

# Manitoba PC Caucus Review

Proud to serve  
Manitobans

## MANITOBA MAKING PROGRESS ON DEFICIT REDUCTION

*September 28, 2018*



The Manitoba government is making progress in reducing the province's deficit, Finance Minister Scott Fielding announced this week with the release of the government's public accounts for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Continued improvement in the province's fiscal position is due to the government's responsible approach to expenditure management, the minister said. He noted the importance of meeting budget targets in making further progress toward returning to balanced budgets.

"We're fixing the finances and moving in the right direction," said Fielding. "Year after year, the previous government exceeded its deficit projections with reckless overspending, putting the province further in debt. Since forming government over two years ago, we have implemented better budgetary practices and are putting Manitoba back on a path to sustainability."

The 2017-18 year-end financial results show a summary deficit of \$695 million, which is \$145 million lower than the 2017-18 budgeted deficit of \$840 million. Fielding noted the province's deficit was projected to climb to \$1.7 billion by 2019 if left unaddressed.

Debt-servicing costs continue to be a concern in the government's pursuit of financial recovery, the minister said. The 2017-18 results show \$952 million has been spent to service the province's debt, and debt servicing costs are projected to exceed \$1 billion in 2018-19 for the first time in Manitoba's history. This is a direct result of increased debt and three consecutive credit rating downgrades due to 17 years of fiscal mismanagement by the previous government, he noted.

## RAIL SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK MARKED THANKS TO BILL FROM MLA LAGASSÉ



During Rail Safety Awareness Week, Manitobans are reminded to exercise caution and follow the rules around railways, Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler and Sean Finn, executive vice-president, CN, announced this week.

“There are approximately 6,000 kilometres of railway track in Manitoba,” said Schuler. “With such a large amount of rail infrastructure, it’s critical that Manitobans remember to be safe around our many rail crossings.”

Each year, 2,100 North Americans are killed or seriously injured when they engage in unsafe behaviour around tracks and trains. Basic rail safety includes being prepared to stop a vehicle at every rail crossing, never stopping a vehicle on the tracks and never trespassing on railways, which are private property.

In response to a tragic railway accident in his constituency, Dawson Trail MLA Bob Lagassé introduced a Private Members Bill earlier this year to officially recognize Rail Safety Awareness Week in Manitoba. Lagassé’s bill was passed with support from all parties this summer.

## IMPROVED CELLULAR COVERAGE COMING TO SOUTHEASTERN MANITOBA

The Manitoba government welcomes the expansion of high-speed wireless LTE coverage by Bell MTS in southeast Manitoba, Premier Brian Pallister announced in La Broquerie earlier this week.

“Better, faster service not only helps protect Manitobans in times of emergency but also improves daily life for those who work and call the area their home,” said Pallister. “We thank Bell MTS for following through on this promise. We’ll continue to work with industry partners, the business community and other levels of government to improve wireless access in Manitoba, and look forward to further progress being made.”

The premier noted Bell MTS will build three new LTE-advanced cellular sites in Woodridge, Zhoda and Stuartburn to extend wireless service to these communities for the first time.

The premier noted earlier this year, the Manitoba government made a \$20-million commitment to help provide increased broadband connectivity to First Nations, rural and northern Manitoba communities. For more information, visit:

<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=42851>.

### Follow us online!

[twitter.com/PCcaucus](https://twitter.com/PCcaucus)

[facebook.com/ManitobaPCcaucus](https://facebook.com/ManitobaPCcaucus)

[youtube.com/c/ManitobaPCcaucus](https://youtube.com/c/ManitobaPCcaucus)

## PROVINCE REPORTS REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE

The number of children in the care of Manitoba Child and Family Services (CFS) has decreased for the first time in the last 15 years, according to the department's year-end numbers, Families Minister Heather Stefanson announced this week.

"While these numbers capture a snapshot of one point in time, they provide us with an encouraging sign that Manitoba is heading in the right direction," Stefanson said. "We need to acknowledge and thank the authorities, agencies, front-line workers and communities for their commitment, dedication and hard work that we believe has led to this positive trend that is emerging."

Numbers from March 31, 2018, show 10,328 children in care, a reduction of 386 or 3.6 per cent from the March 31, 2017, count.

An additional 448 were reported in non-paid care, either reunited in their own home (living with a parent, guardian or a lifelong family member) or placed in supervised adoption, without government financial support. The total of 10,776 open files is a reduction of 576 from last year, or 5.1 per cent overall.

Family reunifications have increased by more than eight per cent across Manitoba and apprehensions have decreased by more than nine per cent over the last year.

This is the first decrease in numbers since 2003. In October 2017, the province launched a new plan to transform the CFS system to create better outcomes for children that focus on community-based prevention, results-based funding, legislative reform, and lifelong connections through reunification and permanence.

## MANITOBA INVESTS IN HEALTH CARE FACILITY UPGRADES

The Manitoba government will upgrade health-care facilities across the province by investing approximately \$9.7 million in 13 new projects, Health, Seniors and Active Living Minister Cameron Friesen announced this week.

"Proper building maintenance and upgrades are needed to make sure the facilities remain in good repair, are safe for patients, staff and visitors, and continue to ensure the provision of quality care," said Friesen. "These much-needed investments will benefit patients across the province."

The minister noted several of the projects include work to improve fire safety and sprinkler systems in personal care homes and health-care facilities, as well as upgrades to emergency medical service (ambulance) facilities.

The projects include upgrades to the Children's Hospital, Victoria General Hospital, St. Boniface Hospital, Health Sciences Centre, and Actionmarguerite St. Joseph in Winnipeg. Upgrades are also coming to facilities in Eriksdale, Stonewall, Arborg, Easterville, The Pas, and Winnipegosis.

Each year, the regional health authorities, CancerCare Manitoba, Shared Health and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba submit requests for safety and security projects at sites across the province. Timely equipment replacements, upgrades and repairs ensure services continue to be available for patients.

Work will begin once the projects are publicly tendered and awarded, the minister noted.