



Message from the Minister

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development continues to focus on strengthening partnerships to advance the social and economic well-being of Aboriginal people and Northern Albertans. As a Ministry, we recognize that all stakeholders must work together to achieve this goal.

I am pleased to say our achievements this past year proudly reflect the commitments and actions of not only my Ministry, but other provincial departments, other levels of governments, First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal communities and organizations, industry and other interested parties.

This year we took some major strides towards increasing Aboriginal participation in Alberta's economy. AAND also saw an increased interest in northern development and requests for greater coordination of initiatives and approaches to northern challenges. My Ministry will continue to work with the Northern Alberta Development Council to ensure the interests of Northern Albertans are given prominence.

2003-04 was a very successful year. We will continue to build on the momentum that has been building for the last three years. We remain committed to the goals, principles and commitments to action in the *Aboriginal Policy Framework* and will continue to strengthen relations between Alberta ministries and Aboriginal people and to raise both the awareness and inclusiveness of Aboriginal people among all other Albertans.

Pearl Calahasen, Minister
Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

2003-2004 Highlights

Alberta
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND
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AAND serves as a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator in developing and implementing Aboriginal policies, programs and services across government. The Ministry also works with other ministries to develop, coordinate and implement strategies to advance economic and social opportunities in Northern Alberta. The Ministry relies on the active support of other ministries and agencies in addressing Aboriginal issues. AAND also communicates government programs and policies to Aboriginal people, industry and other interested parties.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development was involved in numerous activities during 2003-04. The following information outlines activities, improvements, and major consultation processes that took place during the year.

ABORIGINAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

AAND continues to work toward fulfilling the commitments to action outlined in *Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework (APF)*. AAND's accomplishments in 2003-04 toward implementation of the APF included:

Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative (AWPI): AAND worked with other provincial ministries and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to initiate Alberta's participation in the federal AWPI program. Alberta signed a partnership agreement with the Government of Canada to promote partnerships with businesses to enhance Aboriginal participation in the Alberta economy. This was the first such federal/provincial agreement.

Labour Force Survey Aboriginal-specific pilot project: AAND worked with Alberta Human Resources and Employment and Statistics Canada to include Aboriginal "identifiers" in the monthly Alberta Labour Force Survey. This pilot project, the first of its kind in Canada, provides a new source of provincial data on Aboriginal participation in the economy.

Journey to Success:

AAND, on behalf of the federal, provincial and territorial Aboriginal Affairs Ministers, launched *Journey to Success*, a business-planning guide directed toward Aboriginal women. *Journey to Success* reflects input from Aboriginal women, entrepreneurs and Aboriginal women's organizations across Canada.

Aboriginal Consultation Initiative:

AAND worked with seven other Alberta Ministries (Community Development, Economic Development, Energy, Environment, Justice, Sustainable Resource Development, and Transportation) on developing a provincial policy for Aboriginal consultation on land management and resource development. The Ministry led the strategy development and also provided training to increase Aboriginal consultation capacity within the Government of Alberta and First Nations.

Fire prevention education:

AAND worked with Alberta Municipal Affairs to develop and deliver an Aboriginal-specific *Fire Safe* campaign.

AAND convened a meeting of the Western/Territorial Ministers' Forum in Calgary on April 2-3, 2004, at which Aboriginal Affairs Ministers from the four western provinces and three territories agreed to identify common priorities and work together to advance those priorities with the federal government.

The Ministry participated in developing the *Blood Tribe Governance and Child Welfare Agreement-in-Principle*, signed by the Blood Tribe, Canada and Alberta.

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Alberta and the Northwest Territories agreed to a five-year extension to its *Memorandum of Understanding*, which promotes co-operation and development between Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Transportation, health, research and innovation, water and tourism are some of the main issues being examined under the agreement.

The Ministry works with other ministries to develop, coordinate and implement strategies to advance economic and social opportunities in northern Alberta. During 2003-04, the Ministry, through the NADC, provided opportunities for northern Albertans to express their views and address key opportunities and challenges.

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) provided bursary programs to encourage northern students to train in occupations where labour shortages exist in Northern Alberta. The NADC Bursary for Medical Students was also introduced in 2003-04. Bursary recipients are expected to return to the North to work upon completion of their studies.