



WORK NW ALBERTA

GRANDE PRAIRIE-GREENVIEW CORRIDOR

FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING SECTOR PROFILE



If you are organizing a talent attraction campaign, presentation or hiring event, we've got some assets to help you.

Email us at **info@worknwalberta.ca** for information on accessing our photo and video library, research findings and market data. We're here to help.

WORK NW ALBERTA

GRANDE PRAIRIE-GREENVIEW CORRIDOR

Work Northwest Alberta - representing the Grande Prairie Greenview corridor - is poised for unprecedented growth and opportunity. By 2031 our region will need over 4,000+ skilled employees across key sectors such as Energy, Healthcare, Agriculture, Education, Logistics, and Transportation (Lightcast Analyst) to support and expand our thriving economy. Recognized as a northern economic powerhouse, our area serves a trade market of 300,000 and plays a vital role in contributing to both national and international markets.

The sector profile project was led by Work NW Alberta, a collaborative effort between the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District of Greenview, Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce, and Northwestern Polytechnic.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed their feedback, ideas and expertise to the study.

Please note that every effort has been made to use the most current data available. The following sources of information are used in this profile:

- Manifold Data Mining Inc. 2023/2024
- Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3
- IBIS World 2024 Industry Profiles



County of
Grande Prairie No. 1
Alberta, Canada



Municipal District of
GREENVIEW

NORTHWESTERN
POLYTECHNIC 

Chamber of
Commerce 
GRANDE PRAIRIE & DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

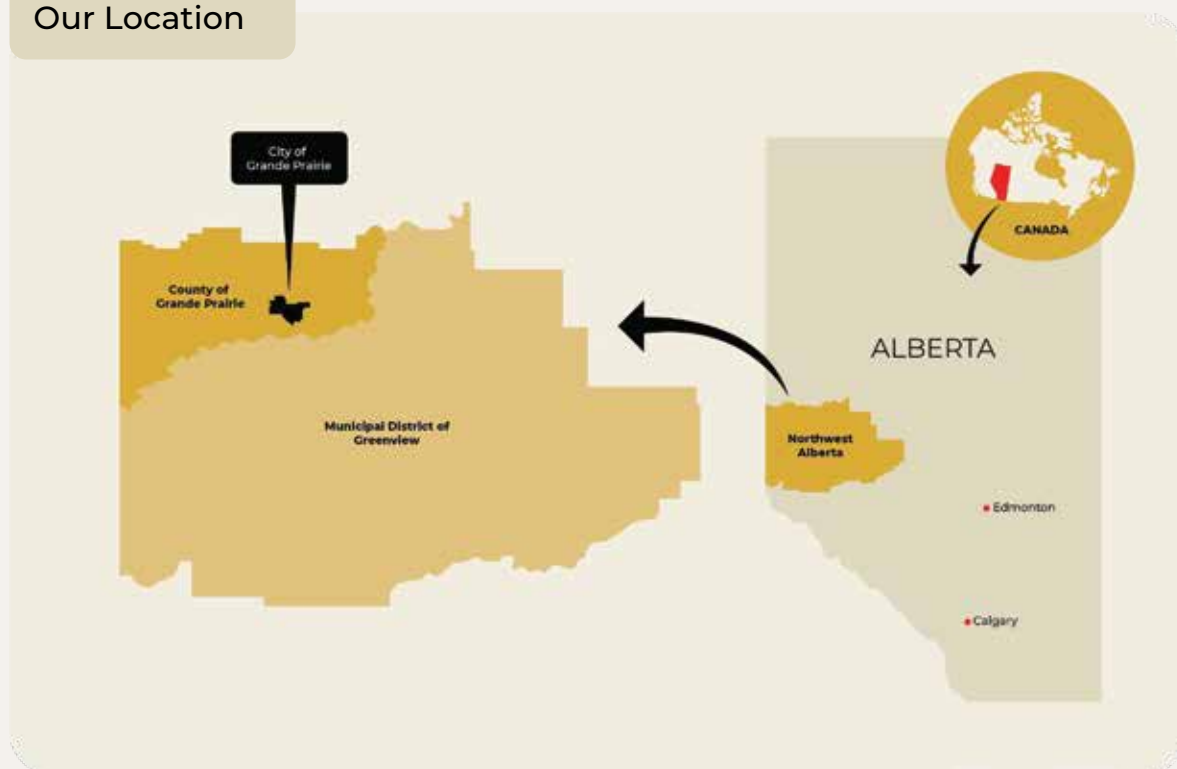
This profile offers comprehensive information about the forestry and wood manufacturing industries in the Northwest Alberta Region. It serves as a valuable resource, providing detailed data on business size, sector outlook, and cluster assets within the region.

