

Dear Friend:

Our goal as New Democrats is simple: **to make life even better for Saskatchewan families in every region of our province.**

We live in a great province. We have more people working than ever before. Our quality of life is second to none. We've cut sales tax, business taxes and provincial income taxes. We're expanding investment in health care and education.

We've achieved a lot working together. But there's still much more we can do.

This platform builds on our accomplishments as a province and sets a course for the future that I believe is both bold and achievable.

With your support we will:

- **make Saskatchewan the most affordable place in Canada to live and raise a family**
- **provide the best public health care in Canada**
- **build a green and prosperous economy**
- **build the future here for young people**

Our vision of the future is a Saskatchewan where everyone, in every region, can participate and share in the prosperity of the province, and no one is left behind.

Forward together

We can go forward together, with strong and innovative Crown corporations that provide the lowest package of utility costs anywhere in Canada.

Not backward, as the Sask Party proposes, with the privatization of these public assets to make some people rich while the rest of us pay more for privatized services.

We can go forward together, with more nurses and health professionals and new hospital equipment to make sure you get the care you need, when you need it, in publicly-funded and publicly-run health care facilities.

Not backward, as the Sask Party would take us, with their plans for reckless corporate tax breaks that will undermine our health care and education and open the door to privatized health services.

continued over...

We can go forward together, with jobs and a prosperous economy by expanding support for innovative, new environmentally-based industry, green energy and high tech. It's our key to the future.

Not backward, as the Sask Party will take us, by ending provincial incentives for innovation and technology and by ignoring our environmental challenges and opportunities.

And finally, we can go forward together to build a future for young people by expanding skills training, reducing student debt and providing incentives for young people to live, learn and work in Saskatchewan.

Not backward, as the Sask Party will take us, with a lower minimum wage, fewer public services and higher costs for privatized car insurance, telephone service and other utilities that make building the future here at home affordable for everyone.

It's up to you

We have a clear choice in Saskatchewan.

I'm proud of this platform and our commitment to make life better for you and your family.

And I know from experience, that every commitment in these pages can be achieved.

We're stronger when we work together.

Let's build the future for Saskatchewan families here, and now.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorne Calvert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lorne Calvert, Leader
Saskatchewan New Democrats
October, 2003

Lorne Calvert  **New Democrats**

Building the future for Saskatchewan families

Table of contents:

Our 4 key commitments at a glance	page	5
Our commitment to make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family		11
Our commitment to provide the best public health care in Canada		19
Our commitment to build a green and prosperous economy		27
Our commitment to build the future here for young people		37



Our 4 key commitments at a glance

New Democrats are making four commitments to make life even better for families in every region of our province:

- 1 Make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family**
- 2 Provide the best public health care in Canada**
- 3 Build a green and prosperous economy**
- 4 Build the future here for young people**

making Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family in Canada

Saskatchewan's quality of life and cost-of-living are already second to none. Our plan will help make our province an even better, more affordable place to live.

Here's our plan:

- ✔ Provide the lowest-cost package of utilities – phone, electricity, natural gas, and car insurance – in Canada
- ✔ Keep our crown corporations publicly-owned, strong and innovative to provide the affordable rates and quality service families depend on
- ✔ Reduce property tax pressures by increasing provincial revenue-sharing and infrastructure funding to municipalities
- ✔ Bring greater balance and fairness to property taxes through the commission on funding for K-12 education
- ✔ Index tax credits and tax brackets to keep pace with inflation
- ✔ Continue to provide sustainable – not reckless – provincial tax cuts that don't jeopardize health care and education
- ✔ Provide a new provincial tax credit for workers who provide their own tools as a condition of employment
- ✔ Reduce the cost of post-secondary education by increasing student bursaries and reducing student loan debt for 10,000 students
- ✔ Build 2,000 new affordable homes for seniors and low-income families
- ✔ Regular review and increase of minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living



Lorne Calvert, Premier

providing the best public health care in Canada

Health care is improving in Saskatchewan. We've hired more doctors and health professionals. We're training new nurses. And we've doubled the number of MRI exams and increased the number of CT scans by 35%.

Here's our plan to meet future health care challenges and provide the best public health care in Canada.

- ✔ **Keep Saskatchewan's health care publicly-funded and publicly-administered, with no health care premiums**
- ✔ **Reduce waiting lists** by purchasing new diagnostic and treatment equipment, training and recruiting more nurses and technologists, and implementing Canada's first province-wide surgical registry
- ✔ **Innovate and improve front-line care by:**
 - expanding one-stop primary care clinics province-wide
 - doubling the number of Telehealth Centres to provide patient-doctor video links
 - strengthening home care, including mental health services
- ✔ **Train and recruit more health care professionals by:**
 - providing 400 training spaces for registered nurses
 - providing 150 training spaces for licensed practical nurses
 - increasing to 600 the number of bursaries per year for health care trainees who commit to work in Saskatchewan
 - expanding recruitment and training for rural physicians and specialists
- ✔ **Improve facilities with:**
 - construction projects in 15 regional centres
 - a new U of S Health Sciences Complex
 - expansion of Emergency and Critical Care facilities at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon
 - new maternal and neo-natal intensive care facilities at Regina General
- ✔ **Continue improving early diagnosis and disease prevention with:**
 - screening programs for cancer
 - increased diabetes education and treatment
 - pre-natal, fetal alcohol, and parenting education programs
 - expanding children's immunization programs



Lorne Calvert, Premier

building a green and prosperous economy

Saskatchewan has experienced 16 straight months of job growth. And the Bank of Montreal and Scotiabank predict we'll have the strongest economic growth in Canada this year.

Here is our plan to build a green, prosperous economy with new jobs and opportunities:

☑ **Expand green energy with:**

- a ten-fold increase in wind power generation
- biomass and small-scale environmentally friendly power generation projects
- the development of Saskatchewan-produced ethanol

☑ **Support environmental protection and energy conservation by:**

- planting 5,000,000 seedlings to reduce 22 million tonnes of carbon dioxide
- continuing the Conservation Cover Program to assist farmers in converting marginal cropland to perennial forage
- expanding the Energy Solutions retrofit program province-wide to include municipalities, First Nations and Health Authorities
- providing low-interest loans to assist homeowners to undertake retrofits to improve energy efficiency
- eliminate PST from energy-efficient **Energy Star** appliances

☑ **Create an even more competitive business environment by:**

- reducing the provincial small business tax rate in a sustainable way, from 6% to 5%
- raising the qualifying income for small business taxes to \$400,000
- using targeted tax and royalty reductions to increase resource sector production
- promoting business investment through a new public/private partnership, **Investment Saskatchewan**

- supporting venture capital funds that invest in Saskatchewan enterprises, including northern, Metis and First Nations companies

☑ **Build on research, development, and innovation by:**

- expanding commercial and medical research surrounding the U of S Synchrotron
- renewing and expanding the Innovation and Science Fund

☑ **Strengthen rural and northern development by:**

- fighting for federal trade injury and BSE compensation
- extending irrigation and expanding specialty and organic crop production
- expanding livestock production and in-province food processing
- increasing value-added forest product manufacturing

☑ **Build infrastructure to support economic development and diversification:**

- invest \$1.2 billion in the largest highway construction and improvement program in Saskatchewan's history
- lead the country in internet access by expanding high-speed internet service to all communities of 200 or more
- develop a long-term safe water distribution system



Lorne Calvert, Premier

build the future here for young people

We're building and renovating schools, expanding our colleges and universities, including the First Nations University of Canada. With more opportunities and more young people working than any time in the last decade, we're turning the corner on out-migration and building a future for young people here at home.

