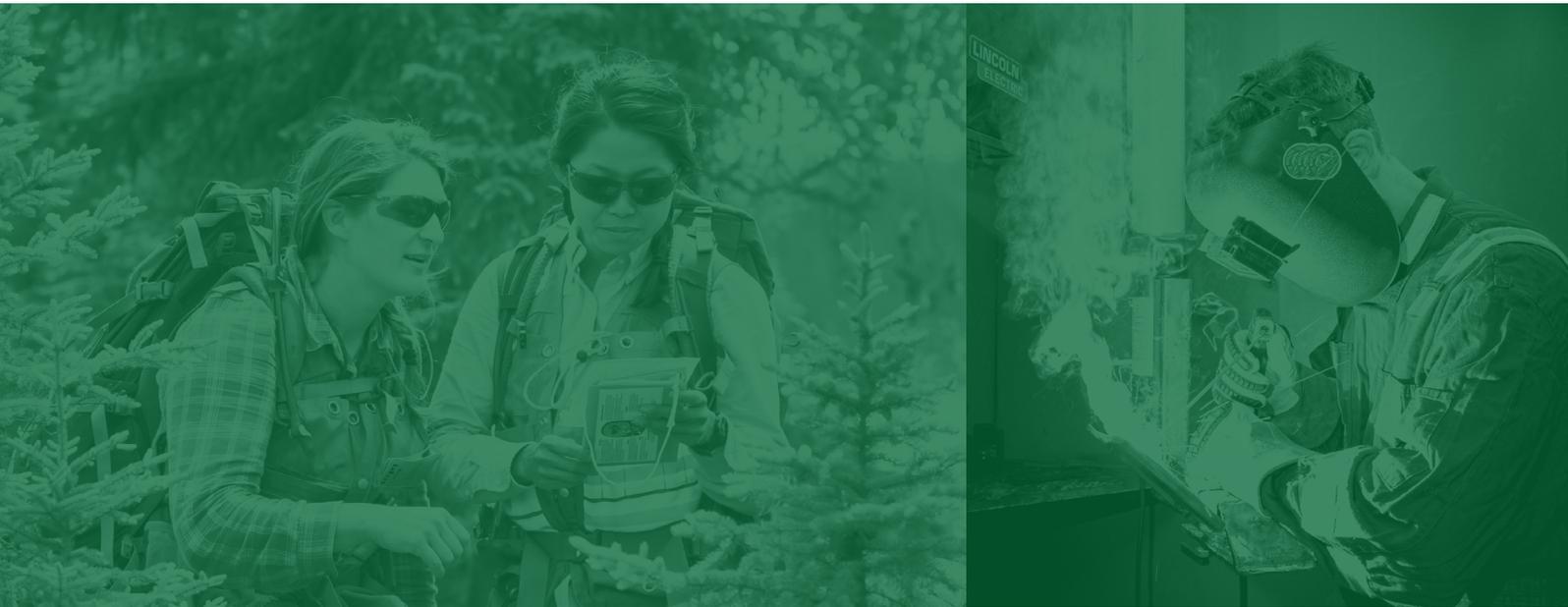




# ***Building for the Future***

*Saskatchewan's Growth Plan | 2024 Progress Report*





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# A Message from **Premier Scott Moe**

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## **Saskatchewan's economy is strong and the province's future is bright.**

There are more people living and working in Saskatchewan than ever before. Private capital investment in Saskatchewan is growing at the fastest rate in Canada and Saskatchewan is forecast to lead the country in new investment in 2024.

Guided by the *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*, the Government of Saskatchewan is ensuring our economy stays strong to deliver on the purpose of growth – a better quality of life. Through investments in new hospitals, new schools and measures to keep life affordable for families, the Government of Saskatchewan is building strong families, strong communities and a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

This report highlights the province's progress on the key goals and initiatives of *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*.

Thanks to the hard work of Saskatchewan people and businesses who are growing our province's economy, a number of growth plan goals have already been achieved or exceeded ahead of the 2030 timeline.

But the work is not done. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to take action to realize all the goals outlined in the growth plan.

Saskatchewan has what the world needs. Our province plays a critical role in providing the world with food, energy and mineral security. The Government of Saskatchewan will ensure that we continue to capitalize on that opportunity.

We will continue to support the growth of Saskatchewan's exports through investments in our highways and infrastructure, measures to ensure our agriculture and natural resource sectors remain competitive and international engagement to grow export markets and investment in Saskatchewan.

We will continue to promote the world-leading sustainability of what Saskatchewan produces and our province's contribution to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

We will invest in people through our labour market strategy and build an inclusive economy to ensure Indigenous people have more opportunities.

We will maintain a competitive business environment and attract more investment into Saskatchewan through our investment attraction strategy, while building the future economy by growing Saskatchewan's technology and innovation sectors.

Together with the work of individuals and businesses throughout the province that are keeping our economy strong, we will deliver on *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan* and build a bright future for everyone in Saskatchewan.



**Scott Moe**  
Premier of Saskatchewan

# Chapter 1

## Growing Saskatchewan's Population



**GOAL | Grow Saskatchewan's Population to 1.4 Million People by 2030**

Since the launch of the *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*, the province's population has surged to historic levels.

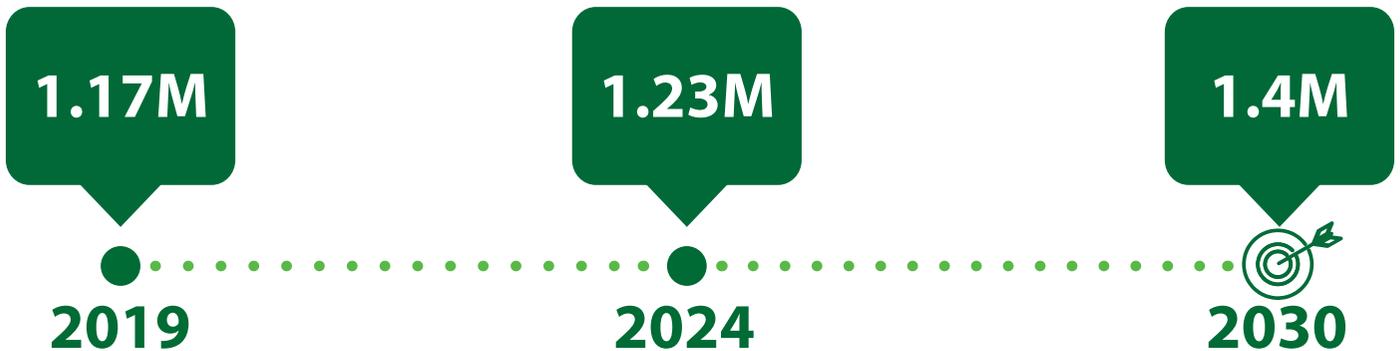
The strength of Saskatchewan's economy is driving investment, generating jobs and opening more opportunities, which supports population growth.

With affordable, vibrant communities and a high quality of life, Saskatchewan continues to be the best place in Canada to live, work and raise a family.

Innovative initiatives like the Graduate Retention Program make it more affordable for post-secondary students to remain in Saskatchewan after they graduate. Additionally, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program has been instrumental in welcoming a growing number of newcomers to our province.

A growing population not only builds vibrant growing communities, but it also sustains the workforce needed to grow Saskatchewan's economy.

### Progress Update



- As of April 1, 2024, Saskatchewan's population reached an all-time high of 1,231,043 – an increase of more than 30,500 people since April 2023.
- Since 2007, Saskatchewan's population has grown by over 233,500 – a 23 per cent increase.

# Key Actions Moving Forward

## Growing our Population by Keeping Saskatchewan's Economy Strong

Saskatchewan's strong economy is continuing to create jobs and opportunities for the province's growing population.

- Saskatchewan added 19,200 new jobs year-over-year in August 2024, ranking third in growth among provinces in terms of percentage change at 3.2 per cent.
- Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among provinces at 5.4 per cent, well below the national average of 6.6 per cent.

## Growing our Population by Training, Retaining and Attracting More People

- The Government of Saskatchewan released *Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy: the Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy* in March 2024 to guide the province's plan to grow the workforce.
- The Graduate Retention Program provides a rebate up to \$20,000 of tuition fees paid by post-secondary graduates who remain in Saskatchewan. Since its creation, this program has benefited over 85,000 graduates.
- More than 200,000 newcomers have arrived in 450 Saskatchewan communities since 2007.

## Growing our Population by Building Strong Families, Communities and a Better Quality of Life for Saskatchewan People

- Saskatchewan continues to be one of the most affordable places to live in Canada, with some of the lowest personal income taxes in the country:
  - » A Saskatchewan family of four now pays no provincial tax on their first \$59,475 of income – the highest tax-free threshold in Canada.
  - » Since 2007, tax reductions have resulted in 112,000 lower-income Saskatchewan residents no longer paying provincial income tax.
- Investments in communities, infrastructure, health care and education are continuing to build a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

# Chapter 2

## Keeping Saskatchewan's Economy Competitive and Growing

### Saskatchewan's Trade and Exports

Saskatchewan's economy continues to grow. Private-sector capital investment is growing at the fastest rate in Canada, and the value of Saskatchewan's exports continues to climb as the province produces more of the goods that the world demands.

Private capital investment and export growth are key drivers of Saskatchewan's economic success. The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to keeping our economy competitive and engaging internationally to attract investment, stimulate economic growth and expand export production.

 **GOAL | Grow Private Capital Investment in Saskatchewan to \$16 Billion Annually**

Private capital investment creates new opportunities, drives innovation and efficiency and creates better and higher paying jobs. Saskatchewan continues to attract new investment due to advantages like our competitive business environment and world class resources including agriculture, oil and gas, potash, uranium and forestry products.

