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LABOUR MARKET NEWS

Government of Alberta

Fort McMurray · Wood Buffalo

Finding a job in Fort McMurray

The streets may appear to be paved with gold, but you still have to do some digging

Like everywhere else, Fort McMurray and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo are affected by economic ups and downs.

A few years ago, activity in the region was booming and many employers were having a hard time finding and keeping workers. Today, activity has slowed, but there are still many job opportunities out there.

In August 2009, the region had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the province at 5.3 per cent. But before packing your bags and heading north, there are a few things to consider.

"Job seekers should first research Fort McMurray and the housing prices, so they know what they're getting into," says Marion Boyd, manager of human resources at Suncor Energy, one of the region's major oil sands mining companies.

"Sometimes people come up here because they hear about the demand for labour, but when they get here and see the housing prices and the apartment rentals—both in terms of availability and cost—they see it's quite limited and expensive. They should do their research first and apply to the companies before they come up."

There are three main types of employment available in the region:

➡**Oil sands mining companies**: These companies directly employ tradespeople, engineers, technologists, plant operations staff, managers and administration staff.

Oil sands growth supports many other industries in the region, including the construction and service industries.

Start your job search here!

A great online resource for job seekers is woodbuffalo.net. This website is filled with career and employment information for Fort McMurray and area. Learn about job trends, employment service providers, employers, housing issues, cost of living and find links to hundreds of other useful websites. You can also call the Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information phone line for help at 780-715-0222, or email info@woodbuffalo.net.

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UPCOMING ISSUES...

- IN-SITU CAREERS IN THE OIL SANDS
- TRADES IN FORT MCMURRAY

This publication has been prepared by Alberta Employment and Immigration.

Average hourly wage by industry and economic region

A range of industries were profiled below to highlight average hourly wages across Alberta. For more wage information, visit alis.alberta.ca/wageinfo.

	Athabasca Grande Prairie	Calgary	Edmonton	Red Deer	**Wood Buffalo/Cold Lake**
Oil and Gas	Can$32.58	Can$32.49	Can$27.18	Can$25.57	**Can$39.16**
Construction	Can$21.68	Can$23.46	Can$25.60	Can$20.29	**Can$25.70**
Retail Trade	Can$17.59	Can$11.92	Can$16.25	Can$15.92	**Can$17.01**
Transportation and Warehousing	Can$24.46	Can$30.31	Can$21.00	Can$23.69	**Can$30.09**
Professional, Scientific and Technical	Can$23.38	Can$34.23	Can$29.58	Can$22.22	**Can$23.84**
Educational Services	Can$24.82	Can$26.16	Can$28.92	Can$27.04	**Can$26.09**

Source: 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey

- **Contractors for oil sands companies:** These companies are contracted to a mining company to provide services such as construction, security, cleaning or maintenance. For example, an oil sands company will contract a company for construction projects. Contract workers can work at an oil sands plant or mine sites or at other locations.
- **Indirect employment:** Growth in the oil sands creates community growth and an increased need for goods and services. For every oil sands job created in Wood Buffalo, two service or support jobs will be created in another industry.

There are high paying jobs in Wood Buffalo, but you need the proper qualifications, training and education.

Also, don't assume that every job in Fort McMurray pays better than anywhere else. The jobs are generally better paying, but not always.

A labourer can make more here, but a nurse generally makes the same across the province. See the wage comparison of selected industries in the table above.

Where are the job postings?

The Internet is a good starting point. Vacant positions are often posted on employment databases and company websites. Here are a few useful websites:

- Links to employer websites: woodbuffalo.net/linksEMPLIntro.html
- Fort McMurray Today (local daily newspaper): fortmcmurraytoday.com
- Canadian Government job bank: jobbank.gc.ca
- Alberta Government Public Service: jobs.alberta.ca/
- Alberta Health Services: albertahealthservices.ca
- Database of businesses that belong to the Fort McMurray Construction Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association: redlink.ca
- Alberta Government site (links to other job banks): alis.alberta.ca/js/job-seeker.html

Visit an employment service provider for help

There are several local service providers that have job boards and other employment services to help you find work.

Look on page 4 for a list of organizations and their contact information.

HOUSING HELP:

Where to look for accommodations

There is a housing shortage in Fort McMurray, so it's a good idea to be prepared before you come here. In June 2009, the apartment rental vacancy rate was just 0.3 per cent. Housing is also expensive. A bachelor suite in June cost an average of $1,448 per month. The average price of a single-family home is $633,686 (according to the Fort McMurray Real Estate Board, August 2009). While some workers stay in recreational campsites, most close for the winter. The average rent for a unserviced campsite is about $700 or more per month.

DO EMPLOYERS PROVIDE HOUSING?

Some employers provide housing. There are jobs that come with accommodation in work camps, especially for more remote job sites. Whether or not a job offer includes camp housing depends on the company and the job, so it's something that you have to negotiate with the employer.

HAVE A PLAN BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

Homeless shelters are overflowing. Don't be left out in the cold at this time of year. Check out all the housing options and have a plan before you arrive.

RESOURCE WEBSITES

- **Housing links:** woodbuffalo.net/linksRESHous.html
- **Rental properties:** places4rent.com
- **Recreational campsites:** fortmcmurraytourism.com
- **Affordable housing:** wbhadc.ca

THE BASICS: Things you need to get and keep a job

The same job search rules that work in other parts of the province also apply in Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo. Here are a few things you need to consider to get and keep a job.

Resumé

A good resumé is a requirement. It should include: your complete contact information, the job you're applying for, a summary of your skills in bullet form, your work experience (including the company name, length of time employed, and your responsibilities), education and training, and any other information relevant to the job you're applying for.

