

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WINNIPEG'S IMPACT REPORT: Q1 2024

Uniting to drive economic development  
Encompasses January, February and March 2024



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
WINNIPEG**



**TOURISM  
WINNIPEG**



**YES!  
WINNIPEG**



# Table of contents

**4** CEO'S REPORT

**7** OUR PROGRESS

**8** SELLING WINNIPEG

**18** EDW IN OUR COMMUNITY

**22** SPOTLIGHT FEATURE: TRAVEL TRADE

# CEO's report

## A message from Ryan Kuffner

As we embrace the new year, I'm committed to communicating with you further about what we do at Economic Development Winnipeg (EDW), how we can support your mandates and share our results in growing Winnipeg's economy as Manitoba's leading economic development agency.

We're sharing this report with you to give you a broader perspective on our operations and highlight the strength of our distinctive model. This distinctive model entails the strategic integration of an economic development agency and tourism agency, united under one roof, cross-leveraging each other to drive economic success and growth for our region.

In Q1, we demonstrated the model's value with some of our success stories. We leveraged our sponsorship opportunity at the State of the City Address to launch a new "Live in Winnipeg" talent attraction campaign, highlighting Winnipeg as the number one place in Canada to raise kids, according to the Globe & Mail.

We used tourism assets to showcase our quality of life, while also reviewing data to help us identify key markets and talent pools to promote this message. Using this information, we launched a campaign promoting Winnipeg's family-friendly advantages—another example of strong cross-collaboration in our office.

Similarly, staff from various departments supported the United Airlines announcement on restored service from Winnipeg to two key markets—Denver and Chicago. This included tasks from responding to media inquiries, to reviewing FDI data on companies in Winnipeg that directly benefit from these routes, to gathering key insights from our corporate travel survey in partnership



**"After restructuring and finalizing the staffing of our executive team in December, we're now focused on coming together as a cohesive leadership unit."**

with the Winnipeg Airports Authority. It was a true team effort to assist in the support of securing and announcing this exciting new development for Winnipeg.

Our conversation with the Mayor and Premier on the future of economic development on May 23 at our AGM was a significant step forward in our collaboration efforts. It provided invaluable insights into how a united effort between governments and the private sector can profoundly shape the economic landscape of Winnipeg and Manitoba. I look forward to continuing conversations on how to evolve our funding model so that Winnipeg remains competitively positioned to unlock new, exciting economic opportunities.

**Ryan Kuffner**

Ryan Kuffner  
President & Chief Executive Officer, EDW



Sports Events Congress (SEC24)  
Winnipeg, March 2024

# Our progress

## Aligning our vision and strategy: Refreshing the balanced scorecard in 2024

As part of EDW's ongoing commitment to clarity and strategic alignment, we are pleased to announce a refresh of the Balanced Scorecard framework within our organization. This robust system enables us to set a clear vision and align our strategic objectives across four key perspectives: financial stewardship, customer and stakeholder relations, internal processes and organizational capacity and learning growth.

The Balanced Scorecard will help us ensure that all levels of our organization work cohesively towards common goals. By simplifying our objectives hierarchy from three tiers to two, we're making our strategy more accessible and actionable. Our top-tier initiatives are now sharply defined, allowing us to identify and measure specific activities that advance these objectives.

Each perspective within the Scorecard is interconnected, forming a cohesive flow that enhances our operational efficiency. For instance, improvements in our organizational capacity feed into better internal processes, bolstering our financial stewardship and ultimately enhancing customer and stakeholder relations. This holistic approach not only supports our mission but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and strategic focus.

Through the Balanced Scorecard, we aim to align our activities tightly with our strategic objectives, ensuring every effort directly supports our overarching goals. This framework will guide us in effectively serving our stakeholders and fulfilling our mission with enhanced accountability and strategic insight. Our new Balanced Scorecard metrics will be implemented throughout 2024.

