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Gov't plans youth summit

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The StarPhoenix

Saturday, December 09, 2006

The provincial government is hoping to get young people to answer the million-dollar question -- what does it take to stay in Saskatchewan? Premier Lorne Calvert announced Friday that a provincial youth summit has been planned for Feb. 2 and 3 in Saskatoon.

He said people between the ages of 19 and 30 will have an opportunity to meet with politicians and industry leaders.

The summit is intended as a forum for discussion about the province's future, and marks another attempt by the provincial government to retain and attract young people to the province, Calvert said.

"If we are going to encourage young people to stay, or to come home . . . then we need to show these people we are a youth-friendly province. What better way to do that than to consult directly with young people?" The summit is the second in recent years to address the province's future, and it's the first to target young people.

Calvert said the government is hoping to attract about 300 people from all backgrounds and industries, particularly immigrants and First Nations youth.

Randell Morris, vice-president of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute for Technologies (SIIT), said the summit is a great idea. He is especially pleased the event will reflect the changing face of Saskatchewan.

"Our First Nations and aboriginal kids are some of the next front-runners," said Morris. "Whatever SIIT can do to promote this, we will." Michelle Hugli, editor of Shout magazine, is also promoting the summit. Her magazine is aimed at on-reserve youth, and she is hoping to motivate them to attend.

"(The summit) is a great idea," said Hugli. "I think people see the value in investing in our youth in the province, but I think a strong effort needs to be made to listen to what they say." Adam, a mechanical engineering student at SIAST Kelsey campus, who didn't want his last name used, said he was interested in attending the summit.

But he said he was getting tired of the retention campaign.

"Those things don't really work," he said. "I'm not sure if they touch on the issues that are involved in keeping people in Saskatchewan . . . jobs, money." Adam thought it was about time the provincial government asked young people their opinions, but didn't think many of his friends would want to go.

More information about the summit can be found at www.saskyouthsummit.ca.

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