*Securing the Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan's Investment Attraction Strategy* will ensure the province continues to grow investment by building opportunities in new and emerging sectors, growing existing sectors and connecting the world to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan to the world.

## Progress Update



- Private capital investment grew to \$12.4 billion in 2023.
- Private capital investment in Saskatchewan in 2024 is estimated to be \$14.2 billion, an increase of 14.4 per cent compared to 2023 and the highest anticipated increase in Canada.

- Saskatchewan's economic outlook is strong, fueled by over \$39 billion in private sector investments planned for the next decade.



**GOAL | Increase the Value of Exports by 50 Per Cent**

Exports are the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy, with 65 to 70 per cent of Saskatchewan's products reaching international markets.

## Progress Update



- Saskatchewan is exceeding the growth plan goal of increasing the value of exports by 50 per cent.
- In 2023, the value of Saskatchewan's exports reached \$49.3 billion, surpassing the 2030 target. This follows the record set in 2022, when exports totalled \$52.6 billion.



**GOAL | Increase the Value of Manufacturing Exports by 50 Per Cent**

Manufacturing continues to be an important sector for economic growth and diversification in Saskatchewan's economy.

## Progress Update



- In 2023, Saskatchewan's manufacturing exports reached a record \$11.5 billion, surpassing the growth plan target for the second year in a row. This represents a 16 per cent increase compared to 2022 and surpasses the

growth plan target of \$9.8 billion.

- Manufacturing sales in the province reached \$24.4 billion in 2023. This is the second-highest year on record, following sales of \$25.7 billion in 2022.
- The economic contribution of the manufacturing sector is significant, with Saskatchewan's manufacturing GDP reaching \$4.9 billion in 2023.
- Manufacturing employment saw a positive trend, rising by three per cent from 31,900 in 2022 to 33,000 in 2023.



**GOAL | Grow the Number of International Markets to Which Saskatchewan Exports More than \$1 Billion**

The diversification of Saskatchewan's economy and the growing diversity of Saskatchewan's export markets make the province more resilient to market access risks such as tariffs and regulatory trade barriers. Saskatchewan's trade missions, international trade and investment offices and the work of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership are helping exporters to expand markets for Saskatchewan products.

## Progress Update



- The Government of Saskatchewan has already met the growth plan goal of increasing the number of markets to which the province exports over \$1 billion.
- In 2023, Saskatchewan exported more than \$1 billion of goods to nine markets: United States, China, Brazil, India, Japan, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Middle East and North Africa, European Union and Andean regions.
- In 2023, Saskatchewan goods reached 163 countries, with 32 of those countries buying over \$100 million of Saskatchewan products.

# Key Actions Moving Forward

## | Expand International Markets for Saskatchewan Products

- The Government of Saskatchewan released *Securing the Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan's Investment Attraction Strategy*, which focuses on three core pillars to enhance Saskatchewan's dynamic business environment:
  - » **Build:** Develop and enhance critical infrastructure to support key industries and attract large-scale investments.
  - » **Grow:** Expand Saskatchewan's global footprint by promoting its resources and sectors.
  - » **Connect:** Strengthen partnerships with global investors and industry leaders to drive innovation and create new economic opportunities in the province.
- The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to expand markets for Saskatchewan products and open doors for business in the province through Saskatchewan's international offices, trade missions and agreements with trading partners. Strong government-to-government relationships help to address market access challenges such as trade barriers, while increasing market access in countries where government is more involved in business.
  - » Saskatchewan's network of international offices provides regional coverage to Asia, Latin America, North America, the Middle East and Europe.
  - » The offices help strengthen relationships with Saskatchewan's trading partners, while providing dedicated services to assist:
    - » Saskatchewan exporters bringing their products to the world.
    - » New investment into the province.
    - » Academic, research, and industry partnerships.
    - » Talent recruitment missions in sectors where Saskatchewan is experiencing labour force shortages.

## | Reducing Inter-provincial Barriers to Trade

- Interprovincial exports of goods and services are crucial to Saskatchewan's economy, representing more than 22 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP.
- Exports to other provinces increased 33.5 per cent from \$19 billion in 2018 to \$25 billion in 2022.
- Through the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and active participation in the Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table, Saskatchewan continues to work with federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts to enable companies to conduct business across provincial and territorial borders.

## | Maintaining a Competitive Tax Environment

- Manufacturers, processors, and small businesses in Saskatchewan benefit from some of the lowest provincial corporate income tax rates in the country.
- Saskatchewan offers a competitive business environment with low tax and utility rates, a continued focus on

reducing regulatory red tape and the second-lowest small business tax rate in Canada.

## | Supporting a Strong Manufacturing Sector

- The *Saskatchewan Chemical Fertilizer Incentive* provides eligible corporations that construct new or expand existing chemical fertilizer production facilities with a 15 per cent non-refundable tax credit.
- The Saskatchewan Lean Improvements in Manufacturing Program provides funding assistance to agri-business for adoption of best practices, new state-of-the-art technologies and processes that stimulate significant improvement in productivity and efficiency.
- The *Manufacturing and Processing Profits Tax Reduction* allows eligible corporations to reduce their Saskatchewan income tax rate on Canadian manufacturing and processing profits by as much as two percentage points.
- The *Manufacturing and Processing Investment Tax Credit* is a refundable tax credit designed to encourage plant and equipment investment for manufacturing and processing activities for corporations permanently established in Saskatchewan.
- The *Saskatchewan Value-Added Agriculture Incentive* is a non-refundable tax credit ranging from 15 to 40 per cent, depending on the size of capital investment in value-added agriculture facilities.

# Chapter 3

## Growing Saskatchewan's Agricultural Advantage

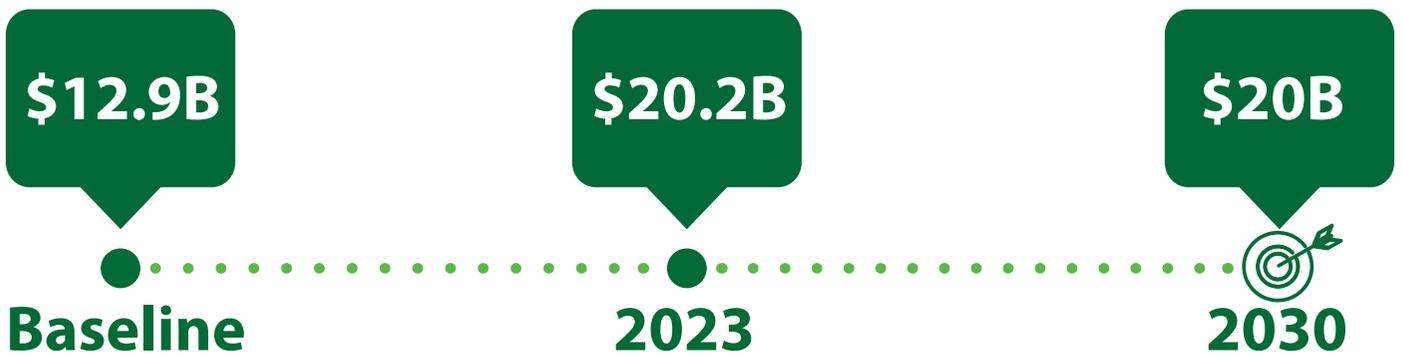
Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to meet rising global demand for reliable, sustainable and nutritious food. Building on Saskatchewan's natural advantage that includes more than 40 per cent of Canada's cultivated farmland and over 20 million acres of native grasslands and tame forage, the province's producers and ranchers are increasing production while reducing their carbon footprint through the adoption of innovative production practices and new technologies.

The Government of Saskatchewan is continuing to grow the province's role as a global supplier of agricultural commodities, high-value ingredients and food products.

### **GOAL | Grow Saskatchewan's Agri-Food Exports to \$20 Billion**

The value of Saskatchewan's agri-food exports – consisting of raw commodities, ingredients and finished food products – continues to grow. Growth is supported by gains at every step of the value chain, including primary production, improved efficiencies in grain handling and investment in value-added processing.

### Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan's total agri-food exports were more than \$20.2 billion in 2023, surpassing the Growth Plan target.

### **GOAL | Increase Agriculture Value-Added Revenue to \$10 Billion**

A natural extension of Saskatchewan's global leadership in the production of sustainable raw agricultural commodities is the conversion of those commodities into high-value ingredients, high-value meat products and co-products that can supply down-stream food manufacturing and bio-product development.

## Progress to Date:



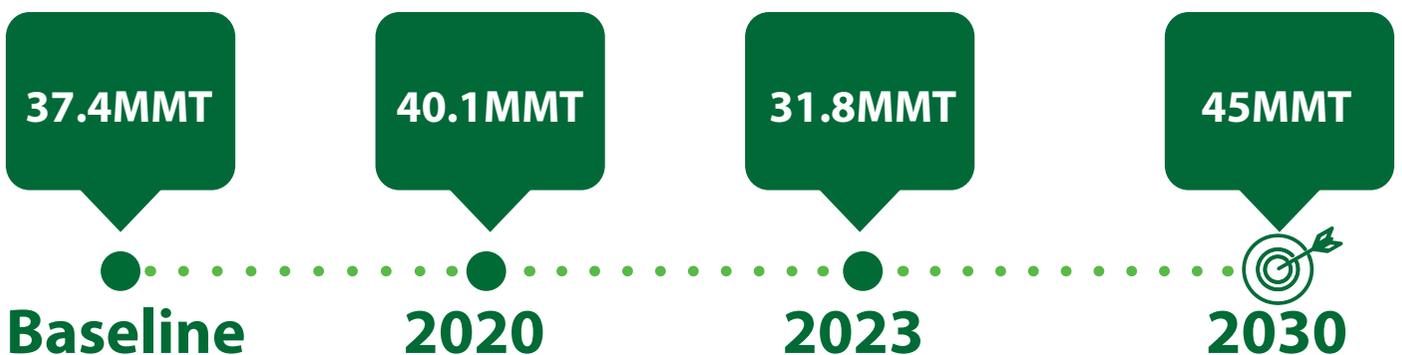
- Saskatchewan’s value-added agriculture sector has seen strong growth, with annual revenue increasing from \$5.2 billion to an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2022-23.
- The food manufacturing sector has grown by 119 per cent since 2012 – surpassing all other provinces – and is responsible for more than 6,000 jobs in Saskatchewan.



