



NEWS RELEASE
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**WCB's 2008 Annual General Meeting
Focuses on Eliminating Work Injuries**

Regina, Saskatchewan – The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) today announced Mission: Zero, a series of safety and prevention programs and an advertising campaign intended to reach the WCB's goal of eliminating work injuries.

The announcement was made by WCB Chairperson David Eberle at the WCB's 14th Annual General Meeting, held in Regina.

"Eliminating work injuries is an ambitious goal. I recognize that. But it is doable," Eberle told the nearly 100 people attending the meeting.

Despite making significant reductions in recent years, Saskatchewan continues to have the second highest work injury rate in Canada. At 3.80 per cent, the rate is also significantly higher than the national average. The rate means that about 4 out of every 100 workers covered by the WCB had an injury in 2007 that kept them away from work.

"The WCB receives nearly 200 reports of work injuries every working day of every week. The number we should be aiming for is zero," Eberle said. "Mission: Zero keeps us, our stakeholders, our partners, and the general public focused on the prize – zero work injuries."

Mission: Zero will be delivered as part of **WorkSafe Saskatchewan**, the WCB's injury prevention partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Those attending the AGM also learned that the WCB ended 2007 with a \$130 million surplus. WCB Chief Executive Office Peter Federko noted that the surplus resulted from higher than expected premium revenue and advantageous investment decisions made early in 2007.

“The operating surplus allowed us to fully replenish our reserves and restore our Injury Fund to a healthy surplus,” Federko reported to the meeting. “This allowed us to remove a \$0.10 levy from the 2008 premium rate, 10 years earlier than planned.”

Federko noted the levy had been introduced to offset a series of operating deficits brought about by poor investment markets in the earlier part of this decade.

Meeting participants also learned that claim and administration costs were stable in 2007, the number of Time Loss injuries continued to decline, the days paid per Time Loss claim dropped for the sixth consecutive year, and that customer satisfaction ratings with WCB services remain high.

The strong 2007 performance represents the balance the WCB aims to achieve with Saskatchewan workers and employers, according to Eberle.

“Employers and workers want the same thing when a work injury happens, and that is the right service and the right program that helps that worker recover and return to work,” Eberle stressed. “Our 2007 results show that we are meeting those expectations while keeping a prudent approach to system costs.”

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The Workers' Compensation Board is a provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors and funded by employers. Saskatchewan's workers' compensation system was adopted in 1930. At that time, the Workmen's Compensation Act made into law what is known as *the historic compromise*: employers became collectively liable for workers' compensation costs and, in return, workers waived their right to sue. Today, the WCB's 34,000 registered employers are assessed among the lowest premiums in Canada and Saskatchewan's over 350,000 covered workers receive one of the best benefit packages in the country.