



Matrixvisa Inc.

www.matrixvisa.com

Immigration Law and International Recruitment

Newsletter: 20 December 2009

Visit to South Africa

I will be in South Africa from Sunday 24 Jan until Saturday 6 Feb 2010. I could be reached on 082-486-1806, however appointments need to be made in advance please.

Immigration news (IMPORTANT !)

Immigration Policy

We receive many inquiries about interested skilled professionals wanting to immigrate to Canada. Interested parties are reminded to read the newsletters from 23 Jan 2008: To be eligible to emigrate applicants must have at least 12 months experience in one of 38 listed occupations; or a permanent job offer from a Canadian Employer; or 12 months working or studying experience in Canada.

Apparently Citizenship and Immigration Canada are receiving 2000 applications per week in the Federal Skilled Worker Class (or 110 000 per annum), but the quota is just roughly 65 000 per annum. Therefore it is expected that immigration policy will become more restrictive sooner than later. Applicants are urged to submit their cases as soon as possible. The list of 38 occupations might change, points might increase, and experience requirements might be increased. Some of my peers believe that the list of 38 occupations will be abolished.

Citizenship

Once an immigrant has been in Canada for 36 months they are eligible to apply for Citizenship after passing their Citizenship test. Here is the new study material for the Citizenship tests

<http://www.matrixvisa.com/pages/forms/CitizenshipStudyGuide-new.pdf> (2,3 Megabytes)

The old Citizenship study material is available here:

<http://www.matrixvisa.com/pages/forms/CitizenshipStudyGuide-new.pdf>

New immigrants should consider reading both study guides even before they arrive as will provide them with an improved understanding of Canada and its people.

Vancouver: 604-395-0801 604-648-8216 (F), 701 West Georgia St, Suite 1500, Vancouver, BC, V7Y 1C6, Canada
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Saskatoon: 306-683-9606
Calgary: 403-441-2706, 403-206-7781 (F)
South Africa: 087-750-0341, 086-686-4650 (F)

The Economy

The Canadian cel phone manufacturer, *RIM (Research in Motion Ltd)*, also the manufacturer of the BlackBerry phone has started to sell its phones in China.

In *November 79 000 jobs* were created in Canada with 27 000 jobs being created in Ontario of which 21 000 were created in The Greater Toronto Area.

The *Russian Central Bank* made an announcement in November to keep its foreign reserves in Canadian Dollar as part of their strategy to diverse it`s foreign exchange holdings away from the US dollar.

The *Canadian Dollar* has hovered at about USD0,95 for many weeks. This prompted Canadians to shop in the US over weekends to buy US goods with our strong Canadian dollar. After arriving back from the USA, ensure you declare everything and that you know your tax exemptions.

The website of the *Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)* shows the following import tax exemptions when permanent residents return from foreign visits (including the USA):

- After each absence of 24 hours or more: Residents can claim up to CAN\$50 worth of goods per person without paying any duties.
- After each absence of 48 hours or more: Residents can claim up to CAN\$400 worth of goods per person without paying any duties.
- After each absence of 7 days or more: Residents can claim up to CAN\$750 worth of goods per person without paying any duties.

To calculate the number of days you have been absent, do not include the date you left Canada but include the date you returned.

Oil Industry

It is well known that Alberta has the world`s second largest oil reserves in the world. It is interesting to note that due to technological changes many other oil fields are being developed and are growing strong. In Saskatchewan the Bakken Oil Field are now producing 65 000 barrels of oil per day (75 % of this oil field stretches into Montana and North Dakota and 25 % is located in Saskatchewan). It can also be mentioned that Saskatchewan produces 425 000 barrels of conventional oil per day.

Price estimated in 1999 that the Bakken Oil Field contained between 271 and 503 billion barrels of petroleum, with 413 billion barrels the most likely amount. That compares with 125 billion barrels at the massive Ghawar field in Saudi Arabia, 7.8 billion at Alberta's Pembina Cardium and 21.4 billion for the entire U.S. reserves, not including the Bakken.

