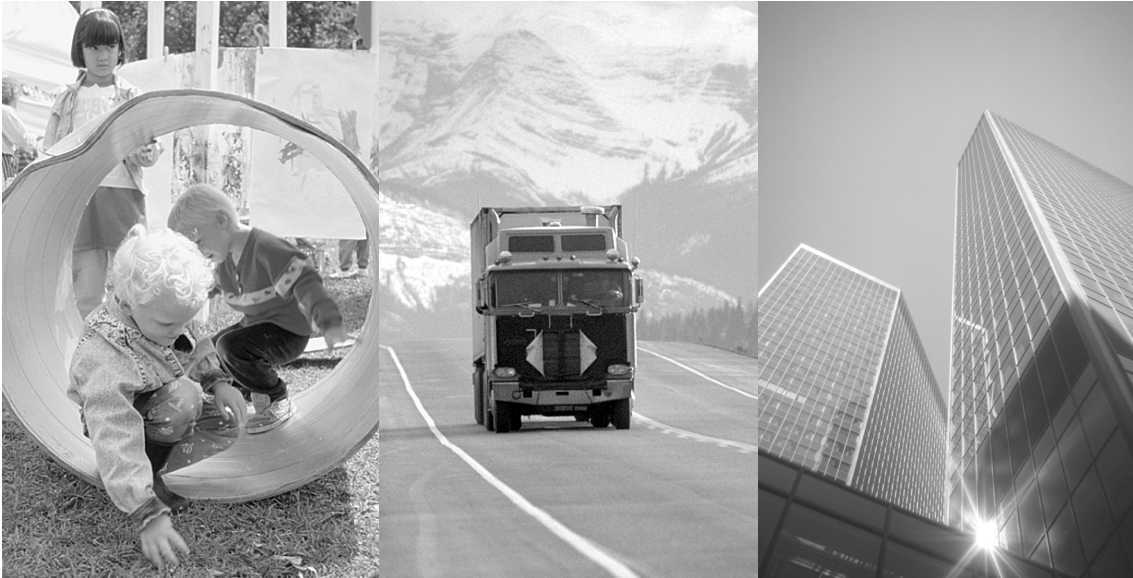


Alberta 2003 Budget

Making Alberta Even Better



THIRD QUARTER ACTIVITY REPORT

2003-04 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

3

FEBRUARY 2004

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Updating Albertans

The government has three core businesses that make up its overall business plan and guide government in its decision-making on behalf of Albertans. The core businesses are:

- **PEOPLE** - The goals for the *People* core business are directed at improving the quality of life in Alberta for individuals and their families through the government's priorities for health, education, our children, those in need, and Aboriginal Albertans.
- **PROSPERITY** - The goals for the *Prosperity* core business focus on protecting the quality of life in Alberta through the government's priorities for our economy, work force and work places, infrastructure, value-added industries, export trade, and financial and fiscal position.
- **PRESERVATION** - The goals for the *Preservation* core business reflect the government's priorities for community safety, our renewable resources, the environment, our natural, historical and cultural resources, and Alberta's relations with other levels of government.

The purpose of this quarterly activity report is to show Albertans what activities the government undertook in the Third Quarter of this fiscal year in support of People, Prosperity and Preservation. The following pages include some of those activities from each of the government departments.

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LISTENING TO ALBERTANS

The activities that support Alberta's core businesses are often influenced by the input government receives from Albertans. Through public consultations, surveys, letters, phone calls and e-mails, Albertans tell government what's important to them and what concerns them. In the Third Quarter, Albertans had a say as government:

- **announced** an MLA Committee on Strengthening Alberta's Role in Confederation. The committee will solicit input from Albertans on the current state of federal-provincial relations. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **decided** not to support a proposed Canada-US softwood lumber interim agreement, following consultations with Alberta stakeholders. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **released** the MLA committee report on The Alberta Recreation Corridors Legislative Review for public comment. (Community Development)
- **hosted** open houses for Albertans to provide input on a draft management plan for the Whaleback region protected areas, Black Creek Heritage Rangeland and Bob Creek Wildland. (Community Development)
- **hosted** an open house, attended by more than 50 people, to provide information regarding ongoing reclamation efforts for the Turner Valley Gas Plant National and Provincial Historic Site, as well as existing and pending plans. (Community Development)
- **received** more than 330 original compositions from Albertans for consideration as Alberta's Official Song. The activity level of the Centennial 2005 web site indicated high interest in the contest with 3,455 downloads of the song contest submission package. (Community Development)
- **developed** a Beef Product and Market Development Loan Program (\$25m Fund) through AFSC Commercial in response to the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crises. The program encourages innovative solutions for the use of beef that is 30 months and older. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **held** 56 meetings with about 7,800 Alberta producers to introduce the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program and to listen to concerns regarding risk management programs. In addition, the CAIS program was presented in 32 meetings hosted by commodity groups, boards and agriculture societies. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **commissioned** an Ipsos-Reid survey on marketing choice for Alberta wheat and barley producers. The results show that Alberta producers strongly support a free and open marketing system. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **presented** Business Risk Management program information to 1,000 producers at 15 producer and industry meetings. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **facilitated** the province-wide Regional Health Council Governance Review. (Community Development)

- **formed** a Ministerial Advisory Committee as part of the *Water for Life* strategy to review the policies and practices associated with industrial activities that remove water from the active hydrologic cycle. The Advisory Committee will provide recommendations in spring 2004. www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca. (Environment)
- **consulted** with representatives from about 120 organizations to discuss a proposed provincial environmental waste program. Results from the consultations will be used to help develop a formal environmental waste program proposal for government review in 2004. www.gov.ab.ca/env/waste/ewaste (Environment)
- **met** with more than 140 public, private and contracted training providers to obtain feedback on the Skills Investment Strategy. This will help ensure skills investments programs and services continue to be effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of our clients and the Alberta economy. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **conducted** a survey with the hospitality and restaurant businesses in Whitecourt in partnership with Métis Nations of Alberta and Yellowhead Business Development Centre to assess needs and develop strategies and services. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **responded** to about 35,000 calls through the Alberta Seniors 1-800 Information Line and Regional Seniors Information Services Offices. In addition, the regional offices provided in-person assistance to more than 6,000 clients. (Seniors)
- **presented** Seniors Benefit Information Sessions to almost 500 Albertans in 19 presentations and attended seven major events where our information displays reached more than 2,000 individuals. (Seniors)
- **participated** in the Aboriginal Information Communication Technology Forum, which brought together federal, provincial, Aboriginal and municipal governments, K-12 and post secondary education organizations, Aboriginal service agencies and the technology industry to discuss developing the technology capacity of urban and rural Aboriginal communities. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **participated** in the Air Services/City Centre Airport Consultation Group, which is examining the Edmonton City Centre Airport issue. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **conducted**, in association with the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Standing Committee, the Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The meeting was held in Grande Prairie and allowed Albertans to provide input and learn more about the Heritage Fund. (Revenue)
- **launched** a new electronic publication entitled ReveNews to offer insights into the operations of Alberta Revenue and provide information on new initiatives currently under development. (Revenue)
- **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to more than 40,000 Albertans through a toll-free call centre. (Government Services)
- **continued** to solicit, listen to and analyze consumer concerns through Alberta's Utilities Consumer Advocate, which also provided advice and guidance to a diverse group of stakeholders. The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board and other regulatory bodies such as Rural Electrification Associations are being monitored and their proceedings analyzed. Consumers are also being informed about changes in Alberta's restructured electricity and natural gas markets. (Government Services)
- **established** an MLA Review Committee to consult with stakeholders and assess public response to proposed health and safety standards for secondary suites. (Municipal Affairs)
- **involved** stakeholders in developing the Cypress Hills Elk Management Plan. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **conducted** public meetings about fisheries and wildlife management in many communities in northwestern Alberta and spoke with more than 250 hunters and anglers in 11 communities about proposed regulation changes and improved walleye harvest opportunities in the province. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **held** meetings with Fort McKay First Nations representatives and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. to develop an access management plan to address access issues in the Fort McKay area. (Sustainable Resource Development)

