces when it comes to employment levels.

A release by Stats Canada on Feb. 6th showed drops in unemployment occurring in the month of January, throughout every province in the country except Saskatchewan.

The only province to remain unaffected by the employment crisis seen throughout the rest of the country, Saskatchewan is in the enviable position of still seeing growth while others are reeling from the economic downturn. How long it will be able to remain that way, is anyone's guess.

Rising up 0.6 percentage points to 7.2 per cent, Canada's January unemployment rate was the largest single increase seen in one month. Not even in the previous economic downturns during the 1980s and 1990s were single month job losses so high.

Of the 129,000 jobs that were lost, nearly all were full-time positions, with a great number of them coming from Canada's eastern provinces in the manufacturing sector. Comparatively, Saskatchewan actually saw an increase of 3.3 per cent in job creation, a figure echoed in Swift Current's own job market where for the first time there were more jobs created in the construction sector than agriculture. It, in itself, an indication of the changes occurring here.

"Swift Current is doing very well, and should continue to do so," says the City of Swift Current's Director of Business Development, Marty Salberg. "Historically, Saskatchewan has always held a relatively low unemployment rate, and Swift Current's own rate has always been even lower."

For Swift Current, says Salberg, the issue is still in having too few workers, not too many, with more than 400 jobs listed on the SaskJobs website for the Swift Current-area alone.

"The extreme labour shortage we've been experiencing here, means that for now, anyone that's looking for work should be able to find a job."

"All in all," says Salberg, "I'm confident that Swift Current's economy is going to continue to be strong."

With dismal employment rates in other provinces continuing to rise, Salberg admits the migration of employees from other provinces is a real possibility, having already fielded telephone calls from families in the Maritimes who are looking to relocate to Swift Current specifically.

"I've talked to a few families who are thinking of making the move, and I believe there is definitely work here if people are looking for it," says Salberg. "Hopefully that in turn means that employers will soon have an easier time finding the workers they need."

Sandra Blyth, Regional Project Manager for Action Southwest agrees. "I think now is the time that we really need to get out there and promote ourselves," says Blyth. "By doing so it would allow us to draw from other areas of Canada where the unemployment rates are higher, and allow us to better prepare ourselves for the continued growth we are expecting."

Citing as example the recent allotment of infrastructure money to the Great Plains College which will help them to expand the Swift Current campus, Blyth says it is that type of expansion which can create jobs in the future.

"The recent announcement by the government to invest in our infrastructure as a province, is going to help us continue to create jobs for those that are looking. It's a time of huge opportunity for the province and for Swift Current."

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