"If you're looking for employment in Fort McMurray, resumés are essential and should be tailored to the job, and company, you are applying for," says, Natashia Foran, a career and employment consultant in Fort McMurray. "Including a cover letter with your resumé is also a good idea—it personalizes the resumé and can help you get an interview."

For more resumé, cover letter and job search resources, visit alis.alberta.ca/hotline or stop by the Labour Market Information Centre (LMIC) or one of the employment service providers in Fort McMurray. See page 4 for more information.

DO YOUR RESEARCH!!!

Visit employer's websites to find out how they want applications submitted. Some require that they be submitted only through their online application process. Others will accept emailed, mailed, or faxed resumés. Many will not accept phone calls. Do your research and save yourself the trouble of having your resumé filed under "G."

"If you're looking for employment in Fort McMurray, resumés are essential..."

Proper certification

Just because there are positions available in the oil and gas industry doesn't mean companies will hire just anyone. People working in the trades—welders and pipefitters, for example—must have an Alberta Journeyperson Certificate, or their Interprovincial Standards Red Seal. See the list of trades that fall under these requirements at Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (tradesecrets.alberta.ca) or call 780-743-7150 in Fort McMurray. In Alberta call 310-0000 and ask for Alberta Apprenticeship. Outside of Alberta call 780-427-8517.

Safety training

Many positions in the oil and gas and construction sectors require safety training. For a list of courses go to woodbuffalo.net/trainSAFE.html. A one-day course, Construction Safety Training System (CSTS), is required by workers on all industrial construction sites. For more information about safety training, visit the Alberta Construction Safety Association website at acsa-safety.org and look under *Courses*, or stop by your local LMIC. You may also need to take Oil Sands Safety Association (OSSA) training programs. For more information, visit ossa-wb.ca.

Other considerations

To work directly for many oil sands plants, an employee must have a high school diploma, or equivalent. They must also be at least 18 years of age and a Canadian citizen. Many jobs require that employees have a valid Alberta driver's licence. Alberta licence information is available online at servicealberta.gov.ab.ca.

Internet access and an email address

In today's electronic age, many employers now post jobs on their websites. Some only accept resumés online. Others will accept resumés by fax.

If you don't have Internet access, stop by your LMIC, public library, or employment service provider. Most of these agencies have computers that you can use for your job search. Set up a professional sounding email address. You won't make a good first impression with partyguy@hotmail.com.

Check out past issues of the Labour Market News (woodbuffalo.net) for helpful stories on how to apply for jobs online.

Free Career Planning Services

Planning your career can be challenging. You have many questions that need to be answered. The unknown can be scary, but Career Planning Services is here to help.

This service is sponsored by Alberta Employment and Immigration and is free to Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo residents who are aged 18 and older.

Career Planning Services provides a professional and in-depth approach to career development that suits your unique personality.

With the help of a career consultant, you will develop a plan that fits you—one that is achievable, and realistic. Clients can receive support for up to six months.

Career Planning Services offers a four step process:

- Increase self awareness
- Exploring options
- Create an action plan
- Implement the plan

Contact us

Career Planning Services can be accessed at your convenience.

- Call toll-free at 1-866-776-7773.
- Email lynncorcoran@nb.sympatico.ca
- Go online to olcconsulting.ca for full details.

Free e-Resumé Review Service

Whether you're new to the job force, or have been working for years, it's always useful to get a second opinion about what your resumé is saying about you. The Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) offers a free resumé review service. The e-Resumé Review Service lets job seekers e-mail resumés through an online form. In less than five days, your resumé will be reviewed and returned to you with comments and suggestions. Career advisors will review resumés and provide feedback based on:

- overall appearance and relevance of information
- length and conciseness
- clarity and absence or errors
- format and appropriate description of skills and accomplishments.

For more information on this service, visit:
alis.alberta.ca//ep/eps/hotline/resume.html.

For information on resources and career decisions in Fort McMurray, contact us at:

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
780-715-0222

Email: info@woodbuffalo.net

Online: **woodbuffalo.net**
employment.alberta.ca

Alberta Employment and Immigration career and employment services

Fort McMurray

Wood Buffalo Labour Market Information
Ph. 780-715-0222
info@woodbuffalo.net

Canada-Alberta Service Centre
Labour Market Information Centre
Provincial Building, 9915 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-743-7192
Website: **employment.alberta.ca**

Other career/employment services

Fort McMurray

Fort McMurray Association for Community Living - CHOICES Employment Services
10010 Franklin Avenue, Ph. 780-791-3355
fmacl.ca

YMCA - Youth Connections
(in-school services only)
Ph. 780-791-7520

YMCA – Immigrant Employment Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-791-1115 ymca.woodbuffalo.org

Franco Job
312 Abasand Drive, Centre Communautaire Scolaire, Boréal, Ph. 780-791-9779
acfawoodbuffalo.ab.ca

Athabasca Tribal Council Employment
9206 McCormick Drive Ph. 780-791-7445
atc97.org/employment

Keyano College Career Employment Services Ph. 780-799-1589 keyano.ca

Métis Employment Services
Ph. 1-888-486-3847, albertametis.ca

Career Planning Services
Toll free: 1-866-776-7773, olcconsulting.ca

Fort McKay

Fort McKay First Nation Employment & Training Office
Ph. 780-828-2430, fortmckay.com

Conklin

Conklin Employment Services
Nakewin Centre, Conklin, Ph. 780-559-8995

Employment and Training

Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative
Ph. 780-747-6500
(previously Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project)

Immigrant services

YMCA – Immigrant Settlement Services
#201, 10011 Franklin Avenue
Ph. 780-743-2970, ymca.woodbuffalo.org