



# Labour Market Bulletin

## Saskatchewan

December 2018



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Saskatchewan, including Regina-Moose Mountain, Swift Current-Moose Jaw, Saskatoon-Biggar, Yorkton-Melville and Prince Albert and Northern economic regions.

### OVERVIEW

Just over 577,000 individuals were employed in Saskatchewan in the fourth quarter of 2018, up considerably compared to the previous quarter (+7,900). Both full- and part-time employment increased during this period, by 5,000 and 2,800 respectively. Overall, employment in the province increased 11,800 between the fourth quarter of 2017 and the fourth quarter of 2018.

#### Saskatchewan Quarterly Labour Force Statistics

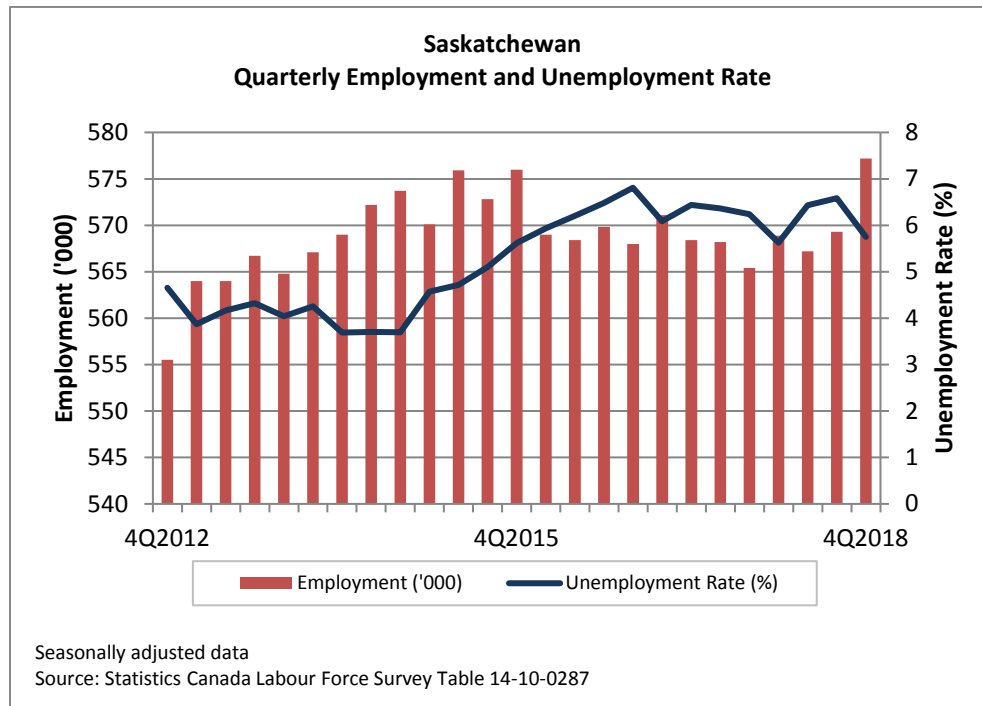
Seasonally adjusted data	4th Quarter 2018	3rd Quarter 2018	4th Quarter 2017	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	886.4	885.4	879.6	1.0	0.1	6.8	0.8
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	612.4	609.4	602.9	3.0	0.5	9.5	1.6
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	577.2	569.3	565.4	7.9	1.4	11.8	2.1
Full-Time ('000)	471.9	466.9	462.6	5.0	1.1	9.3	2.0
Part-Time ('000)	105.3	102.5	102.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	35.2	40.1	37.6	-4.9	-12.2	-2.4	-6.4
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	5.7	6.6	6.2	-0.9	-	-0.5	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	69.1	68.8	68.5	0.3	-	0.6	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	65.1	64.3	64.3	0.8	-	0.8	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

