

BUDGET 2004

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ON COURSE



2004-2005 Quarterly Budget Report

Q1 ACTIVITY REPORT

AUGUST 31, 2004

Alberta

Updating Albertans

The government has three core businesses that make up its overall business plan and that 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 first 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 the 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 first quarter, Albertans had a say as government:

- **released** *Growing Alberta*, a report on the future of Alberta's agri-food industry, after consulting with industry and government stakeholders. (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, AFRD)
- **partnered** with Music Alberta to initiate a consultation process with members of Alberta's music community to determine how programs and services can best be developed. (Community Development)
- **held** a Provincial Roundtable to help set the future direction for the new Office for Disability Issues. The roundtable brought together various provincial organizations responsible for disability-related programs. (Community Development)
- **held** meetings with representatives of the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Canadian Hard of Hearing, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind in Edmonton and Calgary to seek input regarding accessibility issues at the Jubilee Auditoria. (Community Development)
- **organized** an Aboriginal Leaders' Roundtable on Aboriginal Tourism in Edmonton in conjunction with Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. The roundtable provided an opportunity to discuss the growing demand for aboriginal tourism and how Alberta's aboriginal communities could become more involved in developing these opportunities. (Economic Development)
- **provided** baseline information and collected input during six information sessions in communities where Natural Gas in Coal development has been initiated or is expected. A multi-stakeholder advisory committee is guiding the process, and will present its recommendations to the government. (Energy)
- **provided** an initial report from a multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee on Water Use Practice and Policy to Environment Minister Lorne Taylor. The department is currently reviewing public feedback on the committee's recommendations for reducing water use. (Environment)
- **introduced** a new auto insurance system that will result in lower premiums for good drivers, fair pricing for less-experienced drivers, and fast treatment for people injured in collisions. (Finance)
- **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to more than 45,000 Albertans through the Government Services toll-free call centre. (Government Services)
- **assisted** 479 Albertans through the Utilities Consumer Advocate, with a total of 574 concerns about retail electricity and natural gas service. (Government Services)
- **created** an advisory council of 10 community-minded Albertans to provide the Utilities Consumer Advocate with grassroots consumer input on retail natural gas and electricity issues. The council meets monthly. (Government Services)

- **hosted** employer focus groups in Grande Prairie, Edmonton, and Calgary to exchange labour market information and to gather industry trends in preparation for updating the labour market outlook presentation package. (Human Resources and Employment, HRE)
- **held** regional stakeholder forums with Alberta Human Resources and Employment training providers in three regions to discuss policy and implementation issues in the delivery of Alberta Works employment and training programs. (HRE)
- **met** with more than 50 public, private and contracted Calgary-area training providers, who provide Alberta Works Employment and Training Supports programs, in roundtable discussions on the Skills Investment Strategy. (HRE)
- **continued** to receive feedback from Albertans through municipal and stakeholder representatives on the Minister's Provincial/Municipal Council on Roles, Responsibilities, and Resources in the 21st Century. (Municipal Affairs)
- **responded** to more than 35,000 calls to the Seniors Information Line (Seniors)
- **assisted** more than 14,000 seniors and provided 38 presentations to seniors interest groups through the eight Seniors Information Services Offices. (Seniors)
- **distributed** a draft Future Directions report outlining the 10-year vision and strategic plan for the Office of the Public Guardian to approximately 100 external stakeholders for feedback. (Seniors)

PEOPLE

The following activities support the *People* core business and particularly 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 first quarter, the government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

