Small Places, Big Changes: Temporary Migration & Immigration to Brandon, Manitoba

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Presented at
11th National Metropolis Conference
Calgary, Alberta
March 2009
Outline

- Provincial context
- Local context
- Industrial labour needs
- Transitional migration
- Family reunification
- Rural challenge
- Moving forward
Manitoba

• 1996: Canada-MB Immigration Agreement
  – 1998: included Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and settlement services

• 2007: PNP accounted for 70% of Manitoba’s newcomers
  – 28% of Provincial Nominees chose rural destinations

  – Past annual target was 10,000 arrivals
  – Over the next decade, goal is an addition of 1000 per year to a target of 20,000 per year
Pathways to Immigration

PATHWAYS TO MANITOBA FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL ENTRY STREAMS

Permanent Residents
- Refugee Class
- Economic Class
- Family Class

Temporary Residents
- International Students
- Temporary Workers
- Visitors

Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP)
- MPNP Skilled Workers
- MPNP Business

Business Immigrants
Federal Skilled Workers
Live-In Caregivers
Brandon

Population = 41,115

- Second largest urban centre
- Relatively homogenous population over time
- Destination for hundreds of temporary foreign workers
- Rapidly changing population dynamics

Highest rate of immigration growth in the province (2007)
Maple Leaf Foods Brandon

- 1999: Maple Leaf Foods (MLF) pork processing plant opened
- 2001: MLF began foreign recruitment campaign
- 2008: Second shift fully operational
- Today there are approximately 1500 international recruits employed at MLF
  - 70% of employees are international recruits
  - From Mexico, El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, and Mauritius.
Transitional Migration

- Situation where ‘temporary’ actually means ‘transitional’
  - Community preparedness
  - Community welcome
  - Community development

Resources for rural immigration planning are difficult to locate.

Immigration is not the sole responsibility of any level of government.
Family Reunification

Arriving with a plan…

• Approximately 3,500 family members will relocate to Brandon between June 2007 and February 2011
• Supporting reunification after separation
• Evolving needs
  – ~ 5 new students per week enrolled
  – Housing shortage
  – Local service delivery

…your plan will likely be influenced by your initial experiences
The Rural Challenge

- Small centres and rural regions face unique retention challenges
- Amenities and services associated with large-scale immigration may not exist

Therefore…
- Effective communication is vital
- Appropriate local strategies for settlement, integration, and retention are needed
- Share lessons learned in other jurisdictions
- Provincial-municipal collaboration is required
- Cross-departmental communication
- Understanding community/regional capacity
Becoming Welcoming

- Organize in preparation for immigration
- Establish multi-stakeholder regional or community groups
- Foster capacity, community, and partnership building
- Develop local immigration plans
- Celebrate diversity
- Holistic approach to service provision
Welcoming Communities Steering Committee

- 2007: First meeting
- Forum for community, community-serving organizations, industry, governments, and researchers
- Began as dialogue around temporary foreign workers
- Transitioned to dialogue on welcoming communities

Membership
- Economic Development Brandon
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Rural Secretariat
- Service Canada
- Brandon School Division
- Brandon Regional Health Authority
- Westman Immigrant Services
- Maple Leaf Foods
Ethnocultural Organizations, 2008-2009

- To increase understanding of the needs and capacities of ethnocultural groups in rural Manitoba
- Ensure vibrant and active ethnocultural communities
- Multi-phase project with focus on Brandon and Steinbach
- Establishing relationships between community organizations and ethnocultural communities
Challenges in Moving Forward

• Resources for rural immigration planning are difficult to locate
  – Immigration is not the sole responsibility of either the federal or provincial government

• Bringing the ‘right’ voices to the table for discussions
  – Need to create an environment for open discussions among all stakeholders

• Sharing lessons learned from rural and northern communities
  – Need for forums and avenues to share information
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