

News Release

FOR RELEASE
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MANITOBA'S WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY TO BENEFIT FROM WOOD-FINISHING SPECIALIST

Winnipeg, Manitoba – Manitoba's wood-manufacturing industry will soon have access to a specialist who will help firms overcome technical challenges, as well as provide information and programs to help develop the industry. The Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) is contributing \$75,000 towards a wood-finishing specialist position.

The announcement was made today by the Honourable Carol Skelton, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of Western Economic Diversification and the Honourable Scott Smith, Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade.

"Canada's New Government is working with our partners to invest in research and development opportunities," said Minister Skelton. "This project will help to create, expand and diversify the number of opportunities to sell wood products from northern Manitoba."

"Manitoba's wood products manufacturing sector is an important contributor to our province's economy," said Smith. "We are joining with the federal government to fund this position that will help the industry achieve greater success."

Forintek Canada Corp. is a not-for-profit research organization involved in the wood products sector. The organization is funded through government and industry memberships, as well as contracts. Forintek was originally established as Canada's Wood Products Institute by the Government of Canada in 1913, but was privatized as a not-for-profit research partnership in 1979.

For more information on this and other projects funded under EPA, visit: <http://www.epa.gov.mb.ca>.

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Background

In March 2004, funding of \$1.04 million was announced under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) enabling Manitoba to become a partner province in Forintek Canada's Value-Added and Wood Technology Program. There are two components to the program: a research component conducted in partnership with universities in Canada, and a network of industry advisors located throughout the country.

Over this past year, Manitoba-Forintek has responded to more than 50 requests for in-plant assessments and 28 inquiries for technical information. In addition, Forintek has offered sector-specific technology oriented workshops and seminars throughout the province.

There are two Manitoba-Forintek offices, one in The Pas and another one in Winnipeg. The wood-finishing specialist will work out of the Winnipeg office, providing advice to firms on improving wood finish quality and productivity.

Under the Economic Partnership Agreement, the governments of Canada and Manitoba are working together and in partnership with community stakeholders to build the economy and strengthen communities. These priorities promote economic growth and diversification in the province. For more information on this and other projects funded under EPA, visit: <http://www.epa.gov.mb.ca>.