

THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

Alberta is blessed with an abundance of natural advantages that are the foundation of its thriving economy and superb quality of life. Alberta cities have all the amenities of major cosmopolitan centres, yet remain friendly, safe and clean. Albertans are dedicated to preserving their cultural diversity, taking advantage of excellent educational opportunities, and managing the environment responsibly. Albertans are working to ensure that clean air and water are available for future generations and vast areas have been set aside for provincial parks. The government's goal is to make Alberta the best place in the world to live, visit and do business.

For further information on-line, visit:

- [Government of Alberta media releases](#)
- [Alberta in the World](#) (various languages)

ALBERTA FAST FACTS

- **GDP:** estimated \$187.2 billion in 2004. GDP has more than doubled in current dollar terms over the past decade. Alberta has the third largest economy in Canada.
- **Economic growth:** average of 3.8% a year for the past ten years –the fastest provincial growth rate in Canada.
- **Exports:** about \$86.0 billion (goods and services) in 2005, to over 180 countries. International exports account for about 40% of Alberta's GDP. From 1995 to 2005, exports increased by 182%. Oil and gas are Alberta's top exports.
- **Employment:** 419,500 new jobs created in the past ten years, the highest employment growth for any Canadian province. In 2005, 26,900 new jobs were created and wages and salaries increased 9.4%.
- **Unemployment rate:** 3.9% in 2005 – the lowest provincial rate in Canada.
- **Investment:** From 1995 to 2005, investment in Alberta increased 183%. Investment per capita is the highest among the provinces. In 2005, investment per capita was an estimated \$18,520, more than twice the Canadian average.
- **Personal disposable income:** From 1994 to 2004, personal disposable income per capita grew by 4.2% per year – the highest growth rate in Canada.
- **Retail Sales:** Over the past ten years, Alberta retail sales growth has averaged 8.0% per year, the highest annual growth rate in Canada. In 2005, retail sales per capita were \$14,941.
- **Manufacturing:** From 1995 to 2005 manufacturing shipments increased by 108%.
- **Housing Starts:** Alberta housing starts totaled 40,847 in 2005, almost triple the 1995's level of 13,906 starts.

- **Population:** Currently 3.3 million (Edmonton region: 1,016,007; Calgary region: 1,060,297). Alberta has had the fastest population growth in Canada for four consecutive years; the population increased 19.1% since 1995 (Canadian average 10.1%).
- **Education:** 60% of Albertans, 25 years and older, have a university degree or post-secondary diploma or certificate. Alberta has 24 publicly funded post-secondary institutions, including 4 universities, 14 public colleges, 2 technical institutions, 3 private accredited colleges and the Banff Centre.
- **Languages:** spoken in Alberta homes include: English, French, Chinese, German, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Polish, Spanish, Arabic, Italian, and Ukrainian.
- **Provincial status:** Alberta became a province on September 1, 1905.
- **Land Area:** 661,000 km² (255, 285 square miles) – 4th largest province in Canada
- **Average summer temperature range:** 15°C to 23°C (60F to 73F) in July
- **Average winter temperature range:** -25°C to -8°C (-13F to 18F) in January

GDP by industry 2004:

- Energy 23.9%
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate 15.6%
- Retail and Wholesale Trade 9.5%
- Business and Commercial Services 8.9%
- Manufacturing 8.8%
- Health and Education 8.0%
- Construction 7.5%
- Transportation and Utilities 7.0%
- Consumer Services 5.2%
- Public Administration 3.6%
- Agriculture 2.1%

Alberta Merchandise Exports by Region (2005)

Region percentage of total

- North America* 90.8%
- Asia 5.7%
- Europe 1.6%
- Middle East and North Africa 0.6%
- South America 0.4%
- Oceania 0.2%
- Central America and the Caribbean 0.2%
- Commonwealth of Independent States 0.2%
- Sub-Saharan Africa 0.2%

*Includes Mexico

Alberta's Major Exports (2005)

1. Gas and Gas Liquids
2. Crude Petroleum
3. Petrochemicals
4. Metals & Machinery
5. Forest Products
6. Processed Food & Beverages
7. Transportation Services
8. Commercial Services
9. Crops
10. Travel & Tourism
11. Electronic & Electrical Products
12. Refined Petroleum Products
13. Transportation Equipment
14. Livestock

THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE

A strong and diversified economy:

- Alberta has had the strongest and fastest growing economy in Canada for the past decade – GDP has grown at approximately 3.8% a year.
- Alberta has the highest rate of per capita investment among the provinces.
- While energy still remains key to Alberta's vibrant economy, as the economy has diversified, energy's contribution to GDP has fallen from 36.1% in 1985 to 23.9% in 2004, reflecting strong growth in manufacturing and business services.
- Between 1995 and 2005, Alberta's manufacturing shipments increased by 108% to \$59.4 billion.
- Almost two-thirds of Alberta's manufacturing output consists of value-added resource products.