Here's our plan to build a bright future for young people here in Saskatchewan:

- ✔ **New incentives, through *CareerStart*, to help young people work and develop their careers in Saskatchewan, including:**
 - a \$1,000 tax rebate for all post-secondary graduates working in Saskatchewan following graduation
 - a one year interest-free grace period before beginning student loan repayments, for graduates working in Saskatchewan
 - 600 bursaries for health care students in return for their commitment to work in Saskatchewan upon graduation
- ✔ **More skills training and financial support for students, through *CareerStart*, with:**
 - 5,400 new job-oriented training and apprenticeship spaces at Saskatchewan's technical schools and regional colleges
 - expansion of successful co-op education programs
 - reduced student debt for 10,000 students through expansion of the Saskatchewan Student Bursary program
 - quadrupling the Centennial Merit Scholarship program
- ✔ **Tripling of on-line courses available throughout the province through *Campus Saskatchewan***
- ✔ **New support for entrepreneurs under 30 through YES – *Young Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan***
- ✔ **New support to help a new generation of farmers get established, through the *Bridging Generations* program**
- ✔ **New summer student employment opportunities, with *Green Team* energy conservation and environmental protection jobs**
- ✔ **Affordable car insurance by keeping SGI a crown corporation, saving young drivers thousands of dollars compared to young drivers covered by private car insurance systems**
- ✔ **Regular review and increase of minimum wage to keep up with the cost of living**
- ✔ **Stronger early childhood and K-12 education, including:**
 - province-wide expansion of the *SchoolPlus* program to increase academic achievement, personal development and life skill needs of students
 - expanded childcare, pre-Kindergarten programs, new community schools, special needs programs, and support for 'at risk' students
 - school construction and renovation in communities across Saskatchewan



Lorne Calvert, Premier

**Our commitment to
make Saskatchewan the
most affordable
place to live and raise
a family in Canada**



Our commitment to making Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family in Canada

Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work and raise a family. Our low-cost utilities, low taxes and low cost of living are part of the reason why.

Lorne Calvert and the New Democrats understand how important it is to keep costs low for families, whether you're heating your house, heading off to university or paying your tax bill. That's why we've charted a plan to make Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family in Canada.

Provide the lowest-cost package of utilities in Canada

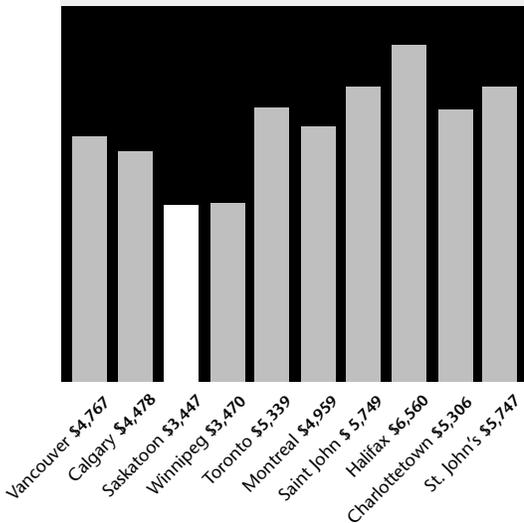
Our Crown corporations give us a head start in controlling utility and insurance costs. SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SGI provide quality services at low rates. They're owned and operated in our province – providing head office and field jobs for Saskatchewan people. They are leaders in innovation and public service. And Lorne Calvert has made it clear that their priority is to put the needs of Saskatchewan people first.

In many other regions of Canada, people are facing runaway auto insurance costs. In some provinces, deregulation of electrical utilities has contributed to skyrocketing energy costs. Not so in Saskatchewan, and we want to keep it that way.

Premier Calvert has made a clear commitment. Thanks to our Crown corporations, Saskatchewan families will have the lowest-cost package of home electricity, natural gas, telephone service and auto insurance in Canada.

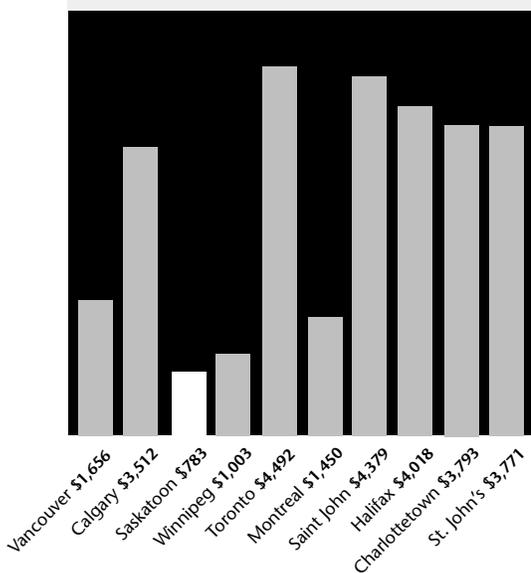
Saskatchewan: Keeping costs down for families

Compare the cost of household utilities and auto insurance across Canada, and Saskatchewan consistently comes out ahead. Here are the average costs for families with incomes from \$50,000 to \$75,000:



Auto insurance, electricity, phone and home heating costs
Family at \$50,000 to \$75,000 total income

It's no different for young people who are just beginning their careers. Basic auto insurance for young people in other provinces can be up to five times more costly than in Saskatchewan.



Adult insurance costs
Single male adult at \$25,000 total income

Keep our Crown corporations publicly-owned, strong and innovative

Lorne Calvert's New Democrats have a clear commitment: keeping our Crown corporations working for you.

New requirements for reporting and disclosure, and a new business-led board to manage investments are helping to make our Crowns more accountable and effective than ever before.

Now it's time for Elwin Hermanson and the Sask Party to come clean on their agenda for Saskatchewan's Crown corporations.

Some Sask Party MLAs have said they would sell our Saskatchewan owned-and-operated corporations when they can get "the best bang for the buck." Others have talked about privatizing our provincial liquor stores, just like Alberta did – with reduced service, higher prices and lost jobs. And the party has said they'll disband STC – discarding Canada's best rural bus service.

In fact, Sask Party MLA Brad Wall said his party would "be open to anything" regarding Saskatchewan's Crowns. He told *Prairie Dog* newspaper in September the Sask Party "would review the government's Crown Corporations with a view to winding down the majority of them over the longer term."

And the Sask Party has stated its intention to privatize parts of SaskTel, by ending SaskTel's ability to compete with corporations like Rogers AT&T and Shaw Cable on cable and cell phone service.

Some believe the Sask Party's out-of-province financial backers are looking to take advantage of Elwin Hermanson's privatization plans.

A fire sale of Crown Corporations would generate short-term cash to compensate for the Sask Party's unsustainable tax cut promises. But it would do long-term damage to the quality services, reasonable rates and jobs those corporations provide for Saskatchewan people. Elwin Hermanson and the Sask Party would put the future of our Crown corporations – and our economy – at risk.

Reduce property tax pressures with more revenue-sharing and funding for municipalities

As we overcame the massive deficits incurred by the Tory administration of the 1980s, all of Saskatchewan shouldered the burden. Municipalities were no exception.

Now, as Saskatchewan's economy grows, Lorne Calvert's New Democrats have been steadily restoring provincial funding to municipalities through:

- **increased unconditional revenue sharing grants**
- **grants-in-lieu of taxes for provincial government buildings, and**
- **expanded infrastructure programs**

During the past two years, revenue sharing grants alone have been increased by \$20 million per year.

We want to keep moving forward. So starting in 2004, we'll implement two new funding measures to help keep municipal services affordable and to ease the pressure on municipal taxes:

- **a further \$10 million increase in unconditional revenue sharing grants, for a total of \$85 million each year**
- **an additional \$20 million per year for municipal and regional infrastructure (including water systems, roads, parks and facilities that encourage economic development), virtually doubling provincial infrastructure funds for municipalities**

Bring more balance to property taxes with fairer funding for schools

Quality public education requires a sound funding base. The challenge is to raise those funds in a fair, balanced way. We want to ensure we do that while making Saskatchewan property taxes as fair as possible.

That's why an independent commission is assessing this complex issue. We know there's no easy fix – but the commission will help us find the best way to rebalance provincial and school division funding to achieve greater fairness in financing K-12 education.

But Elwin Hermanson's Saskatchewan Party would destroy that balance. Hermanson says he'd follow B.C.'s reckless tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy in British Columbia. The B.C. result? Higher provincial sales tax. Higher medicare premiums. Massive cuts to education, health care and the environment. Record high provincial deficits. More provincial debt.

Lorne Calvert's New Democrats know Saskatchewan can't afford extreme, reckless tax cuts. Our past reviews brought balance and fairness to personal and business taxes. We'll do the same for property taxes.

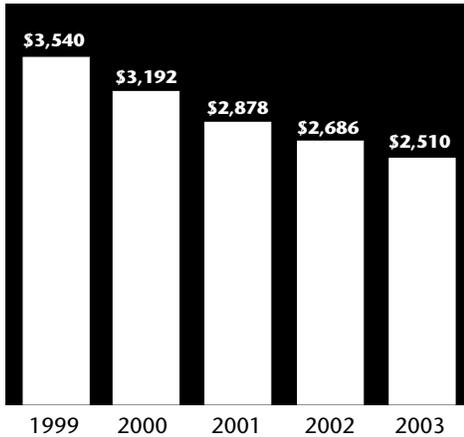
Index tax credits and brackets to keep pace with inflation

We've worked hard to ensure Saskatchewan has Canada's fairest provincial tax system. Now we need to ensure that inflation can't allow unfairness to creep back in.

