

PRESS RELEASE
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March 1, 2012

Coalition of Alberta business associations call for government action on labour shortages

Edmonton, AB (March 1, 2012): A coalition of nineteen Alberta business associations and groups is encouraging the federal and provincial governments to work with industry to address the labour shortages descending on western Canada. The Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages (ACALS) includes representatives from every major sector of the Alberta economy – all of which are being increasingly impacted by labour shortages.

The Alberta government is forecasting there will be 114,000 more jobs than people to fill them in coming years, a trend which is increasingly evident across Western Canada. This shortage of labour will slow economic growth, costing jobs and reducing government revenue to support vital government social and economic programs such as hospitals, schools and roads. ACALS is asking the federal and provincial governments to engage quickly with employers in developing and implementing new strategies to help overcome the expected shortage.

“We recognize that finding qualified employees is primarily the responsibility of employers, and we take that responsibility seriously,” said Ken Kobly, CEO of the Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC). “Coalition members are up-training and re-training their employees to better meet future challenges, and tapping into non-traditional markets in Canada and abroad.”

Over the past few years, government and industry have effectively worked together to ensure Canadians are given the first chance to benefit from these opportunities. These initiatives include:

- Supporting training and outreach initiatives such as apprenticeship.
- Actively recruiting workers across Canada, seeking to employ Canadians who have the necessary skills and who are prepared to come to Alberta.
- Pursuing continuous improvement and maximizing the productivity of business operations to make the best use of existing staff.

Despite these ongoing efforts, there remains a shortfall of available workers domestically to fill the needs of the growing economy.

“Our challenge is clear,” said coalition spokesperson Richard Truscott, Alberta director of the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses (CFIB). “Governments and industry must work together quickly to explore opportunities to improve temporary worker and permanent immigration programs to meet the needs of a growing economy. Every sector of the economy will be hit hard by a shortage of workers.”

ACALS recommendations include:

- Change the point system of the Federal Skilled Worker Program (FSWP) to place greater emphasis on labour demand and validated employment offers.

- Expand opportunities to transition temporary workers to permanent immigrants such as the Provincial Immigrant Nominee Program and the Canadian Experience Class.
- Change National Occupation Codes (NOC), used in both the permanent and temporary streams, to reflect employer needs and recognize a broader range of existing skilled positions.
- Reform Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) processes to recognize employer pre-qualification, cross-industry based shortages of workers, and streamline the application and approval process.

“In addition to ongoing efforts to maximize the opportunities for Canadians to benefit from our expanding economy, what’s needed now is the recognition that we must aggressively recruit in international labour markets. We will be more successful in this effort if the federal and provincial governments make the necessary changes to help employers gain access to the human resources we need,” said Tim Shipton, President of the Alberta Enterprise Group. “We need to work together with all levels of government to implement real solutions.”

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For more information contact:

Richard Truscott CFIB
(403) 971-9291

Ken Kobly ACC
(780) 975-1659

Tim Shipton, AEG
(780) 909 -8584

Attention editors: Please see the following backgrounder for more information, and to contact businesses who use immigration programs to meet labour requirements.

March 1, 2012

BACKGROUND: The Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages (ACALS)

- ACALS members collectively employ hundreds of thousands of Albertans and represent every sector area of the province – from small businesses to large employers.
- The coalition came together in late 2011 to identify areas of common interest and work together to identify solutions.
- ACALS is seeking meetings with federal and provincial officials to discuss further action on immigration improvements.

The Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages is:

Alberta Construction Association
Alberta Chambers of Commerce
Alberta Enterprise Group
Alberta Forest Products Association
Alberta Motor Transport Association
Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association
Calgary Economic Development
Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers
Consulting Engineers of Alberta
Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors
Canadian Energy Pipeline Association
Canadian Home Builders' Association-Alberta
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters
Edmonton Economic Development Corporation
Merit Contractors Association
Petroleum Services Association of Canada
Progressive Contractors Association of Canada

ACALS member companies are utilizing immigration to meet Alberta's workforce needs

For more information on how various Alberta businesses are attempting to use immigration programs to meet labour requirements, and the challenges they face, please contact any of the supporting organizations (see attached).

Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages (ACALS)

Participating Organization Media Contacts (March 1, 2012):

Alberta Construction Association: Ken Gibson, Executive Director Ph: 780-455-1122
Status: Out of Country

Alberta Chambers of Commerce: Ken Kobly, President and CEO Ph: 780-425-4180 ext 5
TF:1-800-272-8854 ext 5 C: 780-975-1659
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Alberta Enterprise Group: Tim Shipton, President Ph: 780-481-7205 C: 780-909-8584
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Alberta Forest Products Association: Brock Mulligan, Director of Communications C: 780-239-6890
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Alberta Motor Transport Association: Don Wilson, Executive Director Ph: 403-214-3429
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Alberta Roadbuilders and Heavy Construction Association: Heidi Harris-Jensen, Director of External Affairs Ph:
780-436-9860
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Calgary Economic Development: Jeanette Sutherland Manager of Workforce and Productivity Ph: 403.221.7898
C: 587.227.7712
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Federation of Independent Business: Richard Truscott, Director of Provincial Affairs Ph: 403-444-9290
C: 403-971-9291
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors: Nancy Malone, Vice President Operations Ph: 403 264-
4311 ext.111
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers: Travis Davies, Manager--Media and Issues Ph.(403 267-1151C.
(403) 542-4115
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Consulting Engineers of Alberta: Ken Pilip, CEO & Registrar/Sheldon Hudson Vice-President Ph: 780-421-1852
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors: Mike Doyle, President Ph: 403-265-0045
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Energy Pipeline Association: Kim McCaig, Vice President & COO Ph: 403-221-8779
Status: Available for post news conference comment

Canadian Home Builders' Association-Alberta: Jim Rivait, CEO Ph: 780-424-5890 Ext 225 TF: 800-661-3348 C:
780-915-8546
Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Alberta Coalition for Action on Labour Shortages (ACALS)

Participating Organization Media Contacts (March 1, 2012) (Continued):

Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters: Neil Kaarsemaker, Acting Divisional VP Ph: 780-231-1573.

Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation: Renee Worrell, Communications Manager, External Relations
Ph. 780-917-7894

Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Merit Contractors Association: Bill Stewart, Vice-President Ph. 780-454-5512 C: 780-695-6798

Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Petroleum Services Association of Canada: Mark Salkeld, President Ph. 403-264-4195 TF: 800-818-7722 C: 403-993-5748.

Status: At News Conference Available for post news conference comment

Progressive Contractors Association of Canada: Paul de Jong , Executive Director Ph:403 620 3781

Status: Available for post news conference comment