Importance of Credit Score

The Financial Service Commission of Ontario (FSCO) has found that a low credit score will lead to higher home and car insurance rates. The reason: 94% of 34 insurance companies that was part of the study are of the opinion that a credit score is a good indication of future losses and subsequent claims.

Immigrants can also ensure a higher credit score if they split their credit card debt over many cards and not just on one card. A single credit card with a high balance (close to the maximum) is therefore a risk that has a negative effect on one's score. It is also a good idea to pay more than the minimum payment if possible, and never pay after the due date.

Political News

Citizens and permanent residents can learn more about our political representatives by starting to navigate to the website of parliament: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

People can also click on the links called "*Today's meetings*" under Senate and House of Commons which is located under "*Committee Business*" on the lower left section of the home page. There one can view a real-time online video of the committee's business. Today we are watching an online streamed video about the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Immigration where the Minister of Immigration is answering questions about his ministry.

Our *Prime Minister, Mr. Stephen Harper* has just returned from well publicized official visits to China and India. The expectation is that uranium exports to India will increase and tourism from China will also benefit the Canadian tourism industry.

The media are further swamped by articles about the war in *Afghanistan* and about accusations that the officials in the Canadian government knew that Taliban fighters that was caught and handed over to the Afghanistan government would be tortured.

Our soldiers continue to die in the war in Afghanistan with the number dead now being 129 soldiers.

It was recently announced that the *Queen of England* (our Head of State) will visit Canada next year (2010) for the 23rd time. This again sparked the debate if we should remain part of the Commonwealth or become a Republic with a non-monarchical head of state such as a president. The debate will continue and the status quo will remain for decades. The queen is only a figurative Head of State as we have a Governor General (Ms. Michaëlle Jean) whom represents

the Queen. What most do not know is that King George signed a document called Letters Patent which allows the Governor General to make all decisions without referring back to the Queen or King in the United Kingdom. For the past 50 years most of the Governor Generals have been Canadians as well.

Science news

Canada has participated in one of the world's most advanced science projects, the \$10 billion atom collider in France (See www.cern.ch/). It is the 27 km long tunnel where protons are collided against one another close to the speed of light. Canada's contribution was the development of a 7 000 ton particle detector and spend roughly CAD200 million in the process.

Social Policy

One of the issues being discussed in the media is the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP)

More can be read about CPP here: <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/isp/cpp/cpptoc.shtml> and here http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_Pension_Plan

In essence is that the CPP will pay benefits of 25% of annual earnings (up to CAD46 300) up to a maximum of CAD10 600 (CAD = Canadian Dollars) per annum. Some suggest that the annual pension should be double to at least 50% and some even suggest 70% of annual earnings. This is especially important since a view of large companies such as Nortel declared bankruptcy in Canada and the fact that many Canadians are not or cannot prepare enough for their retirement. Only 25% of Canadians working for private companies have private pension plans (or single employer defined contribution savings plans). It was also reported that Ontario is planning its own mega pension scheme.

Education

Most apprenticeship programs in Canada require an apprentice to work for 10 months and go to college of 2 months every year. A college in Toronto - the Centennial College have a new program where apprentices work from Monday to Thursday and attend College on Friday's (See <http://www.centennialcollege.ca/>)

The children of immigrants should give an apprenticeship a serious consideration. The Conference Board of Canada has reported the shortages of skilled workers in Ontraio will be as follows:

- 190 000 skilled workers by 2020
- 364 000 skilled workers by 2025
- 564 000 skilled workers by 2030

Consumer Stuff

The Canadian government approved another cell phone provider, called Wind Mobile (<http://www.windmobile.ca/>) Before obtaining a cell phone do look at the offerings of Wind Mobile. Wind Mobile is going to start its service in Toronto and Calgary

Favourite Pastimes



The Yooper Crawler

Depending where immigrants land there is wide verity of activities in all the seasons. Summer and winter fishing are favourite pastimes. Although I have never gone ice fishing, it is apparently a lot of fun. Although most people make their own fishing huts, one could buy the “Mercedes” of ice huts from a company called “Yooper Crawler” More can be seen here

<http://www.yoopercrawler.com/>



Summer fishing is what our family does every year. Here is our son, Walter, with a Bass that he caught on 8 July 2009 at Six Mile Like in Ontario.