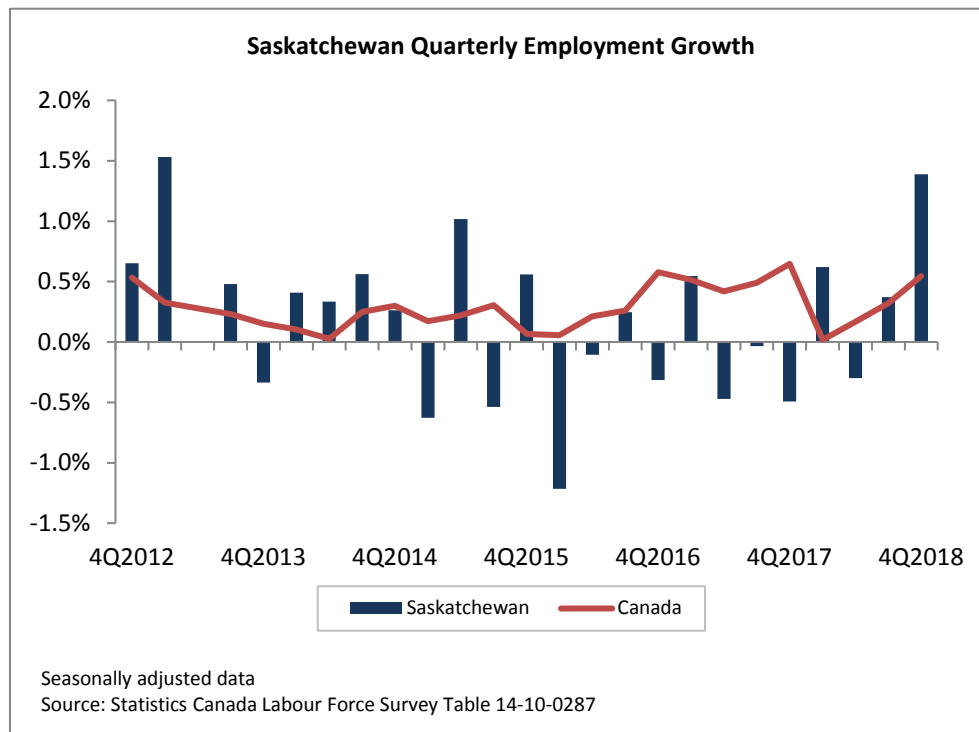
The private sector led employment gains on a quarterly basis (+9,000). Meanwhile, public sector employment rose slightly during this period (+700), whereas the number of self-employed Saskatchewanians dropped 1,800.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, optimism among Saskatchewan’s small business owners improved in December. However, hiring plans remain weak in the province with 18% of all businesses surveyed indicating that they will be cutting jobs over the next three to four months, while only nine percent of small businesses indicated that they plan on hiring workers. The biggest limitations to growth for small businesses during this period were insufficient domestic demand (49%), followed by shortage of skilled labour (24%).<sup>1</sup>



The number of individuals actively looking for employment decreased 4,900 this quarter, and the provincial unemployment rate now stands at 5.7% – down nearly one full percentage point from the third quarter. Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate is on par with the national average of 5.7% and is the second lowest among Western provinces, behind only British Columbia (4.3%).

According to the Conference Board of Canada’s latest provincial outlook, Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate is expected to gradually decline over the medium-term as economic conditions improve. The oil, gas, and potash industries are expected to lead output growth in the province over the next three years. Overall, real GDP growth is anticipated to improve to 1.6% in 2019, following projected growth of 0.8% in 2018.<sup>2</sup>



The unemployment rate for young men (15 to 24 years) dropped significantly for a second consecutive quarter (-3.3 percentage points), and now stands at 12.1%. Similarly, the unemployment rate for young women dropped nearly two percentage points during the same period.

**Saskatchewan Quarterly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age**

Seasonally adjusted data	4th Quarter 2018 (%)	3rd Quarter 2018 (%)	4th Quarter 2017 (%)	Quarterly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	5.7	6.6	6.2	-0.9	-0.5
<b>25 years and over</b>	5.0	5.5	5.1	-0.5	-0.1
Men - 25 years and over	5.0	5.6	5.7	-0.6	-0.7
Women - 25 years and over	5.0	5.3	4.3	-0.3	0.7
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	10.4	13.1	13.3	-2.7	-2.9
Men - 15 to 24 years	12.1	15.4	13.1	-3.3	-1.0
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.5	10.4	13.4	-1.9	-4.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

## Labour market indicators for Indigenous people

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the Indigenous population living off-reserve accounted for 9.8% of Saskatchewan's total population. Employment among the province's Indigenous population stood at 45,100, a decrease (-400) from the same period last year. The decrease was driven by a sharp decline in the number of part-time positions (-1,800) which off-set an increase in the number of full-time positions (+1,400).