As of January 1, 2004, provincial tax credits and the three income tax brackets will be indexed – ensuring Saskatchewan's tax reductions keep up with inflation.

Continue to cut taxes responsibly – without jeopardizing health and education

During the last four years, the NDP has implemented the biggest cut in provincial income tax in Saskatchewan's history. That reduction will total \$400 million for 2003 – a reduction of more than \$1,000 (almost 30%) for the average Saskatchewan family.



Reducing Saskatchewan provincial taxes
Two-income family of four earning \$50,000

Here's what we've done:

- **eliminated the flat tax, high-income surtax and debt reduction tax**
- **taken thousands of low-income families off the provincial income tax rolls completely**
- **introduced a simple, progressive three-bracket structure (under \$35,000, \$35,000 to \$100,000 and over \$100,000)**
- **lowered income tax rates to 11%, 13% and 15% within the three brackets**
- **increased tax credits, including personal exemptions and credits for children, seniors, post-secondary education, persons with disabilities, and caregivers**

It's important progress – but we believe we can do more. We'll introduce new measures like a new provincial income tax credit for workers who provide their own tools as a condition of employment.

And we'll remove the PST from many energy-efficient appliances, so you get a break for making environmentally sound purchases.

We've also reduced taxes for small businesses and made strategic royalty and tax reductions that have stimulated our resource sectors – resulting in increased economic activity.

Saskatchewan's sales tax is the second-lowest in Canada. And while Alberta has no sales tax, families there pay health care premiums – and for average families, those premiums exceed the Saskatchewan sales tax.

Tax reform in Saskatchewan has also helped families meet the needs of children. We've implemented the provincial sales tax credit for low-income families, provided Canada's only universal child tax credit (a \$2,500 income tax credit for each child) and kept children's clothing exempt from provincial sales tax.

Reduce the cost of post-secondary education

Saskatchewan has a higher percentage of young people going to university full-time than any other western province – and no wonder.

We have one of the best student loan programs in Canada, helping make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all Saskatchewan people. The program is supported by non-repayable bursaries and study grants, which assist thousands of students to reduce the debt they incur on their way to new careers.

We've also made post-secondary education more affordable for students and their parents by tripling income tax credits. Annual provincial tax reductions for post-secondary have grown from \$8 million in 1997 to \$24 million this year.

Now it's time to build on that success, and keep Saskatchewan moving forward. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will help make post-secondary education even more accessible and affordable through *CareerStart* a package of new initiatives to help Saskatchewan young people begin their careers here at home – see page 38.

One *CareerStart* initiative will enhance the Saskatchewan Student Bursary Program, which provides non-repayable grants to qualifying students. As a result, we will:

- **increase the number of students who qualify for bursaries**
- **increase the amount of most bursaries**
- **reduce student loan debt for more than 10,000 post-secondary students each year**

We'll also help post-secondary students earn while they learn by expanding co-op education and student employment programs.

Build more affordable homes

Saskatchewan is enjoying record numbers of new housing starts. And an important part of that progress is ensuring that many of those new homes are available to seniors and lower-income families.

During the past five years, the NDP government has been working with seniors, limited-income families, community groups and housing authorities to build and acquire almost 1,500 homes – including 270 new homes in northern communities. We've increased the availability of rental housing. We've helped many families buy their own homes. And we've provided nearly 4,000 grants to renovate and repair homes across our province.

Innovation is our watchword. During the past two years, 150 new condo-style homes were completed for seniors in Yorkton, Saskatoon and Regina. Residents helped finance the developments by investing refundable equity from the sale of their former homes. The new homes give them support services while maintaining their independence and an enhanced quality of life. The result: 150 senior couples have new housing to better meet their needs – and 150 other families have been able to buy the residents' former homes.

The Calvert government is expanding the Centenary Affordable Housing Program to provide 2,000 new homes over the next five years. We've also renewed a federal-provincial home repair program to provide more than \$20 million during the next three years for renovations to older homes. The program will support low-income home owners, facilitate easier home access for seniors and persons with disabilities, upgrade affordable rentals for families and students, and support emergency accommodation for victims of family violence.

New Democrats will introduce a Quality Housing Registry – providing assistance for tenants and incentives for landlords to improve the quality of low-income rental housing.

Ensuring homes for all helps improve the quality of life for Saskatchewan families, but the benefits don't end there. The New Democrat commitment to affordable housing means more jobs and business opportunities in Saskatchewan's expanding economy.

Increase the minimum wage regularly to keep up with the cost of living

For the lowest-income earners in our province, especially women and young people, the minimum wage provides crucial protection. It's one of the ways we ensure that people can count on being treated fairly in the workplace.

The Sask Party complains bitterly every time the minimum wage rises. Elwin Hermanson has said a lower minimum wage would be good for young people. In keeping with extreme Sask Party views, he also said an increase could devastate the Saskatchewan economy – the same economy that took Saskatchewan job totals to an all-time high after we increased the minimum wage.

Lorne Calvert's New Democrats believe everyone is entitled to the same guarantee of decent treatment. We'll regularly review the minimum wage rate, and keep it from being eroded by a rising cost of living. And we won't introduce a two-tier system that discriminates against young people and new employees.

Make the most of our vibrant voluntary sector

One reason the quality-of-life is better and cost-of-living is more affordable in Saskatchewan than elsewhere is the community work done by thousands of volunteers. Saskatchewan enjoys the highest level of voluntary activity in Canada with volunteers undertaking fitness and recreation activities, cultural events and services, community development projects and charitable work.

We're working closely with the voluntary sector to increase support and recognition for their work. We passed legislation this year protecting board members of non-profit groups from liability for actions done in good faith. We've increased the funding from lotteries and casino profits that supports thousands of community groups across the province.

Volunteers are now leading preparations to mark Saskatchewan's Centennial in 2005. Through the Community Initiatives Fund, casino proceeds are providing grants to improve community facilities and organize events to mark 2005, our Centennial Year.

We're committed to continuing the Voluntary Sector Initiative, helping volunteer groups build capacity and develop leadership.

Manage the provincial budget prudently

When the NDP was elected, Saskatchewan was deeply mired in deficits and debt. That's changed dramatically. Today, according to the Dominion Bond Rating Service, we have Canada's second-lowest debt as a percentage of GDP.

The key has been carefully managing public expenditures, fostering economic growth and – in years of higher than usual income – setting funds aside for the province’s Fiscal Stabilization Fund. For example, we identified surplus revenues for the fund in 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 and drew funds down to meet expenses in 2001-2002 – prudent, practical management.

The Sask Party doesn’t support the idea of a Fiscal Stabilization Fund. In 2000, they demanded that we spend the surplus immediately instead of creating the Fund. Now, they criticize the government for using the Fund to protect Saskatchewan’s finances from the ups and downs of revenues.

Their stand is irresponsible. But it pales in comparison to the damage the Sask Party’s deep, reckless tax cuts would do to the provincial budget – the kind of record-high deficits and drastic service cuts that B.C. has had to endure under identical policies.

That’s not the Saskatchewan way. Lorne Calvert’s New Democrats will continue to provide balanced government – making Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live and raise a family in Canada.

Economic experts agree: Saskatchewan’s taxes and finances are in solid shape

“...the province has made significant strides in improving its personal income tax system, to the point where it has one of the most competitive personal income tax regimes in the country.”

Bank of Montreal, March 2003

“Saskatchewan’s personal income tax reform was fully implemented at the beginning of 2003, and will save provincial taxpayers an estimated \$78 million this year.”

Scotiabank Group, March 2003

“Saskatchewan continued an impressive streak of balanced budgets in 2002/03. Despite a drought-related decline in GDP, own source revenues soared, negating the need for a planned withdrawal from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.”

CIBC, March 2003

“Over the past seven years, Saskatchewan has been a leader in Canada in turning around its fiscal house – achieving sharp reductions in both its debt and personal tax burdens. This continued to pay off handsomely in 2002, when Moody’s Investor Services raised Saskatchewan’s credit rating for the third time since 1998, to A3.”