Fishing gear can be bought at Canadian Tire Stores or Walmart at very affordable prices. In most provinces children under 18yrs do not need a fishing license but once a person is older than 18 you will need one.

Real Estate News & Mortgages (Bonds)

A strategist, Mr. David Rosenburg, recently wrote an article in the Globe and Mail and he predicted a real estate bubble as the prices of homes is 15-25% higher than it should be in relation to personal income. The prices are just too high and it is expected to burst. This downturn might be prompted by an increase in interest rates.

According to the Real Estate Magazine (see www.canadianrealestatemagazine.ca) mortgages are currently available from 2, 25% to 7%. Closed Variable mortgages are lower and Open Fixed is higher. In Canada, reference is made to the term “mortgage”, not a “bond.”

We have asked an expert, **Jacques Du Preez**, to explain the different type of mortgages that are available:

Amortization (The time a borrower takes to pay off his mortgage) periods for Canadian mortgages are divided into terms. The *mortgage term* is a contract period between the mortgage lender and borrower which determines the mortgage interest rate, rate/term type and mortgage conditions for a certain period of time. These are called the *mortgage conditions* and they are usually decided by the borrower according to the perceived financial market conditions and personal goals that the borrower plans to achieve by the end of the mortgage term. The end of the mortgage term is called the *maturity date* and at that time the borrower is free to pursue a different mortgage lender with different mortgage conditions.

The *rate/term type combination* is a very important part of the mortgage conditions and if not chosen carefully could cost a borrower a significant amount in penalties if the mortgage is prepaid in full before the maturity date.

There are essentially two *Rate Types* in Canada:

1. *Fixed* – The mortgage interest rate is fixed according to the term length of the mortgage.
2. *Variable/Adjustable* – The mortgage interest rate changes as the mortgage lender adjusts its Prime lending interest rate. The Prime interest rate is linked to the Bank of Canada key overnight lending rate. The Bank of Canada decides its key lending rates during Eight preset dates every year

There are also two *Mortgage Term Types*:

1. *Closed* – The borrower can prepay the mortgage in full before the end of the term, but he is subject to a penalty. The penalty could either be Three months interest or an Interest Rate Differential (IRD) amount depending on the mortgage rate environment at the time the mortgage is prepaid.
2. *Open* – The borrower can prepay the mortgage at any time without penalty.

Written by

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Any combination of mortgage rate type and term type from the above can be chosen by the borrower for the mortgage term, e.g. Fixed/Closed, or Variable/Open etc.

On average, home prices in Ontario are now 10% higher than 12 months ago. Remember to research home prices and availability at www.mls.ca Immigrants can also research trends at this website: <http://www.crea.ca/>

The Canadian Real Estate Industry gained some traction and building permits increased by 18% country wide during November this year.

Canada is a Big & Diverse Country

Canada is 12 000 km wide from West to East and there are many different lifestyle choices in different provinces: From the Greater Toronto Area which is the 5th largest City in North America to small towns in the Prairies.

To get an idea about small town living, navigate to the website of this town <http://www.townofhudsonbay.com/> and click on "Photo Galleries". One of our clients recently visited The Town of Hudson Bay and sent us some pictures of Hudson Bay - this prompted me to have a look at the town on internet. I also noticed that the town will give CAD10 000 to anyone building a home in their town.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and 2010!



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