**GOAL | Increase Crop Production to 45 million Metric Tonnes and Livestock Cash Receipts to \$3 Billion**

Innovation continues to drive growth in Saskatchewan’s crop production. Advancements in crop genetics, production practices, plant health and crop protection have allowed producers to consistently increase yields on a per hectare basis. Advances in livestock genetics are increasing production, while lowering inputs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan’s average crop production has grown since 2007, from 23.6 million metric tonnes to a high of 40.1 million metric tonnes in 2020.
- Severe drought conditions in 2021 and 2023 caused a significant drop in crop production.

## Progress to Date:



- Annual livestock cash receipts increased to \$3.54 billion in 2023, exceeding the Growth Plan goal.

## GOAL | Expand Irrigation in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan is home to Lake Diefenbaker, one of the largest freshwater reservoirs in Canada. Once its irrigation capacity is developed to its full potential, this unparalleled natural resource will help transform the surrounding region through the production of new high-value crops. Developing the region's irrigation capacity will support investment in ingredients and food processing, further advancing Saskatchewan as a critical supplier of food to the world.

## Progress to Date:



- Since 2020, more than 58,000 acres of irrigation have been developed.
- A total of 24,015 acres of irrigation were developed across the province in 2023, bringing the total irrigated acreage in Saskatchewan to approximately 431,000 acres.
- The Government of Saskatchewan is moving forward with planning and engineering design work on the first 90,000 acres of the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Projects. Since 2020, over 58,000 acres of irrigation have been developed, the largest growth since the early 1980s. The Government of Saskatchewan is on track to achieve and exceed its goal of irrigating 85,000 acres.



## GOAL | Crush 75 per cent of the Canola Produced in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's raw commodities such as canola are increasingly becoming a strategic asset for the province, as global demand increases for high-value / low-carbon intensity ingredients.

### Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan's capacity to crush canola produced in the province increased to 42 per cent of the canola produced in the province in 2023.
- Saskatchewan has four canola processing facilities operating in the province.
- New facilities, and the expansion of existing facilities, will significantly increase the province's canola crush capacity to meet current and future global demand:
  - » Cargill is expanding its canola processing, with a new Regina facility set to produce approximately one million metric tonnes per year.
  - » Louis Dreyfus Company is expanding its canola processing complex in Yorkton, which will more than double its annual capacity to over two million metric tonnes.
  - » Richardson International has doubled its canola processing capacity in Yorkton to 2.2 million metric tonnes per year, making it the largest canola crush plant in Canada.



## GOAL | Process 50 per cent of the Pulse Crops Produced in Saskatchewan

Pulses and pulse-derived ingredients represent one of the largest growth opportunities in value-added agriculture, as demand increases globally for high-value ingredients.

## Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan processed 32 per cent of the pulse crops produced in the province in 2023.
- Upcoming pulse processing projects include a new facility by Louis Dreyfus Company in Yorkton, as well as expansions by P&H Milling, Simpson Seeds and Three Farmers.

 **GOAL | Double Meat Processing and Animal Feed Value-added Revenue to More than \$1 Billion**

As emerging economies expand their middle class, global demand for meat is projected to rise. Saskatchewan is uniquely positioned to supply a significant portion of this rising global demand for protein given the province’s abundance of natural grasslands, supply of animal feed and innovative producers.

## Progress to Date:



- Revenue from the meat and animal feed sector was approximately \$1.17 billion in 2022-23, exceeding the Growth Plan goal of \$1 billion.
- The sector employs more than 2,600 people in Saskatchewan.
- North 49 has completed a \$60 million state-of-the-art cull sow processing facility in Moose Jaw. This is the largest in Canada with the capacity to process 225,000 sows annually.

# Key Actions Moving Forward

## | Growing Agri-Food Exports

The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to:

- Promote the sustainability of Saskatchewan agriculture. Research commissioned by the Global Institute for Food Security confirms that Saskatchewan producers grow crops with a significantly lower carbon footprint than their international competitors.
- Invest in agriculture trade events, such as the Tri-National Accord, and programming support through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (supporting six producer associations).
- Expand export opportunities to India for Saskatchewan pulse producers.

## | Delivering Effective Agriculture Supports

- Support producers through crop insurance and agri-stability.
- The *Saskatchewan Value-Added Agriculture Incentive* offers non-refundable tax credits ranging from 15 to 40 per cent.
- The Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year, \$485 million investment by federal and provincial governments in strategic initiatives for Saskatchewan agriculture.
- The Agriculture Development Fund provides \$15 million annually to support agriculture growth and address emerging production challenges through research and development. Additionally, the Strategic Research Program supports 15 research chairs developing innovative crop varieties, value-added processing technologies, agronomic practices and feed formulations.

# Chapter 4

## Growing Saskatchewan's Natural Resource Advantage

Saskatchewan's natural resource sector provides the world with sustainable products to meet growing global demand for energy and mineral security.

Saskatchewan's energy, mining and forestry sectors accounted for \$27.5 billion in sales in 2023 and employ more than 61,000 people directly and indirectly. The Government of Saskatchewan will ensure that the province remains one of the best places in the world to invest in the oil and gas, mineral and natural resource industries.

 **GOAL | Increase Oil Production by 25 Per Cent to 600,000 Barrels Per Day**

Saskatchewan is the second-largest oil producer in Canada, the sixth-largest onshore oil producer in Canada and the United States and the third largest natural gas producer in Canada. The province's oil and gas sector benefits from a competitive and stable regulatory environment and a strong network of suppliers that supports 26,000 direct and indirect jobs.

### Progress to Date:



- In 2023-24 Saskatchewan produced 454,000 barrels of oil per day.
- Saskatchewan's oil production is recovering from the COVID-19 downturn. To increase oil production in Saskatchewan, new programs have been introduced to enhance drilling, processing, and pipeline capacity as well as extending the life of existing wells.



**GOAL | Enhance Oil Recovery, Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) and Position Saskatchewan as The Best Place in North America to Test, Commercialize and Scale New Oil and Gas Technologies**

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to supporting the implementation of Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) technology. When paired with enhanced oil recovery (EOR), CCUS presents an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while increasing oil production, because EOR results in lower emissions than traditional oil and gas extraction.

## Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan continues to be a leader in the advancement of EOR technologies.
- Saskatchewan is home to one of the largest commercial EOR projects in the world operated by Whitecap Resources.
- Over the last 25 years, Saskatchewan EOR projects have sequestered more than 40 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which has resulted in over 100 million barrels of incremental oil production. Approximately 200 million barrels of production will be added over the life of these and other EOR projects, significantly increasing the life cycle and sustainability of these wells.



**GOAL | Increase the Annual Value of Uranium Sales to \$2 Billion**

Saskatchewan uranium provides the world with a secure and sustainable source of energy. The province is the second-largest global producer of uranium and has the largest high-grade deposits of uranium in the world. Headquartered in Saskatchewan, Cameco is one of the world's largest uranium producers and is the largest employer of Indigenous people in Canada.

## Progress to Date:



- In 2023, uranium value of sales increased to \$1.6 billion.

## GOAL | Increase the Annual Value of Potash Sales to \$9 Billion

Saskatchewan has the largest potash resources in the world and the ability to supply food producers worldwide with nutrients for several hundred years. With the global population expected to reach 10 billion people by 2050, Saskatchewan's potash industry is positioned to supply the world with the sustainable resources needed to increase global food security.

## Progress to Date:



- The Saskatchewan potash industry continues to experience positive growth. In 2023, sales were approximately \$10.9 billion – the second-highest year on record.



## GOAL | Double the Growth of Saskatchewan's Forestry Sector

Forestry is northern Saskatchewan's largest industry and a significant contributor to the province's economy. With 34 million hectares of forest, and nearly \$800 million in new forestry sector investments expected by 2026, Saskatchewan's forestry industry is ready for future growth.

### Progress to Date:



- Growth in Saskatchewan's forestry sector reached an all-time high of \$1.8 billion in forestry product sales in 2021, an increase of 60 per cent from 2020.



## GOAL | Grow Indigenous Participation in Saskatchewan's Natural Resource Industries

Saskatchewan is committed to growing Indigenous participation in the natural resource industry.

### Progress to Date:



- Indigenous employment in the natural resource sector grew to 14 per cent in 2023. There were 2,800 Indigenous people employed in the sector in 2023.
- In 2022, Saskatchewan mining operations purchased \$651 million in goods and services from Indigenous-owned businesses.

- Indigenous people account for approximately 27 per cent of forestry sector employment.
- Under the Accelerated Site Closure Program, the oil and gas industry spent \$29.6 million with Indigenous service companies to abandon and remediate drilling wells.

## Key Actions Moving Forward

### | Growing Saskatchewan's Oil and Gas Sector

Saskatchewan is rated as one of the best places for oil and gas production in North America. In 2023, the Fraser Institute ranked Saskatchewan as the number one jurisdiction in Canada and third in North America for oil and gas competitiveness.

