

Labour

“Economy” is well defined as the system of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. The idea of a “sustainable” economy is not well defined, this part of the plan will evolve as we learn together what that can mean for Prince George. Initiatives Prince George, as the City’s economic development corporation provides economic development services that are aimed at developing Prince George as a ‘knowledge based resource economy connected to the world’¹

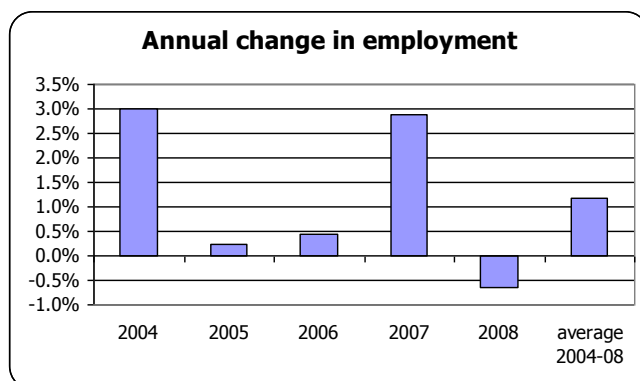
Description

The quantity and quality of labour in a community has a significant influence on the ability of a community to generate and respond to economic opportunities. A larger and more educated labour force tends to attract more diverse economic activities, provided that there is an appropriate match between the education of the labour force and the needs of employers. Ensuring that employers are able to find people with the right skills in the right place at the right time will be essential to securing and capitalizing on the opportunities that will contribute to Prince George’s future economic prosperity.



Status

Prince George has seen a modest 1.2% average annual growth in employment in the past five years (2004-2008), yet Prince George businesses report that considerable skills gaps exist in key occupations.² There are also segments of the population that are critically underused. The city has a significant Aboriginal population that currently lacks both the level of education and the access to opportunities to enable them to participate as equal partners in the economy. The



Source: Initiatives Prince Georae

training and engagement of Aboriginal peoples in the labour force is a key priority which will have significant long-term economic benefits for the community as a whole.

The changing nature of work and projected increases in skills gaps in Prince George are already being addressed in order to position the city competitively for future opportunities. Specific actions underway

¹ Initiatives Prince George, 2008 to 2010 Business Plan

² Initiatives Prince George & Prince George Chamber of Commerce. 2008. “Prince George Community Labour Market Analysis: Initial Findings.”

illustrate emerging collaborations between government, business, and educational institutions. They include:

- The Prince George Chamber of Commerce and Initiatives Prince George, through a joint Recruitment and Retention Program, have begun to address the changing nature of labour and the need to develop and attract a work force that will capitalize on future opportunities.
- Prince George has engaged in **Life in Perfect Balance**, a program that helps to promote the lifestyle and amenity benefits to living in Prince George to prospective employees/residents. Developed by Initiatives Prince George in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and its Living and Working in Prince George Committee, Life in Perfect Balance intends to promote the benefits of life in Prince George for both attraction and retention of residents and employers.
- The Federal Government has committed funding for a new trades and technical education centre at the College of New Caledonia. The College works proactively with industry partners to ensure that educational programming is designed in consideration of the needs of employers.
- The Provincial Government has made the commitment to fund the first phase of a Bio-Energy Centre at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and a Wood Products Design and Innovation Centre affiliated with UNBC. These initiatives are only some of the ways that new training and research opportunities at UNBC are contributing to greater innovation and a diversity of skills within the local and regional labour force.

Performance Measurement

Of the potential measures listed below, which should we use to measure and communicate progress? Would you rather use another one? Why?

- Employment rate is the measure of utilized labour, including the number of jobs per person in the area. This statistic is useful in understanding the level of engagement of the working age population.

Questions for Consideration

- How can Prince George better position itself to attract and retain desired labour?
- Should Prince George promote growth of post secondary education, and if so, with what focus?
- What collaborations are critical to train and engage under-used talent?

More Information

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