- **gathered** public input on direction for the Ghost-Waiparous region and continued with access management planning for the area. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **hosted** the second annual Alberta Visitor Information Providers Conference in Edmonton. Thirty-five representatives of community and regional visitor information centres shared success stories and ideas on customer service, staff recruitment and training, and information management. (Economic Development)
- **implemented** the revised, more responsive natural gas rebate program to assist Albertans when gas prices and consumption are highest. Until March 2006, rebates will be deducted from consumers' bills each winter month (Nov.- March) when the regulated gas utility price on the majority of Alberta consumer bills exceeds \$5.50 per gigajoule. (Energy)
- **supported** the establishment of the Utilities Consumer Advocate to assure consumers that a specific body will represent their interests in the area of utilities. (Energy)
- **extended** the option to remain on regulated electricity rates to July 1, 2006 to allow more time for consumers to learn how to best manage their energy costs and more time for competition for small volume customers to intensify. (Energy)

PEOPLE

The following activities support the *People* core business and, in particular, the areas Albertans have identified as priority areas, including health, education and children.

Promoting Health and Wellness

The state of Alberta's health care system is a priority for all Albertans. The Alberta government continues to search for innovative ideas and initiatives to improve the sustainability of the health system and reassure Albertans that their health care needs will be addressed. In the Third Quarter, the government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

-
- **signed** an unprecedented eight-year agreement with the Alberta Medical Association and Alberta's health regions, which is aimed at changing how physicians, health regions and government work together to improve patient care. (Health and Wellness)
 - **introduced** Bill 52, the *Health Professions Amendment Act*. This Act expands information that can be collected and shared about health professionals while protecting their privacy. Information collected will be used to build and maintain the Alberta Provider Directory, a database identifying practitioners authorized to access information from the electronic health record. (Health and Wellness)
 - **awarded** \$20 million in capital funding to Alberta's regional health authorities. As part of the Health Sustainability Initiative Fund, this grant will fund 18 projects that expand the range of health care services available to Albertans. (Health and Wellness, Infrastructure)
 - **launched** Sport for Life, in partnership with the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) and the Calgary Olympic Development Association, to promote the benefits of active lives without tobacco. (Health and Wellness)
 - **distributed** 10,000 "Live Outside the Box" toboggan posters to Alberta communities. The campaign was launched in 2003 to encourage youth aged 10 to 14 years to be more active. (Community Development)
 - **received** a Citation Award from the Alberta Therapeutic Recreation Association at their 2003 annual conference for the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village's "Special On-site Driving Tours Program for Mobility Impaired Seniors". (Community Development)
 - **presented** recommendations for a new air emissions management framework for the provincial electricity sector to the government. Alberta Environment co-chaired the Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) multi-stakeholder team consisting of industry, government and non-government organizations that made the recommendations, which will help make Alberta a leader in emissions standards for electricity generation in North America. www.casahome.org (Environment)

- **provided** benefits to 64,430 children of low-income families participating in the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB) program. This is an increase of nearly 4,000 over last year. The provision of health benefits through this program contributes to the long-term health and well being of children in low-income families, and helps their performance in school. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **completed** a partnership project with Lakeland Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) clinic to produce an information booklet for employers and agencies regarding potential employees with FAS. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **opened** the Critical Care Building and Third Level of the Red Deer Regional Hospital. Government contributed \$41.7 million to this project. (Infrastructure)
- **launched** the Alberta Heart Institute by breaking the ground for the \$125 million facility. (Infrastructure)
- **started** construction on the final phases of the \$2.3 million upgrade and addition to the High River Hospital. (Infrastructure)
- **started** construction on the \$17.3 million 89-bed long-term care plus 24 assisted living units Wing Kei Care Centre in Calgary. (Infrastructure)
- **supported** the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) in its distribution of an audio-visual program featuring the message of anti-smoking advocate Barb Tarbox to Alberta schools. Each school with Grade 6 to 12 classes received information packages that can be used to educate students on the dangers of smoking. (Learning, Health and Wellness)
- **launched** the annual Joint Forces CheckStop winter billboard campaign in partnership with law enforcement agencies to reduce impaired driving incidents. (Transportation)
- **began** the award-winning “Collision Prime Time” campaign with its traffic safety partners to promote safe driving behaviours through radio advertising. The advertisements began in October and focus on common driving behaviours associated with collisions. (Transportation)
- **provided** a grant to the 10th Annual Knowing Our Spirits Conference, organized to help provide information to participants in areas of cultural awareness, language, traditional medicine, economic opportunities, new initiatives in education, and social development. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **implemented** a pilot health care practicum placement program with Northern-based regional health authorities. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **implemented** a new bursary program for medical students that assists in recruiting physicians to Northern Alberta. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **reminded** Albertans about the importance of getting a flu shot. The 2003 enhanced program was better able to protect seniors and those who are chronically ill. The \$1.5 million the government invested on the flu shots program included all persons who live with Albertans at high risk. (Health and Wellness)
- **announced** the provincial plan to manage a pandemic influenza outbreak. Alberta's plan aims to slow the spread of disease, minimize serious illness or death, and maintain essential community services. (Health and Wellness)
- **provided** information to Albertans concerning a new strain of the flu virus. Albertans were told not to be alarmed about the A/Fujian strain as it was closely related to the A/Panama strain and was one of the components of the 2003 flu vaccine. (Health and Wellness)
- **provided** information to the public about how hunters could voluntarily submit the heads of deer and elk for chronic wasting disease testing. (Sustainable Resource Development)