### Our results to date

<b>YES! Winnipeg NPS</b>	72.73
<b>Private sector funding</b>	\$1.3M
<b>Estimated economic impact of YW successes</b>	\$105M
<b>Hours of professional development</b>	35

<b>Tourism Winnipeg NPS</b>	100
<b>Public sector/Government funding</b>	\$2.5M
<b>Estimated economic impact of tourism successes</b>	\$10M
<b>Employee satisfaction EDW NPS</b>	28



# Selling Winnipeg

## Team operations

Selling Winnipeg highlights our team's continued efforts at enhancing Winnipeg's profile and appeal as a destination for tourism, business, investment and media recognition on both national and international stages.

### Q1 highlights include:

## Sport Events Congress (SEC24)

Our team, together with Travel Manitoba and Brandon First, co-hosted the Sport Events Congress (SEC24) from March 13 - 15 at the RBC Convention Centre Winnipeg. SEC24 was a resounding success, showcasing industry leaders, top events, and hot topics in event sport hosting through presentations, panels and breakout sessions, as well as valuable 1:1 networking opportunities with more than 50 national sports organizations—a prime stage to highlight Winnipeg's diverse sporting event assets for future championships and event opportunities.

Prior to the congress, our team hosted six decision makers from four national and provincial sport organizations on a full-day familiarization (FAM) tour in Winnipeg, which has already led to new qualified opportunities for Winnipeg, representing **\$40 million** of potential impact to our city. During the event, we launched a new sports & special events video, capturing the essence of Winnipeg's vibrant sports culture and facilities.

## Educational Travel Consortium Conference (ETC)

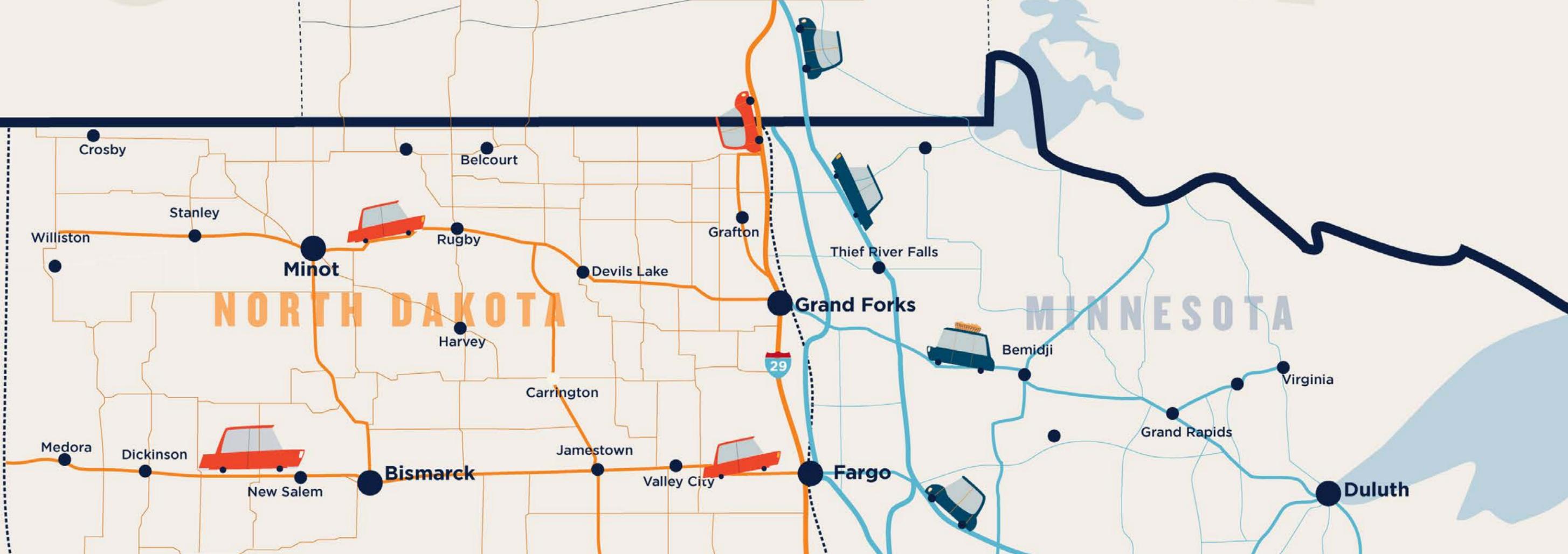
The Educational Travel Consortium Conference (ETC), held from February 4 - 8, brought together international tour operators and affinity travel professionals (planners who organize trips for groups with a shared interest) from North America's top universities.

