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Review of *WinniPeg: A Prairie Portrait* By Martin Cash

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Winnipeg: A Prairie Portrait. By Martin Cash. Montgomery, AL: Community Communications, Inc., 1999. Illustrations, bibliography, enterprise index, index. 256 pp. \$45.00.

The purpose of this attractively produced book, a 125th anniversary project of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, is to celebrate the city at the threshold of the new millennium. Its author, a business writer for a local newspaper, is supported by a collaborative team that includes two writer-reporters and two photographers. The text, snappy and essentially journalistic in character, is organized into two main parts. The first ten chapters offer brief overviews of Winnipeg's history and contemporary aspects of the city's business activities, financial services, communications, arts, educational resources, health-care facilities, recreational opportunities, and wider social fabric. The second part provides detailed profiles of fifty-four of Winnipeg's major "enterprises," the majority of which are businesses in the private sector, with public sector representation limited mainly to health care and education. Outstanding photographs, not only of Winnipeg but also of rural and recreational environments close to the city, are one of the book's major features.

In general terms, this portrait of Winnipeg advances the perspective of the business community, and much of the material is promotional. The volume's first part stresses aspects of the city conducive to business investment and expansion. In particular, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is strongly espoused and viewed as an opportunity to revitalize Winnipeg's historic role as a key transportation and distribution center, potentially serving as the focus of a "Mid-Continent Trade Corridor" extending south through Kansas City and Dallas to Guadalajara, Mexico. The journalistic character of the text is underscored by occasional errors (for instance, the first name of internationally renowned University of Manitoba

geography professor, Vaclav Smil, is misspelled and his departmental affiliation incorrectly stated), repetition, and omissions. Curiously, the book offers no map of Winnipeg to illustrate the detailed references to place locations appearing in the text.

Winnipeg: A Prairie Portrait provides useful background for those interested in the city's business community and supportive infrastructure. From the perspective of a wider readership, however, its main appeal will undoubtedly be its superb collection of photos.

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