

financial services to automotive dealers, was expecting to issue more than CDN \$100 million in loans from its Ottawa office in 1994.

8. Winnipeg, Manitoba

Winnipeg is located in southern Manitoba, at the geographic centre of the North American continent. Winnipeg is approximately 60 miles north of the Canada-US (Minnesota-North Dakota) border and 450 miles north-west of Minneapolis.

From 1986 to 1994 the population of Winnipeg grew at an average rate of 0.67% per annum, with the estimated population of metropolitan Winnipeg in 1994 being 659,361. By the year 2001, the population is expected to reach 676,800.

Historically, the economy of Winnipeg has been based on its importance as a commercial and transportation centre for the grain growers of the Canadian prairies. Transportation, covering freight services, repair facilities and spare parts production have all come to be important industries in Winnipeg. Other important industry sectors include food processing, primary metals and printing and publishing. In more recent years, electronics products, software development and health care products have come to play a significant role in the local economy. The largest private sector employers in Winnipeg include Cargill Ltd, United Grain Growers Ltd, Palliser Furniture Ltd, Boeing Canada Technology Ltd and Monarch Industries Ltd. In August 1994 the Globe and Mail newspaper named Winnipeg as one of the five best cities in Canada for business.

Winnipeg International Airport is located 4.5 miles from downtown Winnipeg. The airport is serviced by both major Canadian airlines, 12 regional carriers as well as Northwest Airlines. Direct services are available to all major Canadian centres as well as Chicago and Minneapolis. Due to its central location, a number of different port facilities are available from Winnipeg. Westbound freight moves through Vancouver while eastbound freight moves through Montreal, Thunder Bay, or Halifax.

Rail freight services are provided by CN Rail, CP Rail and Burlington Northern Railways. Both CN Rail and CP Rail operate extensive marshalling yards in Winnipeg, which collectively handle approximately 5,000 rail cars per day. Both these companies also have significant servicing and repair facilities in Winnipeg. The services of these two companies and the intermodal facilities they provide in Winnipeg facilitate direct movement of goods between Winnipeg and seaports. Burlington Northern provides direct access to the U.S. rail network.

For road transport, Winnipeg is located on the Trans-Canada Highway, providing good road access to all major centres in eastern and western Canada. Two highways run from Winnipeg to Minnesota border points, with Manitoba Highway 75 linking directly to U.S. Interstate Highway 29, which runs south to Kansas City. Eighteen major trucking depots exist in Winnipeg, and full freight services for local, national or cross-border distribution are available.