A globally competitive business tax environment:

- A 2004 international study by KPMG ranked Alberta cities among the most competitive in the world for overall costs of establishing and operating a business.
- Alberta has the lowest overall tax burdens in Canada. There is no provincial sales tax, capital or payroll taxes and no machinery & equipment tax.
- Health care is publicly funded in Canada, so Alberta businesses are not required to provide employer-sponsored health care insurance.
- Alberta is the only province in Canada with no provincial net debt.

An efficient and modern infrastructure:

- Alberta is the most “wired” province in Canada. Completed in 2005, the Alberta SuperNet project ensures that affordable high-speed broadband access is available in virtually all communities in the province.
- Calgary International and Edmonton International airports provide excellent service to domestic and international destinations.
- Four-lane, interstate quality roads.
- Two national railways.

Strategic access to North American free trade market and north Asia markets:

- Alberta has ready access to the NAFTA markets, as well as Asia and Europe. In North America, this includes an estimated 59 million people in the northwestern states and a western Canadian market of 9.8 million people.
- Alberta has one of the lowest access costs for exports from western Canada to points in western North America.
- Alberta operates six international offices in Asia, its second-largest market, as well as offices in London, Mexico and Germany.

A young, skilled and productive workforce:

- 60.3% of Alberta’s labour force, 25 years of age or older, have a university degree, post-secondary education diploma or certificate.
- Alberta’s workforce is one of the most productive in Canada.

The lowest overall tax burden in Canada:

- Alberta is the only province without a sales tax and has the lowest gasoline taxes in Canada.
- A two-income family of four earning \$60,000 pays about \$1,000 less in total provincial taxes – including health care premiums, sales and other excise taxes – than in Ontario, and \$1,650 less than in Quebec.

A fiscally responsible government:

- Balanced budgets and deliberate debt retirement are the law in Alberta.
- Alberta is the only province in Canada that has eliminated its accumulated debt.

A government that understands and works closely with business:

- To attract investment and encourage job growth in the private sector, the Alberta Government is committed to free enterprise, economic development, a competitive tax environment, strong infrastructure and less regulation.

- The Alberta Government's research and development expenditures are among the highest, on a per capita basis, in Canada.
- The Alberta Heritage Foundation for Science and Engineering Research provides long-term funding for research and development in a variety of science and engineering fields.
- The University of Alberta is the location for the new National Institute for Nanotechnology. This facility is expected to be one of the top five nanotechnology centres in the world and developments will enhance future business and industry developments.

Safe communities, with a superior quality of life and diverse cultures:

- 600 lakes, 245 rivers, more than 78,000 square kms of parkland, 275 golf courses, 6 ski resorts, 66 regional ski hills and 2330 hours of sunshine annually.
- Local arts and cultural organizations held close to 60,000 events and shows in 2005 throughout the province with total attendance reaching almost 12 million spectators.
- In 2005, 59 major festivals entertained close to 1.9 million attendees across the province. A number of these festivals, such as Edmonton's annual Heritage Days, celebrate Alberta's culturally diverse population.
- 5 of Canada's 13 UNESCO World Heritage sites are in Alberta.
- Major languages spoken at home in Alberta include English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Punjabi, Ukrainian, Polish and Vietnamese.
- Albertans have access to a wide range of medical services that are covered by general federal and provincial taxes.
- Major medical centres in Edmonton and Calgary offer specialty care and remain current on leading edge procedures through active medical research.

Abundant natural resources, a clean environment and scenic beauty:

- Alberta produces 48% of Canada's conventional crude oil and equivalent output, 80% of its natural gas, more than 90% of its liquefied petroleum gases, 45% of its coal, and 100% of its bitumen and synthetic crude oil.
- Alberta's oil sands contain approximately 1.6 trillion barrels of bitumen in place, of which 174 billion barrels are proven reserves that can be recovered using current technologies. Alberta oil reserves contain more than three and a half times more than the proven reserves of the United States and Mexico combined.
- In 2005, energy resource exports accounted for \$56.7 billion, about 65.8% of the total exports of goods and services.
- Alberta has one of the world's most productive agricultural economies, with a growing value-added sector. Manufacturing shipments of the food, feed and beverage sector accounted for \$9.6 billion in 2005.
- Alberta covers over 66 million hectares of land; 60% or 38 million hectares is forested. About 75 million seedlings are planted each year.

- Through its partnership in Climate Change Central, the Government of Alberta is helping reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.
- Alberta's network of parks and protected areas accounts for 12% of the province's total land mass. There are 515 species of wildlife, less than 2% considered at risk.

PROVINCIAL EMBLEMS

The emblems of Alberta reflect the province's history and its natural, diverse landscape and its inhabitants:

- Motto: Fortis et Liber (Strong and Free)
- Provincial Colours: Alberta Blue and Alberta Gold
- Flower: Wild Rose
- Stone: Petrified Wood
- Animal: Big Horn Sheep
- Tree: Lodgepole Pine
- Fish: Bull Trout
- Bird: Great Horned Owl

For further information about Alberta's emblems, visit Alberta Community Development:

- [Emblems of Alberta](#)

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT ALBERTA

For further information about Alberta, visit the following sections of Alberta Economic Development's website, www.alberta-canada.com:

- [Alberta Economy](#)
- [Investing or Locating Business in Alberta](#)
- [Statistics and Publications](#)

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