Supporting Education and Lifelong Learning

The Alberta government supports learning as a lifelong process and offers Albertans access to a variety of learning opportunities. In the Third Quarter, the government honoured its commitment to education and lifelong learning as it:

- **approved** 216 grants totalling \$1.3 million to public libraries and library systems to address increased operations and maintenance costs. (Community Development)
- **hosted** a Coaches and Officials Symposium in Calgary, providing educational sessions for 150 volunteer coaches and officials. Also launched several new coaching development initiatives, providing an additional \$50,000 annually towards the education and development of volunteer coaches from grass roots to high performance levels. (Community Development)
- **updated** the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission's resource document, *Exploring Human Rights with Children and Teens: An Annotated Bibliography*. Prepared with the assistance of the Calgary Public Library, the document shows how children can make a difference concerning human rights and diversity. (Community Development)
- **established** the Advancing Futures Bursary Program to assist young people who have been, or continue to be, under the care of Alberta Children's Services. Young people can apply if they are interested in upgrading their high school education, earning a degree/diploma from an Alberta post-secondary institution, learning a trade, and/or earning a license or certificate. (Children's Services)
- **enrolled** 225 (year-to-date: 870) high school students as production technicians and supervisors under the Green Certificate program. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **partnered** with and provided resources to communities and school programs to support community-led farm accident prevention campaigns. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **developed** farm safety resources such as fact sheets and a farm safety CD to provide the farm industry with the motivation and resources required to farm in a safe manner. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **worked** with partner organizations such as the Tire Recycling Management Board, the Alberta Used Oil Management Association and the Beverage Container Management Board to encourage Albertans to reduce their personal waste by participating in hazardous and electronic waste roundups, and composting kitchen, garden and yard waste during Waste Reduction Week. www.wrwcanada.com (Environment)
- **responded** to approximately 30,482 inquiries regarding student funding issues through the Student Funding Contact Centre. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **entered** into consultation with the Métis Nation of Alberta and several petroleum companies in the Hinton/Edson/Grande Cache area, to identify training needed for Aboriginal people to work in oil fields. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **developed** five new training and work partnerships with bands under the First Nations Training to Employment Program. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **encouraged** Alberta school children to think about the role that science and technology play in their every day lives during Science and Technology Week in October 2003. The week recognizes the achievements of Alberta's science and technology communities, and promotes the role that science and technology plays in contributing to Alberta's high quality of life. (Innovation and Science)
- **participated** in official school openings for nine new and replacement schools in Red Deer, Innisfail, Castor, Edmonton and High River. Total provincial support for these projects is \$48 million. (Infrastructure)
- **released** \$33 million to the Universities of Calgary (\$12 million) and Alberta (\$21 million) as partial payments for the two Health Research Innovation Centres, Natural Resources Engineering Facility and the University of Alberta Power Plant. These funds are part of the \$100 million government commitment for new university projects announced as part of Budget 2003. (Infrastructure)
- **opened** the new Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton. Total cost of the work is \$21.3 million. (Infrastructure)
- **committed** an additional \$60 million this school year, including \$37 million provided in Fiscal 2003-04, to school boards. This funding, together with \$30 million announced in July 2003 for operations and maintenance, fully covers the shortfall identified by the Commission on Learning in its final report: *Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds*. Also provided another \$2.7 million to address cost pressures in school jurisdictions that have experienced large enrolment declines. (Learning)
- **injected** \$37 million thus far this fiscal year into the education system. This funding, together with \$30 million announced in July 2003 for operations and maintenance, fully covers the shortfall identified by the Commission on Learning in its final report: *Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds*. Also provided another \$2.7 million to address cost pressures in school jurisdictions that have experienced large enrolment declines. (Learning)
- **signed** a Memorandum of Understanding supporting the proposed merger of Augustana University College and the University of Alberta. The proposed merger will provide rural Alberta students with increased access to a high quality university education, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Augustana campus. (Learning)
- **signed** a letter of intent supporting an agreement between the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) and Aurora College in the Northwest Territories to work together to assess needs, combine resources and develop shared solutions. The agreement further strengthens the partnership between the Alberta and NWT governments. (Learning)
- **committed** to support 84 of the 95 recommendations of Alberta's Commission on Learning, including class-size guidelines, greater emphasis on fine arts and second-language learning and increased focus on supporting Aboriginal students and students with special needs. Also committed to further review another nine recommendations (Learning)
- **awarded** 168 dedicated Alberta apprenticeships with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarships valued at \$1,000 each. The scholarships were created through a partnership between industry and the Alberta government. (Learning)
- **launched** Alberta Learning's 2004 Excellence in Teaching Awards. This program offers an opportunity for Albertans to recognize the many outstanding teachers and principals in our learning system. (Learning)
- **released** the results of an external review of the Bachelor of Education programs at The King's University College and Concordia University College, which concluded that these programs are of high quality and have proven sustainable over the long term. (Learning)
- **encouraged** Grade 9 students from across the province to trade their textbooks for lab coats and hardhats during national *Take Our Kids To Work Day*. The annual event gave Grade 9 students the opportunity to job shadow their parents, or a volunteer host, and experience the realities of the work world. (Learning)

- **recognized and rewarded** 50 Alberta Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) students with \$1,000 scholarships. RAP is an innovative program that gives students an opportunity to earn credit towards a high school diploma and an apprenticeship program at the same time. (Learning)
- **launched** joint initiatives with the Government of Canada to attract and retain more foreign students to Alberta and expand existing measures to draw more skilled immigrants to the province. (Learning)
- **advanced** learner-centered education in Alberta through the 2003 Online Learning Symposium, where more than 850 educators and technology experts explored the latest advances in learning technology. (Learning)
- **passed** legislation that will give students better access to a greater diversity of post-secondary programs. The *Post-secondary Learning Act, 2003*, allows for increased access to degree opportunities at universities, colleges and technical institutes throughout the province and helps institutions provide greater choice to students. (Learning)
- **participated** in a review of the Danish education system as part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD) team. Alberta and Finland were selected as reference countries as a result of learning system excellence and outstanding student achievement. (Learning)
- **launched** the log-haul radio advertising campaign in partnership with the Alberta Forest Products Association, to provide information and promote safety with regard to logging trucks. (Transportation)
- **held** Walk the Talk Day in October 2003 to highlight the annual Walk the Talk About Back to School Safety program. Government and its partners teach children about traffic and school bus safety along with safe ways to cycle, skateboard, and in-line skate. (Transportation)
- **provided** two scholarships to members of the Edmonton Métis Cultural Dance Society. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **provided** a grant to National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation for Blueprint for the Future Career Fair designed to increase the awareness of the diversity of employment opportunities available within the Canadian workforce. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **published** *Alberta's Aboriginal Population: Socio-demographic Characteristics (2001)*. This document outlines the socio-demographic characteristics such as educational attainment and labour force activity of Aboriginal people residing in Alberta and selected urban centres. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **published** *A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations in Alberta*. This directory contains a listing of Aboriginal organizations across Alberta in several categories, including economic development and tribal/regional groups. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **funded** projects under the Northern LINKS Program with goals to assist Northern Alberta students make decisions related to the transition from secondary to post-secondary education. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **produced and distributed** an *Awards, Bursaries and Scholarships* booklet to assist students who require funding while pursuing a post-secondary education. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **expanded** the Fish in Schools program to allow students from more schools to raise fish in their classrooms and learn about fish management, habitat conservation and stewardship. (Sustainable Resource Development)