Incentives to grow oil production in Saskatchewan include:

- The Multi-lateral Well Program provides a competitive incentive for the drilling of new multi-lateral horizontal wells within the province.
- The *Oil and Gas Processing Investment Incentive* offers a transferable oil and gas royalty/freehold production tax credits for qualified greenfield or brownfield value-added projects at a rate of 15 per cent of eligible project costs.
- The Oil Infrastructure Investment Program offers a transferable oil and gas royalty / freehold production tax credit for qualified new or expanded pipeline projects at a rate of 20 per cent of eligible project costs.
- The *Saskatchewan Petroleum Innovation Incentive* offers a transferable oil and gas royalty/freehold production tax credits for qualified innovation commercialization projects at a rate of 25 per cent of eligible project costs.
- The High Water Cut Oil Program was expanded to extend the life of existing producing wells in Saskatchewan.

### | Advancing Carbon Capture and Storage Technology

- Saskatchewan has well-developed strategies to reduce methane emissions and promote carbon capture and storage. The province offers competitive incentives, world class geology and outcome-based regulations to firmly position it for large-scale projects.
- SaskPower's Boundary Dam project was the world's first power station to utilize Carbon Capture and Storage technology.
- Saskatchewan's is the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada to invest in CCUS technology and infrastructure.

## | Growing Saskatchewan's Critical Mineral Sectors

Saskatchewan is home to 27 of the 34 critical minerals that Canada has identified as strategically important for the country, including uranium, potash, rare earths, helium, copper and lithium. Demand for those minerals is expected to increase significantly over the coming decades.

### Uranium

- Due to the restart of the McArthur River mine and Key Lake mill in 2022, Saskatchewan uranium production increased nearly 50 per cent in 2023.
- NexGen Energy (NexGen) is moving towards development of a new uranium mine in Saskatchewan. NexGen's Rook I Project is located 130 kilometres north of La Loche and will be a high-grade underground uranium mine with a capital investment of approximately \$2 billion.
- There are multiple other exploration companies working towards developing new uranium mines in Saskatchewan. The most advanced projects are Denison Mines' Wheeler River Project and Fission Uranium's Patterson Lake South Project.
- Orano Group and Denison Mines have announced plans to restart the McClean Lake mine, with production expected in 2025.

### Potash

- BHP has invested \$14 billion into its Jansen potash mine – the largest private-sector investment in Saskatchewan history. Once complete, BHP will have invested \$20 billion in Saskatchewan to create one of the largest potash mines in the world.
- K+S has announced plans to double productive capacity in the coming decades at its Bethune mine.
- Mosaic has completed investments to grow its capacity, including developing Esterhazy K3 into one of the world's largest potash mines.
- Nutrien is the world's largest potash producer and recently increased productive capacity at its network of mines in Saskatchewan.

### Critical Minerals

- The Government of Saskatchewan launched *Securing the Future: Saskatchewan's Critical Mineral Strategy* to drive growth and development of the critical minerals sector in the province.
- The Saskatchewan Research Council constructed North America's first fully integrated Rare Earth Processing Facility, supported by a \$71 million investment from the Government of Saskatchewan.
- The Government of Saskatchewan released Saskatchewan's Helium Action Plan: From Exploration to Export, with the goal of supplying 10 per cent of global helium by 2030.
- North American Helium Inc. is building two additional helium purification facilities, bringing their total to nine facilities after announcing their first facility in 2020.
- Foran mining is committing more than \$800 million to advance the McIvenna Bay base metal project to construction, with several initiatives planned to achieve carbon neutrality during the operation of the mine.
- In August 2024, Prairie Lithium produced the first kilogram of Saskatchewan lithium in the province's history.

## | Delivering on Saskatchewan Mining Incentives

- The *Saskatchewan Critical Minerals Processing Investment Incentive* provides a 15 per cent transferrable royalty/freehold production tax credit to support the development of processing facilities for 10 emerging critical minerals in Saskatchewan.
- The *Saskatchewan Critical Minerals Innovation Incentive* supports innovation commercialization projects targeting emerging critical minerals, such as helium, lithium, rare earth elements and copper through a 25 per cent transferrable royalty/freehold production tax credit.
- The Saskatchewan Mineral Exploration Tax Credit provides a non-refundable 30 per cent tax credit for Saskatchewan taxpayers investing in eligible mineral exploration flow-through shares.
- The Targeted Mineral Exploration Incentive was expanded in 2023-24, with funding increasing from \$750,000 to \$4 million annually and eligibility expanded to include all hard-rock exploration projects at any location in Saskatchewan.
- The Government of Saskatchewan's \$10 million investment into the Saskatchewan Geological Survey's Public Geoscience Initiative will drive mineral exploration activities and reduce mining investment risk in the province by providing industry with high-quality public data.

## | Growing Saskatchewan's Forestry Sector

- Meadow Lake Tribal Council invested \$113 million to construct an eight megawatt Bioenergy Centre adjacent to the NorSask sawmill, Saskatchewan's first wood bioenergy plant.
- Dunkley Lumber invested \$220 million to expand the Carrot River sawmill and construct a bioproducts manufacturing plant adjacent to the sawmill.
- One Sky Forest Products is investing \$400 million in an oriented strand board mill in Prince Albert which is anticipated to be operational as early as 2027.
- Carrier Lumber is investing up to \$30 million in upgrades to the Big River sawmill.

## | Growing Indigenous Participation in Saskatchewan's Natural Resource Industries

- The Government of Saskatchewan established the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation (SIIFC), to provide access to capital for Indigenous communities investing in Saskatchewan's natural resource and value-added agriculture sectors. SIIFC guarantees loans for equity investment to spur economic growth and creates jobs for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.
  - » The SIIFC recently approved up to \$100 million in loan guarantees that will benefit six Indigenous partners to further Indigenous Economic Reconciliation as well as support job growth.

# Chapter 5

## Growing a Skilled Labour Force

There are more people working in Saskatchewan than ever before, with job growth fueled by unprecedented investment in the province. Continued economic growth depends on a strong, skilled workforce supported by a population that is growing at the fastest rate in more than a century.

Targeted investments in education and training – including the skilled trades – are building a talented and resilient workforce to keep pace with the needs of employers across the province.

Investments in programs and services for individuals with barriers to employment are critical to connect employers and job seekers. The provincial commitment to maximize Indigenous participation in Saskatchewan’s natural resource sectors means Saskatchewan has achieved the highest rate of Indigenous off-reserve employment in the province’s history. And when jobs cannot be filled within the province, the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program helps to recruit skilled workers from around the world.

 **GOAL | 100,000 New Jobs**

With an unemployment rate consistently among the lowest in Canada, investments in workforce development are ensuring Saskatchewan residents are supported to fully participate in the economic opportunities available in the province.

### Progress to Date



- Saskatchewan added 19,200 new jobs year-over-year in August 2024, ranking third in growth among provinces in terms of percentage change at 3.2 per cent.
- Saskatchewan continues to have the lowest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among provinces at 5.4 per cent, well below the national average of 6.6 per cent.

# Key Actions Moving Forward

Saskatchewan's workforce is one of the most productive in the country, particularly in the areas of manufacturing, agriculture and resource development. Investments in training opportunities in the province ensure Saskatchewan has the labour force it needs to meet employer demand and realize the potential of a growing economy.

Record job growth and strategic investments in *Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy* will ensure that Saskatchewan residents are prepared for employment now and into the future.

## | Delivering on Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy

*Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy: The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy*, focuses on three key actions.

### 1. Preparing Saskatchewan People for Jobs

- In 2023-24, the Government of Saskatchewan invested more than \$300 million in labour market programming.
- In the 2024-25 , this funding was supported by additional investments, including:
  - » More than \$24 million for adult essential skills training.
  - » More than \$23 million for pre-employment programs.
  - » More than \$21 million for skills training programs delivered through post-secondary institutions.
  - » Almost \$10 million to support employment of persons with disabilities.
  - » Trades and Skills Centres in Regina and Saskatoon receive almost \$2 million annually to deliver demand-led industry training programs that respond to the needs of employers.
- There are now 4,850 apprenticeship training seats in Saskatchewan, including 250 new seats funded in the 2024-25 budget.
- Investments in training and post-secondary education in the 2024-25 budget provide almost \$725 million to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions, including:
  - » More than \$490 million to the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina and federated and affiliated colleges.
  - » Over \$193 million for Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute.
  - » More than \$37 million to Saskatchewan's regional colleges.

### 2. Recognizing Skills in Saskatchewan

- Saskatchewan's Credential Recognition Services help educated professionals trained in Canada and abroad to overcome barriers to becoming licensed in Saskatchewan. This includes working with regulatory bodies in the province to ensure the timely recognition of credentials, as well as supporting the recognition and transfer of existing licences to allow individuals to practice in Saskatchewan.
- In 2022, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced regulations to reduce administrative barriers to credential

recognition to enable workers from other provinces, or those trained internationally, to work in Saskatchewan more quickly.

- » Regulatory bodies now have 50 days to assess the qualifications of an internationally trained applicant and 20 days to assess the qualifications of an applicant certified in another province – the fastest processing times in Canada.

### 3. International Recruitment

- The new *Immigration Services Act* is the most aggressive foreign worker protection legislation in Canada and the most robust immigration program integrity framework in the country.
  - » The new legislation better positions Saskatchewan to attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to fill critical job vacancies in the province and more effectively leverage the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program to grow the province's population and workforce.
- More than 21,000 newcomers from around the world made Saskatchewan their home in 2023.

