

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WINNIPEG'S IMPACT REPORT: Q2 2025

Uniting to drive economic development
Encompasses April, May and June of 2025





Bridge Drive-In mural
Winnipeg, MB

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CEO's message

A message from Ryan Kuffner

In a quarter marked by tariffs, wildfires, and shifting travel patterns, EDW ensured Winnipeg's voice cut through the noise.

From a surge in public interest to major developments in tourism, trade and emergency response, our team worked to share Winnipeg's perspective and amplify local strengths, while collaborating with partners across sectors. In some cases, we were at the centre of these conversations; in others, we were one of several voices ensuring Winnipeg's economic future remained front and centre. This visibility reflects growing trust in EDW's insight and the depth of expertise our team brings to Winnipeg's evolving story.

Public and media interest in Winnipeg was driven by a wide range of scenarios with direct economic implications. EDW responded to an unprecedented number of media requests during this time, resulting in 148 per cent increase from the same period over last year. The spotlight was on our city as journalists sought insight into how U.S. tariffs, ongoing trade tensions and how Manitoba wildfires were beginning to impact local industries, cross-border travel and business.

The Winnipeg Jets' playoff run delivered a much-needed boost to civic pride and downtown businesses, while also shining a national spotlight on our city. Our travel media program capitalized on the opportunity by hosting hockey content creators to promote Winnipeg as a compelling destination – especially during the excitement surrounding the Jets' playoff momentum.

Each broadcast showcased stunning shots of our skyline and the electric atmosphere of

Whiteout Street Parties, accompanied by positive commentary that reinforced Winnipeg's energy and vibrancy, helping shape a strong and appealing image of our city across North America.

The wildfires in Manitoba also drew significant focus, particularly as the Government of Manitoba called on visitors to reconsider non-essential travel to free up hotel rooms for evacuees. EDW partnered with the Province of Manitoba to deliver coordinated responses and public messaging, ensuring empathy remained central while maintaining an economic lens. Our team worked quickly and collaboratively to support tourism partners, visitors and event clients through an evolving and uncertain situation.

In each case, our goal was clear: to support our city. Whether providing media commentary or working behind the scenes with government and industry, our efforts were grounded in collaboration, professionalism and care. We remained adaptable and solutions-focused, reflecting our ongoing commitment to putting Winnipeg first.

We also had reason to celebrate. In May, Tourism Winnipeg and Travel Manitoba hosted Rendezvous Canada (RVC) 2025, the nation's largest international travel trade show, which returned to Winnipeg for the first time in 15 years. The event offered a rare opportunity to showcase our city's tourism assets and warm Prairie hospitality on a global stage.

More importantly, it became a moment of pride and proof of concept for our one-agency model. Staff from across EDW, including tourism, investment and talent, came together to deliver a unified, world-class experience that reflected



the full strength of Winnipeg and our approach. The result was powerful, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback – with comments like “best RVC ever” – highlighted just how well the experience resonated.

Amid an unexpected surge in demand for Canadian travel, we saw an opportunity to test a bold new idea for positioning Winnipeg. We introduced the Middle Child campaign on April Fool's Day – not as a prank, but as a timely, attention-grabbing way to gauge public response. Framing Winnipeg as Canada's “Middle Child” resonated strongly with local audiences and media, and what began as a test quickly grew into a full campaign. It's a reflection of how we're responding to shifting travel trends with agility, creativity and a voice that's uniquely Winnipeg.

Looking ahead, our team has shown that we're ready to rise to the moment when it matters most. As

we continue through a transitional year – shaping a new multi-year strategy and working alongside the province's evolving economic direction – we remain grounded in our purpose and driven by a deep passion for our city. Our focus remains on building a Winnipeg that offers opportunity and optimism for everyone who lives, works, visits or invests here.

To the board, thank you for your continued guidance and support. The pride we feel in the work we're doing – as one agency dedicated to Winnipeg and its surrounding region – is something we know you share as well. Together, we're building momentum that reflects not only where our city is today, but where it's headed.

