

**MANITOBA** 

Manitoba's construction industry is entering the second decade of a strong expansion. Employment reached record levels in 2006 and has grown steadily ever since. The 2012<sup>1</sup> *Construction Looking Forward* scenario for Manitoba projects continued growth over most of the outlook scenario, with employment peaking in 2017.

Rising labour requirements are centred in new residential and electrical utility-related work. While these sectors lead in job creation, there also will be steady gains in industrial, commercial and institutional construction. By the end of the scenario in 2020, employment is more than 25 percent above 2011 levels and more than 50 percent above historical levels.

These gains make construction a leading industry in the province. Recruiting, training and managing growth on this scale has tested the limits for many stakeholders. While labour markets will continue to be tight in the coming decade, the industry has gained experience and invested in support systems to help develop the needed skilled workforce.

Skilled construction labour is in strong demand across Canada. Manitoba's requirements are rising more rapidly than other regions and major utility and resource projects currently underway or proposed will compete for many of the same trades. In the short term, this includes projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, Northern Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta. In the medium term, Manitoba's project plans

extend further into the future than some other provinces, but competing electrical utility work will be an issue for most of the next decade.

The Construction Sector Council (CSC) uses a scenario-based forecasting model to assess future labour market conditions. It consults with industry, including owners, contractors and labour groups, to validate the scenario assumptions, and seeks input from governments on related analysis and construction project lists. This approach offers efficient access to project information and detailed first-hand assessments of labour supply and demand for individual construction trades and occupations<sup>2</sup>.

#### RESIDENTIAL MARKET

New residential construction in Manitoba will rise steadily across the scenario period, catching up with gains in household formations<sup>3</sup>. Rising population and in-migration over the past decade were one measure of Manitoba's strength. For much of the past decade, rising housing starts followed new formations, but weakness in 2008 drew starts below formations and the gap grew wider in 2010 and 2011. Stronger starts will continue across most of the scenario in line with formations and will increase residential employment by 40 percent from 2012 to 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Household formation refers to the change in the number of households (persons living under one roof or occupying a separate housing unit) from one year to the next. It is the means by which population growth is transformed into demand for new housing.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The 2012 Construction Looking Forward release for Manitoba reports new labour market assessments for the 2011–2020 period. The assessment includes 2011 as part of the analysis to track the impact of the global recession and recovery in local construction investment and labour markets.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The CSC LMI system tracks labour market conditions for 33 trades and occupations. This group does not represent approximately 25 percent of the construction workforce that does not work on job sites (e.g., office support, engineers and office managers).

Gains are highest for trades and occupations that specialize in new housing, including:

- carpenters
- residential construction managers
- sheet metal workers
- tilesetters
- trades helpers and labourers

Lower, but steadier, growth is associated with trades and occupations working in both renovations and new housing. This group includes:

- electricians
- painters
- plasterers and drywall installers
- plumbers
- refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics

For the entire workforce on the residential side of the industry, prospects are strong, especially during the 2012 to 2017 rise in activity. In many cases, tight market conditions persist until 2015 and 2016.

#### **NON-RESIDENTIAL MARKET**

Non-residential construction employment moves through a steady growth period, with gains exceeding 25 percent from 2012 to 2017 followed by a modest decline, but remains at a historic high level of employment.

Conditions are most volatile in engineering construction, where the major electrical projects drive up construction jobs 30 to 50 percent by 2015. In contrast, highway, road and bridge work, driven by recent major gains related to the fiscal stimulus programs, declines over the near term from the 2009 peak. Overall investment continues, however, as Manitoba repairs and upgrades highways and bridges.

On balance, overall engineering construction investment rises from 2012 to 2017, but the shifting mix will move jobs with varying skill requirements across projects, including road, highway, bridge and hydroelectric projects. Several trades and occupations will be caught in these changes, including:

- concrete finishers
- heavy equipment operators and mechanics
- trades helpers and labourers
- truck drivers

The major electrical utility projects in Northern Manitoba are similar to many other resource and infrastructure projects across the country. As a group, these projects raise the prospect of a national pool of skilled labour that is dedicated to specialized work in remote locations. These projects have started or are planned in almost every province and include mining, pipelines, electricity generation and transmission and related infrastructure. Projects in Northern Manitoba will fit squarely into this mix.