## | Increasing Health Care Capacity

To complement *Saskatchewan's Labour Market Strategy*, the *Saskatchewan Health Human Resource Action Plan* is a focused, sector-specific blueprint to build a stronger, more robust health care workforce in the province. The plan focuses on four pillars:

- **Recruit:** Accelerating and broadening recruitment efforts to create a steady supply of health care workers.
- **Train:** Expanding health sciences education and professional development opportunities for domestic students and existing health care employees, as well as accelerating training and licensure for internationally educated health care workers.
- **Incentivize:** Supporting sourcing for hard to recruit health care positions.
- **Retain:** Promote the rewarding benefits of a career in health care.

# Chapter 6

## Transforming Saskatchewan's Economy Through Innovation and Technology

Saskatchewan's growing technology sector is strengthening Saskatchewan's economy. Growth in the sector is being driven by the Saskatchewan advantage of strong wages, a low cost of living and a competitive economic environment that includes some of the most aggressive technology development incentives in Canada. This makes Saskatchewan a highly attractive environment for technology development and commercialization.

Saskatchewan's technology sector is a large employer in the province, employing young, highly educated and diverse employees. Supported by Innovation Saskatchewan and two research parks, Saskatchewan is continuing to attract capital investment for new start-up companies. In addition, the growth of the technology sector supports innovation and advancement in Saskatchewan's traditional sectors.

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to invest in world-class research being undertaken in the province through its research centres, including the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization and the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation.

### **GOAL | Triple the Growth of Saskatchewan's Technology Sector**

The technology sector employs a highly educated, diverse and skilled workforce. Employment in the sector has grown significantly since 2019.

### Progress to Date:



- Employment in the sector has grown by over 100 per cent, from 2,631 in 2019 to 5,489 in 2023.

# Key Actions Moving Forward

## | Supporting the Growth of Saskatchewan's Technology Sector

- Innovation Saskatchewan invests in incubators that help local tech entrepreneurs and companies grow their businesses through mentorship, resources and connection to broader networks.
- The province's first tech incubator, Co.Labs, has incubated 206 startups that have raised \$39.6 million in private investment, generated \$73.6 million in revenue and created 853 jobs since 2017.
- Cultivator Powered by Conexus, the province's second tech incubator, launched in Regina in 2019. Cultivator has incubated 173 companies, raising \$155 million in private capital and creating more than 570 jobs.
- In 2024-25, Innovation Saskatchewan announced a new partnership with Opus, the University of Saskatchewan's startup incubator, which focuses on commercializing deep tech innovations. This partnership will focus on taking the most promising research-backed innovations out of the university and into the world.
- Ecosystem building and funding initiatives support events and awards to promote Saskatchewan's innovation ecosystem.

### **Investing in Research Infrastructure and Projects**

- The province is investing in a new Saskatchewan Polytechnic campus at Innovation Place. The campus will strengthen the province's innovation ecosystem, creating new education and employment opportunities in existing and emerging industries. Early works have started on the new Trades and Technologies building.
- Innovation Saskatchewan operates two Research and Technology Parks in Canada, which house 158 organizations employing 4,000 people.
- In 2020-21, the Government of Saskatchewan committed \$15 million to enhance the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization facilities.
- The Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation announced a partnership with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories to increase the production of the isotope Actinium 225, a promising new weapon in the fight against cancer. The partnership will bring much-needed supply to the international market, addressing global demand for cancer therapeutics.
- SaskTel, Samsung Canada and Innovation Saskatchewan launched the province's first 5G Innovation Labs to equip local businesses, students, researchers and other innovators with the tools to develop cutting-edge 5G technology, shaping the future of communication and connectivity across Saskatchewan.

### **Increasing Innovation and Technology Incentives**

- The Saskatchewan Technology Startup Incentive is among the most aggressive tax credit programs for startups in Canada, providing a non-refundable 45 per cent tax credit to Saskatchewan based investors while supporting early-stage technology startups. Outcomes to date include:
  - » More than \$17 million in investment tax credits approved.
  - » More than \$96 million attracted in private investment.
  - » Supporting the creation of more than 440 jobs.

- Innovation Saskatchewan administers two research and development grant programs to accelerate the commercialization of game-changing technologies in the province's core sectors:
  - » Since 2018-19, the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund has invested over \$14.7 million to attract more than three times that amount in private investment, creating 225 jobs.
  - » Since its inception in 2020-21, the Agtech Growth Fund has invested over \$4.4 million to attract more than four times that amount in private investment, creating 141 jobs.
- The *Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive* reduces the provincial corporate income tax rate to six per cent for income generated in Saskatchewan from commercialized intellectual property for period of 10 to 15 years.
- In 2021, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a \$15 million investment into Emmertech, Canada's largest and most active agtech venture capital fund, to support Saskatchewan-based agtech startups.
- The Made in Saskatchewan Technology Program matches tech startups with government to help companies scale faster, by reducing barriers to market entry and validating technology.
- The *Saskatchewan Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credit* encourages private-sector research and development investment in Saskatchewan by annually providing more than \$20 million in tax credits to support commercial R&D in the province.

# Chapter 7

## Building the Infrastructure for Growth: Investing Over \$30 Billion in Infrastructure

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to make record investments in infrastructure to build a strong economy and strong communities. Investments in Saskatchewan’s highways and transportation infrastructure enable Saskatchewan businesses to get their products to market and support Saskatchewan’s export-driven economy. Saskatchewan’s Crown utilities continue to make investments to upgrade and build new infrastructure to support Saskatchewan’s growth. Infrastructure investments in hospitals, schools and municipalities support the Growth Plan goal of delivering on the purpose of growth – building a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people.



**ACTION** | Invest \$30 Billion in Infrastructure Over the Next Decade to Build Strong Communities and A Strong Province

### Progress to Date:



- Since 2019-20, the Government of Saskatchewan has invested \$18.9 billion in infrastructure – achieving 63 per cent of the Growth Plan goal.
- The 2024-25 budget is the largest capital budget in Saskatchewan history, with \$4.4 billion allocated to provincial projects.
- Over this year and the next three fiscal years, the *Government of Saskatchewan’s Capital Plan* will invest \$17.9 billion to build and improve infrastructure.



## GOAL | Expand Saskatchewan's Export Infrastructure and Building and Upgrading 10,000 kms of Highways

### Progress to Date:



- Funding in the 2023-24 budget built or improved almost 1,100 kilometres of highways. To date, the Government of Saskatchewan has built or improved 4,878 kilometres of provincial highways— almost 50 per cent of the Growth Plan goal.
- Over \$13 billion has been invested to build or improve more than 20,700 kilometres of Saskatchewan's highway network since 2008.
- Over the first five years of the Growth Plan, more than \$120 million will have been invested in the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth Program.
- To improve safety on Saskatchewan highways, the Government of Saskatchewan is on track to complete 45 sets of passing lanes since 2020-21.

## Key Actions Moving Forward

### Improving Saskatchewan's Highways and Transportation Infrastructure

- The Government of Saskatchewan is on track to build and upgrade 6,000 kilometres of highways by the end of 2024-25.
- The Government of Saskatchewan is also on track to build and upgrade 840 kilometres of Thin Membrane Surface (TMS) roads by the end of the 2024-25 fiscal year to support the goal of upgrading more than 2,000 kilometres of TMS roads across Saskatchewan.
- The Government of Saskatchewan's goal of rebuilding 200 bridges and replacing 2,000 culverts is on track:
  - » By the end of 2024-25, it's expected that an additional 17 bridges will have been rebuilt or rehabilitated, bringing the total to 89 since 2020-21.

- » In the same period the Government of Saskatchewan will be replacing 100 culverts, bringing the total to 1,152 since 2020-21.
- The Government of Saskatchewan continues to improve safety at intersections throughout the province. By the end of 2023-24, the government had already exceeded its five-year commitment to invest \$100 million in the Road Safety Strategy. In addition, the 2024-25 budget includes a further investment of \$17.6 million in Saskatchewan's Road Safety Strategy.
- Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba signed a memorandum of understanding in 2023 to advance economic corridors, expand market access and create jobs. The strategic trade corridor map will guide infrastructure investments, supporting economic development and trade:
  - » Co-operation amongst the provinces led to a joint funding commitment between the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan to complete passing lanes on Highway 17, which will improve safety along the Saskatchewan–Alberta border.

## | Investing in Municipal and Provincial Infrastructure

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to invest in public infrastructure.

- Since 2007:
  - » More than \$3.1 billion has been invested in municipal infrastructure projects.
  - » \$2.6 billion has been invested to build 69 new schools and undertake 32 major renovations.
  - » Over \$3 billion has been invested to build new hospitals and improve health care facilities.

### **Investing in Municipal Infrastructure**

- Provincial investments in municipal infrastructure total almost \$164 million this year, including more than \$126 million from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

### **Investing in Health Care Infrastructure**

- The 2024-25 budget includes a record \$516.8 million for health infrastructure. Key projects include the Weyburn General Hospital and long-term care facilities in La Ronge, Regina, Estevan, Watson and Grenfell.
- This record investment also includes the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital expansion, which will benefit northern and Indigenous communities through enhanced health care services.

### **Investing in Education Infrastructure**

- The 2024-25 budget invests \$216 million to build and improve classrooms across Saskatchewan:
  - » Eleven schools are currently in construction across the province, including nine new schools and two major renovations. These schools are located in Carrot River, La Loche, Lanigan, Lloydminster, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Regina and Saskatoon.
  - » Investment in 24 school projects in planning, design, and construction have been announced, including \$28.5 million for additional relocatable classrooms. It is expected that nine schools will have completed construction by the end of Summer 2025.