This sector profile focuses on the Region consisting of the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District (MD) of Greenview, Town of Beaverlodge, Town of Sexsmith, Town of Wembley, Town of Fox Creek, Town of Valleyview, Greenview Co-ops and Enterprises, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, and Horse Lake First Nation. Any references to "Region" within this document refer to the custom region above.

The Region spans nearly 40,000 square kilometres and acts as a gateway and resource hub for northwestern Alberta. Its largest centre, the City of Grande Prairie, is located approximately 450 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. With a strong postsecondary institution, new hospital, skilled labour force, and significant business supports, opportunities abound within the Region.

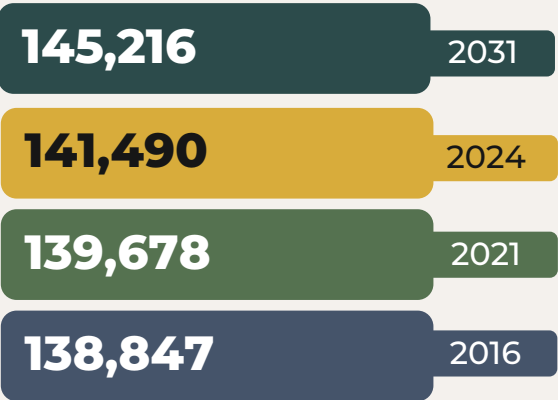
The forestry and wood product manufacturing industry employed 2,288 individuals in 2024 across 165 businesses in the Region. Employment is expected to increase by 141 jobs or 6% by 2031. The majority of the Region's businesses within this sector are small enterprises as 64% of businesses with employees, employ fewer than nine individuals.

Our Location



REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

POPULATION OF REGION, 2024



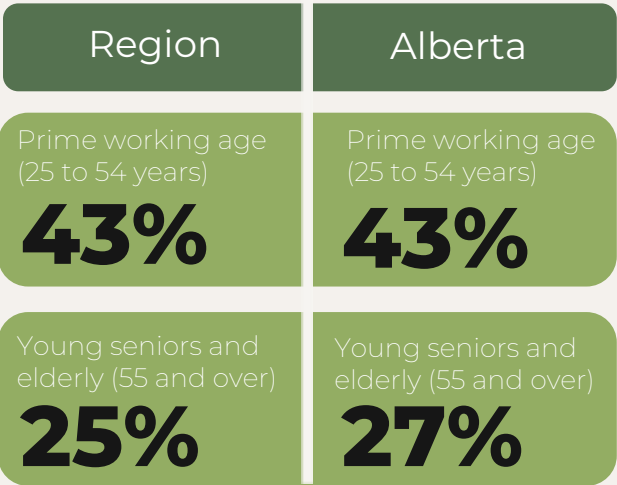
Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

Approximately 60% of the Region's population resides in the City of Grande Prairie.

The Region's population accounted for 80% of the total population in Census Division 18 and Census Division 19. The population in both Census Divisions is projected to increase 2% by 2031.

