

Deputy Prime Minister hears need for skilled trades, daycare in Grande Prairie ^[1]

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Source: My Grand Prairie Now

Format: Article

Publication Date: 26 Aug 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland made an unexpected stop in Grande Prairie Friday to meet with local farmers, skilled tradespeople from Northwestern Polytechnic, and Mayor Jackie Clayton. Freeland, who was born and raised in Peace River, says she wanted to visit the Peace Country to hear directly from people involved in our local industries.

"I really believe that to do my job properly, I have to go out and talk to the people who are actually working hard; talk to the people who actually are building Canada and the Canadian economy and talk to them myself."

"It was really important to me to come to northern Alberta, to come back to where I was born and grew up," Freeland expands. "I think the people you grew up with, they tell you the truth."

Freeland adds that she also wouldn't mind highlighting this part of Canada to the rest of the country, knowing that it can be difficult to attract people to the area if they don't know what it has to offer.

A lot of Friday's discussion revolved around the need for more skilled workers to help labour shortages. Freeland says she'll be taking away from the conversations an understanding of the need to invest in training for skilled trades, sharing an anecdote about a local apprentice who told her he's constantly fielding job offers.

"That tells me there are a lot of people who need skilled tradespeople. I really am committed to working with places like Northwestern Polytechnic to be sure we're providing the support and the training that Canadians and the Canadian economy need."

One area she recognizes the federal government can do a better job of advocating for is better recognition of qualifications between provinces. She has been told Mayor Clayton will help by giving her a list of the qualifications that would help our region most.

"This is something that doesn't cost us any money at all and at a time when we have labour shortages across the country, I think it's a way that we could help everybody."

That also led to a discussion about childcare going hand-in-hand with people working. Freeland points to the reduction of out-of-pocket child-care fees by 50 per cent in some provinces as a strategy to improve the situation, saying work is still ongoing.

"People told me how important it is, for example, for people who want to study to be an apprentice... I have long believed that the Canadian economy needs affordable early learning and childcare; that's going to drive jobs and growth."

As expected, farmers were vocal with the Deputy Prime Minister about the federal government's recent announcement of a fertilizer emissions reduction target aimed at reducing emissions from the application of fertilizers by 30 per cent from 2020 levels by 2030. She said she was clear with them that it is a target and is not compulsory, adding she knows Canadian farmers are smart business people.

"They are already being very smart about their use of fertilizer. They are so thoughtful about the inputs that they use; they are running businesses and they do not want to spend a penny more on inputs than they need to."

Freeland says she'll be taking the ideas and feedback given to her on her tour of multiple cities this summer back to Ottawa.

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

labour shortage ^[5]

funding ^[6]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/08/deputy-prime-minister-hears-need-skilled-trades-daycare-grande> [2] <https://www.mygrandeprairienow.com/99349/featured/deputy-prime-minister-hears-need-for-skilled-trades-daycare-in-grande-prairie/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7859> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9252> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding>