

**TODAY'S ADVANTAGE, TOMORROW'S
PROMISE: ALBERTA'S VISION FOR THE
FUTURE**

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Alberta's Vision for the Future**

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Introduction

Just over 10 years ago, the Alberta government set a course for a new future. Since then, Albertans and their government have created an era of enviable growth and unmatched prosperity. Making great strides toward achieving the vision of: "A vibrant and prosperous province where Albertans enjoy a superior quality of life and are confident about the future for themselves and their children," *Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise: Alberta's Vision for the Future* builds on the successes of the last decade, and focuses on a renewed vision that reinforces both Alberta's quality of life and prosperity.

PROMISES KEPT, MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

In 1993, Albertans faced some tough choices. The economy was not performing to potential and the government was spending more than it could afford. Red tape and regulations were hurting business and government had become too big. Albertans told their government to take action and their government listened. Alberta's government is now more open, transparent, accessible and accountable than ever before.

Enormous achievements have been realized:

- Deficits are a thing of the past and Alberta is eliminating its accumulated debt in 2005.
- The economy has grown strongly and steadily. Alberta's outstanding economic growth has created over 431,000 new jobs in just 10 years.
- Regulations have been streamlined and government has become more effective, efficient, adaptable and value driven. Personal and business taxes are lower.
- Important changes have been made to the way we organize and structure Alberta's health system. The Mazankowski Report has provided a blueprint to continue strengthening and ensuring the sustainability of the system, and to create a strong foundation for the challenges of the future.
- Alberta's Commission on Learning has examined the fundamentals of the learning system to assist us to build on a similar strong foundation in education.

But perhaps the most significant achievement of the past decade is the change in how Albertans and their government work together. Individuals and communities now want and expect to be full

participants in governing the province. Public participation in future-shaping events such as the *Growth Summit*, the *Future Summit* and the *Public Consultation on a Debt-Free Alberta* has brought government closer to the people and has empowered individuals to become planners of their own future while government is asked to ensure the infrastructure is there to enable them to succeed.

The Government of Alberta also has forged partnerships with communities to find local solutions to important issues. From consultation on every policy or legislative change, to community engagement in program areas from Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder prevention to community justice committees to economic development authorities and tourism councils, the door has been opened to individual and community participation. Albertans now expect community governance as a normal operating procedure, not as a special event.

Overall, Albertans' accomplishments have set the stage for the next decade and beyond, but we can't stand still. In a global environment that is challenging and chaotic, success requires a strong foundation, a clear sense of values and a strength of purpose. We must recognize and build on the accomplishments of the last decade; not rest on them. Respecting the ongoing need for the sound fiscal policies which got us to where we are today, *Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise* works to achieve our vision that Alberta is a place where all Albertans can realize their full potential, where we are stewards of Alberta's natural beauty and resources, and where sustained economic growth leads to continued prosperity and realized opportunity.

KEEPING ALBERTANS' VALUES IN MIND

Central to the government's vision for the future are the values this province has been built on. Past successes were achieved as a result of these values – and future successes will be achieved with these values in mind.

Our vision is built on Albertans' desire to take advantage of these new opportunities and to maximize their personal achievements and potential:

- Albertans' desire for the freedom to control their own lives and their rejection of unnecessary rules or red tape.
- Albertans' strong belief in the freedom to pursue personal success.
- Albertans' recognition that their right to self-determination is balanced by their responsibility to their family and to the greater community.
- And Albertans' pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to take risks and embrace new technologies.

Equally important is Albertans' desire for strong leadership. Strong leaders that listen to Albertans and create an environment where individual Albertans have the opportunity to achieve their goals. Strong leaders who will forge directions, make decisions and take action to protect our high quality of life and reflect our independent spirit.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Achieving the new vision will require effort by all Albertans.

Individuals, communities, non-profit organizations and businesses all have an important role to play. So does the Alberta government.

Leadership in government provides the framework through economic, social and regulatory policies – and in partnership with other levels of government, communities, business, industry and not-for-profit sectors – they together create the environment for all to flourish. Leadership also requires promoting Alberta's interests and securing benefits for Albertans as an equal partner in a strong, united Canada.

Albertans want their government to create an environment that enables everyone to take advantage of opportunities. They want government to ensure the right infrastructure is in place for Albertans to make their own opportunities. They want government to provide Albertans with an opportunity to acquire the knowledge they need to identify and participate in future opportunities. They want government to protect them by providing assurance – that Albertans have safe water, air, land and food, and access to quality health care.

Our vision, *Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise*, is centred on people, preservation and prosperity.

People are at the heart of the Alberta Advantage that is envied around the world. Our vision embraces the concept that, as our best resource, Albertans will realize their potential and be confident about the future.

This requires hope, personal and community resourcefulness to meet challenges, and support where needed. It requires valuing the diverse gifts that all Albertans bring to their communities, whether building economic strength or contributing to making the community a vibrant, safe and healthy place to live. And it requires valuing the healthy development of all people, to achieve their highest potential.

The government will promote this success by making sure Alberta's children get the best possible start in life and by ensuring Albertans have the capacity to educate themselves as well as the freedom to create innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities. Individuals make and must be responsible for choices which impact their own health and the health of others, but influencing some of the factors that lead to healthy human development requires our common action. We need to ensure that quality health care is there when people need it.

Albertans are caring and compassionate and have concern for their fellow citizens. Albertans will always ensure that essential services are there for those of us in need to enable each of us to be the best that we can be.

Preservation means maintaining an environment that is unsurpassed in the world. In balance with sustainable economic growth, Albertans value the preservation of the province's clean, healthy, natural environment, where the majestic beauty of Alberta is protected for future generations to enjoy.

Through careful stewardship, the Alberta government will manage these resources in a sustainable manner, maintain our system of parks and protected lands, and ensure clean air, land, rivers and lakes.

Prosperity is essential to maintaining and improving Albertans' overall quality of life. Unmatched, sustainable overall economic growth is the foundation of Alberta's place in Canada and with quality of life.

Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise provides a vision to ensure economic growth that is unmatched in Canada, North America and around the world. It is a vision that ensures individual Albertans will have the chance to work, or seize an opportunity to succeed.

The base for this growth will be achieved through sound management that enables the sustainable development of our natural resource-based economy.

The Alberta government has a role in creating an attractive tax, fiscal and regulatory climate that stimulates all sectors of our economy and makes new, innovative business possible. The government will also target areas of emerging excellence by placing an emphasis on research and development in health, energy, climate change, and value-added agriculture and resource development.

Ultimately, although financial well-being is the anchor of prosperity, other dimensions of family, social, spiritual and physical well-being are essential to fulfill human aspirations and must continue to be a measure of our prosperity as Albertans.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise is focused on ensuring that people grow and develop into vibrant, confident individuals, and that families and communities achieve their full potential.

This is achieved through four key opportunities – unleashing innovation, leading in learning, competing in a global marketplace, and making Alberta the best place to live, work and visit.

Unleashing innovation focuses on becoming a world leader in innovation, research, development and commercialization of new ideas. This applies both to our existing strengths in energy, agriculture and forestry as well as new businesses that create wealth by commercializing new technologies, creating new products, and adding value at home for export abroad.

Leading in learning requires making sure Albertans have the opportunities they need to learn, adapt and develop new knowledge and new skills. This means making certain our educational opportunities are second to none and our children have the chance to get a healthy start in life. It requires our support of opportunities for lifelong learning, developing both skills and knowledge.

Competing in a global marketplace is about creating a business and investment environment that is recognized around the world as an excellent place to do business. It requires setting policies that allow Albertans to compete and succeed in a global marketplace. It means competing for our share of the growing global market for manufactured goods and business services, welcoming visitors both as tourists within a clean and sustainable industry, and as potential citizens interested in investment and living opportunities. It is a place where Albertans, with heritage from all parts of the world, live in harmony in a cosmopolitan society, setting an example for the world and providing a key advantage in global relations and trade.

Making Alberta the best place to live, work and visit is where these strategies translate into a superior quality of life for Albertans. Making Alberta the best place to live, work and visit means attracting people to live in Alberta because it provides an environment in which they can contribute their talents and create a quality of life that meets their dreams. It means maintaining strong and viable rural and urban communities, protecting wildlife and parks, and promoting the diversity and excitement of Alberta's cultural, arts and recreational opportunities. It means promoting safety and ensuring Albertans' security. And above all, it means making certain we are able to raise our children in a safe and healthy environment.

Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise is the Alberta government's vision of an Alberta from Albertans – a vision designed by listening to Albertans. It is a vision of unmatched economic prosperity. It is a vision about unleashing the talents of individual Albertans. It is a vision about maintaining a clean and healthy environment. And it is a vision where all of these combine to create an exceptional quality of life. It is a vision for the future. It is a vision of hope.