## | Investing in Crown Utility Infrastructure

Saskatchewan's Crown utilities will invest \$2.6 billion this year, the largest Crown corporation capital investment in Saskatchewan history. Including this year, investments in utility infrastructure over the next four years will total almost \$9.5 billion. Infrastructure investments this year include:

- \$1.6 billion through SaskPower to improve reliability, replace aging infrastructure and meet customer demand. This includes construction of a 370 MW natural gas-fired electrical plant in south-central Saskatchewan.
- \$416.9 million through SaskEnergy to invest in the province's natural gas transmission and distribution system to meet the growth in demand.
- Continued investment in the Regina Non-potable Water System Project through SaskWater. This project will support the growth of agriculture and value-added processing in the Regina area.
- SaskTel will invest almost \$440 million to deploy fibre to the premise in rural Saskatchewan and expand SaskTel's 5G wireless network. This includes:
  - » More than \$140 million this year to complete 5G upgrades on nearly 200 cell sites serving rural, resort and First Nations communities, as well as major highway corridors and other rural areas. SaskTel also plans to construct five new cell sites to enhance wireless coverage and capacity in the nine major urban centres.
  - » More than \$131 million to continue expanding fibre to the premises and fibre to the business. This includes an additional \$80 million for the Rural Fibre Initiative to expand fibre optic broadband connectivity to another 61 communities across Saskatchewan, as well as an additional 22,000 homes and businesses.
  - » Once this investment is complete, SaskTel will have invested more than \$1 billion to bring its broadband network to 225 communities and nearly 85 per cent of all homes and businesses across Saskatchewan.

# Chapter 8

## Keeping Saskatchewan's Finances Strong

The Government of Saskatchewan remains committed to keeping the province's finances strong. The province finished the 2023-24 fiscal year in a strong financial position, with a surplus of \$182 million. Moving forward, the Government of Saskatchewan will return the budget to balance next year and continue to ensure Saskatchewan has one of the best debt-to-GDP ratios in the country.

The strength of Saskatchewan's financial position and plan going forward is confirmed by Saskatchewan's strong credit rating:

- In June 2024, S&P Global Ratings gave Saskatchewan the highest credit rating among Canadian provinces.
- Saskatchewan has the second-highest credit rating among the provinces when all three major rating agencies (Moody's Ratings, Morningstar DBRS and S&P) are considered.

 **GOAL | Keeping Saskatchewan's Finance's Strong, the Budget Balanced, and Saskatchewan's Debt-to-GDP Ration Within the Top Three in Canada**

Despite global economic volatility, Saskatchewan maintains one of the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratios in Canada. Saskatchewan's strong finances have allowed the Government of Saskatchewan to retire \$2.5 billion of gross operating debt over the past two fiscal years.

### Progress to Date:



# Key Actions Moving Forward

## | Saskatchewan's Financial Record

- By March 31, 2025, Saskatchewan's net debt is forecasted to be 13.4 per cent of GDP – the second lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of any Canadian province. In comparison, the net debt-to-GDP ratio for the Government of Canada stands at 45.8 per cent.
- While the 2024-25 budget projects a deficit, the province's finances are projected to return to surplus in 2025-26.

# Chapter 9

## Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Securing Saskatchewan's Land and Water Resources

Saskatchewan produces some of the highest quality and most sustainable food, fuel and minerals in the world. The province is a leader in sustainable resource development, environmental stewardship, community support and clean energy.



**GOAL** | Deliver on Saskatchewan's Climate Change Strategy, *Prairie Resilience*

*Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy* takes a system-wide approach and includes more than 40 commitments designed to make Saskatchewan more resilient to the effects of a changing climate. The commitments span Saskatchewan's natural systems and resources, infrastructure for electricity, transportation, homes and builds, and community preparedness.

### Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan's climate change commitments under the *Prairie Resilience* strategy have been achieved. Saskatchewan continues to strengthen the province's resilience to the effect of a changing climate without a punishing and ineffective federal carbon tax.



## GOAL | Advance the Development of Zero-Emission Small Modular Reactor Technology

The Government of Saskatchewan is progressing towards the goal of making electrical production net-zero by 2050, as opposed to the unattainable and unaffordable demand of the federal government to achieve this goal by 2035.

This includes investing in nuclear energy technology that will produce safe and reliable electricity with zero emissions using Saskatchewan uranium.

Saskatchewan continues to invest in zero-emission small modular reactor technology to provide new baseload power. As the world's second-largest uranium producer, the province is well-positioned to leverage our natural resources to produce Saskatchewan's future power needs.

## Progress to Date:



- The Government of Saskatchewan has identified the Estevan region as the location for the first grid-connected small modular reactor.

## Key Actions Moving Forward

### | Leading on Climate Change

- In 2023, Saskatchewan's Output-Based Performance Standards (OBPS) Program replaced the federal carbon tax on Saskatchewan industries at the request of local industries and sectors. The OBPS Program is projected to save Saskatchewan industries and sectors \$3.7 billion in carbon taxes by 2030.
- The Government of Saskatchewan has already saved Saskatchewan industries \$560 million in carbon taxes in 2019 and 2020.
- Saskatchewan industries have already reduced their emissions intensity by 3.5 per cent, surpassing national benchmarks.
- The Saskatchewan Technology Fund launched its first intake to accelerate investment in emissions reduction technology, leveraging private investment and industry expertise to share project costs.

- Saskatchewan's oil and gas industry has met and exceeded the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 4.5 million tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) from 2015 levels by 2025. In 2023, greenhouse gas emissions from reported venting and flaring at oil facilities was reduced by 7.3 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e, which is a 67 per cent reduction from 2015 levels.
- The 2024-25 budget provides a \$140 million Clean Electricity Transition Grant to SaskPower for use towards in-year clean electricity operating costs, which will help maintain affordable power rates for customers.

## Promoting the Quality and Sustainability of Saskatchewan's Agricultural and Natural Resource Exports

- Two new websites have been launched as a gateway to the province for international business and investors to showcase Saskatchewan's sustainable production practices.
  - » SustainableSK.ca
  - » InvestSK.ca
- Recent research commissioned by the Global Institute for Food Security found that Saskatchewan's net carbon footprint for crop production is significantly lower than that of competitive jurisdictions.
  - » The carbon footprint of Saskatchewan-produced canola is 67 per cent lower than competitive jurisdictions. The carbon footprint of Saskatchewan-produced canola is 90 per cent lower than international soybean production.
  - » For non-durum and durum wheat, respectively, Saskatchewan's carbon footprint is 62 per cent lower and 78 per cent lower than competitive jurisdictions.
  - » For dry field peas, Saskatchewan's carbon footprint is 96 per cent lower and lentils are 130 per cent lower than competitive jurisdictions.
- Today, 95 per cent of the land seeded in Saskatchewan to annual crops was done using zero or minimal tillage, minimizing soil disturbance and sequestering carbon dioxide.
- As reported in the 2024 National Inventory Report, on average Saskatchewan agricultural producers sequester approximately 14.9 million tonnes of carbon annually – almost 92 per cent of the total reported agriculture emissions in Saskatchewan.
- Pulse crops, which need less fertilizer since their root systems sequester carbon, accounted for 14 per cent of the total seeded area in 2023 - reducing emissions by 1.87 million tonnes.
- The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef reports a 15 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of beef produced from 2014 to 2021.
- Saskatchewan's underground potash mines produce only half the emissions compared to other jurisdictions.
- Saskatchewan produces about 15 per cent of the world's uranium and hosts the largest high-grade deposits. With nuclear power providing 10 per cent of global electricity and 25 per cent of low-carbon electricity, Saskatchewan's uranium industry is set to significantly reduce global emissions for decades.
- The reduction in emissions in 2021 (based on 2015 levels) from vented and flared gas at upstream oil facilities in Saskatchewan is roughly 6.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

## | Develop Zero Emission Small Modular Reactor Technology

Actions to advance the development of zero emission small modular nuclear reactors include:

- Completion of a four-year evaluation process, resulting in the selection of the GE-Hitachi BWRX-300 technology.
- Execution of bilateral agreements with each of New Brunswick and Alberta to share expertise on policy, grid modernization, and industrial decarbonization.
- An Interprovincial Strategy on Small Modular Reactors between Saskatchewan, Alberta, New Brunswick, and Ontario. The strategy aims to advance small modular reactor technology, harmonize regulations and support low-carbon energy solutions while boosting energy security and economic growth.
- Signing agreements with GE-Hitachi and Laurentis Energy Partners to advance small modular reactor planning.
- Negotiating the return of approximately \$500 million in federal carbon taxes to fund small modular reactor planning through 2029.
- Securing a \$50 million dollar investment from the federal government to fund small modular reactor planning.
- Establishing the Small Modular Reactor Investment Fund to support provincial investment in the first grid-scale small modular reactor.
- Investing \$80 million into the Saskatchewan Research Council to develop an eVinci micro-reactor for remote communities and industrial locations.
- Co-funding projects to prepare Saskatchewan businesses to enter the global nuclear supply chain.
- Establishing a public-private Nuclear Supply Chain Working Group and a Codes and Standards Task Force.
- Co-funding a provincial two-phase Nuclear Workforce Needs Study and a national study of the nuclear workforce, to build employment and meet growing labour demands in the nuclear industry.

# Chapter 10

## Growing Locally: Growing Small Business and Tourism

Small businesses, including those in the tourism sector, play a pivotal role in the success of Saskatchewan's economy.

Saskatchewan small businesses contribute nearly a quarter of Saskatchewan's GDP and employ 30 per cent of the workforce.

Comprising more than 98 per cent of the province's 150,000 enterprises, small businesses drive job creation, community development and provide essential services across the province.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports small businesses through low tax rates, reduced red tape and streamlined regulations. This promotes growth and innovation, while boosting sectors like tourism that enhance the province's appeal and quality of life.