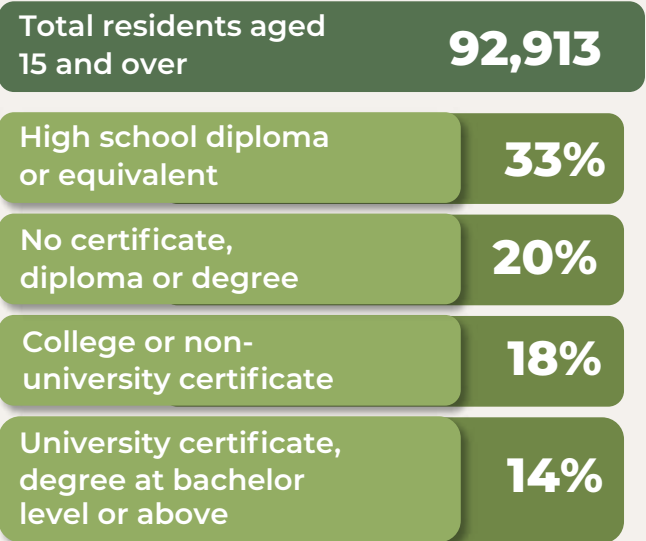


AGE OF POPULATION, 2024



Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR REGION RESIDENTS, AGED 15 AND OVER, 2024



Source: Manifold Data Mining, 2024

60%

of the Region's working
age population is within
the City of Grande Prairie

LABOUR FORCE STATUS FOR REGION RESIDENTS ,
2024

Labour Force Status	Region
Total population, Residents aged 15 and over	92,913
In the labour force	68,406
Employed	63,970
Unemployed	4,436
Not in the labour force	24,507

Source: Manifold Data Mining, 2024

TOP 5 FIELDS OF STUDY FOR REGION
RESIDENTS, AGED 15 AND OVER, 2024

13,666

Architecture, Engineering,
and Related Technologies



8,233

Business, Management,
and Public Administration



6,852

Health and Related Fields



3,264

Education



3,170

Personal, Protective and
Transportation Services



Source: Manifold Data Mining, 2024

AVERAGE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, 2024

PARTICIPATION RATE

74%

EMPLOYMENT RATE

69%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

6%

Source: Manifold Data Mining, 2024

ABOUT THE SECTOR

With rising construction activity and growing trade, the forestry and wood manufacturing industries are becoming increasingly important for the region. Subsectors within this field consist of logging, timber tract operations, manufacturers of wood products (e.g., veneer, plywood and engineered wood products, house-hold furniture and kitchen cabinets). This sector is a key generator of jobs and producer of goods exported outside the Region.

REGION SPECIFIC

The forestry and wood product manufacturing sector is heavily concentrated within the Region when compared to the rest of Alberta. Logging is the most common subsector in terms of total number of businesses within the Region with 61 total businesses, which represent 37% of all Regional businesses within this sector.

There are seven forestry and wood product enterprises within the Region that employ 100+ employees, across logging, support activities for forestry, sawmills and wood preservation, veneer, plywood and engineered wood product manufacturing, and pulp, paper and paperboard mills. Most businesses with known employee totals within this sector are small enterprises: 64% of businesses had between 1 and 9 employees. In total, the Region is home to 165 businesses within the forestry and wood product manufacturing sector.

FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES, 2024

Industries	Businesses
Logging	61
Support activities for forestry	33
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies merchant wholesalers	31
Other wood product manufacturing	12
Household and institutional furniture and kitchen cabinet manufacturing	12
Timber tract operations	5
Sawmills and wood preservation	4
Forest nurseries and gathering of forest products	3
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood product manufacturing	2
Pulp, paper and paperboard mills	2
TOTAL	165

Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

REGION SPECIFIC (Cont.)

Forestry and wood product manufacturing businesses in the Region employed 2,288 people in 2024, an increase of 195 positions since 2021. From 2024 to 2031 this sector is poised to continue its growth (projected increase of 141 net new jobs), increasing employment to 2,429 positions. Pulp, paper and paperboard mills is expected to have the largest increase in jobs by 14%. None of the other subsectors within this industry are expected to see large changes in total employment between 2024 and 2031, with no other subsector projected to see changes of more than 41 individuals.

FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED POSITIONS, 2021, 2024 AND 2031

Subsector	2021 Positions	2024 Positions	2031 Positions	Change 24'-31'	% Change
Timber tract operations	<10	14	20	6	43%
Forest nurseries and gathering of forest products	<10	<10	<10	N/A	N/A
Logging	560	531	525	-6	-1%
Support activities for forestry	35	83	90	7	8%
Sawmills and wood preservation	562	610	651	41	7%
Veneer, plywood and engineered wood product manufacturing	185	223	246	23	10%
Other wood product manufacturing	93	94	92	-2	-2%
Pulp, paper and paperboard mills	419	448	509	61	14%
Household and institutional furniture and kitchen cabinet manufacturing	33	47	50	3	6%
Lumber, millwork, hardware and other building supplies merchant wholesalers	198	235	243	8	3%
TOTAL	2,093	2,288	2,429	141	6%

Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3
 Note: Job totals per subsector may not add up to total number of positions within the broader sector due to methodological rounding





Though many positions within this sector are specialized, other occupations such as accounting technicians and bookkeepers; heavy equipment operators; and transport truck drivers directly support the forestry and wood product manufacturing sector. These positions illustrate how sector businesses employ a range of individuals with diverse skillsets. The occupations in the table below are the top occupations based on total staffing patterns within the Region. The associated wages are listed for the occupation regardless of the sector of work.

FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING AVERAGE WAGES (REGARDLESS OF SECTOR OF WORK) PER OCCUPATION, 2023

Occupations	Average Wages
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	\$87,505.60
Logging machinery operators	\$61,085.44
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	\$88,649.60
Pulp mill, papermaking and finishing machine operators	\$102,348.37
Heavy equipment operators	\$68,411.20
Power engineers and power systems operators	\$120,850.38
Sawmill machine operators	\$84,020.14
Transport truck drivers	\$69,742.40
Woodworking machine operators	\$71,990.27
Material handlers	\$53,664.56

Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

SECTOR DATA

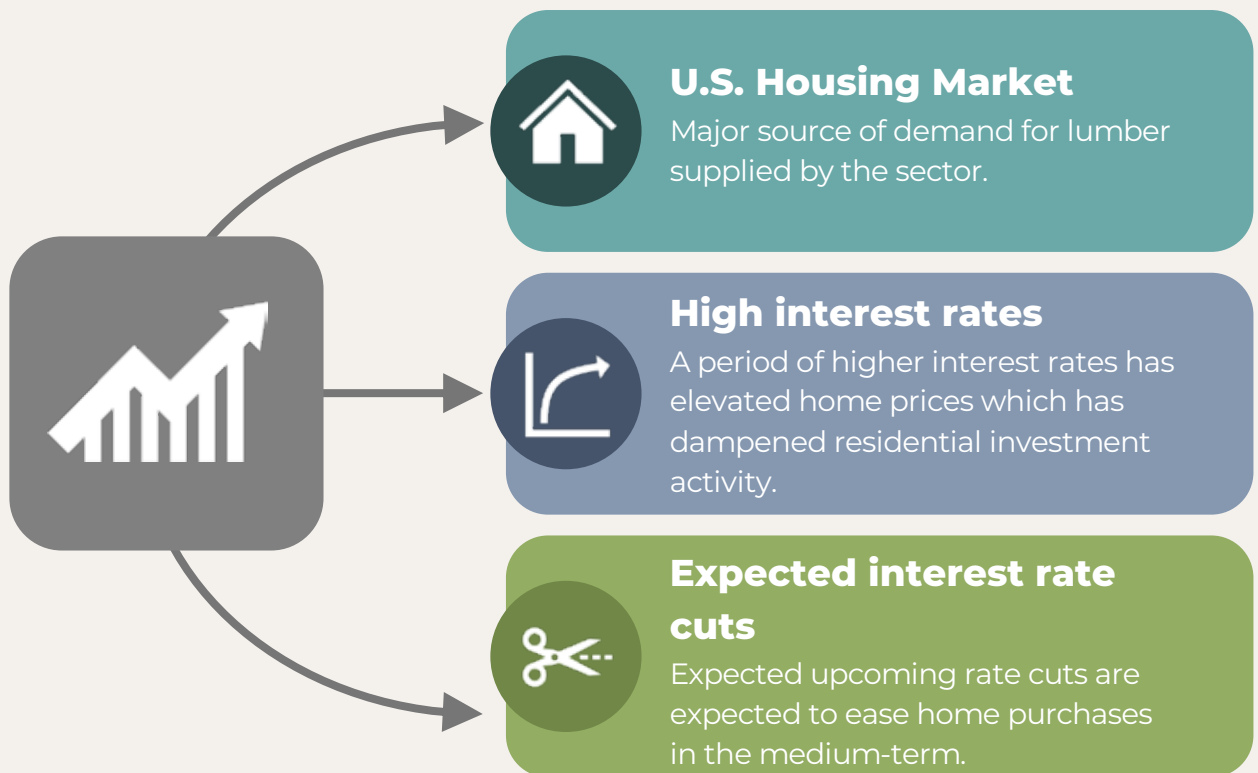
FUTURE OUTLOOK OF THE SECTOR

The future of forestry in Alberta is characterized by a focus on sustainable practices, technological innovation, and adaptation to a changing climate, with the industry poised to remain a key economic driver and a vital resource for the province. The industry is embracing innovative technologies, including GPS and drones for mapping and planning, and developing new products like engineered wood and biofuels.

The future of Alberta's forestry sector is promising, with opportunities for growth and innovation, particularly in sustainable practices and green technologies. The forestry sector will face future challenges like market volatility and environmental concerns.

KEY DRIVERS OF DEMAND

Factors determining national demand for the forestry and wood product manufacturing sector can be broken into three categories.



KEY SUPPLIERS TO THE SECTOR



Wholesales and Upstream Manufacturers

Including machinery, agricultural, and plastic and resin manufacturing

Source IBISWorld – 11331CA – Logging in Canada and 32111CA – Sawmills & Wood Production in Canada

KEY BUYERS TO THE SECTOR



Downstream Mills

Including paper mills, sawmills, wood production and wood paneling



Downstream Manufacturers

Including laminated and coated paper, paper product, furniture manufacturing and construction

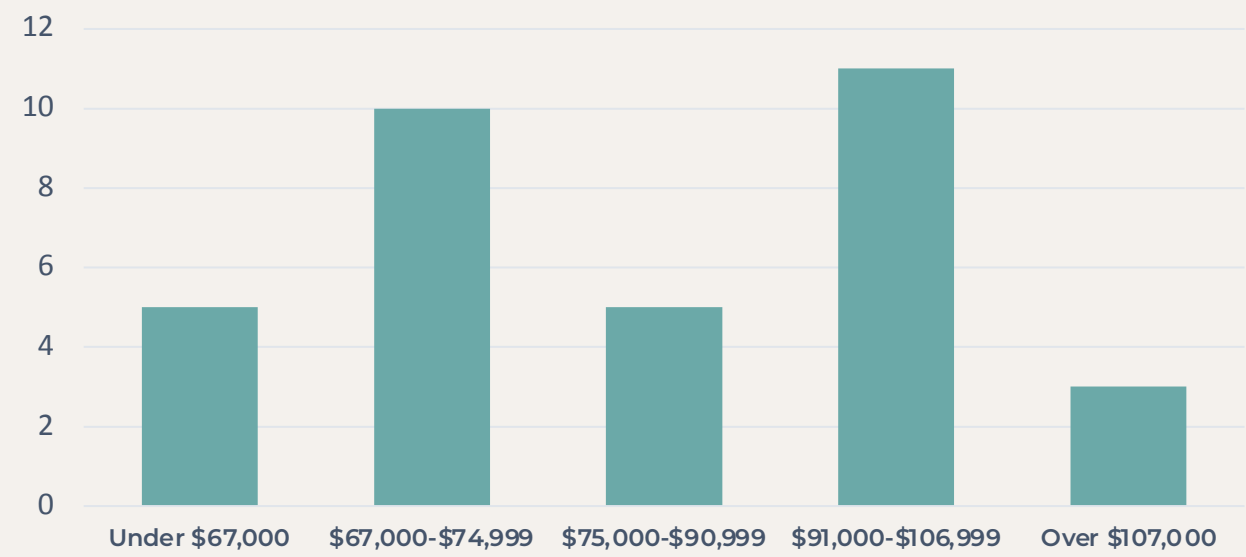
Source IBISWorld – 11331CA – Logging in Canada and 32111CA – Sawmills & Wood Production in Canada

JOB POSTING DATA

Between January and December 2024, the Region saw 104 unique job postings within the forestry and wood product manufacturing sector. Of the jobs posted during this period, 34 had advertised salaries. Those 34 postings had a median advertised salary of \$77,100 with 35.3% offering a salary above \$99,000.