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- **coordinated** a meeting of community members from three Métis Settlements to begin implementation of the Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy pilot projects. Also, supported the development of proposals from two Aboriginal organizations and two First Nations communities to participate in the Aboriginal Mentoring pilot project. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, AAND)
 - **developed and implemented** a tracking system in all provincial abattoirs to ensure removal of specified risk materials, further ensuring the safety of Alberta beef. (AFRD)
 - **initiated** a cross-ministry initiative to begin implementing recommendations of the Clean Air Strategic Alliance Electricity Project team. Results will lead to a reduction in emissions from coal-generated electricity. Implementation is expected to take two years. (Environment)
 - **announced** Alberta's Health Renewal Plan with a \$700 million investment to reduce waiting times and improve access to health services: \$200 million to eliminate accumulated and projected health region deficits, and \$500 million for capital funding (\$150 million for medical and diagnostic equipment, and \$350 million for health facilities). (Health and Wellness/Infrastructure)
 - **expanded** provincial immunization programs to include Hepatitis A vaccination to people at high risk of complications and those at higher risk of exposure, and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination to about 44,000 Grade 9 students. (Health and Wellness)
 - **launched** West Nile virus public education campaign to inform Albertans of the symptoms and consequences of the virus and the precautions they can take. (Health and Wellness)
 - **provided** \$2 million in funding to the Canadian Diabetes Association to develop and implement the *Keep Your Body in Check* program educating Albertans about reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes. A pilot project will give residents in Edmonton Norwood/City Centre communities, St. Paul/Bonnyville, and Medicine Hat practical information and training on healthy food choices and increasing physical activity. (Health and Wellness)
 - **sent** the Healthy U campaign crew on the road to participate in summer rodeos and festivals, encouraging Albertans to eat healthy and be physically active. (Health and Wellness)

- **provided** premium-free health benefits to more than 68,000 children in low-income families through the Alberta Child Health Benefit. In addition, 1,600 individuals and families received premium-free health benefits through the Alberta Adult Health Benefit. (HRE)
- **introduced** \$163 million, over three years, in new funding under the 2004-07 Capital Plan for projects such as renovations in five Edmonton hospitals to reclaim space for 170 new acute care beds and the redevelopment of the Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department at the Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary. (Health and Wellness/Infrastructure)
- **approved** \$53.5 million in funding for the Infrastructure Maintenance Program projects as requested by the health regions and for the Health Sustainability Initiative Fund for 19 projects in health facilities throughout the province. (Health and Wellness/Infrastructure)
- **endorsed** the new Canadian Policy Against Doping in Sport that supports the World Anti-Doping Code to reduce the use of performance enhancing drugs at the annual meeting of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for sport, recreation and fitness held in Quebec City. (Community Development)
- **launched** SummerActive, a national, six-week, community-based healthy living awareness campaign, on May 7, 2004, at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary. (Community Development)
- **provided** grants totalling \$75,540 to 12 provincial sport and recreation associations for projects aimed at increasing participation. (Community 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 first quarter, the provincial government honoured its commitment to education and lifelong learning as it:

- **provided** a grant to assist the Métis Matters Foundation of Alberta in providing scholarships open to all Métis students in Alberta in Grades 4 to 12. (AAND)
- **allocated** for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, through *Northern LINKS*, more than \$320,000, for 100 projects, to encourage northern Alberta students to complete their schooling and pursue a post-secondary education. (AAND)
- **continued** the Summer Farm Employment Program, which supports the development of human resources for the agriculture sector. This year, 246 students were employed. (AFRD)
- **launched** a new web site dedicated to groundwater and surface water quantity in June. The site features information on the hydrologic cycle, factors that influence water quantity in Alberta, and water allocation, licensing and agreements the province has with other jurisdictions. It can be found at www.gov.ab.ca/env/water. (Environment)
- **informed** the public about the Alberta Lottery Fund with a display at a number of community events and conferences throughout Alberta including the Alberta Library Conference, the Grande Prairie Stompede, and the Vitalize Conference. (Gaming)
- **approved** funding for projects spearheaded by seven Alberta school boards. The communities of Drayton Valley, Valleyview, Peace River, Cold Lake, Onoway, Canmore, and Okotoks will benefit from more than \$73 million in school project announcements. (Infrastructure)
- **announced** more than \$150 million in post-secondary capital projects, including major renovations and upgrades at the University of Calgary, redevelopment at the University of Alberta's new Augustana Campus, and a new Sport and Wellness Centre at Keyano College in Fort McMurray. (Infrastructure)
- **partnered** with the University of Alberta Legal Studies program to develop A-Link, Alberta's Law-related Information Network, an online database where Albertans can find access to more than 200 justice-related organizations. (Justice and Attorney General)
- **increased** special needs-related funding by nearly \$45 million to enhance school jurisdictions' abilities to meet the needs of students with severe disabilities and/or special health needs. (Learning)
- **introduced** Alberta's new Languages Initiative that will require all students from Grades 4 to 9 to study a second language. The language-learning requirement will be phased in one grade level each year, beginning with Grade 4 in the 2006-07 school year. (Learning)
- **finalized** an agreement to establish Alberta-accredited schools in China and further education initiatives on language and culture in both learning systems. These will be Alberta's first international schools and are planned to open in 2005. (Learning)
- **awarded** \$555,000 to Alberta's top graduate students through the Arts Graduate Scholarships, Ralph Steinhauer Awards of Distinction, and Sir James Loughheed Awards of Distinction. (Learning)
- **fostered** resource management skills and future job opportunities by starting new aboriginal Junior Forest Warden groups in Fort Vermilion, Lac La Biche, High Level, Slave Lake and Driftpile. (Sustainable Resource Development, SRD)