### GOAL | Increase Tourist Expenditures in Saskatchewan by 50 Per Cent

Tourism accounts for 64,000 jobs in the province, providing numerous seasonal and part-time opportunities, particularly for young people. Tourism is a significant source of employment for new Canadians.

## Progress to Date:



- Saskatchewan's tourism industry is experiencing rapid growth. In 2023 \$2.85 billion was spent on tourism in the province.
- The province welcomed 11.3 million visitors in 2023, which represents a notable increase from 9.8 million visits in 2022. This surge underscores the growing appeal of Saskatchewan as a travel destination.
- The Conference Board of Canada predicts that tourism revenues will continue to increase. By 2028, the

Conference Board of Canada estimates that Saskatchewan will reach approximately \$3.57 billion in annual visitor expenditures.

## Key Actions Moving Forward

### | Supporting Small Business Growth

- The number of small businesses grew by almost two per cent from 2022 to 2023, adding 2,601 small businesses to the province.
- Saskatchewan has the second-lowest small business tax rate in Canada and the highest amount of income that can be claimed at the small business tax rate.
  - » The 2024-25 budget maintained the small business tax rate at one per cent until June 30, 2025.
  - » The income threshold for this rate remains at \$600,000 – the highest in Canada.
- The Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Fund offers a tax credit to Saskatchewan residents for purchasing shares in these funds. In 2023-24, more than half a billion dollars was invested in 90 different small and medium-sized Saskatchewan businesses through pooled funds.
- The Ministry of Immigration and Career Training offers a suite of programs to assist employers with the development, recruitment and retention of workers to support provincial labour market needs.

### | Reducing Red Tape

- Saskatchewan is the only province with a Cabinet committee focused on red tape reduction, continually reviewing business regulations to streamline approval processes and cut unnecessary compliance requirements. Since 2014, the committee has reviewed almost 250 business-related regulations and over 21,000 compliance requirements.

### | Increasing Tourism Expenditures in Saskatchewan

- The Tourism Diversification Funding Program allows tourism operators to collaborate with Tourism Saskatchewan to boost international visitation and secure major events to enhance the local economy.
- Tourism Saskatchewan supports WestJet's non-stop services between Saskatoon, Regina and Minneapolis. In addition to benefitting Saskatchewan travellers, non-stop flights from the United States help bring more visitors to Saskatchewan to experience the province's world class hunting and angling industries.
- The 2024-25 budget invests \$15 million to improve infrastructure in provincial parks. Saskatchewan's provincial and regional parks provide out-of-province visitors and Saskatchewan residents with the opportunity to experience the province's outstanding natural attractions and recreational opportunities.
- A new event hosting strategy was launched, which aligns business events with provincial strengths.
- Tourism Saskatchewan has invested in local media projects and partnered with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to promote Indigenous attractions. A memorandum of understanding with Indigenous Destinations Saskatchewan supports project-based initiatives and capacity-building.

# Chapter 11

## Delivering on the Purpose of Growth: Securing a Better Quality of Life for Saskatchewan's Families and Communities

The purpose of growth is to build strong families, strong communities, a better quality of life and a bright future for everyone in Saskatchewan.

A strong economy has afforded the Government of Saskatchewan the ability to make significant investments in health care, infrastructure, education and public services which, in turn, build strong families and communities.

### Building Strong, Safe and Vibrant Communities



**GOAL** | Support Communities Through \$2.5B in Revenue Sharing

#### Progress to Date:



- The 2024-25 budget includes a record investment of \$340.2 million for municipal revenue sharing. This is an increase of \$42.4 million, or 14.2 per cent from last year's budget.
- Since 2019-20, the Government of Saskatchewan has distributed more than \$1.7 billion to municipalities.
- Since 2007-08, more than \$4.3 billion in unconditional funding has been distributed to municipalities.

## | Investing in Municipal Revenue Sharing and Infrastructure

The 2024-25 budget includes almost \$557 million in direct support to municipalities, including a record \$340 million in municipal revenue sharing.

Since the 2019-20 budget, municipalities have received \$1.7 billion in revenue sharing. This annual funding is predictable and provides municipalities with the flexibility to fund community priorities.

Provincial investments in municipal infrastructure total almost \$164 million this year, including more than \$126 million from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

## | Supporting Affordable Housing and Addressing Homelessness

This year, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will repair up to 1,400 units and add housing for 350 more households.

Additionally, nine new partnership agreements have created over 90 housing spaces with support services.

Since 2020, the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit has been providing low-to-moderate income renters with a flat-rate monthly benefit. As of March 2024, almost 4,500 households have received this benefit, with more than 2,000 new recipients in 2023-24.

The 2024-25 budget includes almost \$29 million to implement the Provincial Approach to Homelessness. This includes:

- \$7.2 million to support ongoing emergency shelter operations, including 120 new permanent emergency shelter spaces established across the province last year.
- \$9.5 million new capital investment to continue to develop supportive housing spaces in Regina and Saskatoon.

## | Building Safe Communities

Almost \$720 million will be invested this year to keep Saskatchewan residents and communities safer. This includes \$78.4 million in funding for the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, which was created in 2019 to coordinate emergency safety and wildfire response across the province.

The 2024-25 budget included more than \$31 million in public safety funding to reduce interpersonal violence and support the victims of interpersonal violence, including funding for second-stage shelters and funding through the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

The 2024-25 budget also supports safer communities through policing initiatives:

- » More than \$23 million to fund 160 municipal police positions. Since 2007, the number of municipal police positions funded by the Government of Saskatchewan has grown by 85 positions.
- » Over \$228 million to fund RCMP operations through the Provincial Police Services Agreement and \$21.6 million for the RCMP's First Nations Policing Program.

The Government of Saskatchewan is providing funding for 1,047 RCMP officers in Saskatchewan, including 140 officers focused on provincial priorities such as warrant enforcement.

## | Supporting Indigenous Communities

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the importance of working with Indigenous people and Indigenous organizations throughout the province.

- Since 2019, \$374 million from Saskatchewan casino profits have been distributed to First Nation and Métis organizations, including \$80 million during the pandemic.
- Almost \$36 million in federal-provincial funding has been expensed to Indigenous recipients under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program since 2019-20.
- SaskTel will improve connectivity for residents living in northern and Indigenous communities, through the Universal Broadband Fund. This includes:
  - » Providing SaskTel infiNET service to residents living in Deschambault Lake, Ballantyne Bay, Tyrell Lake, Jan Lake, Cumberland House, Cumberland House Cree Nation and Pemmican Portage. Additional communities will be announced at a future date.
  - » Constructing new cell towers to bring wireless coverage to Birch Narrows First Nation, Island Lake (Ministikwan Lake Cree Nation), Turnor Lake, and along Highway 106, also known as Hanson Lake Road.

The 2024-25 budget invests in First Nation and Métis people and organizations throughout Saskatchewan, including:

- More than \$255 million in targeted funding for First Nation and Métis people and organizations – an increase of over \$6 million from 2023-24.
- \$27.6 million in the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training to support Indigenous people to connect to the labour market.
- \$19.8 million for Indigenous post-secondary education, including Indigenous Language Teacher Education programs.
- \$1 million for the Consultation Participation Fund to support First Nation and Metis communities participating in consultations related to the duty to consult, which is an increase of \$600,000 in the 2024-25 budget.
- \$800,000 for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls+ Community Response Fund to help grassroots organizations and communities develop and deliver projects that contribute to preventing violence, building safety and fostering the well-being of Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit plus People.
- \$21.6 million for First Nations on-reserve policing.
- \$20.1 million for First Nations and Métis preventative supports.

## | Investing in Arts, Culture and Heritage

Saskatchewan has a vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector made up of talented and creative individuals and organizations. Provincial funding for these sectors supports the creativity of Saskatchewan people, while building a great quality of life for families in communities across the province.

- The Government of Saskatchewan continues to invest in opportunities for families to enroll their children in arts, culture and recreation activities through the Active Families Benefit, which provides a fully refundable tax benefit up to \$150 per child or \$200 per child with a disability.

The 2024-25 budget invests over \$30 million in the arts, cultural and heritage sectors:

- More than \$6.5 million for SK Arts.
- More than \$17 million for Creative Saskatchewan.
- More than \$4.2 million for the Western Development Museum.
- More than \$600,000 for the Saskatchewan Science Centre.
- More than \$300,000 for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation.
- More than \$600,000 for Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

The Government of Saskatchewan also partners with SaskCulture to support the arts and culture sectors through the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation.

## | Investing in Health Care

### Recruiting, Training and Retaining More Health Care Providers

Progress continues on Saskatchewan's Health Human Resources Action Plan which focuses on actions to expand the health care workforce, strengthen health care teams and deliver improved patient care across the province. Some highlights include:

#### **Adding More Doctors, Nurses and Other Health Professionals**

- Since 2007, Saskatchewan has added over 1,000 physicians and 6,400 nurses in communities across the province.
- There have been significant increases in the number of health care professionals including MRI technologists (164 per cent, 22 to 58), respiratory therapists (101 per cent, 118 to 237), and speech and language pathologists (37 per cent, 93 to 127) working in Saskatchewan.
- The number of advanced care paramedics has grown by 68 per cent (97 to 163) and the number of mental health therapists has grown by 58 per cent (86 to 136).
- 300 continuing care assistants were added to long-term care and home care.
- Eleven Physician Assistant positions have been posted across Saskatchewan.