TD Bank, February 2003

Our commitment to provide the best public health care **in Canada**



Our commitment to provide the best public health care in Canada

Perhaps Saskatchewan's greatest contribution to Canada has been universal medicare – public health care based upon need, not the ability to pay. Pioneered by the NDP, medicare today helps define our Canadian values and quality of life.

We're proud of that achievement, but we also know that Saskatchewan families are counting on us to constantly improve the quality of health care in our province. That's why Lorne Calvert's New Democrats are implementing Saskatchewan's comprehensive *Action Plan for Health Care*. We're leading the country in implementing the Romanow Commission on Health Care recommendations, with innovative new approaches to get the best care possible from every dollar we invest.

Lorne Calvert and the NDP understand the importance of tackling the challenges facing our medical health system. But we also know how vital it is to also address family health – including the quality of life and security of our communities. Our commitment is to provide the best public health care in Canada.

Keep our health care publicly-funded, publicly-administered and premium-free

Lorne Calvert has made the New Democrat position clear: no health care premiums and no privatization of our publicly funded and publicly administered health care system.

Public funding and administration are our best guarantee of accountability and responsiveness. They help ensure that every possible resource goes to improving the health of Saskatchewan families.

The Sask Party's plan to open the doors of health care to for-profit companies would take us dangerously close to U.S.-style two-tier care, where the care you get depends on how much you can afford to spend. New Democrats are committed to Saskatchewan values: quality health care for everyone.

Reduce waiting lists for surgery and diagnostic tests

When you need medical care, you deserve to have it as soon as medically necessary. The Calvert government is helping to make sure that happens with a strategy to reduce waiting lists.

The number of operating room cases performed in Saskatoon and Regina in 2002-03 increased by about 1,900 over the previous year. Emergency surgery occurs without delay, and we're working to reduce waiting times for other surgeries.

We're implementing the *Action Plan for Health Care* to ensure that Saskatchewan surpasses North American waiting times standards. We've shortened waiting lists by more than 1,300 during the past year, made possible in part by boosting the MRC capacity from 5,000 annual exams to more than 12,000.

To further reduce surgery waiting times, we will:

- **provide new diagnostic and treatment equipment during the next four years – including additional CT scanners, dialysis units and linear accelerators**
- **train and recruit additional technologists and other medical personnel**
- **implement a province-wide surgical patient registry developed by Saskatchewan's Surgical Care Network. Building on a successful pilot project in the Moose Jaw region, the registry will ensure fairness in scheduling, increase coordination of facilities and personnel, and provide more information to waiting patients**
- **ensure provincial Surgical Care Coordinators (and Quality Care Coordinators in each regional health authority) are accessible by phone and in person to respond to patient concerns**

Innovate and improve frontline care

We're using proven approaches and innovative new ideas to make the care you get the best it can be.

One of the most promising improvements in frontline health care in Canada is the development of one-stop *primary care clinics*. We're working with doctors, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals to establish these comprehensive clinics throughout the province. They provide integrated diagnosis, testing, education, counselling and in-clinic treatment services – improving the quality, accessibility and personalization of health care for each citizen.

We've helped establish 24 primary care clinics to date. Over the next five years, we will extend coverage to at least 50% of Saskatchewan's population – rising to 100 % within the next decade.

Frontline care includes Saskatchewan's *Telehealth* network, using state-of-the-art video links for patient and doctor consultation with specialists – reducing the need for travel to Regina and Saskatoon. *Telehealth* also enables more health professionals to participate in province-wide training seminars. We'll double the number of *Telehealth* centres from 13 to 26 communities.

Saskatchewan recognizes the importance of home care. The provincial home care budget has been increased by 40 % since 1999, allowing the province to fund 92 % of the costs for providing services to 30,000 citizens. We will continue to strengthen home care, including the addition of mental health services.

Home care recipients now participate in recruiting and scheduling their own care providers. And 7,000 residents of seniors' housing projects in more than 70 communities now have access to *Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services (SALS)*, providing housekeeping, nutritional meals and recreation activities.

Saskatchewan's new *HealthLine* gives residents access to registered nurses by telephone – seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It's already proving to be a popular and valuable service.

Emergency response services are being strengthened. Ninety-seven percent of Saskatchewan's population can now rely on 9-1-1 emergency phone service, which will soon be available in Lloydminster and far northern communities.

We're providing more training for the paramedics who staff our ambulance services. We've put two new air ambulance aircraft into service.

We've increased coverage under Saskatchewan's provincial drug plan to include many new drug products and diabetic supplies. We've also added nutritional supplements for people who have to use them as their primary source of nourishment.

The Calvert government has increased support for health research by 40% to more than \$7 million each year, overseen by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation. Funding has also been committed to the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre, led by the First Nations University of Canada.

Saskatchewan also has Canada's first Health Quality Council, undertaking on-going evaluation of our health care system and developing innovative ways to improve health care quality.

Train and recruit more health care professionals

During the past four years, the number of health care professionals working in Saskatchewan has increased by more than 500. We also have more than 130 new physicians. That's an achievement Saskatchewan can be proud of... but there's more work to do to ensure we have the trained professionals we need now and in the years to come.

Many health care providers continue to face demanding workloads. As well, some of our health care workers are in the baby boomer generation that is beginning to retire. And as the Canadian population ages, the demand for health care services will rise.

That's why the Calvert government is increasing the number of training opportunities for registered nurses – an increase of 120% from 1999. Last year, we added 40 new training positions in Prince Albert. During the next two years, we're adding 100 more in Saskatoon and Regina, increasing the annual enrolment in Saskatchewan's Nursing Education Program to 400 students.

We've doubled capacity in the practical nursing program. And during the next two years, 16 more training positions will be added through the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies.

This year, the Calvert government is providing a record 500 bursaries to Saskatchewan nursing and other health professional students in return for a commitment to apply their new skills in the province. We'll increase that number to 600 health bursaries every year – a \$5 million annual

Persons with disabilities

Frontline health care is especially important to Saskatchewan people who have serious disabilities.

Many citizens with significant disabilities are now living independently, actively participating in the economic and social life of our communities. The Calvert government has helped achieve that independence by:

- **providing assistance to undertake renovations that provide easier access for people with disabilities**
- **introducing caregiver and disability income tax credits**
- **expanding employment services (including training and supports for employers) to assist people with disabilities to become part of Saskatchewan's labour force**
- **extending supplementary health benefits for people with disabilities who become employed**
- **providing more than \$3 million each year to municipal governments to improve para transit services**

In consultation with the Council on Disability Issues, we're committed to continuing implementation of Saskatchewan's Disability Action Plan. We'll help foster independence by continuing to expand home care services and by strengthening the Saskatchewan Aids for Independent Living program. And we'll improve respite services for families caring for relatives with severe disabilities.

investment in our young people and in the future of health care.

We're working with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to implement a three-year, \$120 million program to strengthen rural and specialist medical services. The program includes emergency and replacement services, grants to establish rural practices, funding for specialist training, and innovation in attracting, training and supporting physicians in Saskatchewan.

And we're working with the University of Saskatchewan to renew and expand the College of Medicine. It's an investment that will enable the university to increase training programs for future physicians and medical specialists.

The new Health Sciences Complex, to be built at the university, will create Canada's most modern centre for health sciences training and research. It will help attract and retain Canada's best medical instructors and scientists. We want the Complex to house a national centre for excellence and innovation in rural, northern and Aboriginal health care – areas of medicine in which Saskatchewan has become a national leader.

Improve health care facilities across the province

Quality health care often depends on quality facilities. And we've embarked on a major renewal of Saskatchewan's hospitals and other facilities to ensure all Saskatchewan residents have access to quality acute and long-term care.

New and renovated hospitals, care homes, health centres or integrated facilities have recently been completed in communities such as Carrot River, La Loche, Melfort, Melville, Spiritwood, Stony Rapids-Black Lake, and Unity.