Ryan Kuffner
President & Chief Executive Officer,
Economic Development Winnipeg

Our progress

EDW top-line results YTD:

Estimated economic impact of Tourism Winnipeg¹

\$44M



Estimated economic impact of YES! Winnipeg¹

\$3.6M



Tourism Winnipeg NPS²

85



YES! Winnipeg NPS²

61



¹Economic impact is measured by assessing changes in key economic indicators like output, income, employment and value added, considering both direct and indirect effects of a project or event on a specific region.

For Tourism Winnipeg (TW), estimated economic impact is the result of the direct sales revenues for the events that TW has attracted or supported. For YES! Winnipeg, the estimated economic impact refers to the total annual GDP generated by new businesses attracted to the city or by the expansion of local businesses supported by YES! Winnipeg, measured once these operations reach full maturity.

²Net Promoter Score (NPS): Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a metric used to gauge customer loyalty and satisfaction by asking customers how likely they are to recommend a company's products or services. Calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (unhappy customers) from promoters (loyal supporters), NPS ranges from -100 to +100. A higher score indicates better customer loyalty and satisfaction.



Selling Winnipeg

Team operations

Our team's work enhances Winnipeg's profile and appeal as a destination for business events, sport and special events, and leisure travel. In Q2, Tourism Winnipeg secured 32 future events and conferences for our city that will bring more than \$16.2 million in direct spending. **Q2 highlights include:**

Rendez-vous Canada 2025 Showcases Winnipeg to the World

For the first time since 2010, Winnipeg hosted Rendez-vous Canada (RVC 2025) – Canada's premier international tourism industry marketplace. The annual event brings together select international tour operators and invited Canadian tourism suppliers for four days of pre-scheduled, one-on-one business appointments.

Tourism Winnipeg and Travel Manitoba collaborated with over 100 local tourism partners and coordinated 125 volunteers to deliver the event. The three-day showcase drew 1,400 delegates, including 400 buyers from 22 global markets and 500 Canadian tourism businesses and organizations, and is expected to generate \$2.8 million in direct economic impact for the city.

During the marketplace, our team completed 75 appointments with international tour operators and travel media, contributing to the more than 50,000 one-on-one meetings held over the three-day event. Hosting RVC gave us the opportunity to showcase Winnipeg's transformation and tourism offerings, strengthen relationships with key buyers and media, and position the city more competitively on the global stage.



2027 Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) Biennial Conference

Winnipeg will host the 2027 Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) Biennial Conference from May 31 to June 3, 2027, with events planned at the RBC Convention Centre and Delta Hotel, and additional venues to be confirmed.

We worked closely with The Winnipeg Foundation to bring the event to Winnipeg. As the local host, the Foundation will lead on-site activities, while our team supports marketing and promotion for the official 2027 host announcement at the 2025 CFC Conference in Halifax. This successful bid follows an earlier proposal for Winnipeg to host in 2025, which advanced to a site visit and contract stage before being deferred to a later year.

Wildfire response and tourism coordination

In June, our team shifted focus to support wildfire response efforts while continuing to deliver on key tourism priorities. We worked closely with Travel Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, the Manitoba government, the Manitoba Hotel Association, the RBC Convention Centre, Indigenous Tourism Manitoba, Tourism Industry Association of Manitoba, the Canadian Red Cross and other tourism partners.

The coordinated response featured regular briefings and shared touchpoints to align efforts across organizations. Our focus was on keeping visitors, industry partners and event organizers informed, while supporting affected groups in adjusting plans – through cancellations, rescheduling or virtual delivery. We also launched an [FAQ page](#) and, thanks to the generous contributions of our partners, created a new attractions pass that gave evacuees access to free and low-cost activities in Winnipeg.

Promoting Winnipeg

Every day, EDW tells the Winnipeg story to help drive economic growth. This increased awareness of our city contributes to a positive economic outlook, attracting visitors, businesses and talent interested in visiting, investing or living in our vibrant, thriving city

Middle Child campaign drives national attention

Winnipeg is Canada's middle child! That's the message behind EDW's cheeky **new marketing campaign** launched in May to promote the city as a fun and welcoming summer destination and tap into growing demand for domestic travel.