The unemployment rate among the Indigenous population was 14.1% in this quarter, down 0.5 percentage points from the previous year. Among the non-Indigenous population, the unemployment rate was 4.4% (-0.3 percentage points). Between the fourth quarter of 2017 and the fourth quarter of 2018, the participation rate of the Indigenous population dropped to 60.5% (-2.1 percentage points) while among the non-Indigenous, it rose to 69.4% (+0.9 percentage points). The employment rate decreased for the Indigenous population to 52% (-1.4 percentage points) and rose to 66.3% for the non-Indigenous population (+1.0 percentage points).

**Saskatchewan - Labour Market Indicators for Indigenous People**

3-month moving averages Seasonally unadjusted data	Indigenous		Yearly variation (Indigenous)		Non-Indigenous		Yearly variation (non-Indigenous)	
	Q4 2018	Q4 2017	number	%	Q4 2018	Q4 2017	number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	86.8	85.1	1.7	2.0	799.7	794.4	5.3	0.7
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	52.5	53.3	-0.8	-1.5	554.9	544.2	10.7	2.0
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	45.1	45.5	-0.4	-0.9	530.4	518.6	11.8	2.3
Full-Time ('000)	38.4	37.0	1.4	3.8	432.6	424.4	8.2	1.9
Part-Time ('000)	6.7	8.5	-1.8	-21.2	97.8	94.2	3.6	3.8
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	7.4	7.8	-0.4	-5.1	24.5	25.6	-1.1	-4.3
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	14.1	14.6	-0.5	-	4.4	4.7	-0.3	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	60.5	62.6	-2.1	-	69.4	68.5	0.9	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	52.0	53.4	-1.4	-	66.3	65.3	1.0	-

Notes: The Labour Force Survey excludes those living on-reserve.

Estimates are based on three-month moving averages.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Totals may be different from other tables due to adjustments done to indigenous statistics in the Labour Force Survey.

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – ESDC custom table

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Considerable employment gains were registered both in the goods- and services-producing industries in the fourth quarter of 2018. The goods-producing sector added 2,800 positions, while employment in the services-producing sector increased 5,100 this quarter.

Saskatchewan Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally adjusted data ('000)	4th Quarter 2018	3rd Quarter 2018	4th Quarter 2017	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	577.2	569.3	565.3	7.9	1.4	11.9	2.1
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	147.5	144.7	144.3	2.8	1.9	3.2	2.2
Agriculture	39.8	36.8	35.5	3.0	8.2	4.3	12.1
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	22.1	23.2	24.0	-1.1	-4.7	-1.9	-7.9
Utilities	7.0	7.4	6.9	-0.4	-5.4	0.1	1.4
Construction	50.2	49.9	50.3	0.3	0.6	-0.1	-0.2
Manufacturing	28.5	27.5	27.7	1.0	3.6	0.8	2.9
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	429.7	424.6	421.0	5.1	1.2	8.7	2.1
Trade	87.4	89.7	91.5	-2.3	-2.6	-4.1	-4.5
Transportation and warehousing	28.2	27.2	29.2	1.0	3.7	-1.0	-3.4
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	28.9	29.1	27.4	-0.2	-0.7	1.5	5.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	26.7	26.2	28.2	0.5	1.9	-1.5	-5.3
Business, building and other support services	16.1	15.8	14.2	0.3	1.9	1.9	13.4
Educational services	45.5	43.4	41.3	2.1	4.8	4.2	10.2
Health care and social assistance	80.9	78.4	76.6	2.5	3.2	4.3	5.6
Information, culture and recreation	20.2	20.0	20.0	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.0
Accommodation and food services	38.7	37.6	36.5	1.1	2.9	2.2	6.0
Other services	27.0	26.3	25.2	0.7	2.7	1.8	7.1
Public administration	30.3	30.9	31.0	-0.6	-1.9	-0.7	-2.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table T14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