New projects are already underway or in the detailed planning stage in 15 regional centres across the province. The Calvert government is currently working with regional health authorities and local communities across the province to construct:

- **replacement health centres in Swift Current, Outlook, Humboldt and Moosomin**
- **Fort Qu'Appelle's new hospital, being built in co-operation with First Nations' health care agencies in the region**
- **a new 93-bed long-term care and multi-use facility in Yorkton**
- **a new health care and school complex in Île à la Crosse**
- **Tatagwa View, Weyburn's 135-bed long term care and multi-use complex**
- **a new health centre in Cumberland House**
- **a long-term care addition to the Assiniboia Hospital**
- **new hemodialysis units in North Battleford and Moose Jaw**
- **new and expanded integrated health care centres in Preeceville and Maidstone**
- **expanded emergency and critical care facilities at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon**
- **new maternal and neonatal intensive care facilities at the Regina General Hospital**

The new Health Sciences Complex at the University of Saskatchewan will provide an important complement to these new and improved facilities, offering state-of-the-art training and research.

Together, these projects represent an investment in quality health care for the future. It's an investment that would be doomed under Elwin Hermanson's scheme to implement unsustainable tax cuts. But thanks to the Calvert government's balanced approach, we can ensure that Saskatchewan's provincial and regional health care facilities are second to none in Canada.

Increase early diagnosis and disease prevention

Disease prevention and early diagnosis are essential to quality health care. They help maintain the health and well-being of our population, as well as avoiding expensive illness and treatment down the road. That's why the Calvert government has been:

- **expanding screening programs for breast cancer, cervical cancer and bone-density**
- **increasing diabetes education and treatment programs**
- **promoting pre-natal education and parenting programs for young mothers**
- **taking on the big tobacco companies to help reduce tobacco addiction among young people**

During the next term, we will increase fetal alcohol education programs and expand children's immunization programs to include meningitis and chicken pox.

As part of a provincial diabetes strategy, we'll develop regional teams to provide more intensive diabetes prevention and management supports.

Based on the successful physical activity program developed in Saskatoon (where a 13% increase in activity was achieved between 1999 and 2002), the province-wide *In Motion* physical activity and fitness program was launched this year. The program is being undertaken in co-operation with regional health authorities and recreation associations. It's geared to increase physical activity by at least 10 % by the end of our Centennial Year in 2005.

We'll extend the *In Motion* program beyond 2005. It's one of several fitness initiatives being developed by the provincial and federal governments as part of a national Healthy Living Strategy for Canada. We'll carefully monitor, research and report on our success in helping Saskatchewan people improve their fitness and health.

Provide the services and support to foster family health

Medical care is a big factor in keeping families healthy – but it's still only part of the picture. Employment, a safe workplace, a secure community, and child care all play an important role in ensuring family well-being.

That's why the NDP takes a balanced approach to government: developing the economy, providing quality education and health care, addressing crime and the causes of crime, and working with community organizations to provide family support programs.

Building independence; Caring for kids: Giving our children the best possible start in life is an important investment in our kids and our province. Early childhood development programs such as *Kids First* and expansion of pre-Kindergarten and Community Schools are a priority for New Democrats.

Child care services are vitally important for many parents. We'll provide 1,200 new licensed child care spaces – supporting a total of more than 8,600 spaces across the province. And we will work with parents to expand child care services and choices that can better meet the particular needs of their children and their families.

We've increased child care subsidies for low-income parents – helping them participate in the workforce by ensuring affordable care is available for their children.

Child care support is just one element of Saskatchewan's *Building Independence* program, which has assisted many families to end their dependency on social assistance and become a part of our growing economy. In fact, during the past decade, the number of children dependent on social assistance has dropped 40 per cent. The actual social assistance caseload has dropped by 28% – including more than 7,000 families.

The Saskatchewan Employment Supplement and the Saskatchewan Child Benefit have supported this remarkable achievement in building independence. As well, the Family Health Benefit provides assistance to low-income families in meeting prescription and dental costs. These programs – together with training and employment placement services – are helping thousands of parents join the workforce to improve their family living standards. They are part of the Calvert government's commitment to build the future for Saskatchewan families.

Balancing workplace and family needs: In Saskatchewan, our strong work ethic includes having the country's lowest rate of employee turnover. During the last decade, we posted the biggest increase in productivity of any province in Canada. People in Saskatchewan work hard to support their families... but they work just as hard to balance their jobs with their home lives.

We want to do what we can to make that work easier. We've increased maternity and parental leave rights to ensure job protection when parents access employment insurance benefits. We've boosted the minimum wage. We've extended coverage under provincial labour standards regulations.

This year we're adding six occupational health and safety inspection officers to increase workplace safety and inspections and to reduce workplace injuries.

Consistent with new federal legislation, we'll ensure Saskatchewan workers can provide compassionate care for a gravely ill or dying child, parent or spouse without putting their jobs and income at risk. Employees will be eligible to draw up to six weeks of employment insurance benefits.

New Democrats can be counted on to find the right balance in meeting family and workplace needs – creating an environment that will attract and protect working people in our growing economy.

Safe and secure communities: Healthy families need healthy communities to live in. Since 2000, we've provided additional funding to municipalities and the RCMP for more than 140 of 200 new police officer positions being created in Saskatchewan. We've achieved the highest police officer to population ratio in western Canada.

We've also given police and social workers the tools to eliminate the abuse of children and youth in the sex trade. We're hitting hard at those who would exploit children and we're providing new safe houses and counseling services for victims of abuse.

Building on the success of the Regina auto theft strategy and the North Battleford youth crime project, the Calvert government will continue to partner with the RCMP and municipal police forces to develop innovative crime reduction strategies. We'll help police officers and justice officials use the tools of the Youth Criminal Justice Act to target and get tough with chronic offenders.

But New Democrats recognize that crime reduction is not just a policing issue. Reducing poverty, providing childhood development programs and expanding training and employment opportunities are important measures that can help prevent crime and some of its causes – and ensure every neighbourhood is a safe, healthy place to live.

**Our commitment to
build a green
and prosperous
economy**



Our commitment to build a green and prosperous economy

Poised to lead the country in economic growth this year, Saskatchewan is creating more opportunities than ever before.

For the first time ever, we achieved more than 500,000 jobs this year. We've recorded 16 straight months of job growth. And our economy is diversifying. Since 1999, our province has created almost 29,000 non-agriculture jobs.

Manufacturing in Saskatchewan has more than doubled in the past decade. Information technology now employs more than 10,000 people. The oil and gas sector alone is in the process of creating 4,000 new jobs. Since 1998, forestry companies have invested a billion dollars in expansion – and the Calvert government is ready to launch the next phase of our forestry development strategy with a new focus on value-added forest products.

Business is growing in many other sectors – mining, financial services, food processing, specialty crops, livestock production, cultural industries, tourism and more.

We've started to implement Saskatchewan's Green Agenda – the largest package of environment protection initiatives ever undertaken in our province. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats are demonstrating that responsible environmental stewardship and innovation in green technology go hand in hand with a healthy, growing economy.

We're building a green and prosperous economy for Saskatchewan. Here's our plan to keep that economy growing.

Expand green energy

Saskatchewan has become a world leader in implementing alternate energy development. We're expanding wind power, implementing new co-generation projects, mandating the use of Saskatchewan-produced ethanol in fuel and investing in technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

With two commercial wind power projects successfully introduced in Saskatchewan last year, it's time to move forward. Over the next four years, we will increase SaskPower wind power generation almost ten-fold – from

17 megawatts to 150 megawatts. That's enough emission-free power to meet the needs of 73,000 homes.

Small-scale projects hold tremendous promise for clean, green energy. SaskPower is kick-starting environmentally friendly biomass and small-scale power generation projects across Saskatchewan to help meet our future energy needs while reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Our green energy plans will make Saskatchewan Canada's leading producer of ethanol fuel. The development of ethanol goes hand in hand with our expanding livestock industry – using ethanol by-products as feed. After weathering the twin challenges of BSE and non-stop Sask Party negativity, both of these industries are ready to expand and create new opportunities for our province.

Support environmental protection and energy conservation

While we bring in new lower-emission energy sources, we're also directly reducing the effect of greenhouse gases. SaskPower's forest sequestration project will plant five million additional seedlings in our northern forests, generating 22 million tonnes of carbon dioxide offsets. It's the first initiative of its kind to win national endorsement in Canada.

And the Calvert government has helped 20,000 Saskatchewan farmers convert over 1,000,000 acres of marginal cropland to perennial forage. We will continue the Conservation Cover Program, creating carbon "sinks" that capture carbon dioxide while supporting the expansion of livestock production. We'll press Ottawa to provide payment to Saskatchewan producers in recognition of the significant greenhouse gas credits that Canada will receive for these sinks.

