

The North Connect

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 02 / JULY 2026



Community Events

- **July 1st La Fête Du Canada Day 2026:** The Parade starts at 2pm, continuing festivities at Muskoseepi Park from 3:30PM – Midnight, where the event will end with Canada Day Fireworks.
- **July 19th Fables and Faeries Renaissance Faire:** 11AM–4PM, Montrose Cultural Centre, 9839 103 AVE. free activities and local vendors to browse!
- **Aug 1st Grande Prairie Chariot Fest:** 11AM – 3:30PM, a colourful community procession through the city, followed by a cultural gathering in the Muskoseepi park with live music, traditional and contemporary performances, interactive exhibits, family activities, and complimentary vegetarian food. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about world cultures, community traditions, values of selfless service, and the importance of building an inclusive and harmonious society.

BREAKING BARRIERS DOWN, BELONGING UP!

Hello Grande Prairie Business Community!

July is officially here, bringing longer days, community BBQs, and a fresh look at local workforce planning. This month, we are focusing heavily on how inclusive hiring directly solves local labor shortages, while checking in on a crucial summer topic: maintaining workplace mental health during our busiest season. We are also tackling one of the biggest misconceptions in recruitment today by separating fact from fiction when it comes to the actual cost of workplace accessibility. Let's dive in!

SUMMER BURNOUT IS REAL: SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH

Here in the Peace Country, we tend to run at 110% during the short summer months to maximize production. However, compressed timelines and heat can lead to rapid employee burnout.

Mental health is workforce health. As employers, small pivots can make a massive difference in retention and safety:

1.Enforce True Downtime: Encourage staff to fully unplug on their days off.

2.Psychological Safety: Foster an environment where team members feel safe stating, "I am hitting a wall and need a breather," without fear of looking weak or losing hours.

3.Accessible Formats: Ensure your company's internal summer safety memos or event invites are accessible to everyone—use clear language, visual cues, and plain fonts for staff who may have neurodivergent processing styles or visual impairments.



FACT VS. FICTION: THE REAL COST OF ACCESSIBILITY



When we talk about workplace accommodations, many business owners immediately imagine major, expensive construction projects or premium tech overhauls. Let's look at the actual data to separate the myths from the reality.

- **FICTION:** "Accommodating an employee with a disability is going to break my small business budget."
- **FACT:** The vast majority of accommodations cost absolutely nothing.

According to ongoing research by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), 56% of workplace accommodations cost \$0 to implement. They simply require a little flexibility, such as adjusting a schedule, shifting a desk away from a noisy air vent, or modifying how a task is completed. For the remaining 44% of accommodations that do carry a price tag, the median one-time expenditure is only \$500.

Quick Wins: High-Impact, Low-Cost Examples

Accommodations are usually about creative problem-solving, not expensive invoices. Here is how local employers can create accessible environments for next to nothing:

Barrier	Accommodation	Cost
Concentration / Neurodiversity	Providing noise-canceling headphones or utilizing a quieter, unused corner space.	\$0-\$50
Vision / Screen Strain	Activating built-in screen readers or color-contrast settings on standard Office 365 programs.	\$0
Mobility / Chronic Pain	Swapping a traditional desk out for a sit-stand converter or raising a workspace on risers.	\$150 - \$300

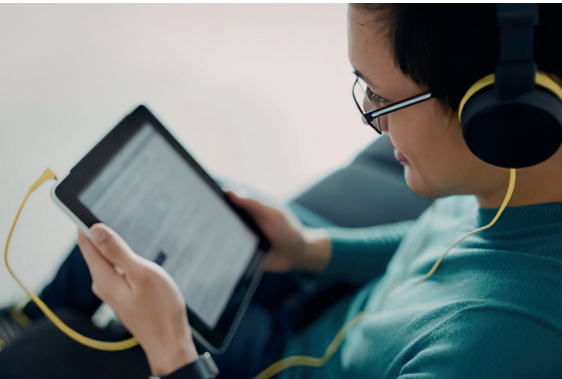
CULTIVATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Hiring inclusively isn't just about checking a box; it's about recognizing that diverse minds bring diverse solutions to your floor, kitchen, or office. When you onboard an individual through EmployAbilities, you aren't just filling a vacancy—you are adding a fiercely loyal, motivated teammate who strengthens your company culture from day one.



REQUIRE ASSISTANCE IN PLANNING FOR AN ACCOMMODATION ?

Before you assume a candidate's needs will be too difficult or costly to manage, reach out! We are always here to help you brainstorm practical, affordable solutions that keep your business running smoothly.



**SCAN THE QR BELOW TO SIGN UP
FOR UPDATES FROM THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT ON CURRENT
TRENDS AND ECONOMIC
ACTIVITY.**



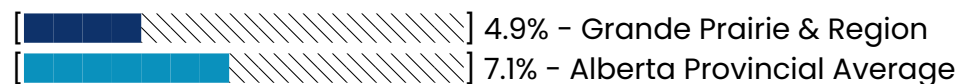
REGIONAL ECONOMIC UPDATE: A TIGHT LABOR MARKET

Data courtesy of the INVEST June Economic Development Newsletter

The economic momentum across our region remains incredibly strong, but it also means the local competition for talent is tighter than ever.