Originally teased as an April Fool's joke, the campaign went viral across Canada for its self-deprecating take on our occasionally overlooked, but entirely unforgettable, prairie city. The April 1 launch generated significant attention with over 50 local, national and international media outlets picking up the story and generating over \$600,000 in earned media before the full campaign had even begun on May 1.

Our team developed the campaign in-house, including messaging, creative design and the introduction of Winnifred, the campaign's mascot, now featured on merchandise available to locals and visitors.

The campaign was paused from June 2 to 24 in recognition of the wildfire situation in Manitoba and to ensure hotel space was available to support in Winnipeg. The campaign has since resumed in key Canadian markets including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Northern Ontario. We look forward to sharing results from the campaign in our next report.

Middle-child merch sold at Made Here
Winnipeg, MB



Investment project pipeline

Q2 results

In Q2 2025, EDW's investment attraction pipeline closed with 501 leads and 378 prospects, with 89 opportunities fully qualified through our investment funnel.

This progress reflects the ongoing work of our business development and foreign direct investment teams to convert interest into tangible opportunities for Winnipeg.

501
Leads

378
Prospects

89
Qualified opportunities

Our efforts included:

Winnipeg hosts global site selection consultants

In April, we hosted three members of the Site Selectors Guild—a global association of consultants who advise companies on corporate location decisions—representing markets in Toronto, the Netherlands and Germany. The visit was part of a coordinated initiative with our counterparts at Calgary Economic Development and Edmonton Global to raise the profile of Western Canada as an investment destination and diversify outreach beyond the U.S. market.

Our team designed a targeted itinerary to showcase Winnipeg's industrial assets and demonstrate the city's competitive advantages. The group toured development-ready sites and key industrial areas, with a focus on advanced manufacturing and transportation and distribution.

Canada's 20th Asia Roadshow highlights Winnipeg opportunities

In May, members of our FDI team joined the Government of Canada's 20th Asia Investment and Innovation Roadshow in Taiwan and Singapore to build connections in innovation-driven sectors. The mission promoted Winnipeg as a destination for global investment within the broader Canada brand.

Through targeted meetings and panels, our team positioned Winnipeg to global firms in advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, life sciences and information and communications technology. This included direct engagement with companies such as Advantech, ST Engineering and Agropcorp.

Expanding reach through World Trade Centers Association forum

EDW's Indo-Pacific team, at the request of World Trade Centre Winnipeg, attended the 2025 World Trade Centers Association Global Business Forum in Marseille, France. The event brought together representatives from more than 300 World Trade Centers and their member companies across 85 countries.

The forum featured targeted business matchmaking and investor networking, giving EDW the opportunity to strengthen ties with World Trade Centers in Japan and India. A key outcome was securing an FDI multiplier in the Indian market—laying a strong foundation for expanding Winnipeg's presence in the Indo-Pacific region.



Site Selectors Guild tour
Winnipeg, April 2025

Business retention, expansion (BRE) and attraction activities

In Q2, our team completed 33 business retention and expansion meetings, six FDI profiles and three talent needs assessments.

We delivered 180 services to businesses, resulting in \$100,000 in capital invested and 150 net new full-time jobs.

Economic Outcome Facilitated: Taiv

Our team confirmed a new Economic Outcome Facilitated with Taiv, a fast-growing company based in downtown Winnipeg that is transforming television advertising through artificial intelligence.

The company uses AI to automatically switch TV content between cable, streaming, signage and trivia based on what's playing and the time of day, ensuring the best content plays at the right moment.

We worked with Taiv on talent support, site selection and government support navigation as the company scaled, resulting in a planned **\$100,000 capital investment** and the creation of **150 net new full-time jobs**.



Economic Outcomes Facilitated (EOF): In our sales process, the ultimate milestone is achieving an EOF, which is marked when a client signs a YES! letter. The letter is private sector validation of the value we have provided them through our service offering and ensures we only claim successes when our clients validate that success. The letter provides EDW with the client's confirmation of the number of jobs expected to be created at maturity, the dollar value of capital invested, and the new payroll generated thanks to our efforts. EOFs are ultimately considered "wins" by our team and communicated accordingly.