Supporting Families and Children

Every government ministry is responsible for initiatives that contribute to an atmosphere where Alberta families can succeed and flourish. In this quarter, the government:

- **hosted** a family violence and bullying seminar in Calgary. Eleven experts from across North America shared best practices and research in the prevention of, and response to, family violence and bullying. (Children's Services)
- **held and participated** in the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying in Calgary. The roundtable highlighted key areas including focusing on prevention, and not just protection; emphasizing public education; and recognizing that communities have the capacity to identify their own needs and develop their own customized solutions. An action plan will be presented to the government this fall. (Children's Services/Solicitor General)
- **announced** a new position dedicated to implementing the action plan resulting from the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying. An executive director was named to coordinate efforts of all government ministries on family violence initiatives and to work closely with businesses and communities across Alberta. (Children's Services)
- **announced** the 19 winners of the My Alberta: Violence-Free contest for young Albertans. Approximately 600 participants created a piece of artwork or wrote a 250-word essay answering the question "What is your vision for a violence-free Alberta?" Winning entries are showcased at www.familyviolenceroundtable.gov.ab.ca. (Children's Services)
- **announced** that access to Alberta's adoption records will change Nov. 1, 2004, when the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* comes into force. (Children's Services)
- **released** *Becoming A Parent in Alberta*, a publication jointly produced by Community Development, Human Resources and Employment, and Human Resources and Development Canada, to provide answers about maternity and paternity leave, related benefits, and human rights protection. (Community Development/HRE)
- **introduced** new supplementary benefits for families receiving Alberta Works Income Support benefits, including the 'Escaping Family Violence' benefit and the provision of assistance to families where a relative baby-sits so the parent can work, train or look for a job. (HRE)
- **introduced**, under the Alberta Works Income Support program, allowance for 18 or 19-year-old children to remain on the family's income support file as long as the children remain in school, ensuring stability and support when finishing their high school education. (HRE)
- **appointed** a specialized Crown prosecutor as coordinator for family violence initiatives to assist with the development and implementation of proposed family violence protocols for Alberta prosecutors. (Justice and Attorney General)
- **provided** approximately \$38 million to around 126,000 seniors under the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. Average monthly cash benefit was \$104 per senior. (Seniors)
- **provided** approximately \$5.4 million through enhanced benefits to approximately 7,900 low-income seniors living in long-term care facilities to assist them with their accommodation fees. (Seniors)

- **provided** \$16.5 million under the Lodge Assistance Program to lodge operators throughout the province, and committed to provide funding for an additional 311 lodge units which will be available for occupancy during this fiscal year. (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 2004-05 and various government ministries are involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that trend continues. In this quarter, the government:

- **signed** an accord between Alberta and the federal government to work together with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement holders, as well as with industry and business, to support the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative. (AAND)
- **participated** on the planning committee for the Northern Alberta Tourism Research Centre Society consisting of the project partners from municipalities, post-secondary institutions, and economic development groups. (AAND)
- **changed** the way Alberta administers funding from the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program to speed up the delivery of advance payments to Alberta producers. (AFRD)
- **made** changes to the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation Act to facilitate investment in rural areas. (AFRD)
- **continued** ongoing consultation with industry regarding a BSE risk management strategy and contingency planning. (AFRD)
- **released** *Alberta Beef: Focus on the Future*, a report detailing the beef industry's strategic framework for coping with the BSE crisis, as well as continued to process recovery payments in an attempt to minimize cash flow difficulties facing livestock producers. (AFRD)
- **organized** the Global Petroleum Show in Calgary. This show is the largest and most comprehensive oil and gas show in the world, housing more than 1,500 petroleum industry companies. (Economic Development)
- **attended** the York Emigration Show in the United Kingdom to promote Alberta as a preferred emigration destination to target skilled workers. Up to 200 individuals met with department officials, and several immigration candidates from the show have already undertaken exploratory visits to Alberta. (Economic Development)
- **organized** the Buyer Seller Forum 2004. The forum has 225 attendees and established alliances and linkages in the Alberta industrial supply chain to improve the competitiveness of industry in Alberta. (Economic Development)
- **coordinated** a Premier's Trade Mission to Asia, including stops in Beijing and Harbin, China; and Seoul and Chunchun, Korea. The Premier met with business leaders, promoted market access for Canadian beef, provided updates on development in Alberta's energy industry, and signed agreements in the education, science, petroleum, and technology sectors. (Economic Development)

- **launched** the annual summer marketing campaign with the delivery of the *Albertabb! Hot Holidays 2004* magazine to 840,000 households in Alberta and Saskatchewan. A new television advertisement, newspaper and radio features, Internet marketing, and radio event cruisers support the campaign to promote tourism within Alberta. (Economic Development)
- **sold** a record 749 parcels of Crown petroleum and natural gas land leases and licences on April 7, 2004, resulting in more than \$94 million in revenue to Albertans. The previous record of 722 parcels was set in March 1997. (Energy)
- **reported** Alberta's strong 2003-04 fiscal position, which featured the province's tenth-consecutive balanced budget, the accumulated debt reduced to \$3.7 billion, the Capital Account increased by \$1.4 billion, and the Sustainability Fund reaching the \$2.5 billion target level. (Finance)
- **approved** two new casino projects: one in Calgary, and one on the Enoch Cree Nation reserve land west of Edmonton. The Enoch Cree Nation casino is the first-ever Alberta casino to be owned by a First Nation, and will generate employment and funds for social, economic and community development projects throughout the province. (Gaming)
- **represented** electricity consumers through the Utilities Consumer Advocate at Alberta Energy and Utility Board hearings. (Government Services)
- **launched** Alberta Purchasing Connection, an online electronic tendering system developed by the Alberta Corporate Service Centre on May 30, 2004 to provide vendors with a single point of access to all Alberta public tenders and contracts for goods, services and construction. More than 3,000 Alberta vendors registered on the site by the end of June. (Government Services)
- **established** an Industry Advisory Committee to determine if adults who lack a Grade 12 credential and are given job-specific skills, but no high school diploma or education equivalent, will be accepted for employment by the private sector. (HRE)
- **signed** the Canada-Alberta Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, commencing April 1, 2004. The bilateral agreement enhances the employability of persons with disabilities and increase employment opportunities. (HRE)
- **placed** a record 7,363 job postings on the Canada-Alberta Job Bank (JOBS) in June 2004, an increase of more than 31 per cent compared to June 2003. JOBS is the largest web-based network of job postings to Canadians, with more than 500,000 new jobs posted Canada-wide every year. (HRE)
- **sold** 10 surplus properties for a total value of \$9.3 million. (Infrastructure)
- **purchased** 11 properties worth \$10.3 million in support of government programs, primarily in the Transportation and Utility Corridors to allow for the extension of ring roads in Edmonton and Calgary. (Infrastructure)
- **promoted** Alberta at BIO 2004, the world's premiere biotechnology conference in San Francisco, California. The Alberta delegation had the opportunity to market the Alberta life sciences sector to an international audience and promote Alberta's competitive business advantage. (Innovation and Science)
- **signed** an agreement with the Republic of Korea Ministry of Science and Technology during Premier Klein's mission to Asia. The letter of intent outlines several ways in which Korea and Alberta will work together on common areas of interest in science and technology research and development, including energy, nanotechnology, biotechnology and other innovative technologies. (Innovation and Science)
- **signed** five new memorandums of agreement and a draft framework agreement on enhanced trade between Alberta and British Columbia after a joint Cabinet meeting in May 2004. Discussions included health care reform, trade, and regulation harmonization. (International and Intergovernmental Relations, IIR)
- **discussed** cooperation with Yukon in areas such as energy, pipeline development, tourism and transportation. (IIR/Energy)
- **highlighted** Alberta as a safe and reliable source of energy at the Western Governors' Association's North American Energy Summit in Albuquerque, N.M. (IIR/Energy)