According to the latest data released by INVEST, our broader economic region—which encompasses a massive labor force of approximately 198,900 people stretching across Grande Prairie, Peace River, Athabasca, Banff, Jasper, and Rocky Mountain House—is significantly outperforming provincial averages.

May 2026 Unemployment Rates:



What this means for local employers:

With our regional unemployment rate sitting comfortably low at 4.9%, our local labor market is highly competitive. Traditional hiring pools are shrinking fast.

To keep your operations fully staffed this summer, now is the time to tap into underutilized talent pools.

Partnering with EmployAbilities gives you direct access to skilled, motivated, and job-ready individuals with disabilities or mental health barriers who are ready to step into your vacancies today and help bridge that 4.9% gap!

Who's Hiring? Partner Highlights

Shoutout to our local retail, hospitality, Trades and industrial partners who have proactively reached out this month to diversify their talent pools.

If your business is currently looking to scale up or fill high-turnover positions, let's partner up. Our pool of pre-screened, capable candidates are ready, willing, and waiting to step into meaningful employment.

Let's connect this July! Reach out to us directly to chat about your current hiring needs, workspace accommodations, or how to get started with our free employer services.



Partner With Us: Streamline Your Staffing

Interested in one of our candidates? Or are you looking to fill a completely different vacancy? The EmployAbilities Grande Prairie Liaison team is here to help at no cost to your business.

What we provide to our employer partners:

- Pre-screened, job-ready candidates tailored to your specific industry.
- Recruitment support
- Information on resources such as grants
- On-site onboarding support and job coaching to ensure long-term retention.
- Guidance on wage subsidies and inclusive workplace modifications.

Connect with the Employer Liaison team today:

Website:

employabilities.ab.ca/grande-prairie

or scan the QR code



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Talent Pool Highlights

The following candidate profiles are job-ready and actively seeking opportunities in the Grande Prairie region. In strict compliance with privacy regulations, all profiles are anonymized:



Candidate C.P.

- **Experienced Field Laborer & Chainsaw Operator:** Proven track record in heavy seasonal labor, pipeline construction, and clearing operations across Northern Alberta, backed by an Enform Level I Chainsaw Certification.
- **Diverse Industry Adaptability:** Robust hands-on background spanning oil and gas (including PITS Floorhand training), logging, pulp mills, carpentry, landscaping, and specialized archaeological fieldwork/site inspection.
- **Safety & Team-Oriented Foundation:** Strongly supported by safety-first certifications—including a Type 3 Firefighter Certification and general pipeline safety training—combined with a dependable work ethic in crew-based environments.



Candidate K.M.

- **Advanced Administrative & Data Systems Expertise:** Highly proficient in front-end operations, multi-line communications, database administration, and record-keeping. Proven track record handling municipal permits, financial databases, digital invoicing, and specialized municipal/law enforcement software (including PROS, CPIC, Report Exec, and See Click Fix).
- **Diverse Public & Private Sector Coordination:** Extensive background in high-level service delivery and operations within Grande Prairie, including managing an independent services business, acting as an Office Coordinator for the City of Grande Prairie, and delivering front-counter community reception for the local RCMP detachment.
- **Rigorous Security, Compliance, & Leadership Background:** Demonstrates an exceptional work ethic and reliability backed by past experience as a Canadian Forces Infanteer, an RCMP Cell Block Guard (holding RCMP Security and Public Works Reliability clearances), and a decorated youth mentor and instructor with a deep commitment to workplace safety and procedural compliance.

Talent Pool Highlights

Cntd.



Candidate A.M.

- Experienced in diverse roles across the Peace Region, including technical instrument repair, retail customer service, outdoor well testing, and site security.
- Mechanically inclined, physically fit for demanding tasks, highly reliable, and possesses strong customer service and cash-handling skills.
- Seeking adaptable, hands-on roles such as Shop Assistant, Security Guard, Retail Clerk, or General Laborer.



Candidate M.F.

- Decades of Proven Local Reliability: Features an incredibly stable and dedicated 30+ year work history in Grande Prairie, demonstrating exceptional long-term loyalty and punctuality across all roles.
- High-Volume Customer Service & Communication: Expert in delivering fast, friendly, and courteous service in fast-paced environments, with a strong background in clear client communication regarding order accuracy, substitutions, and digital transactions.
- Strict Adherence to Safety & Quality Standards: Fully versed in maintaining rigorous food handling, sanitation, and cleanliness guidelines, alongside sharp attention to detail when fulfilling precise customer orders and dietary preferences.



Candidate A.L.

- Eager and Growth-Oriented Professional: Highly motivated candidate seeking a part-time role to leverage existing abilities while quickly learning new tasks and gaining valuable long-term industry experience.
- Recent Retail & Cash Handling Experience: Currently building practical skills as a regular volunteer at the Grande Prairie Goodwill Industries, where tasks include operating cash registers, handling transactions, sorting donations, and stocking shelves.
- Dependable, Team-First Skill Set: Possesses strong foundational soft skills, including an exceptionally positive attitude, excellent time management, a strong eye for organizational cleanliness, and a proven high school Certificate of Achievement from Grande Prairie Composite High.

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