Conserving energy reduces costs for consumers, businesses, communities and governments. It also reduces the emission of greenhouse gases that can affect climate change. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats are ready to implement a new generation of energy conservation measures to benefit both our economy and our environment.

Helping businesses and communities conserve: SaskPower's Energy Solutions program has demonstrated that commercial and institutional users can often fund energy efficiency improvements through energy savings. SaskPower is applying that same self-funding model to community facilities through a pilot project with the communities of Lanigan and Watrous. A similar approach is being taken by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to retrofit senior citizens housing projects.

We will extend the Energy Solutions program to local governments, First Nations and health authorities across Saskatchewan. And, using nationally developed EnerGuide energy conservation audits, we'll implement a low-cost loan program to help individual homeowners undertake retrofits that will similarly save energy and pay for themselves. The provincial program will be designed to help homeowners take advantage of federal grants associated with EnerGuide retrofits.

Promoting conservation close to home: We're working with the Saskatchewan Homebuilders' Association to increase awareness of the benefits of using R-2000 energy efficient construction techniques for new homes. We'll

increase R-2000 promotion. We'll also exceed national energy-use construction standards for all building projects undertaken by the provincial government.

We'll explore and support other innovative approaches to increase energy conservation in home and business construction.

Since 2001 SaskEnergy has arranged low-interest loans for more than 7,000 Saskatchewan homes to acquire new energy-efficient natural gas furnaces and hot water heaters. The program has been a partnership with more than 130 natural gas appliance retailers across the province.

We will continue to encourage the use of energy efficient appliances – using the internationally recognized Energy Star standard. We will remove the provincial sales tax from all refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers and clothes washers that meet the Energy Star standard retroactive to October 1, 2003.

Protecting our environment: Lorne Calvert's Green Agenda is ambitious but achievable and responsible.

It includes:

- **completing the implementation of Saskatchewan's Safe Drinking Water Strategy**
- **undertaking additional monitoring of rural soil and water quality**
- **working with municipalities to continue the development of regional landfills and reclamation of abandoned hazardous sites**
- **testing biodigestion technology as a means of generating energy while making fertilizer and managing organic wastes and livestock manure**
- **adopting a provincial biodiversity plan – including the protection of unique biosphere sites and the construction of new information centres and viewing sites in support of eco-tourism and environmental education**
- **demanding federal participation in the clean-up of abandoned northern mines that were federally licensed 50 years ago**
- **expanding recycling services through SARCAN**
- **providing opportunities for young people to participate in energy conservation and environmental management through the Green Team, a new student employment program**

Create an even more competitive business environment

Thanks to Saskatchewan's *Wide Open* campaign, businesses around the world have learned about our province's economic opportunities, low operating costs and skilled work force. We're a great place to do business and create jobs – and we're about to become even better.

Tax cuts for small business: The NDP has implemented carefully planned, sustainable personal and business income tax reductions. In 2001, we cut the small business income tax from 8% to 6%, and boosted qualifying levels of business income from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

Now we plan to make another reduction: a sustainable cut to 5% by January 2005. And during the next term, we'll increase the qualifying annual income to \$400,000.

These changes build on a powerful Saskatchewan advantage: no payroll tax and, unlike Alberta, no medicare premiums. And our support for small-scale business goes beyond tax reductions. We'll continue to back Regional Economic Development Authorities, Neighbourhood Development Associations, Small Business Loan Associations and the Northern Development Fund.

We're also working with the private sector to establish the Saskatchewan Entrepreneurial Foundation. A board of successful Saskatchewan business people will govern the foundation. It will provide professional advice and mentorship to assist entrepreneurs in start-up and growth stages of their companies. It will also encourage venture capital investment in new and expanding enterprises.

Increasing resource sector production: Our targeted royalty and tax reductions will continue to encourage new oil, gas and mineral exploration and production. Here's what they've achieved so far:

- a 25% increase in mineral exploration
- an increase of more than 30% in oil and gas drilling this year
- expanded potash production
- the potential development of a diamond industry

Encouraging capital investment: We've encouraged Saskatchewan-based corporations to increase capital investment by raising the provincial corporate capital tax exemption from \$10 million to \$15 million. That exemption will reach as high as \$20 million by 2005.

In contrast with the wild tax promises of the Sask Party, the Calvert government's tax and royalty reductions are affordable and sustainable. They've been designed to stimulate expansion and diversification of our economy – ensuring that provincial government revenues will continue to be available to support our social programs and quality of life.

Promoting business investment: We've announced the creation of Investment Saskatchewan – consolidating major provincial government investments and creating a larger pool of private and co-operative sector funds for investment in our economy. Managed by an independent board of business leaders, Investment Saskatchewan will partner with private companies to support industrial expansion – generating profits for investors and jobs for the economy.

We'll also build on the success of the *Wide Open* campaign, launching a new phase to attract specific investors to targeted sectors of our economy.

Supporting venture capital initiatives: We'll continue tax credit incentives to encourage investment in Saskatchewan's labour-sponsored venture capital corporations, which have invested \$42 million in 24 Saskatchewan companies during the past two years.

We'll maintain our support for other venture capital funds that focus on Saskatchewan. We're currently working with private investors and Saskatchewan credit unions in building the Prairie Ventures Fund – providing \$60 million for investment in Saskatchewan companies over the next five years.

We'll work with private-sector partners to create a new equity fund to invest in business and industrial enterprises undertaken in partnership with First Nations, Métis and northern companies and communities. Targeted investment capital will help increase northern and Aboriginal participation in our expanding economy.

Promoting international trade: With 73% of our economy involving international trade, Saskatchewan is Canada's most active trading province. One reason for our leadership: the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, created by the NDP in 1996. With more than 300 Saskatchewan companies as members, STEP is successfully tapping new export markets – assisting Saskatchewan companies and agricultural producers to identify international trade opportunities. We will continue this important partnership and increase promotion of Saskatchewan products in the international marketplace.

Giving business more e-services: The Saskatchewan Electronic Tax Service allows companies to use the Internet to file and pay PST and fees collected from their customers. We've simplified income tax calculations and deleted surcharges. New online features such as Freelaw, Saskbiz and sasktenders.ca give our businesses access to government information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We'll continue developing eGovernment services to make access to information and ease of reporting more "e-efficient" for Saskatchewan business.

Fostering young entrepreneurs: We're proud of Saskatchewan's entrepreneurial spirit – especially the new generation of enterprising young people making their mark in our province's economy. They've earned our support as they develop new enterprises that will contribute to our expanding provincial economy.

We'll ensure Saskatchewan's business information centres and online services are responsive to the business interests of young people. And we'll launch YES – the Young Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan program. The program, administered through existing Small Business Loan Associations across the province, will target \$5 million in loans for companies whose principals are under 30.

Ensuring a skilled workforce: As new opportunities arise, we will ensure that Saskatchewan's working people have the skills they need – and that our businesses can continue to count on the most dedicated, talented workforce in the country. That's especially important if we want to avert a labour shortage as a growing number of workers retire over the next ten to 15 years.

Saskatchewan's young First Nations and Métis population gives our province an advantage in meeting future labour force requirements. We believe in making the most of that advantage. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will double resources for Saskatchewan's successful Aboriginal Employment Development Program – creating partnership agreements with employers to increase First Nations and Métis participation in the workforce. All of Saskatchewan's regional health authorities have signed agreements under the program. As a result, those agencies employ more than 1,400 First Nations and Métis people – a number that is steadily increasing.

Even with Saskatchewan's growing Aboriginal workforce, our province will need to attract more skilled immigrants to meet future employment demands. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will implement a long-term inter-provincial and international strategy to welcome new participants in the province's growing economy.

We're boosting the number of immigrants who are bringing investment and professional expertise to Saskatchewan. We'll welcome 200 economic immigrants, and their family members, to our province next year under the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program. That's up from only 25 in 2001. We've added a Farm Owner-Operator category to encourage new investment in the diversification of our agriculture industry. The initial 14 nominees in this category have made average land purchases of \$655,000 each.

Increased research and development

Saskatchewan's international leadership in research and development is creating jobs throughout our province – not only in high technology, but in every economic sector.

The new Canadian Light Source Synchrotron at the University of Saskatchewan – the only such facility in Canada and the largest Canadian scientific project in a generation – is providing a new focus for our province's research sector. Saskatchewan will bring the Synchrotron online early in 2004, and expand the commercial, medical and public-sector research investment it's already attracting from across Canada and abroad.