#### **Recruiting and Retaining More Health Care Professionals**

##### **Provincial and International Recruitment**

- Established the Saskatchewan Healthcare Recruitment Agency in 2022 to accelerate and expand efforts to recruit doctors, nurses and other priority health care professionals.
- 1,279 nursing graduates from Saskatchewan and out of province have been hired since December 2022.
- As of August 2024, nearly 750 internationally educated health care professionals out of the 850 target, have been sourced and are in the province. Of those, over 380 are now working in the health care system.
- 290 internationally educated health professionals have been recruited from the Philippines and are working

throughout the province.

- In 2022-23, placements in the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) Program increased from 36 to 45, and in 2024-25, an additional 6 to 8 seats were added. Under this program, there are over 300 doctors practicing in the province, 74 per cent of whom have established practice in rural communities.

### **Rural and Remote Recruitment and Retention**

- 245 of the 250 new positions in rural and remote communities had been filled as of August 2024.
- In addition, another 65 new or enhanced from part-time to full-time positions have been added. 30 of these 65 positions have been filled.
- The Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive Program recruited nearly 350 applicants, all committing to a three-year service in rural and remote areas, exceeding the initial goal of 114.
- Over 80 distinct communities across the province have benefitted specifically from the Rural and Remote Recruitment Incentive (RRRI) and internationally educated nurse (IEN) initiatives.
- Since September 1, 2022, over 430 Final Clinical Placement Bursaries have been provided, amounting to an investment of over \$860,000.
- The Rural Physician Incentive Program has over 300 applicants, with nearly 140 grants awarded, surpassing the goal of 50 participating physicians.
- Since 2022-23, over \$11.8 million has been invested in over 150 additional paramedic positions in rural areas.
- 27 new Nurse Practitioner positions have been created for rural and remote communities. Eight Nurse Practitioners have been hired since June 2024.

### **New Training and Seat Expansions**

- Approximately \$11.4 million will be invested to create Saskatchewan-based Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Respiratory Therapy and Physician Assistant programs.
- Substantial investments have been made to expand training seats for Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses, and Licensed Practical Nurses, as well as other critical and hard to recruit health care professions such as Primary Care Paramedics and Mental Health and Addictions Counsellors.
- Expanded continuing care aide training seats to over 850.
- Expanded the College of Medicine undergraduate seats from 60 to 108.
- Expanded medical residency seats through the University of Saskatchewan from 60 to 140, offering additional locations in Prince Albert, Swift Current, La Ronge, North Battleford and Moose Jaw.

## **Investing in Health Care Infrastructure**

Saskatchewan is enhancing access to health care by investing in infrastructure.

- Over \$3 billion has been invested in health care infrastructure since 2007, including \$1.5 billion since 2019-20.
- The 2024-25 budget includes a record \$517 million investment in health care infrastructure, with over \$2.6 billion planned for health care infrastructure over the next four years.

- The 2024-25 budget includes funding for LTC projects in La Ronge, Regina, Estevan, Watson and Grenfell.
- Construction has begun on Saskatchewan's new Breast Health Centre, scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024-25.

### **Reducing Emergency Room Congestion**

The Government of Saskatchewan is addressing emergency room congestion by investing in new facilities, increasing capacity and enhancing emergency medical services.

- Regina's new Urgent Care Centre completed construction in April 2024 and began treating patients in July 2024.
- The Saskatchewan Health Authority's Capacity Pressure Action Plan has added three intensive care unit beds, 21 acute care beds, and 22 emergency department flex beds in Saskatoon.
- From 2022-23, emergency medical services capacity has been boosted with more staffed ambulances and improved dispatch services across the province.
- The expansion of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital and other capital projects will increase acute care capacity, especially in northern Saskatchewan.

### **Increasing Funding and Support for Mental Health and Addiction Services**

- Funding for mental health increased by approximately 159 per cent to \$574 million from 2007-08 to 2024-25. The number of addiction counselors has grown by 48 (307 to 456) per cent over the same period.
- The new Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions was released last year and has three pillars of focus: building capacity for treatment, improving the system itself and transitioning to a recovery-oriented system of care for addictions treatment. The new plan includes concrete steps to create a seamless path into treatment and recovery.
- The Government of Saskatchewan is adding 500 new addiction treatment spaces, to double capacity. To date, 213 spaces have been announced.
- Five schools were added to the Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools Program in 2024-25, for a total of 15 schools. Under Saskatchewan's new Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions, the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to further expanding the program to all 27 school divisions over the next five years.
- New Complex Needs Emergency Shelter provide medically supported, secure facilities for police to bring people who are a threat to themselves and others to help them address their challenges by connecting them with services and supports as well as protect the community.
- \$1 million toward the development of a provincial opioid agonist therapy program that will provide province-wide rapid access to legitimate addictions medicines once implemented.
- \$1 million towards the development of a central intake and navigation system that patients will be able to contact directly to self-refer for addictions treatment once implemented.

### **Reducing Surgical Wait Times to a Three-Month Target**

- In 2023-24, a record 95,770 surgeries were performed – an increase of six per cent since 2019.
- The surgical waitlist has decreased by over 19 per cent, from 34,000 in December 2022 to just over 27,000 by March 2024.

- In 2023-24, almost 92 per cent of surgeries were completed within 10 months.
- Annual funding for surgeries has increased by over \$80 million since 2019-20.
- The system is on track to meet the three-month wait time target once the pre-COVID waitlist goal is achieved, with improvements in surgical capacity and volumes.

## Investing in K-12 Education and Child Care

To meet the needs of a growing province, the Government of Saskatchewan is building more schools, adding more teachers and investing in classroom supports to address class size and complexity.

### | Hiring More Teachers, Educational Assistants and Specialists

- To meet the needs of a growing province, the Government of Saskatchewan has added nearly 1,000 more teachers and educational support staff since 2007. This has resulted in:
  - » 27 per cent increase in student support staff.
  - » 50 per cent increase in speech language pathologists.
  - » More than 100 per cent increase in career counsellors.
- Over 930 educational assistants have been added to Saskatchewan classrooms since 2018.

### | Increasing Education Funding

- Provincial funding for K-12 education has increased by more than 57 per cent since 2007. Per student funding over the same period has grown by 34 per cent.
- The 2024-25 budget includes the largest increase for school operating funding in Saskatchewan's history.
  - » \$2.2 billion in school operating funding for Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions – an increase of \$180 million, or 8.8 per cent.
  - » \$356.6 million in classroom supports, including funding to address classroom size and complexity.
  - » \$35 million to support enrollment growth.

### | Building and Repairing More Schools

- Since 2007, more than \$2.6 billion has been committed for 69 new or replacement schools and 32 major school renovations.
- The 2024-25 budget continues to invest in new schools and classrooms by investing \$216 million in K-12 infrastructure – an increase of almost 47 per cent from last year. This funding includes almost \$166 million to support 11 ongoing school projects and three major renovations in communities throughout Saskatchewan, as well as funding to begin planning for nine new schools and two renovations.

## | Building More Child Care Spaces

- Since 2007, over 14,500 regulated childcare spaces have been created in Saskatchewan.
- There are more than 4,150 child care spaces currently under development, with a target to provide funding for more than 12,000 additional new space developments by the end of the current federal-provincial agreement in 2025-26.
- Parents of children under six save between \$473 and \$712 per month on full-time regulated childcare compared to March 2021.
- Agreements with First Nations and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan have added 276 and 180 childcare spaces, respectively.
- The number of Pre-kindergarten programs has doubled since 2008, from 155 programs to 316 programs.

## | The Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre

Offers more than 180 online courses for K-12 students, including more than 120 high school courses with over 70 electives in areas like agriculture, business, and technology. High school students can also take dual credit courses and participate in hands-on learning. As of March 2024, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre has more than 6,800 students, including 2,500 full-time and 4,300 part-time students.

## Making Life More Affordable

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to make life more affordable for Saskatchewan families.

- Tax reductions since 2007 have resulted in lower taxes for everyone in Saskatchewan, including 112,000 low-income earners who no longer pay provincial income tax.
- Saskatchewan has some of the lowest personal taxes in Canada. A family of four pays no provincial tax on their first \$59,475 of income, the highest tax-free threshold in Canada, compared to \$26,150 in 2007.
- A family with two adults, two children – and an income of \$75,000 to \$125,000 – pays the lowest total for taxes, utilities and housing in Canada.
- As a result of Saskatchewan’s refusal to collect the carbon tax on home heating, homeowners are saving \$400 annually on home heating costs. These savings combined with the Government of Saskatchewan’s affordability measures, are contributing to Saskatchewan having the lowest year-over-year inflation rate of any province in Canada.
- The Government of Saskatchewan also provides a variety of programs to make housing more affordable, including the First-Time Homebuyer’s Tax Credit.

# Investing in Supports for Families

The Government of Saskatchewan continues to invest in supports to build strong families and communities throughout Saskatchewan.

## | Supporting Persons with Disabilities

Since 2009-10, benefits under the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) Program have increased more than \$500 – a 60 per cent increase that is helping more than 18,000 households monthly.

An additional \$90 million has been invested since 2019-20 for community-based organizations aiding persons with intellectual disabilities.

## | Supporting Low-Income Families

- Since 2018-19, monthly Saskatchewan Income Support benefits have risen by more than \$230 – a 26 per cent increase.
- Launched in July 2022, the *Education and Training Incentive* offers up to \$200 per month for educational or training programs, replacing the Provincial Training Allowance.
- Since January 2024, the new *Saskatchewan Employment Incentive* is providing up to \$600 in monthly benefits to lower income working families with children under 13.
- The Government of Saskatchewan provides approximately \$150 million annually through the *Saskatchewan Low-Income Tax Credit*, which is a fully refundable, non-taxable, benefit to help Saskatchewan residents with low and modest incomes.