- **met** with key government and business leaders in China and South Korea, Alberta's third and fourth largest trading partners, to explore ways of increasing cooperation, update them on developments in Alberta's oil sands industry, and stress the safety of Alberta's beef. (IIR)
- **reaffirmed** a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with Alaska. The Alberta-Alaska Bilateral Council, established to discuss such opportunities as trade, tourism, energy and aboriginal issues, also held its inaugural meeting. (IIR/Energy)
- **defended** the province's forestry practices in response to U.S. softwood lumber trade action. Activities included participating in Canada's North American Free Trade and World Trade Organization challenges. (IIR)
- **attended** a meeting of provincial and territorial ministers responsible for internal trade, resulting in a work plan on internal trade to be presented to Canada's Council of the Federation. During the meeting, the Alberta government continued to press for full implementation and revitalization of the *Agreement on Internal Trade*. (IIR)
- **secured** Canada's bid to host the 2009 WorldSkills Competition in Calgary. This event brings together young people from around the world to exhibit their skills in trades and technologies, and is expected to generate \$46 million in economic benefits. (Learning)
- **signed** a new agreement with the federal government allowing the targeted entry of temporary foreign workers to meet the urgent skilled labour needs of oilsands employers for key projects in Fort McMurray. (Learning)
- **released** the 2003-04 Annual Report for Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. During the 2003-04 fiscal year, the Heritage Fund recorded the single largest annual rise in fair value in its 28-year history as the Fund's investment portfolio increased by \$2.45 billion and recorded an overall return on investment income of 22.5 per cent. Over the year, the Heritage Fund transferred \$1.13 billion in investment income to the General Revenue Fund. (Revenue)
- **reduced** the General Corporate Income Tax rate from 12.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent, and the small business rate from four per cent to three per cent, saving Alberta businesses about \$142 million. These changes ensure Alberta's business taxes continue to be among the lowest in Canada. (Revenue/Finance)
- **promoted** the economic, environmental and recreational benefits of forestry to Alberta through the Forestry Capital of Canada celebrations in Lac La Biche. (SRD)
- **introduced** the *Highways Development and Protection Act*, amalgamating two prior acts to provide a single legislative framework for the planning, development and protection of provincial highways. (Transportation)
- **opened** the Little Bow Water Management Program in Southern Alberta. The \$95 million project secures water supplies for more than 7,000 people and numerous communities for domestic, industrial, and recreational use. (Transportation)
- **signed** the historic agreement-in-principle with the Tsuu T'ina First Nation to negotiate the transfer of Nation land to the province for the future construction of the southwest leg of Calgary's ring road. (Transportation)

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 this quarter, the government:

- **launched** the Innovative Technologies Royalty Program to provide the impetus for development of new technologies that can increase resource recoveries and improve project economics while supporting Alberta's commitment to seeking solutions to critical environmental issues. (Energy)
- **approved** four test projects aimed at advancing Alberta's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing the recovery of Alberta's oil and gas resources through the use of carbon dioxide sequestration. (Energy)
- **signed** a memorandum of understanding with British Columbia's Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection on May 26, 2004 to work cooperatively on common areas of environmental management, including regulatory harmonization. Work on eight initiatives is now underway as a result of the agreement and additional areas for cooperation are being considered. (Environment)
- **added** a new searchable database of liquor stores, bars, and Bring Your Own Wine locations to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission web site (www.aglc.gov.ab.ca). (Gaming)
- **provided** GAIN (Gaming Information for Charitable Groups) training to more than 1,590 individuals and 866 charitable groups throughout the province. The GAIN program trains groups and individuals to be more accountable for their charitable gaming activities, and better understand the responsibilities and requirements of a gaming licence. (Gaming)
- **partnered** with the Capital Health Authority in a new purchasing arrangement developed by the Alberta Corporate Service Centre to reduce staff costs for purchasing activities and obtain better pricing from pharmaceutical manufacturers by increasing purchase volumes. (Government Services)
- **launched** the Regional Shared Health Information Program linking seven rural health regions to the Alberta Electronic Health Record. The \$92 million program will create a common information system to manage health and financial information. (Health and Wellness)
- **awarded** nearly \$23 million to Alberta's university research community through the Alberta Science and Research Investments Program. (Innovation and Science)
- **completed** a high-capacity connection between Edmonton and Grande Prairie for Alberta SuperNet, helping bring it to 467 service locations including 210 schools, 145 provincial government offices, 39 health facilities, 43 libraries, and 30 municipal government offices in 66 communities. (Innovation and Science)
- **hosted** international research leaders and Alberta's top researchers in information and communications technology for the first ever iCORE Banff Informatics Summit. (Innovation and Science)
- **invested** \$750,000 in a new research program to make oil sands mining methods safer and more efficient. The project is valued at \$4.9 million over five years. (Innovation and Science)