In contrast to the situation in engineering construction, industrial, commercial and institutional activity is quite stable. Strong annual increases in 2012 and 2013 gradually tail off to steady manageable growth until 2020.

A long list of non-residential trades is required for industrial, commercial and institutional work. These trades include:

- boilermakers
- construction millwrights
- electricians
- insulators
- ironworkers
- plumbers
- steamfitters and pipefitters
- welders

Overall, most construction trades will be included in strong and potentially volatile labour markets across the scenario period. In general, job prospects are good to very good, with potential recruiting challenges.

#### THE AVAILABLE WORKFORCE

Unemployment represents the first source of supply as labour requirements grow. In Manitoba, unemployment was driven down to record low levels in 2007 and 2008 with a very moderate increase during the recession in 2009.

As construction labour requirements continue to expand, the pool of unemployed workers seeking jobs has not kept pace. Unemployment remains well below historical averages and market pressures will slowly raise rates back toward normal levels. To further frustrate recruiting, over the longer term, demographic trends will limit the addition of younger people to the workforce and this will restrict labour force growth and limit gains in unemployment. In short, unemployment will not be a consistent source of labour in Manitoba from 2012 to 2020.

Long-term demographic trends will also be driving replacement demand across the scenario period. The CSC system breaks down the annual change in the available

labour force into key components: retirements, new entrants and net in-mobility4. Estimates of retirements track annual losses to the workforce that are offset by new entrants from the Manitoba population aged 30 and younger. The number of new entrants is restricted by the age profile of the local workforce and is lower than retirements. Net in-mobility measures the remaining change in the labour force needed to meet labour demand requirements. Industry would need to recruit from other industries and other trades and occupations outside of construction and/or other provinces.

Migration into Manitoba has been rising since 2007, with a notable number of these arrivals working in construction. The construction labour force is estimated to rise by 9,100 from 2012 to 2020 in response to strong demand and low unemployment. This pattern coincides with an increase in replacement demand related to the expected retirement of 6,900 workers. An estimated 6,000 new entrants will be available to fill the overall increase in labour requirements. From this perspective, from 2012 to 2020, the local construction industry will need to draw in an additional 10,000 workers from other markets.

### **RANKINGS, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The following table ranks each of the trades and occupations tracked by the CSC system. Ranks reflect the very strong labour markets, with high rankings persisting for most trades and occupations from 2012 to 2016. Later in the scenario period, there is a shift from current shortages to more balanced markets as the known major non-residential projects peak and begin to wind down. These rankings offer insights into the potential patterns of construction labour mobility.

Manitoba's medium-term prospects for residential construction are uniquely strong, with housing on a weak or downward trend in many other regions. While this workforce is notably less mobile than the non-residential trades, job opportunities in Manitoba's housing market will continue over many years and may attract trades from other provinces.

Outside the province, the CSC system is tracking several other centres of resource construction<sup>5</sup> that will be attracting the same trades that are needed in Manitoba. Major construction projects will draw workers to Saskatchewan, Northern Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador in the near future, and to British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario (the Greater Toronto Area) over the medium and longer term.

The construction industry in Manitoba has experience from the recent past in recruiting skilled construction workers from other markets. The 2012 Construction Looking Forward scenarios suggest that construction activity will intensify in the near term and local recruiting will require an expanded search. Scenarios for Saskatchewan and British Columbia track major projects that will be ending after 2013 and 2014, suggesting that there will be opportunities for recruiting into the stronger Manitoba markets in the later years. At the same time, projects are scheduled in Alberta and Ontario that will start later in these scenarios and increase the demand for these same trades.

Industry and government systems and practices have been refined and improved over the past construction expansion to deal with these situations. New challenges will appear, and the continuing growth and refinement of the supporting systems, including apprenticeship, industry training and immigration processes, is needed to help match the local workforce to emerging requirements.

