

THE BATTLEFORDS

The City of North Battleford and the Town of Battleford are situated on the Yellowhead Highway in the central northwest area of the province, located approximately 140 km northwest of Saskatoon and 137 km southeast of Lloydminster and the Alberta border at the intersections of TransCanada Highway 16, and secondary Highways 4 and 40. With a combined population of just over 23,000, the Battlefords' region is the province's seventh largest metropolitan community with a trading area of approximately 62,000. The population of the Battlefords saw a moderate but steady growth up until the mid-1980s then stabilized. Actual statistics show a 4% decline in population between 2001 and 2006 and an increase of 6.3% between 2006 and 2011. The most recent statistics indicate a 4.5% increase in population between the 2011 and 2016 census numbers. According to city officials, job creation and building construction permits were the highest in 20 years as of 2015.

CITY MAP



The local economy is heavily influenced by the agricultural, mining and oil field industries, both of which can have significant fluctuations due to world market conditions. According to Stats Canada, health care and social services (17%) make up the largest known industry followed by retail trade (14%), business services (11%), educational services (9%) and manufacturing (7%). Due to the range and availability of amenities, the Battlefords has become a central transportation and service hub for several surrounding communities.

The Government of Saskatchewan announced a new hospital to replace the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford and a hospital integrated correctional facility as a P3 procurement model. The new facility includes 188-bed replacement (156-bed existing) and a 96-room correctional facility that will house both male and female offenders. Construction on the new facility began mid 2015 and is expected to be completed in late 2018. The facility is being constructed on existing hospital grounds near the current hospital building.

The Gold Eagle Casino has become significant to North Battleford's economy. The casino reportedly attracts \$12 million tourist dollars a year to the City and is a major employer with nearly 300 workers. The Battlefords Tribal Council is proposing construction of several facilities near the casino. The Gold Eagle Lodge and Event Centre was completed in 2013.

The City constructed a four component multi-purpose facility known as the Credit Union CuPlex in late 2012. The facility has a performing arts centre that seats 374 people, a field house with both a turf and rubberized field, a curling centre with six sheets of ice and an indoor aquatic centre with two waterslides, steam room, wave pool, lazy river and a 25 metre competition pool.

The level of construction is a good measure of economic activity. The total value of building permits in 2017 was \$17,570,310 on 117 permits, which indicates a decrease in the number of permits granted with a slight decrease in value from 2016. In 2016, the total value of building permits was \$17,784,400 on 140 permits, a roughly \$215,000 dollar difference. Construction activity in the commercial and industrial sectors include projects such as the new hotel construction on Carlton Trail, the new Saskatchewan Psychiatric Hospital, continuing construction in the Battleford West subdivision and various other commercial projects.

North Battleford contains two industrial hubs. Parsons Industrial Park is located adjacent to Trans Canada Highway 16 located southeast of the City along its boundary. McMillan Industrial Park is adjacent to Territorial Drive off of Railway Avenue and McMillan Drive located north east of the City. The industrial parks provide a variety of agricultural and heavy industrial services. The CN rail system intersects Parsons Industrial Park and links North Battleford's business and industry with major container-ports in eastern, central and western Canada.

The development of a gas-fired electrical power generating station near the community has created construction and permanent employment. Northland Power Inc. in agreement with SaskPower constructed the North Battleford Energy Centre, a \$700 million gas-fired power station. Construction started in the spring of 2010, with the facility operational in June 2013. This facility maintains 25 to 30 full-time jobs to operate. SaskPower also constructed a smaller facility within City Limits.

Retail and commercial services are varied in North Battleford. There are two shopping centres, the Territorial Mall in the northwest quadrant of the city and the Frontier Mall on the Yellowhead Highway in the southeast. Wal-Mart Super Center has a freestanding store just to the north of the Frontier Mall. Canadian Tire, Peavey Mart, Staples, Shoppers Drug Mart, Sportchek and No Frills are all part of these malls.

Home Hardware expanded its retail space by approximately 25,000 square feet in late 2015. Marks Work Warehouse opened a new store in this area as well. The southeast sector of the city is now well established as the commercial hub for North Battleford.

Vacancy in the central core area is slightly higher than in the suburban areas. Many of the older buildings in the central core have not seen any renovation or upgrading for years. Some of the retail-oriented businesses left to the peripheral mall locations or to strip retail locations on major traffic arteries. A downtown revitalization has commenced with the demolition of some existing properties for the development of the "King Street Station". This project is hoped to eventually see a number of buildings, both office and retail developed around a central square area. The first building constructed was an 11,000 sq.ft. Liquor Board store which was opened in 2000.

Emergency services are readily available with a local RCMP detachment, fire department, ambulance services, and a modern hospital with an intensive care unit. Social facilities include K-12 schools, the Northwest Regional College, parks, as well as recreational facilities for hockey, swimming, curling, golf and other sports. The Battlefords Provincial Park and Table Mountain Regional Park provide good fishing, hunting and skiing within an 80 km radius. Recreational facilities have received significant enhancement with the construction of the newly developed Credit Union CuPlex complete with Aquatic Centre, Performing Arts Theatre, Curling Centre, and Field House.

In summary, the outlook for the city is stable at this time. Growth in the value-added agricultural, manufacturing and retail sectors solidify the Battlefords as the trading centre for the central northwest, a trend expected to continue, particularly regarding recent oil and gas activity. The area has felt the effects of slumping oil prices but to a lesser degree than other communities. Demand for housing has followed the provincial trend with 240 sales in 2017 at an average sale price of \$225,357, down from 281 sales at \$220,133 in 2016. An increase in the establishment of job creating industrial companies in the community continues to sustain the momentum that has been generated in past years.