Supporting Families and Children

Every government department is responsible for initiatives that contribute to an atmosphere where Alberta families can succeed and flourish. In the Third Quarter, the government:

- **launched** a new bilateral initiative in cooperation with the Government of Canada to provide \$1.2 million over three years to support a number of programs aimed at increasing the participation in sport of under-represented groups including girls and women, Aboriginal people, economically disadvantaged persons, and persons with disabilities. (Community Development)
- **provided** more than \$300,000 to open 14 new women's emergency shelter spaces in Edmonton and Calgary. The Lurana Shelter in Edmonton received \$108,000 to open seven new beds. The Sherrif King Home in Calgary received \$121,000 to fund four new beds. The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter received \$72,000 to open three new beds. Throughout Alberta, there are 413 provincially funded beds in women's emergency shelters. (Children's Services)
- **launched** a new Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) public awareness campaign. *Your Decision: Baby's Future*, to run in newspapers and on television, is designed to inform women and their partners that alcohol can damage the brains of unborn children and result in a preventable birth defect known as FASD. (Children's Services)
- **provided** about \$5.8 million through the Supplementary Accommodation Benefit to some 8,000 low income seniors living in long term care facilities to assist them with their accommodation fees. (Seniors)
- **provided** about \$41 million to some 127,000 seniors under the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. Average monthly cash benefit was \$104 per senior. (Seniors)
- **approved** more than 9,700 applications from low-income seniors under the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program for a total of about \$11 million. This is a 163 per cent increase in approved applications over the previous year. (Seniors)
- **distributed** more than 34,000 copies of the 2003-04 *Seniors Programs and Services Information Guide*, the primary source for information on programs and services for seniors in Alberta. (Seniors)
- **approved** \$4.83 million in grants to support the housing needs of low-income families, seniors and people with special needs. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$5.65 million to support 16 homeless shelters. (Seniors)
- **disbursed** \$192,300 to 46 applicants under the Home Adaptation Program to assist individuals in completing homes modifications to improve wheelchair access and mobility. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$119,700 to the Unique Homes program to cover additional operating and maintenance expenses. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$3 million in homeless funding through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative to Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge. (Seniors)

PROSPERITY

The following activities support the *Prosperity* core business and contribute to a better quality of life for Albertans.

Strengthening the Alberta Economy

Alberta is expected to be a leader in economic growth in 2003-04 and various government departments are involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that trend continues. In the Third Quarter, the government:

- **introduced** a sweeping auto insurance reform framework into legislation, which will provide for fair premiums for good drivers and fair compensation for injured persons. (Finance)
- **confirmed** the province's effective fiscal management with the Second Quarter Update, demonstrating continued commitment to reducing the debt, investing in infrastructure, and ensuring a sustainable fiscal framework. (Finance)
- **froze** auto insurance premiums for consumers effective October 30, and ensured consumers are treated fairly under the freeze and receive refunds or credits if they overpay their premiums. (Finance)
- **released** a discussion paper to gain feedback within the pension industry to improve how the plans are managed, and particularly on how financial problems with the plans can be better identified and addressed. Input may be used to shape any changes to the *Employment Pension Plans Act* in the spring session of the Alberta Legislature. (Finance)
- **released** a discussion paper to gain feedback regarding unlocking pension funds for individuals facing financial hardship. Input may be used to shape changes that may be made to the locking-in rules in this spring's sitting of the Alberta Legislature. (Finance)
- **signed** a Protocol of Cooperation with the Government of BC committing both governments to work cooperatively to find ways to save taxpayers money, reduce the cost of government, and influence federal government policies and decisions in areas of mutual concern. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **negotiated** a formal Memorandum of Understanding between AFSC Commercial and 27 Alberta-based Community Futures Development Corporations. This agreement will assist in providing further consulting and financial assistance on a joint basis to rural Alberta businesses and strengthen and support the rural economy. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **released and promoted** *Workplaces that Work: Creating a Workplace Culture that Attracts, Retains and Promotes Women* in Alberta. This report encourages employment leaders to place women in high-growth industry sectors. (Community Development)
- **provided** \$500,000 to Growing Alberta, an industry-supported communications program, to inform Albertans of agriculture's contribution to our economy and efforts to improve and promote environmental responsibility. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)