Exploring office expansion in Winnipeg

Our team met with a Kelowna-based technology and insurance services firm to discuss its plans to establish a formal office in Winnipeg. While headquartered in British Columbia, the company already has a majority of its staff based in our city.

The firm cited Winnipeg's strong talent base, central location and cost-effective market as factors that make the city an attractive place to anchor future growth. We continue to support the next steps as the firm considers Winnipeg a long-term strategic hub.

ITB advances to full production at new Winnipeg site

Our team visited International Truck Body's (ITB) newly expanded Winnipeg facility ahead of its official opening in July.

The manufacturer specializes in custom truck bodies for sectors such as food delivery, laundry and municipal services, with 40+ years of North American experience. The site is currently in early-stage operations and is scheduled to enter full production by September.

Our team is working with the company to connect them with programs and partners that will help maximize the benefits of their expansion in Winnipeg.



Downtown Winnipeg
Winnipeg, MB

Talent & workforce development

Work in Manitoba job portal – Q2 update

In Q2, the Work in Manitoba job portal added **3,243 new job seekers** and **77 new employers**. Since its launch, the platform has attracted **124,205 job seekers** and **2,019 employers**, supporting workforce connections across the province.

Work in Manitoba becomes official job board for CME

EDW's Talent & Workforce Development team partnered with Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) to make Work in Manitoba the official job board across CME's network. Now integrated into CME's Manufacturing is Hiring website and career fair materials, the platform enhances support for Manitoba's manufacturing employers and job seekers through coordinated outreach and shared resources.

Connecting with global talent before they land

In partnership with ACCES Employment's Pre-Arrival Services, EDW's Talent & Workforce Development team co-hosted the virtual Manitoba Professional Networking and Attraction Event, connecting local employers with skilled international talent approved for permanent residency.

Our team presented on Winnipeg's quality of life and job market, followed by a Q&A and networking session with around 70 global participants – many not yet in Canada.

Organizers reported strong interest in Winnipeg, with several attendees preferring it over the Greater Toronto Area.



VIA Rail Union Station
Winnipeg, MB





RBC Convention Centre
Winnipeg, MB

EDW in the news

Earned media coverage includes stories that position Winnipeg as an attractive destination for business investment.

In Q2, this included **132 articles**, some of which mention EDW and/or our initiatives, generating a total earned media value* of **of \$3.75 million**. Top headlines included:

Rendez-vous Canada revs economic engine | Aaron Epp, Winnipeg Free Press

Winnipeg Jets playoff run generates 'invaluable' free publicity for the city | Cameron Maclean, CBC Manitoba

U.S. visitors to Manitoba up in 1st quarter of 2025, bucking national trend: StatsCan | CBC Manitoba/ Yahoo News

* Earned media value (EMV) is a metric in marketing that calculates the value of publicity gained through promotional efforts rather than paid advertising. It measures the worth of media exposure obtained through channels like social media, press coverage, and word-of-mouth, estimating the equivalent cost of achieving the same exposure through paid ads.

Winnipeg in the news

Our Travel Media Program actively seeks out and collaborates with journalists, influencers and content creators to tell positive stories about Winnipeg and is key to attracting visitors. By securing impactful media coverage, we also help shape and influence how people perceive Winnipeg – highlighting its vibrancy, culture and unique experiences.

In Q2, this included **299 articles/media mentions**, some of which appear in different outlets, for a total earned media value* of **\$13.3 million**. Top headlines included:

Weekend in Winnipeg: Brunch, butterflies and a spa under the stars | Juanita Ng, Victoria Times Colonist

Canada's Best Summer Festivals: 2025 | hosted by travel expert Jennifer Weatherhead, promoting Folklorama on CTV's The Social

Our quick guide to LGBTQ2S+ Winnipeg | Paul Gallant, Pink Ticket Travel



Assiniboine River
Winnipeg, MB

Corporate Partnerships

Partner and investor funding committed YTD:

YES! Winnipeg investors

101

Investors committed
\$1,055,000

Team Winnipeg

37

Partners committed
\$325,500

EDW in our community

EDW in our community highlights the foundational local work that supports and amplifies our broader initiatives, which in turn enhances Winnipeg's profile. Our dedicated efforts within the community help fuel our success in promoting Winnipeg in all markets.