- **established** a pilot project using videoconferencing to connect seven regional courthouses to the Edmonton Remand Centre. Videoconferencing eliminates the need to transfer prisoners to court for routine procedures, increasing safety and streamlining the docket court process. (Justice and Attorney General/Solicitor General)
- **implemented** the Municipal Sponsorship Program, which will provide \$13 million to municipalities with populations of less than 20,000 for projects promoting innovation, excellence and cooperation in improving municipal government, administration, and services. (Municipal Affairs)
- **received** 14 applications for the *ME first!* Program, totalling \$1.18 million. *ME first!* is a four-year, \$100 million program helping municipalities access interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects. (Municipal Affairs)
- **recognized** a record 43 work teams across the Alberta public service for demonstrating excellence in business practices and superior client service in their workplace at the 10th annual Premier's Award of Excellence ceremony. (Personnel Administration Office)
- **began** deploying Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies on the Highway 2 corridor to improve safety and efficiency, and to better manage traffic flows. (Transportation)

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 first quarter of 2004-05, the Alberta government:

- **completed** a major survey of mayors, reeves, town and county managers and Métis Settlements as part of a project to determine the condition of housing in Northern Alberta. (AAND)
- **announced** funding in support of the 2005 Centennial Initiative, with an additional \$30 million over the next two years. (Community Development)
- **launched** the third annual Under 25 ID policy awareness campaign and audit to help keep alcohol out of the hands of minors. This initiative reinforces the need for liquor licensees to ask for identification from people who appear to be under the age of 25. (Gaming)
- **issued** 1,127 charitable gaming licences to community groups throughout the province. Community groups raised more than \$200 million last year from licensed charitable gaming activities such as casinos, bingos, raffles and pull tickets. (Gaming)
- **supported** projects province-wide with the Alberta Lottery Fund through the Community Facility Enhancement and Community Initiatives Programs, including funding for special needs (\$38,000 to the Ability Society of Alberta, Assistive Technology for Persons with Disabilities); learning/social opportunities for children (\$5,000 to the Canmore Children's Festival Society); and a facility upgrade offering safe alternatives for First Nations youth (\$3,337 to the Elizabeth Métis Settlement Youth Centre). (Gaming)
- **issued** consumer alerts to caution Albertans on unscrupulous businesses and provide consumer tips for dealing with a variety of situations in the marketplace. Subjects included travel, door-to-door sales, electricity and natural gas marketing, and credit reporting. (Government Services)
- **completed** 398 investigations related to consumer protection. (Government Services)
- **simplified** the process to initiate charges for trespassing with Legislative changes to the *Petty Trespass Act* and the *Trespass to Premises Act* that became effective June 1, 2004. (Justice and Attorney General)
- **supported** an initiative from Crown prosecutors to consider the option of seeking dangerous offender and long-term offender designations in the most serious cases for some habitual impaired drivers. (Justice and Attorney General)

