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Offer



Ontario job hunters welcome out west

Saskatchewan premier makes pitch for workers

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QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU CHIEF

Go west, Ontarians.

That's the clarion call to the unemployed in recession-battered Ontario from Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, whose booming province has a massive surplus of unfilled jobs.

In the wake of Friday's stunning news from Statistics Canada that 71,000 jobs were lost last month in Ontario, Wall yesterday called the *Toronto Star* to tout opportunities in energy-rich Saskatchewan.

"We've got a message to get out. In getting it out, I want to be circumspect and very cautiously optimistic because we're not immune to what's going on ... around the world," the premier said.

"I also want to be ... conscious of the fact that Canadians all over the country are going through the horror of losing a job. I mean, I have a young family, I can't imagine what that night at the supper table might be like," said Wall.

"So I'm not doing this in a flippant way or a glib way, but we do have opportunities here. I do think it's a bit of a 'good news' story in terms of what's happening elsewhere."

Wall is directing people seeking employment to the saskjobs.ca website, which as of late yesterday had 5,430 jobs that need to be filled across the prairie province.

These include hundreds of jobs in construction, agriculture, management,

finance and administration, health care, science, education, the arts, sales and even manufacturing.

"We've been a great place to be from in the past. We're now a great place to be," Wall said. "We've always been a great place to be, but there's opportunity to go along with it."

Saskatchewan saw its unemployment rate fall to 4.1 per cent in January from 4.2 per cent in December, the only province to enjoy such a decline.

Over the same period, Ontario's unemployment rate jumped to 8 per cent from 7.2 per cent – and in Toronto it's now 8.5 per cent.

All newcomers are welcome, Wall stressed.

In terms of incentives to get people to head west, Wall said it's simple: "The pitch might be the job, an opportunity, number one."

"Number two, it's a great quality of life. It's not just a great place to make a living, it's a great place to make a life."