#### MARKET RANKINGS

- Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other current working conditions. Excess supply is apparent and there is a risk of losing workers to other markets.
- Workers meeting employer qualifications are available in local or adjacent markets to meet an increase in demand at the current offered rate of compensation and other working conditions.
- The availability of workers meeting employer qualifications in the local market may be limited by large projects, plant shutdowns or other shortterm increases in demand. Similar or weaker conditions exist in adjacent markets so that mobility is an option. Employers may need to compete to attract needed workers. Established patterns of recruiting and mobility are sufficient to meet job requirements.
- Workers meeting employer qualifications are generally not available in local and adjacent markets to meet any increase. Employers will need to compete to attract additional workers. Recruiting and mobility may extend beyond traditional sources and practices.
- Needed workers meeting employer qualifications are not available in local or adjacent markets to meet current demand so that projects or production may be delayed or deferred. There is excess demand, competition is intense and recruiting reaches to remote markets.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In-mobility refers to the arrival of workers from outside the local construction industry.

Centres of resource construction are identified in the 2012 Construction Looking Forward scenarios for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador.

### MARKET RANKINGS FOR TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS IN MANITOBA

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Boilermakers	4	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3

Demand requirements related to industrial and engineering projects continue to rise from already tight levels, maintaining tight labour market conditions to 2014. Employment is exclusively in non-residential construction. The age profile for this trade is much older than average. Replacement demand requirements are not met by new entrants into the labour force. Workers from outside the local market may be required across the scenario period to meet requirements.

**Bricklayers** 

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential construction rise from current levels, tightening labour market conditions in 2012 and 2013. Markets are generally balanced for the remainder of the scenario period. Employment is divided between residential and non-residential construction. The potential for mobility between these two sectors may help to meet market requirements. The age profile for this trade is about average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market may be required to meet increased demands early in the scenario period.

3 **Carpenters** 3

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential construction continue to rise from already tight levels. Labour market conditions are tight to 2016 and then return to balance as major projects begin to wind down and residential investment peaks. Employment is divided between residential and non-residential construction. A potential for mobility between these two sectors may help to meet market requirements. The age profile for this trade is about average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market will be required to meet expansion demands early in the scenario period.

**Concrete finishers** 

Demand requirements related to engineering projects rise steadily from current levels through 2020, but labour market conditions are generally balanced across the scenario period. Employment is concentrated in non-residential construction. The age profile for this trade is about average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market may be required across the scenario period to maintain balanced conditions.

**Construction estimators** 3 3 3 3 3 3

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential projects rise steadily from current levels. Labour market conditions tighten in 2012 and 2013 and then settle into more balanced conditions across the remainder of the scenario period. Employment is divided between residential and non-residential construction. There are limited opportunities for potential mobility between these two sectors. The age profile for this trade is older than average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market will be required to meet increased demands early in the scenario period.

**Construction managers** 3

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential construction rise sharply from current levels, tightening labour market conditions from 2012 to 2016. Markets return to balance for the remainder of the scenario period as major projects begin to wind down and residential investment peaks. Employment is divided between residential and non-residential construction. A potential for mobility between these two sectors may help to meet market requirements. The age profile for this occupation is much older than average, contributing to tighter market conditions. Replacement demand requirements are not met by new entrants into the labour force. Workers from outside the local market will be required to meet expansion demand requirements between 2012 and 2016.

**Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics** (except textile)

Demand requirements related to industrial and engineering projects continue to rise from already tight levels. Labour market conditions are tight to 2014 and then weaken as major projects begin to wind down. Employment is exclusively in non-residential construction. The age profile for this group is older than average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market will be required to meet expansion demands early in the scenario period.

