

# MONTANA- ALBERTA RELATIONS



## PROFILE

**Capital:** Helena

**Population:** 935,670 (2005 est.)

**Language:** English

**Government:** Bicameral state government

**Head of Government:** Governor Brian Schweitzer (D)  
Term expires: 2008

**Currency:** US Dollar  
\$1 CDN= \$0.89 US (August 2006)

**GSP:** US \$25.4 billion (2005)

**Per Capita Income:** US\$29,387 (2005)

**Key Industry Sectors:**  
Agriculture, tourism, mining, forestry, natural gas.

**Unemployment:** 4.3% (November 2005)

**Primary Cities** (2004 est.): Billings (96,977), Missoula (61,790), Great Falls (56,503), Bozeman (32,414), Butte (32,393), Helena (27,196)

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Montana's largest export is wheat and wheat products.
- 80% of Montana's population is employed by small business.
- Like Alberta, Montana has a large prairie, with a grain economy, but also a significant mountain region, with large forestry and mineral industries.
- The Waterton-Glacier National Park straddles the Alberta-Montana border.

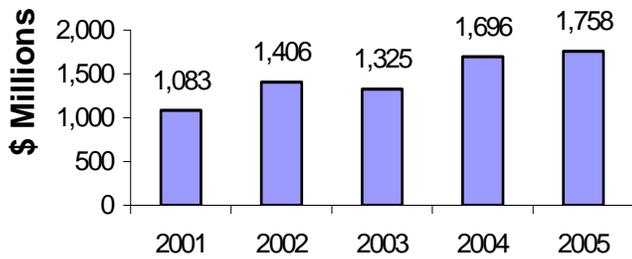
## RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Montana is the only U.S. state Alberta borders and as such is important to the province's export trade sector.
- Alberta's relationship with Montana is comprehensive, and involves a range of common interests.
- Over the last five years, Alberta's exports to Montana averaged \$1.45 billion CDN per year.
- Montana is Alberta's 12th largest export market.
- Alberta oil supplies the major refinery at Billings.

## MABAC (Montana Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council)

- Alberta and Montana agreed to form MABAC in 1985 to discuss area of common interest, identify opportunities for cooperation and resolve emerging issues.
- In March 2000, Premier Klein and Governor Racicot signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" formalizing MABAC as an ongoing forum for transboundary dialogue and cooperation, and committing the parties to an informal dispute resolution process.
- Members include government legislators and senior officials, and representatives from the business community.
- MABAC meetings are usually held annually, alternating in Alberta or Montana.
- The 2006 MABAC meeting was held in Helena, Montana, May 11-12. Agriculture, Transportation, and Transboundary Water Issues topped the agenda.

## Alberta Exports to Montana



### AGRICULTURE

- In June 1999, the Montana and Alberta governments jointly hosted the Montana-Alberta Agricultural Opportunities Conference in Great Falls. Subsequent conferences were held in 2001, in Canmore and 2003, in Great Falls.
- These conferences brought together producers from both sides of the border to discuss common problems, recommend possible solutions, and identify opportunities for cooperation.
- AAFRD is considering some other options for future conferences, which may include expanding to a more regional focus.
- Alberta's main agricultural exports to Montana (about \$42 million in 2005) are oilseed cake and meal, barley, and prepared animal feeds.
- Alberta's 2005 agri-food imports from Montana amounted to about \$15 million. Major imports include barley, cereal preparations, and prepared animal feeds.

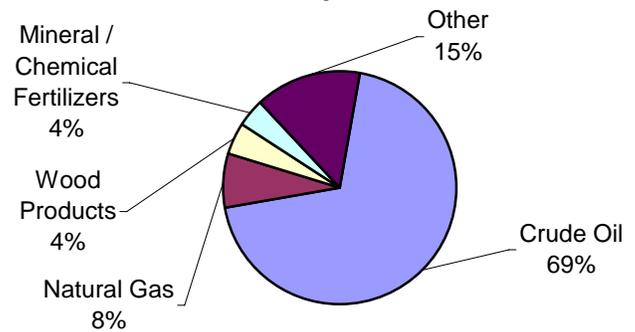
### ENERGY

- With common electricity transmission interests and development of coal bed methane a priority in both Alberta and Montana, energy will become a growing area of bilateral cooperation.
- Montana ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in oil reserves with 400 million barrels.