- **completed** the province-wide Emergency Public Warning System (EPWS). The network is the first of its kind in North America, enabling local broadcasters to transmit warning messages to alert the public in the event of major emergencies or child abductions. (Municipal Affairs)
- **provided** approximately \$3.8 million in funding to support 21 homeless shelters, which provide overnight accommodation for up to 1,610 individuals nightly, and an additional 514 beds for short-term transitional housing. (Seniors)
- **continued** direct operation of the Sunalta Emergency Shelter in Calgary that provides overnight accommodation for up to 150 individuals nightly (included in above figures). (Seniors)
- **worked** toward implementing the accepted recommendations within the Government MLA Policing Review report released March 26, 2004, including the development of a new funding formula for municipalities. (Solicitor General)
- **worked** toward implementing the accepted recommendations from the Government MLA Corrections Review report released March 30, 2004. Key recommendations to be implemented include hiring more probation officers, implementing a smoking ban in adult jails, and closing some underused adult work camps and young offender facilities. (Solicitor General)
- **issued** new policing standards manual to all police services for implementation. (Solicitor General)
- **promoted** Alberta Crime Prevention Week (May 8-15, 2004) to increase awareness of crime and crime prevention. (Solicitor General)
- **continued** to develop a strategy to deal with the increase in methamphetamine use through the help of an intergovernmental working group including Solicitor General, Children's Services, Environment, Agriculture, Health and Wellness, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, and the College of Pharmacists. (Solicitor General)
- **worked** on FireSmart plans in 32 communities in the forested parts of the province to reduce the threat of wildfires, ensure public safety, and protect property. (SRD)
- **announced** a \$25 million allocation for regional water systems for 10 communities as part of the province's *Water for Life* strategy. (Transportation)
- **announced** \$25 million in funding for 59 community infrastructure projects approved through the Infrastructure Canada-Alberta Program. (Transportation)

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 first quarter, the Alberta government:

- **coordinated, hosted and promoted** celebrations throughout the province showcasing Aboriginal culture, language and traditions during National Aboriginal Day. Also, provided assistance to a number of communities across the province with their National Aboriginal Day activities. (AAND)
- **facilitated** cultural performances and workshops in Gangneung City, Korea at the Gangneung International Folklore Festival. (AAND)
- **enacted** the Blackfoot Repatriation Regulation, which will allow for the repatriation of sacred and ceremonial objects from government collections to Blackfoot First Nations. (Community Development)
- **signed** the second contribution agreement between Alberta Community Development and the Department of Canadian Heritage that will allow for the continued implementation of the federal/provincial/territorial Historic Places Initiative in Alberta. (Community Development)
- **completed** the digitization, catalogue and description of 2,000 archival photos. These images will be made available on both the Provincial Archives of Alberta and the Archives Society of Alberta web sites (*Insight*). (Community Development)
- **enhanced** Fish Creek Provincial Park with a groundbreaking for the new Lafarge Meadows wetland complex, with the addition of 60-hectares of land acquired from Lafarge Canada Inc. (Community Development)
- **announced** Alberta would be the first province in Canada to implement an Electronics Recycling Program. The e-recycling program will divert computer and television waste - which contains lead, mercury, cadmium and PVC plastics - from Alberta's landfills to recycling facilities. (Environment)
- **distributed** approximately 70,000 seedlings across the province in May 2004. Each year, Grade 1 students receive tree seedlings from Alberta Environment to help students realize the importance and value of trees in our environment. (Environment)
- **announced** the Alberta Water Council on May 31, 2004. With 24 representatives from diverse sectors across Alberta, this advisory body will provide guidance on implementing *Water for Life*, the provincial water strategy, and advise stakeholders on improving water management throughout the province. (Environment)
- **planted** approximately 700 trees and shrubs as part of Alberta Environment's tree-planting program. This initiative began in 1999 to provide a legacy in communities across Alberta, beautifying the landscape, sequestering carbon dioxide emissions, mitigating noise, offering shade, and providing habitat for wildlife. (Environment)
- **assigned** a career counsellor to the Lethbridge area office to work with Aboriginal clients and act as liaison to Red Crow College, to develop more cultural awareness in career and employment activities. (HRE)
- **reduced** the number of commercial fishing operations, introduced a barbless fish hooks regulation, conducted fish stocking, and undertook other initiatives to help conserve and enhance fish populations. (SRD)
- **implemented** *Respect the Land* initiatives to raise awareness of the impacts of outdoor recreation and random camping on the landscape. (SRD)
- **initiated** a grizzly bear DNA census program to better estimate grizzly populations and provided a number of BearSmart education products to minimize encounters between bears and people. (SRD)

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