



**BRANDON
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

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Dear Members,

Following our attendance at the Provincial Budget on March 24, 2026, I want to share the Brandon Chamber of Commerce's perspective and what it means for our business community. In advance of the budget, members of the Chamber Executive had the opportunity to meet with Finance Minister Adrien Sala in February. During that discussion, we emphasized the growing economic pressures facing businesses such as; rising costs, tax impacts, global uncertainty, and the importance of strong fiscal management.

After reviewing the 2026–27 Provincial Budget, there are several elements worth noting.

The government's focus on affordability is clear. Measures such as free childcare for low-income families and the removal of PST on groceries are designed to ease household financial pressures. In the long term, these types of supports can help sustain consumer spending, which is critical to many of our members.

The budget also places significant emphasis on healthcare and social services. While this reflects real and pressing needs across the province, the success of these investments will depend heavily on implementation. Businesses across Westman will be watching closely to understand how these programs are rolled out and what impacts they may have on employers and service providers.

We also note the proposed creation of a new Economic Development Agency. While efforts to attract investment and improve coordination are positive, Brandon and the Westman region already benefit from strong local and regional economic development organizations. It will be important to ensure alignment and avoid duplication as this new structure evolves.

There are also areas of concern. While increased investment in apprenticeship training is welcome, recent changes to apprenticeship ratios continue to present challenges for employers—particularly in the skilled trades. Additionally, initiatives such as the Manitoba Jobs Agreement remain a concern for many industry groups.

Overall, this budget does not significantly advance policies that directly support business growth and competitiveness. With another projected deficit and limited new measures for business, there is a need for greater clarity and stronger focus on economic development moving forward.

*“Setting the Pace
for a Greater
Brandon
Since 1883”*



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As the voice of business in Brandon and across Westman, your Chamber will focus its advocacy efforts on three key priorities:

1. Workforce Development that Works for Employers - We will advocate for practical solutions to labour shortages, including apprenticeship policies that reflect industry realities, stronger alignment between training and employer needs, and targeted strategies to attract and retain workers in our region.
2. Smarter Economic Development and Regional Alignment - We will push for clarity and coordination around the proposed Economic Development Agency to ensure it strengthens, not duplicates the existing efforts in Brandon and rural Manitoba, and delivers real investment attraction outcomes.
3. Fiscal Responsibility and a Competitive Business Climate - We will continue to advocate for disciplined spending, reduced regulatory burden, and policies that improve Manitoba's competitiveness, enabling businesses to grow, invest, and create jobs.

As we await spring and move into our renewal period, your Chamber remains committed to ensuring your voice is heard at all levels of government.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ludwig
President
Brandon Chamber of Commerce