The largest increase in employment was recorded in Saskatchewan's agriculture industry (+3,000). Legalization of marijuana has had a positive impact on employment in the agriculture industry. There are currently four licensed marijuana cultivators located in the province: Agro-Greens Natural Products Ltd., CanniMed Ltd., Prairie Plant Systems Inc. and Tweed Grasslands Cannabis Inc.<sup>3</sup> In addition, companies such as Bold Grow Inc. are also setting up operations in the province. Bold Growth is currently building a \$12 million marijuana plant north of Saskatoon and will be applying for a Health Canada license once construction of the plant is completed.<sup>4</sup>

The number of people employed in construction increased 300 in the fourth quarter. Two Chinese companies are building flax seed processing plants in Saskatchewan. Ming Hai Inc. is currently constructing a linseed oil crushing plant in Dundurn. The plant is estimated to crush approximately 80 million tonnes of flax per day,

which will be purchased from growers in Saskatchewan. Ming Hai plans to export the oil to China, while the flax meal will be sold to local feeding businesses and cattle farms in North America. Similarly, Shenzhen-based FlaxMega is constructing a flax processing facility in Delisle. Canada is the largest producer of flaxseed in the world, representing about 40% of world production. Saskatchewan has been the largest flax producing province in Canada for over two decades.<sup>5</sup>

Employment in resource extraction (forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas) declined for a second consecutive quarter (-1,100). Yet despite depressed potash prices, the long-term forecast for potash remains favourable due to greater population growth in developing countries, rising world income, and increasing demand for biofuel. Construction continued on Mosaic's K3 mine and BHP Billiton's Jansen mine in 2018. In addition, the provincial Ministry of Environment provided environmental approval to Gensource's Vanguard One project in August 2018.<sup>6</sup> Construction of Western Potash Corporation's Milestone Project is also expected to begin this year. Western Potash awarded the detailed engineering contract for the project to SNC-Lavalin in June 2018, and expects that the project will be ready for final tendering and construction in early 2019.<sup>7</sup>

On the oil front, amid ongoing uncertainty caused by Alberta's announcement to oil curtail production, the Government of Saskatchewan launched a new incentive program to spur oil activity in the province. On December 5, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced the water flood development program. The program will allow oil companies to defer royalty payments to the Province for three years if they spend that money to convert existing wells to water flooding injection or create new wells that employ waterflood technology. The program will support \$375 million in new investment over the next five years and could create up to 500 permanent jobs.<sup>8</sup> Overall, conditions in Saskatchewan's oil industry are more optimistic compared to neighbouring Alberta. Saskatchewan had the highest percentage of drilling rigs operational in Western Canada as of November 13, 2018, as 61 of the province's 119 drilling rigs were active – signaling that the recent drop in oil prices has not yet affected the provinces rig counts.<sup>9</sup>

Employment in Saskatchewan's transportation and warehousing industry increased 1,000 in the fourth quarter of 2018. On December 6, the Government of Saskatchewan approved regulations that allow rideshare companies to begin operating in the province, as long as they follow bylaws set by the municipalities in which they operate. Drivers hired by rideshare companies are required to have a commercial class license, or Class 5 license with at least two years of post-Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) program experience and a satisfactory driver history. In addition, rideshare companies will be required to hold at least \$1 million liability coverage for all affiliated drivers and vehicles. The new regulations came into effect on December 14, 2018. Shortly after the Provincial regulations came into effect, the City of Saskatoon approved bylaws that allow companies such as Uber and Lyft to operate in the city.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, employment increased in two of three public sector industries in the fourth quarter. Health care and social assistance added 2,500 positions this quarter, while the number of people working in the educational services increased 2,100. Conversely, public administration shed 600 positions over the same period. On the healthcare front, the Saskatchewan Health Authority held a grand opening for its new Community Health Centre in Saskatoon's Market Mall on November 29, 2018. The health centre will provide specialized care services to patients with multiple chronic conditions, mental health issues and other complex care needs. The centre employs over 80 full-time-equivalent (FTE) health care professionals including continuing care aides,

physicians, paramedics, pharmacists and other health care professionals.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital is scheduled to open in Saskatoon in the fall of 2019. According to the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the new hospital will employ 70 FTE pediatricians and pediatric specialists by the time it opens.<sup>12</sup>

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Compared to the same period last year, employment is up in all Saskatchewan economic regions with the exception of Prince Albert and Northern region. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate decreased in two of the five economic regions during this period.