Saskatoon's Synchrotron is the latest of our province's world-class research facilities, including:

- **Regina's Research Park (including the Petroleum Technology Research Centre)**
- **innovation Place in Saskatoon**
- **the Forest Development Centre under construction in Prince Albert, and**
- **the Saskatchewan Research Council**

We created Saskatchewan's Innovation and Science Fund, which has sparked a major increase in commercial and federal government research in the province – particularly at our universities. We'll renew and expand the fund and ensure that Saskatchewan is a world leader in research related to agriculture, industrial innovation, health and the environment.

We're investing in new technology that has the potential to reduce coal-fired emissions to the same level as electricity produced from natural gas. And we're working with the oil and gas industry and federal government at the International Test Centre for Carbon Dioxide Capture at the University of Regina. The Centre's studies – and field projects being undertaken in the Weyburn area – hold promise for technology that both disposes of CO₂ and assists in the production of natural gas.

Strengthen rural development

Agriculture and our rural communities have long been the backbone of Saskatchewan's economy. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats are committed to strengthening development throughout rural Saskatchewan providing a helping hand for farm families and helping rural communities diversify and grow.

Lorne Calvert and Clay Serby have worked with Saskatchewan farmers and helped them deal with drought, BSE and unfair international trade subsidies. They successfully convinced the federal government to provide an additional \$1.2 billion in transition funding to Canadian farmers over two years to address the issue of trade injury. \$360 million of that funding will go to Saskatchewan producers.

We're demanding a longer-term federal commitment to address trade injury compensation as part of the proposed five-year national Agriculture Policy Framework – the APF. We want provisions for inflation included in APF funding. And we want federal support for BSE compensation beyond the use of APF funds. We need co-operation from Ottawa – not coercion – to address international trade issues and to make the APF fair and workable for Canadian farmers.

Since 1999, we've averaged more than \$520 million each year in expenditures and tax exemptions for Saskatchewan farmers, ensuring support for agriculture as a core element of our economy.

That investment has paid off. Our farmers have been leaders in introducing new crops and expanding production for the growing organic market. Many new value-added processing plants have been established in rural areas. Since 1999, the number of hogs marketed has increased by 30%. Poultry production is up 75%. With the U.S. border beginning to re-open, we're getting our beef production plan back on target. We're already home to more than 25% of the Canadian beef herd.

Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will encourage that expansion to continue. We will:

- **increase production of higher-value crops by expanding irrigation facilities**
- **strengthen support for the production and marketing of organic crops and products**
- **promote the growth of livestock production and marketing of organic crops and produce**
- **support crop insurance and risk management programs**
- **continue to place priority on agricultural research and development**
- **introduce a Bridging Generations program, assisting farmers to take advantage of the Farm Credit corporation's intergenerational farmland financing program**
- **continue the Farm Family Opportunities Initiative – assisting individual farm families with professional advice and grant funds to pursue on-farm and off-farm diversification, training and employment opportunities**

Promote growth and diversification in the North

Saskatchewan's northern economy is entering an exciting new era.

The Calvert government has provided new incentives for mineral exploration and development. Along with the new Cigar Lake mine, these incentives will lead to expansion of the northern mining industry – an industry that is providing many northern jobs and business opportunities.

Forestry is expanding with northern communities and First Nations directly participating in the management of Crown forest resources. The forestry industry has invested a billion dollars in Saskatchewan during the past five years. Forestry training programs are ensuring that northerners will be able to take advantage of growth in the industry. The next phase of the province's forestry development strategy will focus on the production of new value-added wood products.

Commercial fishing in northern Saskatchewan is on the rise. The Calvert government has worked with fishing co-ops to improve lakeside fish handling facilities. Those co-ops have now developed plans for a new fish processing plant that will also increase the economic benefits from Saskatchewan's revitalized commercial fishing industry.

Improved roads (including support for a new east-west link between northwest Saskatchewan and northeast Alberta), expanded cellular phone and high speed internet service in the North, and a \$30-million northern water and sewer program are improving community services and supporting economic development. The Northern Development Fund, combined with a new equity investment fund that will be targeted to First Nations, Métis and northern companies, will add increased momentum to the expansion and diversification of Saskatchewan's northern economy – from construction to tourism.

Build infrastructure to support economic growth

A modern economy relies on transportation, energy, communications and water infrastructure. Saskatchewan's investments in these areas have proven to be a key economic advantage – and we'll continue to make infrastructure a priority.

Paving the way for opportunity: Our highways – Canada's largest road network – are vital to our economic growth. During the past three years, we've invested a record \$900 million to upgrade our highway network. Road improvements have been completed or are underway in every corner of the province.

The Calvert government has rapidly advanced Saskatchewan's major highway twinning projects, completing Highway #1 to the Alberta border this year. Highway #1 to the Manitoba border and #16 to the Alberta border will be completed within the next three years.

But that is only the beginning. We will invest a minimum of \$1.2 billion over the next four years to continue our massive highways program. It's the most ambitious highway construction and improvement ever in Saskatchewan.

We'll work with Area Transportation Planning Committees to set regional priorities. We'll strengthen key trade corridors and upgrade "heavy haul" routes used for forestry, oil and gas development, and grain hauling. We'll continue the development of our northern road network. We'll build on our successful partnerships with industry and municipalities, including assistance for community airports. And we'll help tackle the major projects that face our growing cities and continue to resurface hundreds of kilometers of road each year.

Expanding digital access: Opportunity rides on the electronic highway as well, and Saskatchewan is a world leader in providing high-speed Internet to its citizens. Today, 74% of Saskatchewan people can access high-speed Internet.

In co-operation with SaskTel, we will launch a new phase of our award-winning CommunityNet program – this time using wireless technology. The expanded program will provide coverage to 86% of Saskatchewan's population. Every community with more than 200 people will be covered by wireless high-speed Internet.

That's 159 more communities – including the North, another 1,500 Saskatchewan businesses, and farmsteads within a 30-kilometer radius of these communities. As a result, people living in communities from Onion Lake to Ogema, Regina to Riverside Estates will be able to enjoy the same access to high-speed Internet.

And this year, more than 90% of Saskatchewan's population will have access to SaskTel's digital cellular phone network, completely overlaying the analog network. SaskTel will continue to develop technology and solutions to further extend cellular service.

Renewing our energy and communication infrastructure: SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SaskTel will invest \$2 billion in Saskatchewan over the next four years to renew and expand our energy and communications infrastructure – including further extensions of natural gas service to the North. In the process, these Crown corporations will directly contribute to the provincial economy through the business and employment opportunities they create.

Ensuring safe drinking water: Lorne Calvert's New Democrats understand how important safe, clean drinking water is to Saskatchewan's families. We're increasing funding for municipal infrastructure with a priority on ensuring safe water supply and distribution systems. Working with SUMA and SARM, we'll develop a long-term provincial strategy – including regional water distribution systems – to provide communities and industry with assured sources of clean water.

Our Crowns – Saskatchewan-owned and operated

Saskatchewan's Crown corporations give Saskatchewan's economy a significant advantage. Every day, SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SGI provide outstanding service and affordable rates for businesses and families across the province. Companies such as STC and the Crop Insurance Corporation are particularly critical to our rural economy.

These Saskatchewan companies ensure that Saskatchewan's interests come first. They also help drive our economy. They partner with more than 600 private business agents. They provide 9,500 head office and field jobs and do business with 12,000 private Saskatchewan companies. They offer terrific career opportunities for Saskatchewan young people. They contribute to community and charitable projects. Their profits help pay for public services.

Elwin Hermanson and the Sask Party would handcuff our Crown corporations or sell them outright to their out-of-province backers. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats won't let that happen. We know that our Crowns helped build this province – and we want to keep them working for you.

**Our commitment to
build the future
here for
young people**



Our commitment to build the future here for young people

Every young person in Saskatchewan deserves the promise of a bright future – one where hard work and talent can take them as high as they want to go.

We're working to ensure young people have every opportunity to succeed and prosper. And young people, in turn, are making the most of those opportunities. Saskatchewan has the lowest high school dropout rate in Canada. The percentage of Saskatchewan young people enrolled in university is higher than any other western province.

Meanwhile, our economy is expanding and diversifying. Saskatchewan has set record employment levels in 2003 – more than 500,000 jobs for the first time in our history. As the baby boomer generation begins to retire and the need for more health professionals grows, thousands of new job opportunities are being created.

Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will keep looking for new ways to help our province's youth succeed, and to ensure the brightest opportunities are right here. We'll continue to build the future here for young people.

Help young people develop their careers in Saskatchewan

We know how important it is to encourage Saskatchewan students to develop their careers right here at home. That's why we've developed a plan to provide the incentives that will allow them to do just that: *CareerStart*.

CareerStart will:

- **introduce a \$1,000 provincial income tax rebate to all post-secondary graduates employed in Saskatchewan in the year after they receive their diploma or certificate¹**
- **provide a one-year, interest-free grace period for graduating students to establish their careers in Saskatchewan before having to begin student loan repayment**
- **offer 600 bursaries for students taking health care studies with a commitment to apply their skills in Saskatchewan**

1 Applies to persons who have completed an accredited program of eight months duration or more and are resident in Saskatchewan December 31 of the following year.

Give young people the skills and tools they need

CareerStart will also help young people get the training and education they need in a changing economy. We will:

- **create 5,400 new training opportunities through increased funding to SIAST, regional colleges and the Apprenticeship Commission – a one third boost in the number of skills training, apprenticeship and basic education programs**
- **expand co-op education programs in Saskatchewan, providing new “earn while you learn” opportunities for students. Tax credits of up to \$1,000 will help private-sector employers provide job opportunities related to students’ fields of study**
- **expand the Saskatchewan Bursary Program by increasing eligibility and bursary amounts – reducing student loan debt for more than 10,000 post-secondary students each year**
- **quadruple the Centennial Merit Scholarship Program, providing particular emphasis on assistance for graduate students to achieve advanced post-secondary education**

Saskatchewan has developed a strong post-secondary network to help young people build their future here at home. It includes our regional colleges, SIAST campuses, universities (including the new First Nations University of Canada) and a revitalized, industry-driven apprenticeship program.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, the U of S Native Law Centre, and the ITEP, SUNTEP and NORTEP teacher training programs make Saskatchewan a leader in northern and Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Private sector training is also part of the mix – from film animation to pilot training.

Lorne Calvert’s government has sparked a major expansion of post-secondary facilities in the province.

We’ve invested in new student residences, expansion of the Education Building, and the new Centre for Kinesiology, Health and Sports at the University of Regina. We’ve provided funding for the Chemical Engineering building, the College Building reconstruction and the new Kinesiology Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. We’ve created a new SIAST campus in Regina and constructed the multi-purpose North West Post-Secondary Centre in Meadow Lake.

Our next post-secondary priorities include on-going improvements to regional college facilities, a new multi-purpose Laboratory Building at the University of Regina, and the Health Sciences Complex at the University of Saskatchewan. The complex will house Canada’s most modern medical colleges and provide facilities for a broad range of health science research.

Expand e-learning, and triple the courses available online

We want Saskatchewan’s young people to have access to advanced technology as they develop their skills and careers. We’ve funded professional and curriculum development to ensure computer technology is part of our K-12 program. Online access is now available in all subject areas required for Grade 12 graduation. Saskatchewan’s post secondary institutions have created

Campus Saskatchewan as the province's on-line window to post-secondary education – providing more than 90 credit courses. High-speed Internet is now available to almost 75% of Saskatchewan's population.

During the next five years, SaskTel will extend high-speed service to every community of 200 population or more – the best rural coverage in the world!

We will double our investment in digital learning supports for K-12 and post-secondary programs – providing our future workforce with advanced information technology skills.

We'll more than triple the number of credit courses available online. Using SaskTel and Community Net high-speed Internet service, we'll enhance distance-learning possibilities across the province and increase the number of university and SIAST classes offered through regional colleges.

Support young entrepreneurs

Some of Saskatchewan's most successful new entrepreneurs are still in school. The energy and ideas of Saskatchewan young people are already helping to expand and diversify our provincial economy.

They deserve all the encouragement we can offer. The Lorne Calvert government will introduce YES – the *Young Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan* program. In addition to sharing information and experiences among young business people, YES will target \$5 million in loan funds to companies whose principals are under 30. The funds will be administered through the province's 269 Small Business Loan Associations, with loan decisions made at the community level.

We'll make sure Saskatchewan's business information centres and our on-line business support websites are in gear to help young entrepreneurs turn their good ideas into new enterprises.

Help a new generation of farmers get established

Saskatchewan's growing agriculture industry is revitalizing rural economies – and young people are helping to lead the way. As the next generation of farmers makes its first investment, we want to be there to help.

The *Bridging Generations* initiative will provide loan guarantees for 10% of the value of land and assets being purchased. This will support the participation of more young people in the Farm Credit corporation's intergenerational farmland program or assist them to arrange financing through other lenders. And we'll encourage young farmers to take advantage of new production and processing opportunities in rural agriculture.

Create new opportunities for student employment

A summer job means a student can help pay for post-secondary education. A *good* summer job means students gain real-world experience they can't find anywhere else. And a *great* summer job lets students get that experience while they make a valuable contribution to the world around them.

That's what the *Green Team* is all about. Starting in 2004, Lorne Calvert's New Democrats will offer this new summer employment program for young people interested in environmental management and energy conservation. Students will undertake energy efficiency audits, participate in park improvements, and

help with environmental reclamation and research projects. The *Green Team* will work with the Office of Energy Conservation, Environment Saskatchewan and community organizations.

We've also introduced the year-round Centennial Student Employment Program that helps place students in jobs that are relevant to their fields of study. The program funds up to 75% of wages and benefits paid for students – providing opportunities for students and employers to consider longer-term employment prospects.

And Saskatchewan's Crown corporations are also expanding student employment and mentorship programs. In many cases, these aren't just one-time jobs – they're relationships with future employees

Keep car insurance affordable

In too many provinces, private car insurance companies are allowed to discriminate against young drivers and charge them sky-high premiums that many just can't afford.

But in Saskatchewan, we have SGI – a Crown corporation that saves young drivers thousands of dollars a year by keeping premiums affordable. Lorne Calvert's government will keep SGI public, and keep your insurance premiums down.

Review and increase the minimum wage

A young person's first job is often one that pays the minimum wage. We'll continue to review the minimum wage and increase it as necessary so that inflation doesn't erode the wage protection many young workers rely on.

We won't do what Sask Party MLAs have suggested, and lower it or even scrap it altogether. And we won't bring in a lower "youth" or "training" minimum wage; we believe young and new employees deserve the same wage protection as everyone else.

Strengthen early childhood and K-12 education

Children in Saskatchewan should get the best possible start in life. Lorne Calvert's New Democrats are committed to working with our schools and communities to ensure every child gets the helping hand they need, and nobody is left behind.

We have:

- **established 98 community schools across the province**
- **created 100 pre-Kindergarten programs**
- **increased supports for children with special learning needs**
- **introduced Kids First – working with school divisions, regional health authorities and First Nation and Métis agencies to provide special support for kids and parents in "at risk" situations**
- **increased our per-student annual investment in our schools by more than 40%**

Now comes the next step: working with communities, educators and health and social development professionals to implement SchoolPLUS province-wide. SchoolPLUS, a concept developed by the Task Force on the Role of the Schools, will increase academic achievement and provide a more integrated approach to the personal development and life skill needs of our students.

We'll continue to expand pre-Kindergarten and programs for children with special learning needs. We'll increase our investment in early childhood development – an investment in the future well-being of our children and our province. We will also expand licensed childcare spaces.

We'll also ensure our K-12 students are supported by good school facilities. Construction projects for new schools and major school renovations are currently planned or underway in many communities across the province, such as: Balgonie, Carnduff, Cabri, Dalmeny, Estevan, Frontier, Île à la Crosse, La Loche, Melville, Moose Jaw, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Warman.

Give young people the opportunity to speak for themselves

We're committed to involving young people in making the decisions that will determine their future.

We've created the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee to help us review current programs, look at new ideas and make specific recommendations that will help build their future in Saskatchewan.

We're increasing representation of young people on provincial government and Crown corporation boards and committees – engaging youth in decision-making, helping develop the next generation of Saskatchewan leaders.

We're investing in education, research, new technology and new career paths – ensuring that Saskatchewan young people are given the tools and the opportunities they need. And we're doing it right here at home.

As our province approaches its Centennial in 2005, we can be confident that young people will be ready to lead a new century of progress – with a bright future here in Saskatchewan.