- **continued** to provide grant assistance under the Rural Gas and Rural Electric programs to help rural Albertans access essential natural gas and electric utility services. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **introduced** a \$4-million Beef Product and Market Development program to help regain and develop new markets in a post BSE environment. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **announced** a \$400,000-Food Processor Assistance Initiative to help companies with their export inventories following the discovery of a single case of BSE. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **coordinated**, in cooperation with the Canadian agri-food industry and other governments, an advocacy strategy to discourage mandatory country-of-origin labelling regulations by the US. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **worked** cooperatively and strategically with the beef industry and the federal government towards re-opening export markets for Alberta and Canadian beef products following the discovery of the single case of BSE. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **distributed** \$46,257 to farmers under the 2002 Southern Alberta Flood Disaster Recovery program. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **distributed** \$86,951 to producers under the 2003 Northwest Alberta Disaster Recovery program. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **distributed** about \$152.2 million to producers under various BSE programs, including Canada-Alberta BSE Recovery, Alberta Fed Cattle Competitive Bid, and the Alberta Fed Cattle Competitive Market Adjustment program. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **awarded** 17 grants totalling \$92,500 from the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation to provincial associations, communities, and local organizations to host events in Alberta. (Community Development)
- **passed** Bill 37, the *Climate Change and Emissions Management Act* in the Legislature during the 2003 fall session. The Act strengthens and complements Alberta's existing legislation on environmental protection and resource management related to greenhouse gas emissions. A copy of the Act is available at the Queen's Printer: www.qp.gov.ab.ca. (Environment)
- **placed** seven Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped clients in various full and part-time positions in the restaurant and hospitality industry. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **negotiated** a multi-service contract to develop programs for the Calling Lake community, including youth employment services, in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada, Bigstone First Nations, Ability Employment Services and Northlands School Division. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **released** results from Aboriginal Labour Force Survey conducted in conjunction with Statistics Canada on Aboriginal people living off reserve in Alberta. Alberta is leading the way with this initiative – this is the first survey of its kind in Canada. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **released** *Skills Investment Strategy: Supporting the Development of a Skilled Workforce in Alberta*, which sets the direction for adult training and employment programs over the next three to five years, and is designed to help Albertans prepare for, train for, find and keep employment, while helping ensure Alberta employers have a skilled and productive workforce to meet their present and future needs. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **sponsored** a Career Learning Day for youth in Calgary to help build career and labour market awareness, promote career planning and connect them to career role models and mentors. More than 300 youth aged 16 to 24 years attended, some of whom were hearing impaired, developmentally challenged or involved in rehabilitation programs. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **concluded** the 'WorkABLE' Project, which provided assessment, placement and support services to disabled Albertans. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **contributed** \$1.8 million to Bredin Institute - Edmonton, in support of the Foreign Trained Professionals Centre to help more than 1,000 newcomers with professional designations find employment. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **placed** a record 13,641 job postings onto the Job Bank for Employers through Canada-Alberta Job Order Services (JOBS). JOBS is the largest web-based network of job postings for Canadians with over 500,000 new jobs posted every year in Canada. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **initiated** job placements through a new employment program in Camrose and continued job coaching and employment support for 16 mental health clients and their employers in partnership with Canadian Mental Health, Human Resource Development Canada, and the Lotteries Foundation. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **developed and hosted** an event for 175 new Canadians and career practitioners to promote career planning and enhance opportunities for workforce participation of immigrants living in Calgary. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **participated** in the BSE Impact Partnership, made up of social service family support organizations, the private sector and government. Conducted town hall meetings in the communities in Southern Alberta that have been significantly impacted by BSE, and provided information on government programs and services. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **facilitated** the sharing of career and employment information to more than 9,500 Albertans who attended Western Canada's largest Career Fair in Edmonton. At the two-day event, 114 different industries and training institutions offered information and advice. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **provided** funding to the Alberta Online Consortium to develop tools, including a web site, to promote and inform Albertans about career opportunities in the logistics business. This initiative is part of a partnership with local school boards and post-secondary institutions to promote career pathways into the logistics sector of the transportation industry. (Human Resources and Employment, Learning)
- **achieved** a 75 per cent employment success rate through 90 days for students who began the Petroleum Land Administration Skills for Work Program in May 2003. The program is funded by government and delivered by the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). (Human Resources and Employment)
- **participated** in a unique trade mission to Texas and California involving the premiers of Alberta and British Columbia. The mission highlighted Alberta and BC as leaders in the technology industry, focused on investment opportunities in high-tech sectors and promoted the two provinces as secure sources of energy for North America. (Innovation and Science, Economic Development)
- **sold** 32 properties for a total value of \$15.6 million. These properties had been declared surplus to government requirements. (Infrastructure)
- **purchased** 18 properties worth \$8.8 million in support of government programs primarily in the Transportation and Utility Corridors, to allow for the extension of the ring roads in Edmonton and Calgary. (Infrastructure)
- **started** work under the new 10-year agreement with Earth Tech Canada (Inc.) for the operation of the Swan Hills Treatment Centre, including approving a three-year business plan. (Infrastructure)
- **promoted** the excellence and innovation of Alberta's high-quality learning system during round table discussions on e-learning and helped showcase the world-class Banff Centre in Los Angeles and Anaheim, California. (Learning)
- **highlighted** Alberta's education system as being one of the best in Canada, through *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2003*. The report highlights that Alberta's 15-year-olds not only performed significantly better than the Canadian average, but ranked first in the world in reading and third in mathematics and science. Alberta was the only jurisdiction in the world where students placed among the top three in the world in all three areas of assessment. (Learning)
- **promoted** Alberta as a leader in learning technology to key advisors and decision makers around the world during the Public Services Summit and Nobel Week in Sweden and Norway. (Learning)

- **expanded** access to high-quality learning opportunities for students through the launch of eCampus Alberta. Post-secondary students will have even greater choice and access with a variety of courses that are being made available online. (Learning)
- **wrapped up** another successful construction season and invested over \$620 million in Alberta's highway network, which improved 1,107 kilometres with 365 kilometres receiving chip seal coating. (Transportation)
- **opened** Calgary's Deerfoot Trail Extension to traffic, which connects Deerfoot Trail to Highway 2. Completing the extension is a major step toward completing the North-South Trade Corridor. (Transportation)
- **approved** \$17 million worth of projects for 19 rural Alberta municipalities through the Resource Road Program. The program supports infrastructure improvements to local roads facing increased resource-based or new industrial truck traffic. (Transportation)
- **provided** a grant for the Calling Lake Economic Development Foundation's Economic Development Initiative to develop economic and socio-economic initiatives like job skill training plans and youth training programs. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **provided** grants for an Economic Development Officer in Peerless Lake and Calling Lake to develop and strengthen relationships between the community and industry, to generate business and employment opportunities for the community members. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **coordinated** an Economic Development Workshop in St. Paul that included representatives from municipalities, First Nations, Métis settlements, regional economic development offices, chambers of commerce and tourism associations based in Northeast Alberta. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **coordinated** the signing of the extension for the *Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development*. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **undertook** a study on air transportation connections between Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **collaborated** with Economic Development and northern stakeholders on strategies to re-open the rail connection between Hythe, Alberta and Dawson Creek, British Columbia. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **released** the 2003-04 Second Quarter Update for Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. At September 30, 2003 the Fund's fair value stood at \$11.9 billion. Increases in the first six months of the year almost entirely reverse the decline of the past two years. (Revenue)
- **broadened** tax and revenue administration's waiver policy to include Canadian corporations that are adversely affected by BSE. Corporations that qualify may apply to Alberta Revenue, Tax and Revenue Administration (TRA) for a waiver of interest on tax owing. More details are available at www.revenue.gov.ab.ca. (Revenue)
- **passed and enacted** legislation to protect the privacy of Albertans in the private sector. Under the *Personal Information Protection Act*, businesses need to ask Albertans for consent when collecting their personal information. (Government Services)
- **issued** 4,897 surface approvals for oil and gas wells and pipelines on public lands. Each approval included criteria to minimize the impact on Alberta's natural resources. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **gained** authority to deal quickly and effectively with non-compliance on public lands as well as permit some bison grazing on public land, through the *Public Lands Amendment Act*. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **received** 31 new applications to the Natural Resources Conservation Board for confined feeding operations (CFOs), made decisions on 28 previous applications, and investigated 268 public complaints related to 123 existing CFOs. (Sustainable Resource Development)

