

Sask. PST lowered to five per cent

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Premier Lorne Calvert said the reduction was made so Saskatchewan families could benefit first-hand from prosperous times in the province. Local MLA Milt Wakefield, while pleased with the tax cuts, isn't necessarily buying it.

"I guess I'm a skeptic," said Wakefield. "It's a good thing. We've always talked about trying to be more competitive with other provinces and Alberta in particular, so any PST reduction is welcome.

"It just seems like a last-minute desperation attempt to buy votes, really with our own money."

The announcement was made in the legislature Friday by Minister of Finance Andrew Thomson – one day after the government's throne speech and well before a budget announcement in the spring.

"It's almost strange why they made the PST announcement in a minister's statement instead of in the throne speech or a press conference," said Wakefield.

Calvert said by announcing a tax break now, it could have real tangible effects for residents of the province before holiday shopping.

"Our record on tax relief demonstrates we are making life better for today's families and businesses, and building a better future for our youth," he said in a prepared release.

For Lloyd's part, the tax cut won't make a difference as the Border City shares Alberta's lack of PST.

However, next to Alberta, Saskatchewan now has the lowest PST in Canada. The tax break will make a difference in outlying areas around Lloyd and on the eastern edge of the province.

Wakefield says fiddling with the tax is almost obsolete as the NDP were the government who raised the PST in the first place; up one point in 2003.

"So now we're just getting back to where we were before," said Wakefield. "Also, they put in a statutory holiday, Family Day, in February which I guess is welcome too. I mean, who could say no?"

The five per cent PST came into effect on Oct. 27.