

Employer Group tackles Canada's labour shortage

Toronto ON, May 26, 2008. The Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) - Canada's only organization devoted to advancing the interests and issues for workforce mobility - today announced it will be holding cross Canada meetings that will bring together business and government representatives to discuss one of Canada's most important challenges.

CERC Executive Vice President Stephen Cryne said, "We know that the availability of skilled labour continues to be a major concern for business. It's clear that improved immigration policy, together with more effective processes to evaluate foreign skills and credentials will go a long way towards addressing the problem. And it's not just immigration policy that needs to be modernized," says Cryne, "but we also need to remove the restrictions that prevent full mobility of workers within Canada."

According to the CERC, labour shortages are most acute in Western Canada, but with an aging population all areas of the country can expect to see a significant increase in the number of help wanted signs within the next three to five years. Since 1996 the Canadian economy created three million new jobs. Immigration accounted for 70 percent of all workforce growth between 1991 and 2001.

Government data suggests that there are more than 600,000 skilled workers currently waiting to enter the country; many of those have been waiting over six years to enter. Canada is competing with other countries such as Australia and the U.K. for workers, and wait times for entry into those countries can be as little as six months. Recently announced changes by the federal government to Canada's immigration laws are expected to cut waiting times for skilled immigrants.

CERC is hosting national symposia on Canada's labour shortage in five key cities in May and June 2008, beginning with Toronto on May 29. These events will bring together influential leaders from business, government and academia to discuss this important challenge and identify solutions.

The Canadian Employee Relocation Council (CERC) represents the interests of leading organizations across Canada involved in the movement of employees. The organization has been pressing for change to Canada's immigration system since 2004. Relocation of employees is vital to a vibrant and prosperous economy.

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