- **supported** BSE Market Recovery in the international marketplace through market re-entry programs held in the US and Mexico. These programs were delivered through the Beef Information Centre in the US and the Canadian Beef Export Federation in Mexico. Activities included technical seminars, senior buyer missions, communication and promotional products. (Economic Development)
- **finalized** the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding with China to strengthen mutual cooperation in agricultural production and processing. (Economic Development)
- **opened** Alberta's new international office in London, United Kingdom. The new office will promote Alberta as an excellent place to invest and support Alberta businesses selling products and services in the UK. (Economic Development)
- **partnered** with the Canadian Embassy in Kazakhstan to showcase Alberta and its capabilities in the oil and gas industry, identifying trade opportunities for export-ready Alberta companies. Market intelligence was also gathered and relationships with key contacts in Russia and Kazakhstan were strengthened and established. (Economic Development)
- **promoted** the Alberta Film Advantage and Alberta beef on a two-day mission to Los Angeles in October 2003. The mission highlighted the advantages of Alberta's diverse locations, experienced crews, production facilities, and competitive costs. (Economic Development)
- **expanded** recognition of Alberta oil sands reserves as a long term, secure supply to include frequent coverage by influential, international public media (The Economist, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, Time Magazine, etc.). (Energy)
- **promoted and obtained support** for integration and growth of value-added manufacturing in the upgrading, refining and petrochemical sectors in Alberta, based on Alberta's vast bitumen resource through working with industry partners, Alberta Economic Development and the Alberta Energy Research Institute. (Energy)

Improving Efficiency and Innovation

Albertans have worked hard to establish our province as a leader in technology and innovation. In addition the government is constantly examining ways in which it can provide services to Albertans more efficiently. In the Third Quarter, the government:

- **initiated** a digitization project through the Provincial Archives of Alberta to make some of its photographic images available electronically. (Community Development)
- **provided** improved service through Internet access at the Provincial Archives of Alberta to aid the researching public in conducting their work. (Community Development)
- **processed** 7,686 Farm Income Disaster Program claims through AFSC prior to December 31, 2003, an increase of 60 per cent in the number of claims processed over the previous years' 4,888. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
- **continued** work with irrigation producers to increase crop production with existing water supplies, and sustain crop production and quality during times of water storage. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **worked** with the federal government and other provinces to implement the Science and Innovation component of the national Agricultural Policy Framework. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **passed** Bill 36, the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Amendment Act*, in the Legislature during the 2003 fall session. The Act improves government's regulatory processes and enables more efficient and effective environmental protection programs. www.qp.gov.ab.ca (Environment)
- **introduced** the Gaming Information for Charitable Groups program to help the 9,000 charity and volunteer groups that conduct licensed gaming events gain a better understanding of their responsibilities under Alberta's unique charitable gaming model. (Gaming)
- **launched** the on-line versions of the Employment Standards Complaint Form and Self-Help Kit, giving Albertans improved access to Employment Standards services. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **received** an award for innovation and leadership in addressing privacy issues. The award recognizes Alberta's privacy protection framework that guides the design of its computer systems. The Office of the Chief Information Officer received the award at the 5th Annual PrivacyCon conference in Columbus, Ohio. (Innovation and Science)
- **sponsored** the Alberta Science and Technology Leadership Awards Foundation's "ASTech Awards" in November 2003. Awards and prizes go to outstanding individuals and organizations that have contributed significantly to the success of science and technology in Alberta. (Innovation and Science)
- **sponsored** with Western Economic Diversification Canada and Global TV the third annual Alberta Innovation 2003 documentary, broadcast provincially on Global TV. The program contained some of the world's renowned researchers and industries in Alberta that are having a positive impact on our quality of life and are continuing to build Alberta's knowledge-based economy. (Innovation and Science)

- **celebrated** the ceremonial groundbreaking for the permanent home of the National Institute for Nanotechnology. The new building will be one of the world's most technologically advanced research facilities and will house laboratory space that will be the quietest in Canada. (Innovation and Science)
- **created** the office of the Corporate Chief Information Officer (CCIO). The role of the CCIO is to help the government stay current in the systems and processes used to serve Albertans, as well as help lead government toward greater coordination and efficiencies in government-wide computer and information systems. (Innovation and Science)
- **completed** negotiations on the two "green power" contracts with Canadian Hydro Developers Inc. and Enmax Energy Corporation. This is the most significant commitment for the use of sustainable energy from benign sources of any jurisdiction in Canada. (Infrastructure)
- **developed** the business case analysis for the Turner Valley Gas Plant Management Plant. This is an Historic Site and the recommendation is to re-channel the Sheep River away from the site to avoid future contamination. (Infrastructure, Community Development)
- **continued** with development of an Environmental Management System that focuses on the handling of hazardous materials during new construction, renovations and demolitions and the management of contaminated sites. (Infrastructure)
- **engaged** the services of Alberta Research Council to develop a Building Mould Assessment and Management Program, to help assess health threats, ensure best practices in remediation, and support communication on this issue. (Infrastructure)
- **prepared** a draft of minimum building system performance standards that would be acceptable in continuing care facilities. Regional Health Authorities are considering these standards for future use, including public-private partnership projects. (Infrastructure)
- **contributed** \$900,000 in one-time funds to start the eCampus Alberta project, which will see 15 publicly funded colleges and technical institutes collaborate to increase access to online learning opportunities and reduce inefficiencies across the system by sharing courses online. (Learning)
- **celebrated** 25 years as a Public Guardian to dependent Albertans in the province. (Seniors)
- **signed** a Memorandum of Understanding with the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation to build a joint vehicle inspection station at the BC-Alberta border east of Golden. The joint facility would be more efficient for both the carrier industry and both provinces' inspection services. (Transportation)
- **coordinated** Alberta's participation in the Aboriginal Strategies Conference in October 2003. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **participated** in a national strategies session on Aboriginal Tourism. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **implemented** Internet payment service for Corporate Income Tax, Insurance Corporations Tax, International Fuel Tax Agreement, Fuel Taxes, Propane Tax, Health Cost Recovery Levy, Tobacco Tax and Hotel Room Tax. (Revenue)
- **received** nine grant applications for the *ME first!* program, totalling \$14.2 million. *ME first!* is a four-year, \$100 million program (\$25 million per year) that allows Alberta municipalities to access interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects. *ME first!* was launched in September 2003. (Municipal Affairs)
- **introduced** the Alberta Waitlist Registry. Albertans can now access the Internet to view wait times across the province for publicly funded surgeries, MRIs, CT scans, radiation and chemotherapy. The web site provides patients with accurate information on wait times and allows them to discuss options for treatment with their physician. (Health and Wellness)
- **launched** the Electronic Health Record province-wide – the first of its kind in Canada. The record links physicians, pharmacists, hospitals, home-care and other providers across the province. By storing pertinent information on-line, health care providers may access a patient's prescription history, allergies, and laboratory test results. (Health and Wellness)