Sharing Winnipeg's story on a national stage

EDW's Talent & Workforce Development team co-presented with Patience Fairbrother, Senior Vice-President of Talent Attraction at Development Counsellors International, at the City Nation Place: Americas conference in Ottawa.

Their session, "How to win the talent war: Fresh research on how to attract U.S. and Canadian workers to your destination," spotlighted new data and strategies, while positioning Winnipeg within the broader conversation on attracting skilled workers across North America.

Showcasing industry opportunities at the International Education's annual conference

EDW's Talent & Workforce Development team organized and moderated a plenary at the Manitoba Council for International Education's Empowering Team Manitoba conference.

Representatives from Manitoba Aerospace, the Bioscience Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Agriculture and Tech Manitoba shared insights on workforce opportunities and challenges, especially for international students. The session equipped education stakeholders with sector-specific knowledge to better position Manitoba as a destination for learning and career growth.

Exploring global competitiveness at the 2025 Investor Breakfast

On May 8, EDW welcomed more than 280 attendees to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights for our 2025 Investor Breakfast. This year's event focused on exploring the topic of Winnipeg's global competitiveness with panelists sharing perspectives on investment and infrastructure.

The panel featured local business leaders: Brad Elias (Winnipeg Airports Authority), Chris Reiter (Focus Equities), Katie Hall Hursh (The McGill-Stephenson Company Limited), and Marty Maykut (Anvil Management & Price Industries Canada). The annual breakfast continues to serve as a key touchpoint with our investor community, reinforcing the value of local leadership in shaping Winnipeg's economic future.

Celebrating growth in aerospace manufacturing

On June 24, EDW joined industry partners for the official opening of a 12,000 sq. ft. expansion at Boeing Winnipeg's composite manufacturing plant—the largest of its kind in Canada.

The \$20-million investment includes a new 7,250 sq. ft. freezer for storing composite materials, nearly doubling the facility's cold storage capacity. The expansion reinforces Winnipeg's position as a hub for advanced aerospace manufacturing and innovation.





Our people

We celebrate the people who drive EDW forward, highlighting our commitment to continuous learning, community engagement, and the growth and development of our team.

Learning from leaders in Indigenous economic development

EDW welcomed Milton Tootosis, Chief Economic Reconciliation Officer with the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA), for a day of learning and discussion hosted by our Indigenous Advisory Council.

Tootosis met with EDW's Indigenous Advisory Council, executive committee, board member Stephen Borys and representatives from the City of Winnipeg, Government of Manitoba and USKE. Later that day, he joined CEO Ryan Kuffner and board member Dennis Meeches for a fireside-style conversation and Q&A with EDW staff, giving our team an opportunity to learn from SREDA's leadership in Indigenous economic development and reflect on how we can better support inclusive, community-led growth in Winnipeg.

Guest speaker: Charlie Eau, Trans Manitoba

On May 26, during Pride Week, EDW staff welcomed Charlie Eau, Executive Director of Trans Manitoba, as part of our commitment to inclusivity and community learning.

Charlie shared insights on supporting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and offered practical ways organizations like EDW can listen, learn and engage more meaningfully. The session followed staff attendance at the City of Winnipeg's Pride flag raising at City Hall the day before.

Spotlight feature: Planting seeds for global growth

How Winnipeg and Manitoba are competing for foreign investment

A three-year foreign direct investment (FDI) initiative led by Economic Development Winnipeg (EDW) wrapped in March 2025, marking a major step forward in putting Winnipeg and Manitoba on the global investment map.

Backed by more than \$5 million from Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan), the Government of Manitoba and EDW, the project focused on raising international awareness, attracting new investment and strengthening ties with foreign-owned businesses. With hundreds of new leads and deeper partnerships now in place, the effort is already reshaping how the world sees this region.