As a strategic partner, our Tourism Winnipeg team led four Learning Labs, demonstrating Winnipeg's appeal as a lifelong learning travel destination and city to consider in future for affinity group travel of programs from Boston College, UCLA, Princeton University and others. ETC capped off with a community dinner at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, hosted by Travel Manitoba, where delegates saw first-hand the awe-inspiring architecture and thought-provoking exhibits of this Canadian icon. ETC had an overall economic impact of **\$336,000** and brought in **300 delegates**.

## Indspire National Gathering

We proudly continued our partnership with Indspire, a national Indigenous-led registered charity, for the 2024 - 2028 Indspire National Gatherings. This event builds on the remarkable success of the 2022 Indspire National Gathering, previously held in Winnipeg and celebrated as the most successful in its history.

Our ongoing commitment to this event highlights EDW's dedication to supporting educational advancement and cultural celebration among Indigenous communities across Canada, increasingly positioning Winnipeg as a global hub for Indigenous conferences and business events. Annually, the Indspire National Gathering brings together **1,200 delegates**, resulting in approximately **1,000 room nights**. This five-year commitment to Winnipeg has an estimated combined economic impact of **\$4 million**.



## Leisure tourism opportunities

### Attracting U.S. visitors & season campaigns

To capitalize on the opportunity to grow our leisure visitors from the United States, we successfully introduced our first dedicated campaign targeting two markets in the U.S. This new campaign, which launched on March 4, included a new landing page to raise awareness of Winnipeg among North Dakota and Minnesota residents. Our team worked with a digital marketing and data partner to develop a targeted audience of U.S. residents who have previously been to Canada. The campaign garnered **342,000 impressions** and **4,120 clicks** to the landing page in its first three weeks. Additionally, we celebrated the successful second

year of our Winnipeg Attractions Pass with a refreshed campaign that launched in January. During the first quarter we sold **105 passes**. Complementing these efforts were our 2024 seasonal leisure marketing campaigns, targeting key markets in Canada and the United States with winter and spring seasonal content and experiences. During the first quarter, our paid and organic marketing campaigns drove **340,550 sessions** on [tourismwinnipeg.com](http://tourismwinnipeg.com), with most visitors coming from rural Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.



# Business retention, expansion and attraction

In Q1 our team delivered:

**196**  
Services

<sup>1</sup> Economic Outcomes Facilitated (EOF): In our sales process, the ultimate milestone is achieving an EOF, which is marked when a client signs a YES! letter. The letter is private sector validation of the value we have provided them through our service offering and ensures we only claim successes when our clients validate that success. The letter provides EDW with the client's confirmation of the number of jobs expected to be created at maturity, the dollar value of capital invested, and the new payroll generated thanks to our efforts. EOFs are ultimately considered "wins" by our team and communicated accordingly.

Which led to:

**\$150M**  
Capital invested

**300**  
Net new direct jobs

**One**  
EOF<sup>1</sup>

EOF success:



**GENVION Corporation**, a pharmaceutical development and delivery leader, has expanded its 200,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) facility in Winnipeg. This expansion is set to significantly enhance the company's capacity, with an initial increase of **50** new full-time employees (FTEs) in 2024, reaching **250 FTEs** upon full operational maturity. The project involves a capital investment of **\$50 million** in 2024, escalating to **\$150 million** at full maturity.