- **received** a national technology award for Alberta Wellnet, a branch of Alberta Health and Wellness. The Internet-based tracking system uses a patient's provincial health number to match birth records with blood test results from Alberta's Newborn Metabolic Screening program. Since 1999, this technology ensured that an average of 800 additional babies were screened for inherited disorders each year across Alberta. (Health and Wellness)
- **upgraded** water treatment systems at the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery and incorporated onsite wetlands to treat hatchery wastewater prior to discharge in the Bow River. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **donated** refurbished computers under the Alberta Visitor Information Program to 49 eligible community visitor information centres to assist them with travel counselling and accessing Internet-based tourism information resources. (Economic Development)
- **established** Alberta as Canada's number one wind power producer, which comes as a result of electricity deregulation and subsequent investor confidence in wind power developments in Alberta. (Energy)
- **achieved** a target that states that Alberta's average residential natural gas price will be less than the annual average national residential price. During 2003, Alberta residential rates were 19 per cent lower than the national average. (Energy)
- **awarded** to the Internet based Petroleum Registry of Alberta was the prestigious Technology in Manufacturing (TIM) Award, winning in the "Most Innovative Software Implementation" category. The TIM awards, announced annually by Canada's IT for Industry magazine, recognizes the top technology implementations in the country. A recent article in the International Oil and Gas Journal states, "the Petroleum Registry of Alberta has transformed an archaic, paper-based system into a time and money-saving web-based space". (Energy)
- **committed** to considering a proposed long-term solution to gas-over bitumen and partnering with industry to work together on technical solutions. (Energy)
- **approved** an electricity transmission policy that paves the way for significant improvements to Alberta's transmission infrastructure, which will ensure Albertans continue receiving reliable service regardless of where they live by supporting new investment in generation to meet the demands of economic growth. (Energy)

PRESERVATION

The following activities support the *Preservation* core business to ensure Alberta's communities are strong and safe, and Alberta's natural, cultural and historical resources are protected.

Building Stronger and Safer Communities

Albertans take pride in their communities. They require leadership from government on issues of safety, and flexibility from government on determining what initiatives will best strengthen their communities. The government supports numerous initiatives that improve safety and build stronger communities. In the Third Quarter of 2003-04, the government:

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- **passed** Bill 45, the *Family Law Act*, which consolidates provincial family law while updating it to reflect current legal practices, making it easier for Albertans to understand. It addresses areas such as spousal and adult interdependent partner support, child support, guardianship and parenting. (Justice)
 - **introduced** Bill 56, the *Alberta Court of Justice Act*, which provides the legal framework to establish a unified family court in the province. The new court would have jurisdiction over family law and youth matters, improve access to the justice system and provide a more positive experience for Albertans involved in family law. (Justice)
 - **initiated** an inter-governmental working group in Alberta to develop a strategy to deal with the increase in methamphetamine use. The group will look at what preventative steps can be taken with a coordinated approach to meth labs. (Solicitor General)
 - **profiled** Alberta's crime enforcement initiatives at the 2003 Crime Stoppers International Training Conference in Australia. (Solicitor General)
 - **launched** an awareness initiative called *Help Make a Difference* to show the benefits of intercultural understanding. This initiative, in partnership with Global TV, consists of two major components: a series of public service announcements broadcast across Alberta, and a website created to complement the announcements, www.helpmakeadifference.com. (Community Development)
 - **partnered** with The Alberta Library to obtain a contribution from Industry Canada of \$1.2 million to support public access computers in public libraries in Alberta. (Community Development)
 - **presented** six Albertans with a Star of the Millennium volunteer award on International Volunteer Day. Recipients of the Stars of the Millennium Volunteer Awards were inducted into Alberta's Volunteer Wall of Fame. (Community Development)
 - **awarded** 90 grants totalling \$181,365 for various provincial and community-based projects in the areas of sport, recreation, parks and wildlife. (Community Development)