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Contractors and our	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Contractors and supervisors	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Demand requirements related to residential and non-resider remain tight until 2013. They are then generally balanced for non-residential construction. A potential for mobility betwee group is much older than average. Replacement demand req local market will be required across the scenario period to m	r the rema en these t juirements	ainder of wo secto s are not	f the scen ors may h t met by r	ario perio elp to me	od. Emplo et marke	oyment is et require	divided ments. T	between he age pi	residenti ofile for t	al and this
Crane operators	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Demand requirements related to engineering projects conting return to balance by 2014 as major projects begin to wind do for this trade is much older than average, contributing to tight replacement demand requirements, but workers from outsid the scenario period.	own. Emp hter mark	loyment et condi	is concer tions. Ne	ntrated in w entrant	non-resi	idential c e labour f	onstructi orce are	on. The a estimate	ge profile d to mee	t
Electricians (including industrial and power system)	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
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Floor covering installers	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3
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Gasfitters	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
Demand requirements related to non-residential construction 2012 and 2016. Later in the scenario period, conditions are mand non-residential construction. There are limited opportun about average. New entrants into the labour force are estim market may be required to meet increased demand requirem	nore balan lities for p lated to m	nced as n ootential neet repl	najor proj mobility acement	ects wind between demand i	I down. E these tw equirem	Employme o sectors ents, but	nt is divi	ded betw e profile f	een resid	lential ade is
Glaziers	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Demand requirements related to commercial and institution		nstructio	on. The a	ge profile	for this	trade is o	lder than	average	, contribu	
to balance by 2013. Employment is concentrated in non-resid to tighter market conditions later in the scenario period. Rep	lacement					by new e	entrants i	nto the r	abour ford	
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TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Insulators	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
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Ironworkers and structural metal fabricators and fitters	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
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Painters and decorators  Demand requirements related to residential and non-	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
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TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Roofers and shinglers	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential buildings continue to rise from already tight levels. Labour market conditions are tight to 2016, such that demand requirements exceed local labour supply. Starting in 2017, market conditions return to balance as residential activity peaks. Employment is concentrated in residential construction. The potential for mobility between the residential and non-residential sectors may help to meet market requirements. The age profile for this group is younger than average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market will be required to meet expansion demands between 2012 and 2016.

## Sheet metal workers 3 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

Demand requirements related to engineering and non-residential building activity rise from current levels, tightening labour market conditions in 2012 and 2013. Employment is concentrated in non-residential construction. The age profile for this trade is about average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market may be required to meet increased demands early in the scenario period.

# Steamfitters, pipefitters and sprinkler system installers

Demand requirements related to non-residential construction rise steadily across the scenario period, but labour market conditions remain generally balanced. Employment is concentrated in non-residential construction. The age profile for this group is younger than average, which contributes to maintaining balanced market conditions. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market may be required to maintain balanced conditions.

#### Trades helpers and labourers

Demand requirements related to residential and non-residential construction continue to rise from already tight levels. Labour market conditions are tight to 2017, such that demand requirements exceed local labour supply. Starting in 2018, market conditions become more balanced as major project activity peaks and begins to wind down. Employment is divided between residential and non-residential construction. The potential for mobility between these two sectors may help to meet market requirements. The age profile for this group is much younger than average. Replacement demand requirements are not met by new entrants into the labour force. Workers from outside the local market may be required across the scenario period to meet expansion demand requirements.

#### Truck drivers 4 4 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3

Demand requirements related to engineering projects continue to rise from already tight levels. Labour market conditions remain tight until 2015. They are then generally balanced for the remainder of the scenario period as major projects peak and begin to wind down. Employment is concentrated in non-residential construction. The age profile for this trade is much older than average, contributing to tighter market conditions. Replacement demand requirements are not met by new entrants into the labour force. Workers from outside the local market will be required to meet expansion demands early in the scenario period.

#### Welders and related machine operators

Demand requirements related to engineering projects rise steadily from current levels. Labour market conditions tighten in 2012 and 2013, but are generally balanced for the reminder of the scenario period. Employment is concentrated in non-residential construction. The age profile for this group is younger than average. New entrants into the labour force are estimated to meet replacement demand requirements, but workers from outside the local market may be required to meet increased demands early in the scenario period.

Note: The labour market assessment for some trades is limited by the small size of the workforce (<100 employed). In such cases, the information is suppressed because of limited statistical reliability. The CSC, in consultation with the provincial LMI Committee, has suppressed the following trades for Manitoba: drillers and blasters, elevator constructors and mechanics, industrial instrument technicians and mechanics, and tilesetters.

Source: Construction Sector Council

Timely construction forecast data is available online at **www.constructionforecasts.ca**. Create customized reports on a broad range of selected categories within sector, trade or province covering up to 10 years.

The more detailed report, Construction Looking Forward, An Assessment of Construction Labour Markets from 2012 to 2020 for Manitoba, is part of the Construction Sector Council's Labour Market Information Program and will be available electronically at www.csc-ca.org this spring.

For more information, contact:

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## **Construction Forecasts Website**

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