WINNIPEG



# Investment project pipeline

## Q1 results

Our team closed Q1 with an investment project pipeline of:

**313**  
Leads

**161**  
Prospects

**50**  
Qualified opportunities

Our efforts included:

### BIOKET

In collaboration with Manitoba Agriculture, our team attended BIOKET March 19-21, a leading conference in France focused on the bioeconomy and biomass valorization, where we were able to gauge the alignment of Manitoba's value proposition with industry needs. We showcased Manitoba's strategic advantages, including access to abundant Prairie biomass and competitive cost structures in energy and operations, to a diverse audience of companies ranging from European startups to large corporations. This resulted in **30 leads** and **11 prospects**. The partnership with the province demonstrated our capacity to collaborate and leverage our resources to present a common message in the market.

### World Agritech Summit

On March 19 & 20, representatives from our FDI and Business Development units attended the World AgriTech Summit in San Francisco. Out of a total of **76 leads**, the team conducted **20 prospect meetings** (a **26 per cent conversion rate**), **16** of which were international companies and four that are Canadian companies. The summit, a key event for U.S. agribusiness companies, offered our team excellent networking opportunities to help build our connections and grow in this space. We met with a representative from the Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis and participated in an event organized by the Trade Commissioner Service, where Canadian agribusiness startups presented their innovative projects.

### LEVEL UP – An Exclusive Manitoba Night

The following day in San Francisco, in conjunction with the Game Developers Conference (GDC), our FDI team hosted "LEVEL UP—An Exclusive Manitoba Night" on March 21. To bring the event to life in a playful way, the night was themed around Winnipeg as a cheat code in video game production with our competitive tax credits, exceptional talent pool and steadfast government support. This event and its creative positioning brought together members of Global Affairs Canada, Ubisoft and game-developing giants from across the globe to increase Manitoba's visibility within the video game sector. It was also an opportunity to continue building the ecosystem, attract top talent and strengthen our partnerships to help generate new economic opportunities for Winnipeg's creative industries sector and keep the city top of mind with decision makers.

### Western Innovation Forum

Our team participated in the virtual Western Innovation Forum March 5-7, a key event for the aerospace, marine, and defense sectors that facilitates discussions between prime contractors and Canadian businesses about Industrial and Technological Benefit (ITB) related opportunities. We engaged in **27 B2B meetings**, exploring Manitoba's industry capabilities and discussing future growth and expansion plans, resulting in **46 leads** and **27 prospects**.

Christine Perrin, Director of Foreign Direct Investment, speaks at LEVEL UP – An Exclusive Manitoba Night, San Francisco, March 2024



# Talent & workforce development

## Q1 highlights

As of Q1, the Work in Manitoba job portal has grown to include **45,738 job seekers**, marking a 9 per cent increase from Q4 2023. Additionally, the platform now serves **1,709 employers**, representing a 19 per cent growth since the end of last year.

In Q1, the Newcomer Employment Hub, previously managed by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, merged with the Work in Manitoba job portal. The full administration of the platform has transitioned to EDW, creating a unified job portal with expanded reach. This merger connects a broader pool of job

seekers and employers. Magnet, the technology provider, is facilitating the seamless transfer of users to the consolidated Work in Manitoba platform.

To drive more traffic to the Work in Manitoba job portal, our Talent and Workforce Development team hosted 18 webinar sessions to inform Manitoba businesses about the key benefits and functionality of the portal. These information sessions were held weekly from January to March and saw **117 registered business attendees**.



# Winnipeg in the news

Tourism media coverage highlights our city's visitor assets and in Q1 this included **137 articles/media mentions**, some of which appear in different outlets, for a total earned media value\* of **\$7,256,000**.