“We’ve gotten the attention of key markets and put Winnipeg and Manitoba on the global investment map,” says Alberto Velasco-Acosta, Vice President of International at EDW. “Now we need to keep that momentum going—and strengthen our position as a top destination for investment.”

Building a strategy and a team

When the FDI team was created in fall 2019, EDW faced a foundational challenge: Winnipeg and Manitoba were barely on the radar in international investment conversations. Under the leadership of Velasco-Acosta, the team adopted a new approach and a shift in mindset. That momentum accelerated with the arrival of Christine Perrin—now Director of FDI—who joined the team in February 2021 and is currently on maternity leave. Perrin played a key role in shaping the team’s

strategy. The COVID-19 pandemic, though initially a setback, became a turning point. “It gave us time to sharpen our strategy,” Perrin says. “We identified our target markets and articulated our value proposition to focus where Winnipeg could meaningfully compete.”

That groundwork helped secure federal funding, and by 2022, the project was up and running. With the financial support it needed, EDW’s FDI team grew from a small team of two investment attraction specialists to a market-divided team of 10 focused on North America, Europe, and the Indo-Pacific. Three strategic pillars guide the work:

- 1. Retain existing foreign-owned business** by engaging with their headquarters to ensure satisfaction and identify opportunities to expand their investments and operations in Winnipeg.
- 2. Attract new investors in target markets and priority economic sectors** by building and nurturing a funnel of qualified leads.
- 3. Show the world what sets Winnipeg and Manitoba apart**—our strengths, our advantages, and why this is the place to invest and do business

The region’s value proposition was packaged and promoted internationally, with the team engaging in proactive outreach, travelling to key cities, and relying less on traditional channels. “We wanted to fill the gap, not just react to what came to us,” Perrin says. “It was time to be in the driver’s seat and ramp up proactive investment attraction.”



From hidden gem to trusted partner

The shift from being unknown to becoming a credible player took intention, persistence and relationship-building – and that effort is still ongoing.

“We realized that no one was really talking about Winnipeg and Manitoba,” Velasco-Acosta explains. “The federal government lays the foundation for investment opportunities in Canada, but it’s up to each province to show up and pitch their specific value proposition for foreign investment.”

Ethan Kim, Senior Investment Officer at the Embassy of Canada to the Republic of Korea, in Seoul, echoed Velasco-Acosta’s sentiment. “My role is focused on convincing Korean companies to go to Canada,” Kim said. “In fact, the work that EDW is doing is comparable to the work I started here four years ago, when companies were only meaningfully considering America for FDI.”

Now that Kim has helped put Canada on the map, he’s enthusiastic about the collaborative effort between him and EDW to actively promote Manitoba. “We’re starting to see that companies are thinking of Winnipeg right alongside places like Vancouver and Toronto,” Kim said.

EDW's team built trust with international investors by being proactive and working closely with local partners like Kim. They took Winnipeg's story directly to the world—participating in 36 investment missions, trade shows, and events across more than 35 cities in 10 key markets.

Behind the headlines

Pahul Gill, FDI Manager at EDW, knows firsthand the persistence and nuance this work requires, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, where he's led outreach in key markets including Japan, South Korea, and Singapore.

Rather than relying on trade shows where they encountered language barriers, Gill's team opted for targeted outreach using research done by EDW's Market Intelligence team and tools like LinkedIn. "We looked at FDI imports and exports, trade balances, and geopolitical factors to find the right matches for Canada—and then Winnipeg and Manitoba," he says.

In markets like South Korea and Japan, relationships are essential. "It's not just about selling. You almost become an advisor," Gill notes. "You build trust with local staff at Canadian embassies and with businesses executives themselves. It takes time, and it's highly competitive. If you take your foot off the pedal, you disappear."

Building trust may feel intangible, but Kim helps describe how the effort goes a long way.

"Koreans are known to want answers right away, and we've come to count on EDW for super-fast responses," he said. On top of that, having EDW representatives such as Gill visit Korea regularly helps. "We've established a strong partnership," said Kim.

"We go to meetings and exhibitions together to tell a compelling story about the benefits of investing in Winnipeg and Manitoba."



