

February 19, 2007

**MANUFACTURING WEEK  
PROCLAIMED FEBRUARY 19 TO 25**

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**Winnipeg Company Recognized  
As Exporter of the Year**

The progressive and innovative work being undertaken by the province's manufacturing sector was acknowledged today by Competitiveness, Training and Trade Minister Scott Smith, as he proclaimed Feb. 19 to 25 Manufacturing Week in Manitoba.

"Celebrating Manufacturing Week gives us an opportunity to acknowledge and show our support for this very vital part of Manitoba's economy," said Smith. "Our manufacturing sector is a primary wealth generator and a serious provider of well-paid technical and professional jobs."

The minister noted that manufacturing offers Manitobans, particularly the province's youth, highly-skilled, satisfying careers with the potential for training and advancement. The industry accounts for about 12.5 per cent of the province's gross domestic product and as of January 2007, provided for more than 72,000 jobs across the province.

Latest provincial statistics show manufacturing capital investment during the last year is up 60.8 per cent, compared to 3.4 per cent nationally. In the last 12 months, the number of jobs in the manufacturing sector has increased by 7,000 or 10.7 per cent.

Highlights of the week will be the Manufacturing and Trade Summit, scheduled for the Winnipeg Convention Centre on Thursday, Feb. 22., and the annual gala awards dinner recognizing the successes achieved in the manufacturing sector. The summit is sponsored by the Manitoba Division of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME). CME Manitoba helps provincial manufacturers and exporters become globally competitive by adopting innovative technologies and practices.

"The week will focus on recognizing the role of manufacturing and exporting in our province as well as providing a series of educational and networking events for Manitoba's business leaders and for students – our future business leaders," said Tony van Rosmalen, vice-president, CME Manitoba. "We are thrilled to be launching the Discovery Program that will inspire youth to experience the creative and exciting world of manufacturing."

At the gala awards banquet, Robert Lavery, retired president and CEO of Winpak Ltd., and Joseph Andrew MacDonald, founder of MacDon Industries, will be inducted into the Manufacturers Hall of Fame. Winnipeg's Winpak will be honoured for its work in the manufacturing and exporting sector. The company will be presented with the 2007 CME Manitoba Export Award.

Winpak manufactures and distributes packaging material and machines used for the protection of perishable foods, beverages and health-care products.

“We began our operation in Winnipeg in 1978 and haven’t looked back since,” said Bruce Berry, the chief executive officer of Winpak. “We now operate nine facilities in Canada and the United States and our plant in Winnipeg has grown from 60,000 square feet to more than 450,000 square feet and more than 500 employees.”

“The government of Manitoba continues to work toward strengthening and diversifying Manitoba's economy,” said Science, Technology, Energy and Mines Minister Jim Rondeau. “A vibrant manufacturing sector makes Manitoba a better place to live, work and invest.”