### TRANSPORTATION

- Montana is Alberta's chief ally in advancing CANAMEX, a seamless North-South trade and transportation corridor, stretching from Alaska, through Alberta, Montana, and other western states to Mexico.
- Alberta and Montana contributed to a plan that has led to the "flagship" Canada/US joint border crossing facility at Coutts/Sweetgrass, which opened in August 2003.
- Alberta and Montana operate a single Joint Use Vehicle Inspection Station at Coutts/Sweetgrass.

## 2005 Alberta Exports to Montana



### ENVIRONMENT

- The waters of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers traverse the Alberta-Montana border; Alberta and Montana jointly manage this resource.
- Alberta and Montana's water management partnership predates the International Joint Commission's call for state-province watershed boards.
- Alberta and Montana cooperate on wildlife conservation and fire management strategies along the border area.

### EDUCATION

- The University of Alberta and University of Montana have an agreement for student and faculty exchanges, focusing on natural resources, environment, and business.
- Three Alberta colleges have university transfer and course recognition agreements with the University of Great Falls.
- In 2004, SAIT was approved by the Montana Post Secondary Educational Opportunities Council to participate in their annual student recruitment fairs.
- Olds College has a transfer agreement with Montana State University-Northern.
- Other Alberta institutions, such as NAIT, work in partnership with Montana on specific projects.
- In 1998, Alberta and Montana signed an agreement to provide for cross-border schooling of grade 1 through 12 for students living along the border.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- Alberta and Montana work together to improve public safety and emergency management entities' ability to effectively respond to emergencies in the border region
- In 2005, this ongoing relationship was given more structure with the establishment of the Western Boarder Region Interoperability Working Group (WBRIWG), which includes representatives from all three levels of government
- In 2002, law enforcement and emergency first responders from Alberta and Montana participated in a joint exercise responding to a simulated emergency at a border crossing. An even larger joint exercise is currently being planned

## **SHARED ORGANIZATIONS**

- Montana and Alberta are key members of the Rocky Mountain Trade Corridor, an organization that assists businesses involved in North-South trade.
- Alberta and Montana participate in other multi-lateral bodies, including: Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER), Can/Am Border Trade Alliance, Western Governors' Association (WGA) and several U.S. sectoral and legislative forums.

## **RECENT VISITS**

- May 2006: IIR Minister led an Alberta delegation to Helena for the 2006 MABAC meeting.
- October 2005: Two Montana State legislators, Representatives Jacobsen and Gallik visited Alberta as part of an economic development mission from Helena.
- September 2005: Governor Schweitzer attended Alberta's Centennial celebrations in Edmonton.
- June 2005: Seven Montana state legislators visited Alberta to discuss agricultural issues with government and industry representatives.
- June 2005: Premier Klein met with Governor Schweitzer at the Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting in Colorado.
- September 2003: Premier Klein to Missoula to give a lecture at the University of Montana.
- September 2003: Premier Klein to Big Sky for Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting
- June 2003: 3<sup>rd</sup> Montana-Alberta Agricultural Opportunities Conference in Great Falls, Montana.
- June 2003: MABAC meeting in Calgary, Alberta.

- June 2002: MABAC meeting in Helena, Montana.
- June 2001: 2<sup>nd</sup> Montana-Alberta Agricultural Opportunities Conference in Canmore.
- May 2001: Montana's U.S. Senator Max Baucus visited Edmonton.
- May 2001: MABAC meeting in Edmonton.
- June 2000: MABAC meeting in Helena, Montana.
- March 2000: Governor Racicot and Premier Klein signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation.

## **DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION**

- The U.S. Consul General in Calgary is Mr. Tom Huffaker.
- The Canadian Consulate responsible for Montana is located in Denver, Colorado. Mr. Michael Fine is the Consul General.