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Morden, The Best in Country Living

If you are considering a new life in Canada then Manitoba has to be considered. Here Dave Wilkinson explains why Morden in Manitoba should be top of your list of destinations.

I emigrated here with my wife in 2003 from the harsh industrial West Midlands of England and we have found Morden in rural Manitoba to be an exceptionally fine place to live. From personal experience I can best describe the town's attributes as follows:

Morden is a beautiful small town situated in rural southern Manitoba. The population is 6,500 people. Actually, the town's proud boast is that we were described in the prestigious Harrowsmith Country Life Magazine - 2004 as one of ten "Best In Country Living" places in Canada. You can see the full article on the Town website at www.mordenmb.com.

The very life blood of this whole region is based on farming and agriculture. This is also reflected in the manufacturing and engineering in the area which is mainly agriculture related; with tractors and farming implements made here.

The Town of Morden was established in 1882 and celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2007. Tourism is growing here fast with a number of significant events including the renowned annual Corn & Apple Festival in August and the Back 40 Music Festival in June.

The "Corn & Apple Festival" attracts almost 100,000 visitors over the three day festival with plenty of fun, live music, dancing, street vendors, arts and crafts – they all feature strongly and there is



Downtown Morden

something for everyone.

The "Back 40" is an all day live music festival in Morden Park with a wide variety of music including folk, gospel, country, blues, rock, modern & traditional jazz. The depth and the high standards of musicianship is remarkable for such a sparsely populated region. This goes back to the roots of the pioneering immigrants and no doubt reflects on the influence of the various churches. (www.back40folkfest.com)

Education here is very high on the agenda with a high achieving collegiate

school. A good percentage of students go on to study at university. We have a middle school and two primary schools. There is a small adult education unit here in Town and Red River College in neighboring Winkler provides many and diverse courses for adults, including nursing.

"The very life blood of this whole region is based on farming and agriculture"

Health care is also high on the agenda with the brand new Agassiz Medical Clinic with 14 doctors at Boundary Trails Place in Morden. This is a medical mall with optometry, dentistry, osteopathy, physiotherapy, plus a health and fitness club all situated on one convenient self contained site. There are three pharmacies here in Town.

Just outside of Town the new Boundary Trails Hospital was opened in 2001 and is now preparing to install an MRI scanner which is impressive for a rural hospital and together with all the other facilities and amenities, will make it into a state of the art hospital.

For retail shopping we have a number of large supermarkets and the picturesque downtown covers just about the A-Z of retail stores.

Leisure and sport are a major part of



The Teahouse, Morden in winter

Continued on page 15

Continued from page 14

everyday life during the clearly defined seasons. We have ice hockey, skating, curling, gymnastics, racket ball/squash, baseball, soccer, football, and golf at the fabulous Lake Minnewasta Golf Course. The Lake has fishing and boating including very good ice fishing in winter. Hunting for deer is also a popular pastime throughout the province. In my second season of curling and I won a competition.



The lake at Morden

For the more adventurous, there is cross country skiing and snowmobiling on rugged cross country trails groomed to the highest standards.

“For the more adventurous, there is cross country skiing and snowmobiling”

The local people here are warm and friendly with an eclectic ethnic mix going back several generations; British, German, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Icelandic, Canadian Aboriginals. The resourceful, gritty, immigrant farmers, who came here in the late 1800’s and around the turn of the 19th Century as pioneers tamed a difficult and rugged landscape using skills from their homelands creating what is today a very lush and productive agricultural landscape. It is this diversity of people that makes Canada such a wonderful country, apart from the clean, clear, fresh air, the natural resources and the sheer scale and size of the open spaces.

Morden has interesting history, art and culture, including the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre (CFDC) which has the

biggest collection of Marine Reptile Fossils in Canada. It is the home of “Bruce” which at 43 foot long is the biggest example of a Mosasaur fossil in Canada. The CFDC owns their own fossil dig site at the nearby Manitoba Escarpment with a field station where they run supervised public fossil finding expeditions. (www.discoverfossils.com)

In downtown Morden there is the charming Pembina Hills Art Gallery with ever changing exhibitions of work by a

variety of talented local artists. A number of various art classes are available.

There is the nearby Pembina Threshermens Museum which has many large scale “living” exhibits including a sod house, log built RCMP station, school room, church, farm houses and barns, the old Morden Town train station and many good examples of early farming machines, tractors and implements including fully working steam driven threshing machines. There are a number of events including the annual Threshermen’s Reunion which includes authentic suppers from yesteryear served by the ‘Harvest Maids’ in costume.

“If food and eating out is your passion, then you will not be disappointed”

This province is described as “Sunny Manitoba”, which is actually true in every season, but “Sunny” best describes the disposition of the local people. The good will, warmth and generosity of the locals which is shown to visitors is what makes Morden a truly wonderful place to live and

Morden Facts:

Population:
6,500

Location:
Approximately 122 km south of Winnipeg and 80 km from US boarder at Emerson

Average Temps:
January -11°C, April 10°C, July 27°C, October 12°C

Average Precipitation:
Rainfall 399mm per year,
Snowfall 125mm per year.
Average 125 frost-free days per year

Housing Costs:
1500 sq ft detached
New - \$120,000,
Existing \$90,000

2500 sq ft detached
New - \$175,000,
Existing \$120,000

Minimum Wage:
\$7.25 rising to \$7.60 on 1st April 06

Major Employers:
3M Canada, Decor Cabinets, John Buhler Inc, Tabor Senior Citizens Home, Boundary Trails Health Centre, Western School Division and Agriculture Canada Research Station

work. Here volunteerism becomes second nature to most residents whose bywords seem to be “Love thy Neighbour”.

We have a small 230 seat Theatre called the Kenmor, where locally directed theatrical productions are put on, plus a number of lively variety and musical shows by local groups.

One notable feature of the residential areas of the Town of Morden is the large number of beautiful mature trees that line the suburban, crime free streets. It seems the Town fathers of yesteryear had an eye to the future of Morden’s growing

Continued on page 16

16 Manitoba

Continued from page 15

society by ensuring that natural beauty abounds along tree lined streets. Morden Park is also abundant with mature trees, a nice picnic area, children's play park and baseball bowl.

If food and eating out is your passion, then you will not be disappointed with the wide range of dining available around town plus the coffee shops of course. There is also The Legion and The Traveller's Inn for liquid refreshments and good food.

There are many jobs and business opportunities in Morden and district and the Town Council is very proactive in encouraging every aspect of business, supported by the local development corporation and the Morden & District Chamber of Commerce.

The Pembina Provincial Park is a 20 minute drive west of Morden and in springtime at nearby Windygates, 'birders' from all over North America flock to the site to view the spectacular migration north of literally thousands of birds of prey on their journey to the rich feeding grounds on the fringe of the Arctic Circle.

The spiritual needs of local society are well served here in Morden with 17 churches of various Christian beliefs.

Overall, I believe Morden is the finest place to live. Coming here as an immigrant from the UK two years ago, I was quickly adopted by the locals who took me to their hearts. I highly recommend life here in Morden and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. We both have good jobs and we have a wonderful home and lifestyle.

What are you waiting for?

Morden
See History Unfold



*Voted as one of the top ten
"Best In Country Living"
places in Canada by
Harrowsmith Country Life Magazine*

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Photo by Steve Hiebert of Personal Expressions Photography



Morden, beautiful, even in the winter