### Saskatchewan Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

Seasonally unadjusted data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	4th Quarter 2018 ('000)	4th Quarter 2017 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	4th Quarter 2018 (%)	4th Quarter 2017 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	575.4	563.2	2.2	5.3	5.6	-0.3
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Regina - Moose Mountain	184.5	183.4	0.6	4.9	4.3	0.6
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	51.0	50.2	1.6	4.0	3.5	0.5
Saskatoon - Biggar	206.3	196.4	5.0	5.2	7.0	-1.8
Yorkton - Melville	37.0	36.5	1.4	3.9	5.2	-1.3
Prince Albert and Northern	96.6	96.6	0.0	7.0	6.8	0.2

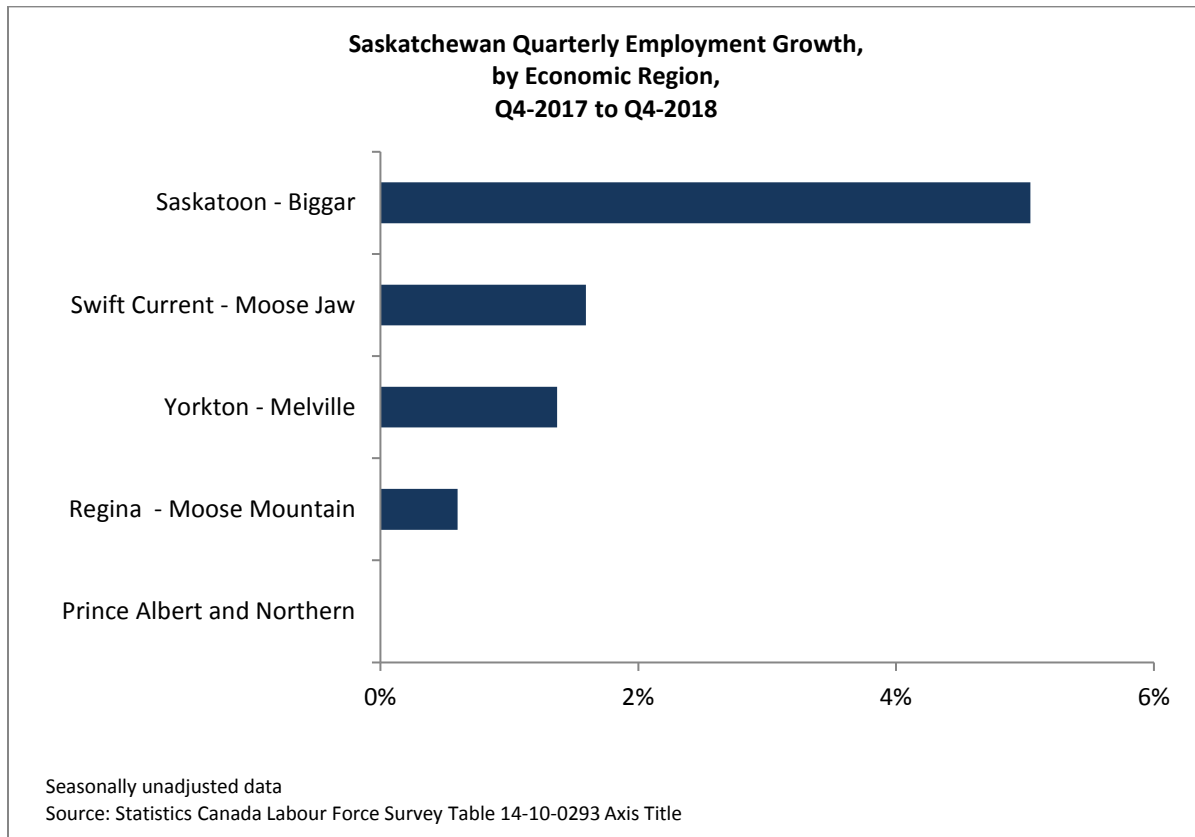
Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293, formerly CANSIM 28222