The top occupations by number of job postings in the chemical product manufacturing sector are construction millwrights and industrial mechanics, other labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities, and supervisors, other products manufacturing and assembling.

JOB POSTINGS BY SALARY, JANUARY – DECEMBER 2024, REGION



Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

TOP OCCUPATIONS BY NUMBER OF JOB POSTINGS, JANUARY – DECEMBER 2024



12

Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics



7

Other labourers in processing, manufacturing and utilities



5

Supervisors, other products manufacturing and assembly

Source: Lightcast Analyst, Datarun 2024.3

COMMUNITY ASSETS SUPPORTING THE SECTOR/CLUSTER

Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce is the voice for business and community betterment in the Region. As one of the provinces largest chambers, they focus on empowering businesses and fostering opportunities for their members.
www.grandeprairiechamber.com

Grande Prairie Regional Innovation Network serves innovators, entrepreneurs and companies in Northwestern Alberta with resources, knowledge and connections to launch innovations in connection with the broader Alberta innovation ecosystem.
gprin.ca

Community Futures Grande Prairie and Region offers businesses support from first steps through to growth stages. This includes information on how to start a business, developing business plans, financing loans, marketing and feasibility studies.
grandeprairie.albertacf.com

Women Building Futures offers programs and support services to help unemployed and underemployed women explore and connect to careers that pay a living wage. Employment training programs provide the introductory skills to begin a new careers in trades, trucking and related fields.
womenbuildingfutures.ca

ATB Entrepreneur Centre supports businesses through business-to-business networking, connections and workshops.
atbentrepreneurcentre.com

For information on other Community and Training Assets, please contact the project partners.

REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Alberta's forest products are some of the highest-quality in the world. The province's forest sector relies on sustainable practices with an eye towards long term forest and ecosystem management. The Region is one of the top two Alberta regions for the production of forest products, is first for employment in the forest sector, and is one of the leading producers of panelboard as well as pulp and paper.

Most unique about the Region is that there are few places in the world with such a concentration of leading forestry companies. The following five world-class facilities operate within the Region, representing the single-largest hub for forestry in Alberta:

- **West Fraser** is the largest lumber producer and the largest OSB producer in world.
- **Weyerhaeuser** is one of the largest forestry companies in the world.
- **Canfor** is the second largest lumber producer in world.
- **International Paper (IP)** is the largest pulp producer in world.
- **Dunkley Lumber- Foothills Forest Products Division** has an annual production capacity of 120 million board feet of SPF lumber.



TRAINING ASSETS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT SUPPORT THE SECTOR/CLUSTER

TRAINING ASSETS SPECIFIC TO REGION



Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP) has a wide array of forestry and wood product manufacturing sector-related diplomas and certificate programs. Students can develop skills and knowledge in various productive pathways including the Parts and Materials Technician certificate, and the ThinkBIG (Heavy Equipment) Service Technician program in unique partnership with Caterpillar Inc. and Finning (Caterpillar's largest dealership worldwide).

Sector-related Apprenticeships provide hands-on Heavy Equipment Technician, Welder, and Carpenter experience while NWP's Continuing Education offerings include Equipment Operator Training, and Class 1 Driver Training.

nwpolytech.ca



ThinkBIG



Heavy Equipment
Technician



Class 1 Driver
Training

TRAINING ASSETS SPECIFIC TO REGION (CONT.)

