

April 27, 2011

Alberta helps mature workers remain in the workforce

190,000 workers could retire in next decade

Edmonton... The aging population, current economic growth and declining labour force growth are the drivers behind an Alberta government action plan to encourage more mature workers to remain in the workforce.

After extensive research and consultation, Employment and Immigration Minister Thomas Lukaszuk released *Engaging the Mature Worker: An Action Plan for Alberta* during the Human Resources Institute of Alberta annual conference on April 27.

“Declining birth rates, the aging baby boom generation and increasing life expectancy are creating the perfect storm leading to future labour shortages,” said Lukaszuk. “This action plan not only strives to increase mature worker labour force participation but also seeks to reduce the loss of experience, corporate memory and leadership that can occur when people retire.”

The plan outlines actions to:

- work with employers to retain mature workers by developing age-friendly work environments, offering flexible work arrangements and phased retirement;
- support employers by collaborating on tools for succession planning;
- support mature workers who want to continue working by offering employment and career services and post-secondary educational options;
- create greater public awareness of changing expectations for older workers; and
- revise retirement programs and pension policies to support mature workers choosing to remain in the labour force.

For the full action plan see:

www.employment.alberta.ca/documents/RRM/RRM-BI-mature-workers.pdf

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Backgrounder: Facts on mature workers in Alberta

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Facts on mature workers in Alberta

- The number of mature workers aged 55 years of age and older in the labour force doubled between 2000 and 2010 (from 167,000 to 337,000).
- Mature workers currently account for almost 16 per cent of the labour force.
- In 2010, 17,400 Albertans retired, 2,300 more than in 2009 and about 190,000 workers are expected to retire during the next ten years.
- Less than 25 per cent of employers have strategies in place to address the aging workforce.
- In 2010, the average age of retirement in Alberta was 62.9 compared to the national average of 62.1 years.
- In an online public consultation on Alberta's aging workforce in 2007-08, 90 per cent of respondents said the impacts of an aging workforce should be a high priority for both government and the private sector.
- 55.3 per cent of Alberta's mature workers hold a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.
- 70.1 per cent of Albertans aged 55-64 are active in the labour force compared to 62.5 per cent of Canadians; and 15.8 per cent of Albertans over age 65 choose to remain in the labour force compared to 11.4 per cent of Canadians.
- Alberta experiences one of the lowest unemployment rates in Canada and the unemployment rate for mature workers is even lower than the Alberta average. In 2010, while the unemployment rate was 6.5 per cent in Alberta and 8.0 per cent across Canada, the unemployment rate for Alberta workers over age 55 was 4.8 per cent - suggesting that mature workers who choose to remain in the labour force are very likely to have employment.
- 17.6 per cent of Albertans worked part-time in 2010. Workers aged 55-64 mirrored this trend; however, beyond age 65 part-time employment increased to 39.8 per cent.

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