- **provided** funding for a number of community-based Alberta 2005 Centennial projects: Foothills Centennial Centre in Okotoks (\$500,000), Nord-Bridge Seniors Centre in Lethbridge (\$200,000), Morinville Agriplex (\$250,000), Ponoka Golf Clubhouse (\$200,000), St. Paul Golf Course and Clubhouse (\$350,000) and Peace Memorial Multiplex in Wainwright (\$1,000,000). (Community Development)
- **awarded** the 2006 Alberta Winter Games to the communities of Hinton, Jasper and Edson. \$410,000 of lottery funding will be used to support the Games, including a \$60,000 grant from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. (Community Development)
- **co-chaired** the Joint Management Committee in November 2003 to review grant fund applications for the federal Community Mobilization Program (CMP). Twenty-three projects from Alberta were recommended for funding totalling more than \$900,000. (Solicitor General)
- **chaired** the government panel at the recent joint Alberta Energy and Utilities Board/federal hearings for Canadian Natural Resources Limited Horizon and Shell Jackpine. The purpose of the hearings were to assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the proposed construction and operation of oilsands mining projects in the Fort McMurray area and to determine if these projects are in the public interest. (Environment)
- **released** *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability* in November 2003, the most comprehensive strategy of its kind in Canada. *Water for Life* is based on over 18 months of consultations and discussions with Albertans and water experts. The plan outlines a series of short-, medium- and long-term actions, worth an estimated \$916 million, aimed at ensuring Albertans have safe, secure drinking water, healthy aquatic ecosystems and a reliable water supply to support provincial economic development. www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca. (Environment)
- **removed** over 90 tonnes of potentially hazardous crop protection products from Alberta's environment during the 2003 Operation CleanFarm program. Farmers in Central Alberta were given the opportunity to drop off obsolete or unwanted pesticides at one of 35 sites for safe disposal – at no cost. www.gov.ab.ca/env/protenf/pesticide/cleanfarm/index.html (Environment)
- **issued** 1,151 charitable gaming licenses to community groups throughout the province. These fundraising activities support everything from minor league hockey to religious organizations, and promote community involvement throughout Alberta. Through charitable gaming events, over \$200 million was raised last year for various community organizations. (Gaming)
- **maximized** the benefits to charities conducting bingo events by strengthening the terms and conditions that govern operations for Alberta's bingo industry. The changes were made after extensive consultation with industry groups and stakeholders and reflect policy direction from the 2001 Gaming Licensing Policy Review. (Gaming)
- **provided** invaluable funding to projects throughout Alberta through the Alberta Lottery Fund. Lottery funding has assisted in areas such as crime prevention (\$73,865 to the Clean Scene Network), protecting our historical resources (\$12,118 to the Bear Lake Canuck Historical Society), and facility upgrades that better the lives of Albertans (\$23,415 to Chrysalis: Alberta Society for Citizens with Disabilities). (Gaming)
- **expanded** the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission web site to include information on tobacco enforcement. To help deter tobacco-related offences, the site also lists those who have been charged with an offence and their infractions. (Gaming)
- **released** the new *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code*, which contains all the technical requirements for workplace health and safety previously contained in 11 regulations. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **produced and distributed** brochures explaining the Work Safe Alberta mentorship program, which helps employees reduce injury rates. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **released** the guidelines and application for the first annual Awards for Innovation in Workplace Health and Safety, a Work Safe Alberta program, to recognize health and safety initiatives in Alberta workplaces over the past year. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **participated** in the official opening of the Beverly Lodge. This is a 73-unit seniors lodge in Edmonton recently upgraded under the Lodge Upgrading Program. Total government support for this project was about \$1 million. (Infrastructure)
- **agreed** to provide up to \$472,000 in additional emergency shelter funding to the Calgary Drop-In Centre to increase shelter capacity by 200 spaces during the winter months. (Seniors)
- **entered** into a two-year agreement with the Dream Centre in Calgary to provide \$290,400 for up to 44 short-term transitional housing spaces. (Seniors)
- **provided** about \$11.9 million in funding under the Canada Alberta Affordable Housing Program to construct affordable housing units in Edmonton, Fort McMurray and Brooks. (Seniors)
- **launched** the Alberta ski season by reminding skiers and snowboarders of theft prevention through ski check. Ski check is a crime prevention program that offers tips to skiers and snowboarders to help them prevent theft of their equipment. (Solicitor General)
- **passed** a private member's bill to amend the *Traffic Safety Act*. The amendment allows police to seize vehicles from anyone caught trying to solicit a prostitute. The goal of the bill is to reduce street prostitution and its negative effects on urban neighbourhoods. (Transportation)
- **approved** grants to seven cities for a total of \$16.4 million through Alberta Transportation's Cities Special Transportation Grants program. Grants are available to Alberta cities, other than Edmonton and Calgary, to address road, transit, or airport growth. (Transportation)
- **invested** approximately \$17.7 million in infrastructure projects in 32 communities through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program. Alberta Transportation administers this joint federal-provincial funding program on behalf of the province. (Transportation)
- **provided** a grant to A Better Choice - A Better Life Mentoring Project. The initiative is a mentoring program based on a youth-helping-youth model that utilizes peer support, peer counselling and education. The primary focus is to address the escalating issue of urban Aboriginal youth and gangs. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **participated** with the Athabasca Oil Sands Developers on an initiative to develop transportation infrastructure in support of the oil sands activity occurring in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **partnered** with Municipal Affairs on the launch of an interactive tool to educate children on fire prevention safety. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **issued** consumer alerts to caution Albertans on unscrupulous businesses and provided consumer tips for dealing with a variety of situations in the marketplace. Subjects included home renovators and funeral home operators. (Government Services)
- **handed** the largest fine ever imposed under the province's *Fair Trading Act* to a home renovator convicted of multiple charges. (Government Services)
- **completed** 577 investigations related to consumer protection and recovered more than \$162,000 for Alberta consumers. (Government Services)
- **opened** the new, state-of-the-art Emergency Management Alberta Operations Centre, which will be used as the province's coordination centre during disasters or major emergencies. The \$1.4 million, 17,000 square foot facility is the first of its kind in Canada and has been cited as an excellent model for the rest of the country to follow. (Municipal Affairs)
- **received** 11 grant applications under the Regional Partnerships Initiative, which encourages and assists municipalities to foster regional cooperation in the delivery of municipal services to Alberta residents. Two grants totaling \$125,000 were approved and the remaining applications are still under consideration. (Municipal Affairs)
- **allocated** \$500,000 to support training of emergency management personnel and ground search and rescue volunteers. This special initiative will provide training to local personnel that will enable them to continue to effectively respond to major emergencies and disasters. (Municipal Affairs)

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- **organized** a workshop to bring the province's fire service and mental health communities together to learn about juvenile fire-setting and receive information on a Canadian program that can be used to help deal with this serious problem. (Municipal Affairs)
- **participated** in a regional hazardous material response exercise organized by the Montana Department of Disaster and Emergency Services. The exercise simulated a terrorist strike with poison gas at the border crossing facility between Coutts, Alberta and Sweetgrass, Montana. (Municipal Affairs)
- **certified** 74 first responders to train others throughout Alberta on how to identify and assess chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards. The training provided to these first responders will establish an additional level of security against potential threats. (Municipal Affairs)
- **amended** the *Municipal Government Act* to provide municipalities with the authority to collect an off-site road levy as a condition of subdivision or development to help offset transportation costs attributable to new growth. Other amendments dealt with liabilities associated with contact sports and dates for changes in assessment requirements. (Municipal Affairs)
- **continued** to implement FireSmart planning and operational activities in more than 26 communities identified as priority areas. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **responded** to more than 320 wildlife-human conflict situations, which resulted in the relocation of 77 bears, 24 ungulates and 43 other animals. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **fought** nearly 80 reported wildfires. (Sustainable Resource Development)

Protecting Alberta's Natural and Cultural Heritage

Albertans want to ensure Alberta's awe-inspiring natural beauty and rich cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. In the Third Quarter, the Alberta government:

- **provided** \$209,500 in total grants to assist with the implementation of the Alberta portion of the Historic Places Initiative, which is aimed at preserving Alberta's heritage. (Community Development)
- **opened** the new Provincial Archives of Alberta, an Alberta 2005 Centennial legacy project. (Community Development)
- **partnered** with the French community in Edmonton and the Francophone Secretariat to set up a formal process of preserving the community's documentary heritage at the Provincial Archives of Alberta. (Community Development)
- **unveiled** the final artwork, the *Story of Life*, a 40-foot long by eight-foot high mural, of renowned Canadian artist Lorraine Malach at the Royal Tyrrell Museum. Malach spent more than two years designing, modeling and firing the project, which was nearing completion at the time of her death in March 2003. (Community Development)
- **partnered** with the Friends of Fort Victoria to reconstruct the historic kitchen at the Clerk's Quarters at Victoria Settlement Provincial Historic Site. (Community Development)
- **continued** to develop science-based phosphorus limits for all agricultural lands in Alberta to sustain agriculture development without negatively impacting the province's surface water quality. (Agriculture, Food And Rural Development)
- **supported** Hallmark Entertainment Group's *Dreamkeeper*, a two-part mini-series made for ABC television, filmed in southern Alberta and included more than 1,500 Aboriginals in all aspects of making the film. (Aboriginal Development and Northern Affairs)
- **assisted** the Lac La Biche/Lakeland Interpretative Society with its interpretative centre project proposed for the Town of Lac La Biche. (Aboriginal Development and Northern Affairs)
- **contained** a mountain pine beetle outbreak in the Bow Corridor area, through a joint program with Parks Canada and the Town of Canmore. (Sustainable Resource Development, Community Development)
- **increased** penalties for wildlife poaching offences. Fish and Wildlife officers also gained additional ways to respond to poaching. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **spoke** with more than 14,450 people during compliance checks, and investigated about 1,600 complaints of illegal activities involving fish and wildlife resources. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **led** a pilot project in northeast Alberta designed to develop a protocol and process for engagement of Alberta's Aboriginal communities in regional economic development initiatives. (Economic Development)

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