

## City job market No. 2 in Canada

### 34% of Calgary employers look to expand staff

**Geoffrey Scotton**

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Calgary's employment climate has cooled somewhat from the heady days of 2007, but is still among the very top tier in Canada, according to a survey to be released Tuesday.

The long-running quarterly employment outlook survey by Manpower Services Canada Ltd. found that a net 34 per cent of Calgary employers are expecting to expand their payrolls in the last three months of 2008. That's an eight-point increase from intentions in the third quarter, but down from the 48 per cent finding a year ago.



CREDIT: Herald Archive, Reuters

A recent survey says the job market in Western Canada is stronger than elsewhere in the country.

"We should be pretty happy," said Manpower's Alberta region chief executive, Randy Upright, noting that Calgary ranks second to only Regina among Canadian cities in terms of the proportion of employers looking to hire more workers in the fourth quarter of the year. The Calgary survey showed 64 per cent of the city's employers are planning no change, while two per cent are uncertain.

Upright noted that, in keeping with a slew of other economic indicators, the results of the latest Manpower survey indicate the economy in Western Canada is considerably stronger than elsewhere in the country, particularly in the central provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Canada's largest provincial economies have been stymied by weak U.S. demand for the manufactured goods at the core of their economies, as well as high energy costs.

"It's absolutely way stronger in the West," said Upright, noting the net hiring figure for Canada's largest provincial economy, in Ontario, is a slim eight per cent.

The Manpower figures follow the release Friday of Canada's monthly labour market survey by Statistics Canada, which found the jobless rate across Canada stayed at 6.1 per cent in August, while Alberta's rate edged lower to

3.5 per cent from 3.6 per cent in July.

In Calgary, the rate rose to 3.6 per cent from 3.3 per cent a month before, but was among the three lowest city rates in the country. And the increase in the jobless rate was largely due an influx of people into the labour force; although employment in the city rose by 2,100 people from July to August, the labour force increased by 4,200 people, sending the unemployment rate up.

Any jobless rate below four per cent is widely considered to be the equivalent of full employment, in any event.

The Manpower survey found that nationally, 20 per cent of employers are looking to hire, while seven per cent expect cutbacks, for a net figure of 13 per cent. While underwhelming, that figure marked a slight increase from the results of Manpower's survey one quarter earlier.

The national results also indicated the strongest results are in industries centred in Western Canada and, to a lesser degree, in Atlantic Canada. By sector, mining -- which includes oil and gas -- had a net 28 per cent hiring bias, followed by the public service and construction segments.

The Manpower survey involved 1,700 employers across Canada.

[gscotton@theherald.canwest.com](mailto:gscotton@theherald.canwest.com)

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