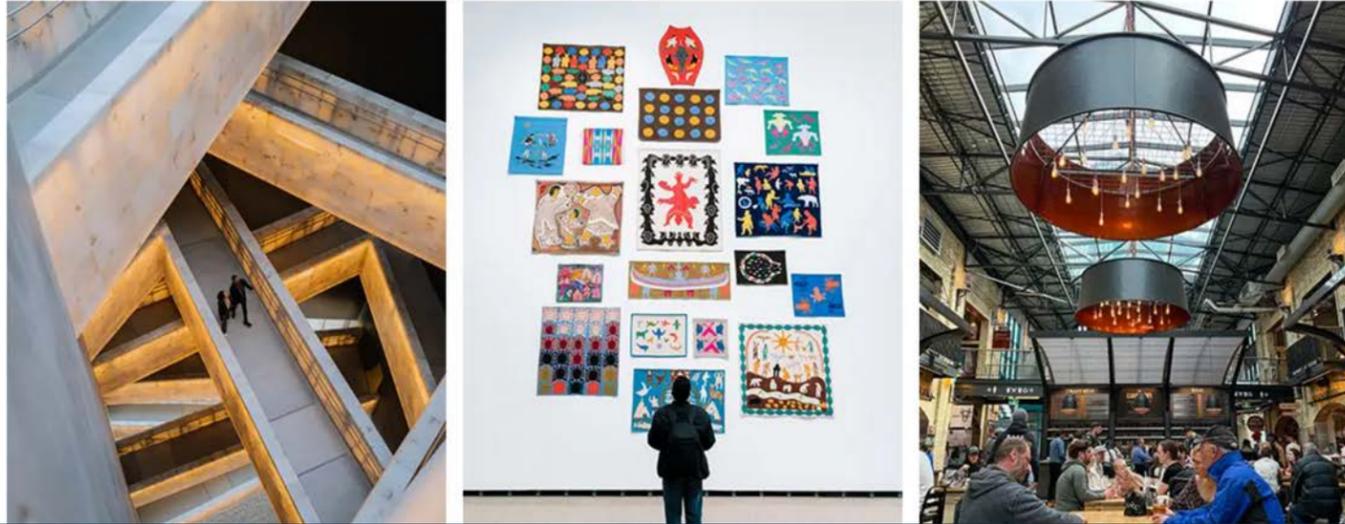
- Top headlines included:
- In praise of Canada's Coolest Under-the-Radar City**  
By Kimberley Lovato, Virtuoso
  - 11 Canadian restaurants that will take you back in time**  
By Melissa Girimonte and Dylan Muñoz, Food Network
  - 4 Noteworthy Nordic-Style Spas**  
By Robert Annis, AARP.org

## In Praise of Canada's Coolest Under-the-Radar City

Kimberley Lovato  
February 27, 2024

Arts & Culture City Guides

Save This



**"Come for the access to wildlife tours, stay for Filipino food, French history, and Inuit art."**

\* Earned media value (EMV) is a metric in marketing that calculates the value of publicity gained through promotional efforts rather than paid advertising. It measures the worth of media exposure obtained through channels like social media, press coverage, and word-of-mouth, estimating the equivalent cost of achieving the same exposure through paid ads.

# EDW in our community

EDW in our community highlights the foundational local work that supports and amplifies our broader initiatives, which in turn enhances Winnipeg's profile. Our dedicated efforts within the community help fuel our success in promoting Winnipeg in all markets.

**The local activities and partnerships that fuel our efforts include:**

## Evenings at the Government House series

Our Director of Business Development, Adam Vitt, had the honour of moderating a panel on 'Tech's Role in Shaping Manitoba's Future—Why Winnipeg for Tech' at Government House, hosted by Her Honour the Honourable Anita R. Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, as part of the 'Evenings at Government House' series. The panel featured representatives from North Forge Technology Exchange, Neo Financial and Tech Manitoba and focused on how technology drives innovation, job creation and efficiency improvements across sectors. It also highlighted Winnipeg's competitive edge in technology, success stories from local tech companies and the potential for further growth.

## Manitoba FDI seminar

Our FDI team participated in the "Manitoba Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Seminar: Team-Toba Approach for FDI in Manitoba," hosted by Global Affairs Canada and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. During a fireside chat, our team discussed the current status and future directions of FDI in Manitoba and Canada alongside Jonathon Kupi, Director, Investment Promotion from Global Affairs Canada and Kam Blight, President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities Board.

