

HEILONGJIANG - ALBERTA RELATIONS



PROFILE

Capital: Harbin

Population: 38 million (3% of China's total population)

Major Cities: Harbin (9,743,600), Qiqihar (5,611,000), Suihua (5,170,000), Mudanjiang (2,663,000), and Daqing (2,644,000).

Language: Mandarin

Government: Chinese Communist Party

Head of Government: Governor ZHANG Zuoji (appointed in 2003). Governor ZHANG represents the executive branch of government and is responsible to the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress.

Currency: \$1 CDN = 6.98 Yuan Renminbi (Oct 2006)

Key Industry Sectors: Petroleum, agriculture, coal, lumber, and heavy industry.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The year 2006 marked the 25th anniversary of the Heilongjiang-Alberta sister province relationship. The anniversary was celebrated in 2005 with the signing of the reaffirmation of friendship agreement by Premier Klein and Governor ZHANG.
- Heilongjiang is also twinned with Hokkaido, Alberta's sister province in Japan.
- In 1985, Edmonton twinned with Harbin, Heilongjiang's capital city, and Calgary entered into a sister city relationship with Daqing.

RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Following the recommendation of China's Ambassador to Canada, a protocol of understanding and friendship between Alberta and Heilongjiang was signed in 1981.
- Similarities between Alberta and Heilongjiang include climate, topography, energy resources, and agricultural production.
- Mutual areas of interest and exchange include agriculture, energy, forestry, science and technology, medicine, culture, education, sports, and environmental protection.
- In 1998, Heilongjiang suffered its worst flooding in decades. Albertans responded to this disaster by raising over \$200,000 CDN in private donations. The Alberta government made an additional \$100,000 CDN contribution to flood relief efforts and extended a special scholarship to Heilongjiang for skill development directly related to flood management.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Alberta's trading relationship with China has more than doubled since 2003. China is Alberta's 2nd largest trading partner. Alberta's longstanding relationship with Heilongjiang has proved valuable for a broad range of joint activities and continuing growth of business opportunities in other areas of China.

Agriculture

- Over the years, a number of agricultural cooperation agreements have been signed between Heilongjiang and Alberta, focusing on livestock improvement, pasture management, and beef and dairy cattle genetics technology.
- China's accession to the WTO in December 2001 presents significant challenges to Heilongjiang's agrifood sector. This may provide opportunities for additional cooperation between Alberta and Heilongjiang.
- In 2005, AAFRD endorsed a five-year agreement on comprehensive value-added agricultural processing with the Heilongjiang Department of Science and Technology, called the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in Value-Added Agricultural Processing, Product Development, Packaging and Marketing.
- In 2006, AAFRD signed a five-year agreement on comprehensive food safety standards with the Agriculture Committee of Heilongjiang, called the MOU on Cooperation in Food Safety, Research and Regulation Development.

Innovation and Science

- In 2006, the Alberta-Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT) Research and Innovation Centre was established as a partnership between Alberta Innovation and Science and HIT to collaborate on computer technology development.
- In 2004, Alberta signed an agreement with the Heilongjiang Department of Science and Technology to cooperate on research and technology development.

Energy

- Heilongjiang is China's principal oil-producing province.
- Alberta companies have been successful in supplying energy equipment and services to Heilongjiang. In 1998, Sunwing Energy Ltd. of Calgary was the first foreign company to produce oil in China.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- Commercial activities have expanded beyond the petroleum sector and include coal gasification, petrochemical production and manufacturing, breeding cattle, forage seed, hides, and malting barley.
- Significant opportunity exists in water quality monitoring (consulting and technology) within China.

EDUCATION

- In January 2002, Alberta, Heilongjiang, and the University of Alberta signed a MOU on the Development of a Heilongjiang Executive Training Program. The program, which began in June 2002, is designed to train Heilongjiang public servants and entrepreneurs.

- In June 2004, Premier Klein signed a MOU to establish an English International Studies program based on the Alberta curriculum.
- There are 40 linkages and agreements between post-secondary institutions in Alberta and China, including Heilongjiang. Areas of cooperation include education, distance learning, engineering, agriculture, management, medicine, and Chinese language studies.
- Each spring and summer, students from the Universities of Alberta and Calgary study Chinese in Heilongjiang.

CULTURE

- The Provincial Museum of Alberta has developed strong links with Chinese cultural institutions bringing unique aspects of Chinese culture to Alberta. Examples are the "Black Dragon Rising" exhibits from the Jurchen Jin Dynasty of China and the Qing Dynasty exhibit from Heilongjiang.
- Cooperation has occurred between Heilongjiang and Alberta in the area of paleontological research.

RECENT VISITS

- June 2006: Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development participated in the International Forum on Food Quality and Safety, China 2006, held in Harbin.
- January 2006: Alberta's Minister of Innovation and Science undertook a mission to Harbin, meeting with the Heilongjiang Department of Science and Technology.
- October 2005: Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development led a mission to Asia, resulting in the development of two new MOUs with Heilongjiang.
- August 2005: Heilongjiang Governor ZHANG visited Alberta to take part in Alberta's Centennial celebrations and to sign the reaffirmation of friendship agreement, marking the 25th anniversary of the Heilongjiang-Alberta twinning.
- June 2005: Alberta's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development visited Heilongjiang to chair the Northern Forum.
- June 2004: Premier Klein led a delegation to Heilongjiang. Two MOUs were signed to encourage closer ties in the areas of education as well as science and technology.
- September 2001: Heilongjiang Governor SONG Fatang and a 70-member delegation visited Alberta to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Heilongjiang-Alberta twinning.
- September 1999: Premier Klein visited Heilongjiang in conjunction with Heilongjiang-Alberta-Canada business outreach.