

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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## MARKETS

# Wal-Mart Expands Move to Boycott Visa Cards in Canada

Retailer won't accept Visa cards in Manitoba starting Oct. 24



Wal-Mart has seven stores in Winnipeg, which is the capital of Manitoba and more than 400 stores in Canada. PHOTO: ZUMA PRESS

By **ROBIN SIDEL**

Updated Sept. 15, 2016 9:53 a.m. ET

Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said it would stop accepting cards from Visa Inc. in its 16 stores in the Canadian province of Manitoba on Oct. 24, representing an escalation in its fee fight with the card network.

The move comes after Wal-Mart stopped accepting Visa cards at its three stores in Thunder Bay, Ontario, in July. At the time, Wal-Mart said that it planned to roll out the program across Canada if the two companies couldn't reach an agreement on fees.

"We are committed to continuing discussions, and we are still hopeful we can reach an agreement with Visa," said Randy Hargrove, a Wal-Mart spokesman.

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Visa said that Wal-Mart's move was "disappointing" and that it "remains committed to actively working with Wal-Mart so that

Canadians can use their Visa cards wherever they wish to shop."

Wal-Mart employees will start posting signs Thursday in the affected stores so customers will be aware of the change, he said. The retailer has seven stores in

Winnipeg, which is the capital of Manitoba. Wal-Mart has more than 400 stores in Canada and nearly 12,000 globally.

Visa is the largest payments network in Canada, with 50.6 million cards in circulation and \$232.59 billion worth of transactions rung up on its plastic last year, according to the Nilson Report, an industry newsletter.

Wal-Mart started the Visa boycott in Thunder Bay because it is a relatively small and sparsely populated market. Unlike Thunder Bay, some of the stores in Manitoba are open 24 hours and have self-checkout lines. That makes it technically more difficult to stop accepting a specific type of card.

Mr. Hargrove, the Wal-Mart spokesman, said sales in Thunder Bay have been “better than expected” following the move to stop taking Visa. “Customers have adjusted their payment methods accordingly,” he said.

Visa launched a marketing effort to combat the Thunder Bay move, offering gift cards to Wal-Mart customers who used their Visa cards at grocery stores.

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