

# BUSINESS

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'The whole notion of business development was not a traditional responsibility of our department,' says Claire LePage, deputy minister for the Department of Energy. 'The energy hub became a big piece of the self-sufficiency agenda and our work cuts through business, natural resources and the environment.'

## Employment outlook bright

**Jobs** Manpower Inc. survey indicates a solid hiring climate for the second quarter of '09

**BRETT BUNDALE**  
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Hiring in New Brunswick is outpacing the national average, with 25 per cent of employers planning to add staff in the second quarter of 2009, according to a survey released Tuesday.

Manpower Inc.'s survey shows that 27 per cent of employers in Saint John plan to hire during the upcoming quarter from April to June. In Moncton 26 per cent of employers will add staff and in Fredericton 23 per cent.

The New Brunswick numbers beat

the national average of 15 per cent of employers looking to hire, down 21 per cent from the same time last year and the lowest level in 15 years.

"Honestly I'm surprised to see such a positive outlook," said Mindy Stoltz, branch manager of Manpower's Saint John office.

"These numbers are stronger than what we anticipated," she said.

The Port City has seen an increase in construction jobs for the Canaport LNG terminal as well as mining-related jobs in Sussex, Stoltz said.

Currently there are 1,100 construc-

tion workers at Canaport LNG. The number of workers will likely increase in the spring and summer months, said spokeswoman Carolyn Van der Veen. But that number will dip back down in the fall, when only a few workers will be kept on to finish the third storage tank. The project is now 94 per cent complete and is on time to be finished in the first quarter of 2010.

In addition to construction, the most active sectors in the province looking to add employees to their rosters include public administration and government.

New Brunswick's three biggest cities will see few jobs cut in the second quarter. About six per cent of those surveyed in Moncton expect to cut jobs, three per cent in Saint John, and

less than one per cent in Fredericton.

The net employment outlook for these cities, or the number of expected job gains minus the job losses, is 24 per cent for Saint John, 23 per cent for Fredericton and 20 per cent for Moncton, which includes numbers from the Bathurst region.

"Saint John's net employment outlook is a four percentage point increase from the same time last year," Stoltz said. "It is also a four percentage point increase from the previous quarter when the net employment outlook was 20 per cent. This indicates a solid hiring climate for the second quarter of 2009."

For Moncton the net employment

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outlook of 20 per cent is a 10 percentage point decrease from the same time last year when employers reported an outlook of 30 per cent.

But the silver lining is that this number is a 10 percentage point increase from the previous quarter, Stoltz said.

Fredericton's second quarter employment outlook of 23 per cent is a decrease from the 40 per cent reported at the same time last year. "However, it is a seven percentage point increase from the previous quarter of 16 per cent," she said. Meanwhile the net employment out-

look for Atlantic Canada is 19 per cent – far stronger than the national average of six per cent.

The employment outlook was eight per cent for the West, three per cent for Quebec and one per cent of Ontario.

The survey indicated that overall the services, public administration and construction sectors are most likely to add staff in the coming quarter. But the outlooks for all three sectors have shrunk since the previous quarter.

The durable and non-durable goods manufacturing sectors are the weakest areas, reporting negative outlooks of nine and five per cent, respectively on a

seasonally adjusted basis.

The Manpower survey was conducted between January 15 and January 28. More than 1,900 public and private employers were polled on their plans to hire, reduce or maintain workers.

The Canadian economy lost 129,000 jobs in January, the worst monthly performance in three decades, bringing the national unemployment rate to 7.2 per cent.

Another approximately 60,000 jobs will likely be lost in February, according to economists, which would bring the unemployment rate in Canada to roughly 7.3 per cent.