

# Dire job numbers released as job-creation group visits

A truck outfitted with a counter tracking how many Canadians are losing their jobs stopped in Edmonton yesterday as sobering jobless numbers were released.

Statistics Canada said yesterday that the number of people in Alberta drawing employment insurance soared by 10,240 to 42,160 in March, an increase of 32.1% and the fastest monthly increase since Stats Can started recording provincial data.

EI claims in Alberta are now 162.5% higher than one year ago.

Nationally, the number of beneficiaries rose 10.6% to 681,410 in March.

In Edmonton, 14,650 people were receiving EI in March compared with 5,130 in March 2008. That's a 185% jump and the second largest increase of major Canadian cities behind only Calgary, which saw a 187% jump from a year ago.

The National Employment Clock truck, which stopped at West Edmonton Mall, is part of a campaign calling on the government to stop major corporations from moving Canadian jobs offshore, especially when many Canadians are out of work.

The campaign is run by the Telecommunications Workers Union, made up of mostly Telus and Shaw em-

ployees.

"There is talent right in our backyard that corporations should be hiring," said Thomas Stringham, creative director of the employment clock.

During the truck's Edmonton stop the real-time sign read 1,618,093 and counting — claiming that's the number of employable Canadians who are currently out of work.

The counter works on a formula from the most recent Statistics Canada employment figures, and goes up about every 35 seconds.

— *Kristy Brownlee, 24 HOURS, with files from SUN MEDIA*





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**JOB COUNT:** Thomas Stringham, creative director for the national unemployment clock, poses beside the mobile billboard clock near West Edmonton Mall yesterday. The truck, sponsored by the Telecommunications Workers Union, is making its way across Canada.