### Corporate partnerships

YES! Winnipeg

96

Investors contributed  
\$1,010,000

Team Winnipeg

38

Partners contributed  
\$322,000

## Corporate partner networking

We hosted our first joint networking event of 2024 at Inn at the Forks on March 12, attended by 139 guests and representatives from various investors and partners. We shared the excitement around new opportunities, formally introduced Alberto Velasco-Acosta as VP, International and reminded our community we are here for them. The event participants surveyed provided an excellent **Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 70**.

## State of the City Address

EDW actively supported and participated in the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce's State of the City Address & VIP luncheon on February 9, a key event attracting community leaders and a broad audience eager to network and learn about governmental



Evenings at the Government House series  
Winnipeg, March 2024

priorities. As sponsors, EDW had the privilege to address the audience. Making his debut as President & CEO, Ryan highlighted EDW's role as a private sector driven entity that responds to the business community's needs. We promoted Winnipeg as the number one city in Canada for raising a family—a claim supported by a recent feature in The Globe and Mail, which served as the foundation for our new talent marketing campaign, "Live in Winnipeg," aimed at raising awareness of the city's family-friendly advantages and attractive quality of life.

## StudioLab xR launch party

Our team participated in the StudioLab xR launch party celebrating the opening of a new virtual production facility for commercial use and training. The launch attracted government representatives and leaders from the film, technology, and creative sectors. Hosted by New Media Manitoba (NMM), the event featured speakers, including the Honourable Jamie Moses, Minister of Economic Development, Innovation, Trade, and Natural Resources, and NMM's Executive Director Louie Ghiz.

## Tech Thursday event

Our Talent and Workforce Development team moderated talent-focused panels at the Tech Thursday events in February and March. Yvonne Kinley, our then-Director of Talent and Workforce Development, led a panel titled 'Tapping into the Canadian Tech Talent Pool' with panellists from ConstructionClock, Illumia Labs,

and Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Annie Henry, our Senior Manager of Talent, moderated 'Developing a Bilingual Community in Tech' featuring representatives from NeoFinancial, SkipTheDishes, and la Chambre de commerce francophone de Saint-Boniface.

## Investor Council meeting

The YES! Winnipeg Investor Council convened on March 20, hosted by our partners at MNP. The meeting focused on reviewing our 2023 results as well as exploring current economic opportunities and priorities for 2024. Additionally, we welcomed new members to the Investor Council this quarter: Scott Marohn, VP Commercial from Winnipeg Airports Authority; Melanie Fatouros-Richardson, Vice President, Communications and Government Relations from SkipTheDishes; and Paul Beatty, Chief Financial Officer from The Megill-Stephenson Company.

## The Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement explained

The FDI team also participated in the "The Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) Explained" event to boost international trade between Manitoba, the U.S. and Mexico. Hosted by Global Affairs Canada, the event offered insights into CUSMA's impact and opportunities, enhancing our team's understanding of international trade dynamics and supporting our mission to drive economic growth and global partnerships for Manitoba.



Beyond the beat  
Canadian Museum for Human Rights  
Winnipeg, February 2024

## Beyond the beat

Our team is dedicated to promoting Winnipeg as a top destination and actively engages with local cultural institutions like the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) to enhance our advocacy of their offerings. Our Tourism Winnipeg team participated in events supporting the CMHR's new *Beyond the Beat: Music of Resistance* and Change gallery, including concerts and the Indigenous Spring Equinox Ceremony. These experiences deepen our understanding of CMHR's exhibits, helping us effectively share Winnipeg's rich cultural narrative with diverse audiences.

## Agowiidiwinan Treaty Centre

Sarah Robinson, our Business Development Manager on the Tourism Winnipeg team, had a rewarding day at the Agowiidiwinan Treaty Centre at The Forks, filled with learning, crafting, and reflecting. Her cultural engagement continued at the Indigenous Tourism Operators' Gathering, hosted by Indigenous Tourism Manitoba, which included workshops, presentations, and networking with Indigenous tourism businesses, fostering personal and professional growth. These activities strengthen our community ties and enhance our efforts to promote Winnipeg as a diverse and inclusive destination.