CAREERS: The Next Generation is an industry led non-profit organization that brings together industry, schools, governments, and communities to guide youth into successful career paths. Youth get the opportunity to test drive in-demand occupations in skilled trades, forestry, information and communications technology, agriculture and healthcare. Companies benefit by attracting local talent and bringing youthful energy to their industry.

careersnextgen.ca

The Rupertsland Institute supports the well-being of Métis in Alberta through job matching, training partnerships with NWP, access to technology and internet, online counselling tools, information on local services, employers and careers, and self-employment workshops.

rupertsland.org

Montney Riverstone Tribal Council is the service provider for the **Indigenous Skills Employment and Training (ISET) Program** in the Montney Riverstone Tribal Council area. ISET is designed to help members improve their skills and find employment through training and skills development. The program helps the community members find employment and polish employment skills. Funded through Service Canada, it gives members the skills required to find employment and fill job gaps.

montneyriverstone.ca

Northern Lakes College (NLC) provides a supported distance learning environment with two locations in the Region. NLC offers Business and Administrative Studies. Continuing Education and Corporate Training programs include Asset Management Professional and Maintenance Management Professional certificates.

northernlakescollege.ca

For information on other Community and Training Assets, please contact the project partners.

Data Disclaimer

- The data has been rounded to the sum of all subcategories to minimize discrepancies caused by margin of error.
- The information presented in this report may not precisely match the data collected or developed by each individual community.
- To maintain privacy due to small population samples, data for some communities have been suppressed by Statistics Canada and economic modeling tools. These instances are represented with "<10".
- Occupational wages and median advertised salaries for the sector are two distinct values. Occupational wages reflect the average wage by occupation based on the latest available data (2023). In contrast, the median advertised salary represents the median value of job postings in the sector that included compensation data for the period between January and December 2024.

WORK NW ALBERTA

GRANDE PRAIRIE-GREENVIEW CORRIDOR

**MAKE A GREAT LIVING.
LIVE A GREAT LIFE.**

**CONNECT WITH US TO HELP
IDENTIFY, RECRUIT AND GROW
YOUR TALENT POOL.**



info@worknwalberta.ca



www.worknwalberta.ca



FORESTRY AND WOOD PRODUCT MANUFACTURING SECTOR PROFILE

WORK NW ALBERTA



Northwest Alberta (2024 Profile Summary)

Overview: The forestry sector in this region is a vital economic engine, producing wood, paper, furniture, and engineered materials. With a high concentration of major industry players, it is Alberta's top region for forest product employment and output.

KEY FACTS



Sector Employment (2024):
2,288 individuals



Projected Employment (2031):
2,429 (▲6% or 141 jobs)



Total Businesses:
165 (64% employ fewer than 9 people)

ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

- Main sector drivers are the U.S. housing market (main lumber buyer), Interest rate trends affecting construction.
- Adoption of GPS, drones, and engineered materials, and sustainability and climate adaptation strategies.
- 104 career postings with a median salary of \$77,100; 35% advertised over \$99,000.
- Key supporting occupations include millwrights, supervisors, equipment operators.

WAGES (2023 AVERAGES)

\$102,348

Pull mill operators



\$61,085

Logging machinery operators



\$87,506

Millwrights/Mechanics



\$69,742

Truck Drivers



MAJOR SUB-SECTORS:



Logging,
Sawmills,
Engineered
wood products



Pulp and paper,
Forest nurseries,
Cabinet and
furniture
manufacturing



Wholesalers for
lumber and
building
materials

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Advanced technologies like GPS and drones is improving efficiency and enabling innovation

High global demand continues to drive production and exports

Interest rate fluctuations impacts construction demand in key export markets

COMMUNITY & TRAINING ASSETS



Institutions:

Northwestern Polytechnic,
Northern Lakes College



Programs:

Heavy Equipment, Welding,
Class 1 Driver Training



Support Networks:

Home to global leaders –
West Fraser, Weyerhaeuser,
Canfor, IP, Dunkley

SPECIAL FEATURE

Alberta's forestry sector is recognized for its high-quality products and commitment to sustainable practices. The Region leads the province in sector employment

Scan for an
Audio Overview!