The number of people employed in Saskatchewan’s two largest economic regions – Regina-Moose Mountain and Saskatoon-Biggar – increased over the past year. However, a slowing economy, caused by weak commodity prices, has weakened demand for single- and multi-unit dwellings in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon. As a result, housing inventories are up, which has pushed new housing prices down. According to Statistics Canada’s latest New Housing Price Index, new housing prices dropped 2.4% between October 2017 and October 2018 – this was the largest drop among all Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada. Similarly, new housing prices in Saskatoon declined by 0.9% units over the same period.<sup>13</sup> Looking ahead, the Conference Board of Canada expects housing starts in Saskatchewan to rebound by 21.3% in 2019, due to stronger population growth.<sup>14</sup>

Employment in Swift Current – Moose Jaw is up 800 compared to a year ago. Swift Current is aiming to increase its population base by 1,000 new residents a year over the next seven years to reach 25,000 people. In order to reach its population growth goals, the City has developed a plan to spur economic activity that includes municipal tax exemptions for new businesses, as well as existing business expansion, and low commercial property leasing costs for businesses. The push to attract new business has resulted in Swift Current attracting major projects such as SaskPower’s \$680-million Chinook power plant, which created about 650 jobs during the construction phase.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, employment in Prince Albert and Northern region was unchanged in the fourth quarter of 2018 compared to a year ago. The largest drop in employment was recorded in the region's resource extracting industry (forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas). Weak uranium prices and depressed global demand for uranium resulted in Cameco indefinitely extending the shutdown of operations at its McArthur River and Key Lake uranium operation in July.<sup>16</sup>



**Note:** In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.

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**For information on the Labour Force Survey,** please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Federation of Independent Business (December 27, 2018). Business Barometer – December 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/sites/default/files/2018-12/business-barometer-provinces-2018-12.pdf>

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<sup>2</sup> The Conference Board of Canada (December 20, 2018). Provincial Outlook Economic Forecast: Saskatchewan—Autumn 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-Library/abstract.aspx?did=10069>

<sup>3</sup> The Government of Canada. Licensed cultivators, processors and sellers of cannabis under the Cannabis Act. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/industry-licensees-applicants/licensed-cultivators-processors-sellers.html>

<sup>4</sup> CBC News (July 17, 2018). Saskatoon company aims to grow and wholesale cannabis to Prairie recreational, medical markets. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-company-aims-to-grow-and-wholesale-cannabis-to-prairie-recreational-medical-markets-1.4750541>

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<sup>6</sup> Gensource Potash Corporation (August 9, 2018). GENSOURCE ANNOUNCES VANGUARD ONE PROJECT ACHIEVES ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT MILESTONE. Retrieved from: <https://gensourcepotash.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GSP-NR-EA-Determination-09Aug2018.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Western Potash Corporation (June 7, 2018). Milestone Potash Awards Contract for Final Stage of Phase I Project Engineering to SNC-Lavalin. Retrieved from: <https://www.westernpotash.com/news/2018/06/07/milestone-potash-awards-contract-final-stage-phase-i-project-engineering-snc>

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<sup>8</sup> CBC News (December 5, 2018). Sask. announces 'aggressive' new program to encourage more drilling. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/saskatchewan-drilling-program-waterflood-wells-1.4933873>

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<sup>11</sup> Saskatchewan Health Authority (November 29, 2018). New Community Health Centre Launched In Saskatoon. Retrieved from: <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/news/stories/Pages/2018/Nov/New-Community-Health-Centre.aspx>

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<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada (December 13, 2018). New Housing Price Index, October 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/181213/dq181213b-eng.pdf?st=R2i0fN78>

<sup>14</sup> The Conference Board of Canada (December 20, 2018). Provincial Outlook Economic Forecast: Saskatchewan—Autumn 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-Library/abstract.aspx?did=10069>

<sup>15</sup> The Globe and Mail (September 24, 2018). A Swift plan to grow: Saskatchewan city diversifies its commercial activity. Retrieved from: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/industry-news/property-report/article-a-swift-plan-to-grow-saskatchewan-city-diversifies-its-commercial/>

<sup>16</sup> Nutrien Ltd. (August 1, 2018). Nutrien Rebalances Potash Operations. Retrieved from: <https://www.nutrien.com/what-we-do/stories/nutrien-rebalances-potash-operations>