Manitoba

### Skilled workers with family ties to Manitoba will get boost in provincial nominee process

Prioritizing applicants with family connections meant to improve province's newcomer retention rate: minister

 Ian Froese · CBC News · Posted: Jan 15, 2024 5:00 AM CST | Last Updated: January 15



## Manitoba Association for Business Economics (MABE) Outlook Conference

Our Senior Economist, Chris Ferris, attended and presented the 36th annual Manitoba Association for Business Economics (MABE) Outlook Conference. The only event of its kind in Manitoba, MABE aims to provide insight into the direction of the provincial economy over the next year.

Chris delivered a presentation on behalf of EDW, sharing insights aimed at helping the business community make informed decisions and noting that, "Canada's easing inflation is setting the stage for the Bank of Canada to begin easing the overnight interest rate in the second half of 2024. These two factors and slowly easing interest rates will provide some affordability relief for individuals and bring more certainty for business investment decisions."

## EDW in the news

EDW's earned media coverage highlights our organization's activities and features our expertise on economic development initiatives, which included **62 articles** valued at **\$1,128,000** in EMV\* in Q1.

### Top headlines included:

***Acquisition of Winnipeg's Fairmont Hotel a positive thing, says one expert***

By Talha Hasmani, Global News

***Skilled workers with family ties to Manitoba will get boost in provincial nominee process***

By Ian Froese, CBC News

***Chicago is our kind of town... Denver, too***

By Gabrielle Piche, Winnipeg Free Press

\*Earned media value (EMV) refers to the dollar value of positive mentions in traditional, online and social media. Our media and influencer marketing monitoring tools provide these values.

# Spotlight feature: Travel Trade

## Tourism Winnipeg's strategy to drive tourism through tour operators

Sarah Robinson is "playing the long game." While the end goal for Robinson, Tourism Winnipeg's Business Development Manager focusing on Travel Trade, is convincing groups and tour operators that Winnipeg is the ideal spot to bring travellers, she says it's really about the business of developing relationships – however long it takes.

Tourism Winnipeg, a division of Economic Development Winnipeg, leads EDW's efforts to attract organizations to host special events, sports, meetings and conventions in Winnipeg, as well as visit for leisure or educational travel. The Travel Trade side focuses on Winnipeg as a packaged tour destination, by researching, promoting, buying and selling travel experiences (such as local attractions and accommodations) to the tour operators and travel agents who might be convinced to add Winnipeg's tourism products to their packages and promotions.

**"We might have groups booking tours for 2024 or 2025, but I've been building the relationship with the tour operators for years, even since I started here in 2015," Robinson says. "It's a very patient process!"**

While most North Americans tend to book their personal travel on their own and don't use the travel trade network, most of the rest of the world relies on it entirely to plan their travel.

**"Anytime someone is booking travel through an agent or a tour operator, that's who I'm targeting, so Winnipeg is top of mind for a destination to sell to their end consumer," Robinson explains. "I'll make phone calls and send emails, but the most effective way to start that classic cycle of prospecting, selling and closing deals is to meet with them in person."**



# Travel Trade

## What it is

The work we do with tour operators and travel agents to sell Winnipeg as a travel destination to groups or individuals.

## Why it's important

Travel trade enables us to engage with overseas markets and student/youth groups, encouraging them to consider Winnipeg as a travel destination.

## Impact

We measure the number of new tours booked and number of accounts that continue to carry Winnipeg tourism experiences, along with the number of tours organized and hosted for clients.





**“We might have groups booking tours for 2024 or 2025, but I’ve been building the relationship with the tour operators for years, even since I started here in 2015.”**

That includes through sales missions to visit tour operators across Canada, the U.S. or beyond, as well as setting up at conferences such as Rendezvous Canada, which Tourism Winnipeg won the bid to host in 2025. The Tourism Industry Association of Canada in partnership with Destination Canada and the local hosts holds this important event every year, inviting tour operators from key international markets to discover what Canada and each province has to offer.

**“That face-to-face opportunity as suppliers is important. You see a much higher response rate in your follow-up if you’ve had that in-person contact,”** Robinson says.