"We're planting seeds. They're not ready to bloom yet, but we'll keep watering them."
-Alberto Velasco-Acosta

Alberto Velasco-Acosta and Christine Perrin
Economic Development Winnipeg

While competing for foreign investment with regions all over the world, EDW also explores other tactics to raise awareness and build relationships.

For example, during a gaming conference in San Francisco in March 2025, EDW hosted a business dinner featuring local success stories like Complex Games, who shared firsthand why Winnipeg is a great place to grow. The evening included a trip giveaway—won by a small gaming company from Romania, which recently visited the city.

From these touchpoints, interest has flourished. The lead funnel expanded from just 62 leads in Q1 2022 to more than 300 by the end of Q1 2025 resulting in 33 qualified opportunities. "We're planting seeds," says Velasco-Acosta. "They're not ready to bloom yet, but we'll keep watering them."

Leveraging the local ecosystem

No investment story is complete without a compelling offer, and CentrePort Canada is one of Winnipeg's greatest differentiators. According to Carly Edmundson, President & CEO of CentrePort Canada Inc., this inland port integrates trade, transportation, and infrastructure, enabling companies to build and move things better, faster, and cheaper.

"We have 20,000 acres of high-quality, affordable industrial land—the size of Manhattan," says Edmundson. "It includes on-site access to rail, truck and air cargo operations, residential and recreational amenities, and talent pipelines from local institutions like RRC Polytech. It's an unmatched ecosystem for private sector businesses."

CentrePort Canada Inc.'s mandate includes attracting investment to the inland port, often targeting companies looking for an ecosystem that helps them expand or streamline their manufacturing and distribution operations. "

As part of our broader efforts to grow Manitoba's economy, we work closely with organizations like EDW, the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba to strengthen our roles in business attraction—especially in foreign direct investment," Edmundson says. "That alignment builds confidence, and it shows in our results."

This coordinated approach has made CentrePort an invaluable partner in hosting site visits, crafting tailored business packages, and presenting a

holistic view of what the region offers— including the quality-of-life perks that matter to executives and their families.

Both Edmundson and Gill recall a recent visit from executives in Asia who initially thought Winnipeg was just “wheat fields.” After experiencing the city and seeing its infrastructure firsthand, their perceptions shifted. They recognized the attractiveness of Winnipeg as a place to operate, not only because they get access to development land and infrastructure, but also the appeal of being near a vibrant urban centre.

“That’s the power of storytelling and firsthand experience,” Gill says.

Lessons learned and the road ahead

The project team is quick to acknowledge that FDI is a long game. Sales cycles span years. Deals can stall with political shifts.

Misconceptions and low awareness of Winnipeg and Manitoba’s unique work and living conditions still exist. But the effort has already delivered one powerful result: Winnipeg is in the conversation.

“Success is that we’re in the room,” says Gill. “That wouldn’t be happening if we hadn’t done this work.” Velasco-Acosta echoed this milestone, adding, “We’re now seen as a partner worth referring.”

The team is now focused on maintaining momentum through strategic follow-ups, carefully chosen trips, and deepening partner engagement.

Key markets remain a priority: the UK, France, and Germany in Europe; Japan, South Korea, and Singapore in the Indo-Pacific; and ongoing engagement across North America.

“We’ve built the greenhouse, and our seedlings have taken root,” says Velasco-Acosta. “Now we have to tend the plants.” In a highly competitive landscape, this regular and intentional maintenance is critical to more success.

A blueprint for the future

What this initiative has proven is that a focused, collaborative, and proactive approach works. The ripple effects are just beginning. Perceptions are changing. And a global audience is starting to listen.

When EDW launches its new five-year strategy in November 2025, it’ll be clear how this FDI initiative has shaped and strengthened the organization’s strategic approach. The vision of Winnipeg and Manitoba as globally competitive, welcoming and ready for growth is no longer a dream. It’s becoming a reality, one relationship at a time.



Pahul Gill, Bram Strain, Ethan Kim,
Ryan Kuffner and Alberto Velasco-Costa
Winnipeg, May 2025



Q2 2025



ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
WINNIPEG



TOURISM
WINNIPEG



YES!
WINNIPEG