

Following the Saskatchewan Chamber's recommendation, the government of Saskatchewan joined with Alberta and British Columbia in the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA).

The NWPTA is a free trade agreement that created Canada's largest, barrier-free interprovincial market.

The Saskatchewan Chamber's informational campaign and ongoing encouragement of free trade played a vital role in building the necessary support for this partnership locally and was essential in ensuring the political palatability of this agreement.

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"Collaboration between the three western provinces has been key in simplifying tenders, removing redundant regulations and making it easier to do business overall interprovincially."

**- Pat Friesen
Owner, Success Business Consulting**

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New West Partnership/Accelerating Interprovincial Collaboration

Background

As Alberta and British Columbia reached an interprovincial free trade agreement in 2006, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce urged the Government of Saskatchewan to become a participant. After this initial opportunity for inclusion passed, the Chamber continued to push for a reduction of trade barriers and the creation of a free trade region including Saskatchewan.

With the objective of strengthening Saskatchewan's businesses environment through enhanced market access, and creating further inducement for Saskatchewan businesses to establish operations within different regions, the Saskatchewan Chamber actively engaged in the provincial dialogue on interprovincial free trade with a submission on the State of Internal Trade in Saskatchewan to the Standing Committee on the Economy, numerous letters and meetings, as well as formally adopted policy positions.

The interprovincial free trade discussion in Saskatchewan was plagued with initial hesitancy from the government, the general public and even several members of the business community because of uncertainty and protectionism. The Chamber's information campaign was key to building a broader acceptance of free trade in the province and in 2010 the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce was successful when the Government of Saskatchewan signed the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) with Alberta and British Columbia.

The NWPTA came into effect July 1, 2010 and has been fully implemented since July 1, 2013. Following the Saskatchewan Chamber's recommendation, the Government of Saskatchewan joined with Alberta and British Columbia in a free trade agreement to create Canada's largest, barrier-free, interprovincial market. The NWPTA requires that government and public entities remove impediments across all economic sectors. The Agreement is comprehensive, applying to all government measures (e.g., legislation, regulations, standards, policies, procedures, guidelines, procurement, etc.) affecting trade, investment and labour mobility.

To further bolster Western Canada's interests and economic ties in China, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia opened a shared Western Canada Trade and Investment Office in Shanghai. This office was part of the New West Partnership's commitment to collaborate on cost-effective international initiatives, including sharing resources in international markets.

Saskatchewan Chamber's Steps Toward Success

- Labour mobility provisions allow certified workers to practice their occupation in the three provinces without being subject to additional exams or training requirements.
- Unnecessary differences in business standards and regulations will have been eliminated.