Another valuable opportunity is the Student Youth Travel Association’s annual conference, given that the student/youth market has been a major focus for Tourism Winnipeg for the past few years. The conference was held here in 2023, and Robinson says she’s already seeing the results.

Canadian student groups often want an educational experience, learning about things like history, French studies and Indigenous culture, so the Canadian Museum for Human Rights has been a pillar for Winnipeg, Robinson says. On the other hand, American

student groups are more often bands and choirs that want to incorporate performance opportunities and music clinics into their visit.

**“So we’ve been working a lot with our attractions and museums over the years to explain to them that if you promote yourself as a venue where these groups can perform, they will also book a tour or program and perhaps spend some money in the gift shop too.”**

Visitors who purchase through the travel trade are a critical fabric of our tourism economy who care about the authentic experiences they’re going to have here and bring a real curiosity to learn about Winnipeg and Manitoba, notes Natalie Thiesen, Tourism Winnipeg’s Vice President of Tourism.

**“Tourism is one of the largest sectors in the province and this segment, in addition to business events and conferences and leisure visitors, has a huge impact to our economy in a direct way and also an indirect way,”** says Thiesen, who began her own Tourism Winnipeg career in Travel Trade.

But the value these tour groups and visitors bring goes beyond just the economic impact, she explains.

**“If you look at the visitor journey when they come to Winnipeg – maybe they’re doing a cross-Canada tour in the summer by train and they’re stopping two nights in Winnipeg, or they’re going to see the beluga whales in Churchill and they’re spending three nights here – it’s not just the direct impact of the hotel stays and the taxis and the restaurants, it’s that indirect impact that can really be this pride of place. When you have someone coming from Australia, it’s their first time in Canada and they’re just amazed at the beauty of Winnipeg and Manitoba, that has a ripple effect in terms of creating more ambassadors for our city.”**

Thiesen notes travel trade is a competitive space and Winnipeg is competing to win business with other cities around the globe to be carried and offered as a travel destination by tour operators. If Robinson and Tourism Winnipeg aren’t engaging with operators and agencies, the city will get passed by and that potential tourism economic opportunity for Winnipeg goes elsewhere.

By working with the travel trade, Tourism Winnipeg’s partners – the attractions and accommodations, for example – are essentially diversifying their market, Robinson explains.

**“If they’re only selling direct to the consumer, that’s one form of revenue generation. But if they work with a tour operator, yes, they would have to provide a wholesale rate, but they’re expanding their reach to a market they wouldn’t have had access to, and attracting business they wouldn’t have otherwise received.”**

Getting the tour operators to see Winnipeg’s value for themselves is often crucial, and the relationships Robinson and the Tourism Winnipeg team build with tour

operators and agents will often turn into a visit, called a familiarization or “FAM” tour. Tourism Winnipeg will bring them here to show them around, building a customized itinerary of attractions, accommodations, transportation and dining, to show them what’s available and possible depending on their focus.

**“This might be two or three years after our initial meeting. Then after another year, the product gets to market – the operator builds an itinerary, advertises it and starts the process of selling it to their clients, which could take another one to three years,”** Robinson explains.

Tourism Winnipeg also offers tours and itinerary suggestions for groups – or individuals – on its Travel Trade website at [winnipeggroups.com](http://winnipeggroups.com), along with reasons to choose Winnipeg, trip planning tips and resources, and information specific to the student/youth tourism market.

It’s an exciting time to be promoting Winnipeg and Manitoba, Thiesen says.

**“We have these world-class attractions that are unique to only Winnipeg, and combined with our rich arts and culture scene and culinary experiences, we can give visitors a really transformational experience, whether it’s related to learning about Indigenous culture, the plants in our environment, to our journey of human rights and the work that we continue to have to do. So whether we’re talking to educational travel companies for youth, or international high-end tour operators who are looking for a connection, to researchers wanting more in-depth experiences, we have that right here in Winnipeg.”**





# Q1 2024



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**  
WINNIPEG



**TOURISM**  
WINNIPEG



**YES!**  
WINNIPEG