

BUDGET 2002

THE RIGHT DECISIONS FOR CHALLENGING TIMES



SECOND QUARTER ACTIVITY REPORT

2002-03 QUARTERLY BUDGET REPORT

2

NOVEMBER 2002

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF 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 quarterly Activity Reports is to show Albertans what activities the government undertook in the second 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 government receives from Albertans. Through public consultation, surveys, letters, phone calls, and e-mails, Albertans tell government what's important to them and what concerns them. In the Second Quarter, Albertans had a say as government:

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- **held** meetings with various private and public organizations in Fairview, Grande Prairie, High Prairie and St. Paul to further interest in northern development. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
 - **launched** the Protection for *Persons in Care Act* Legislative Review for public consultation from families, health care professionals and service providers, their professional associations, regional health authorities, Persons with Developmental Disabilities boards and law enforcement agencies. The Act investigates reports of abuse or safety concerns for adults in publicly funded care facilities including hospitals, nursing homes, seniors' lodges and nursing homes. (Community Development)
 - **listened** to concerns of Aboriginal and Metis communities and discussed oil and gas issues, as part of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board's (EUB) Aboriginal Awareness Program. (Energy)
 - **released** a report on the Minister's Forum on Water in early June. The report summarized key discussion points and includes major recommendations from participants for developing a provincial water strategy. (Environment)
 - **held** a number of targeted stakeholder sessions on Alberta's approach to climate change with the Clean Air Strategic Alliance, Climate Change Central, municipalities and environmental groups in Edmonton and Calgary. In addition, Albertans provided feedback on Alberta's action plan through a questionnaire on Alberta Environment's Web site. (Environment)
 - **conducted** consultations to find out what Albertans think of employee benefits becoming part of insurance policies. (Finance)
 - **began** consultations on whether Albertans think credit unions should be allowed to sell life insurance. (Finance)
 - **began** consulting with Alberta's charities and religious groups on the province's charitable gaming licensing process and use of proceeds guidelines. (Gaming)
 - **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to over 46,000 Albertans through the Government Services toll-free call centre. (Government Services)
 - **received** written submissions from labour relations stakeholders and the public on whether Alberta's *Labour Relations Code* should be reviewed. (Human Resources and Employment)

- **consulted** with representatives from Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 on the development of program guidelines for the new First Nations Training to Employment Partnerships Program. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **initiated** a public consultation to improve two key pieces of provincial legislation governing residential tenancies - the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the *Mobile Home Sites Tenancies Act*. (Government Services)
- **held** two information sessions for development groups and other interested parties regarding the Calgary Law Courts project. (Infrastructure)
- **released** the results of stakeholder consultations on Alberta's safety system, which provided the basis of over 60 recommendations for system improvements. Provincial consultation is continuing on the recommendations, with the overall goal to improve public safety in the province. (Municipal Affairs)
- **handled** 289,000 calls to the Service Alberta Call Centre (310-0000) providing callers with information and toll-free connection to government offices; another 1.7 million calls were connected toll-free through the direct dial option. (Public Affairs Bureau)
- **conducted** a series of focus groups to review the province's savings policies, including the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. (Revenue)
- **surveyed** 1,000 Albertans to get their thoughts on the future of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. (Revenue)
- **completed** planning for province-wide consultation with Albertans on the future of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. (Revenue)
- **responded** to over 55,000 calls received through the Alberta Seniors Information Line. (Seniors)
- **released** the report of the MLA Policing Review Committee that contained 30 recommendations on a wide range of issues including police funding, police training and police accountability. (Solicitor General)
- **conducted** an open house in Strathmore in July to gain feedback concerning the future routes of Highways 1 and 817 through the community. (Transportation)
- **consulted** with Albertans regarding management plans for Big Lake Natural Area, Cold Lake Provincial Park and French Bay and English Bay Provincial recreation areas. Information on issues and concerns regarding the protected areas will be gathered from stakeholders and the general public and provide the basis for a plan that will direct the management of each area. (Community Development)

PEOPLE

The following activities support the *People* core business and particularly areas that 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 Second Quarter, the government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

- **approved** the Health Resource Centre in Calgary to provide selected uninsured procedures requiring an overnight stay. The facility will offer five orthopedic procedures to patients, including Workers' Compensation Board recipients, members of the military and RCMP, who are uninsured under the *Canada Health Act*. (Health and Wellness)
- **participated** with several Aboriginal service organizations, federal and provincial government officials and other interested parties to examine the issue of HIV/AIDS in the Aboriginal community. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **collaborated** to ensure Alberta Human Resources and Employment offices also provide information on Alberta Health and Wellness programs, Blue Cross programs and applications for the Alberta Health Care Premium Subsidy. (Human Resources and Employment and Health and Wellness)
- **increased** the money paid to Supports for Independence (SFI) recipients residing in mental health approved homes from \$257 per month to \$357 per month to cover an increase in their rent. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **authorized** the Capital Health Authority to proceed with long-term care public-private partnership projects for the development and operation of four nursing homes in Edmonton totaling \$43 million. (Infrastructure)
- **approved** \$10 million in funding for distribution to the rural regional health authorities, Alberta Cancer Board and the Alberta Mental Health Board for the upgrading of their health facilities. (Infrastructure)
- **started** construction on the new \$25.5 million High Level and Northwestern Regional Health Centre in High Level. The centre is scheduled to open in the spring of 2004. (Infrastructure)
- **released** an Indoor Air Quality Guideline to help property managers deal with indoor air quality issues. Also issued a Technical Bulletin, *A Guideline for Maintaining Acceptable Indoor Air Quality*, which provides advice on the impact of operation and maintenance, construction materials and cleaning products on air quality in provincial buildings. (Infrastructure)
- **continued** work in support of AADAC on the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy. (Revenue)

- **recognized** offenders at the Calgary Correctional Centre who repaired the one-millionth pair of eyeglasses for Operation Eyesight Universal. Since 1997, offenders at the centre have repaired donated, used eyeglasses and shipped them to the Canadian charitable organization that distributes the eyeglasses to needy people in 48 countries. (Solicitor General)
- **released** the 2001 Traffic Collisions Statistics report that emphasized driving errors were most commonly associated with collisions and that 90 per cent of collisions are preventable. (Transportation)

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 Second Quarter, the provincial government honoured its commitment to education and lifelong learning as it:

- **funded** nearly 60 projects under the *Northern LINKS Program*; with goals to assist northern Alberta students to make decisions related to the transition from secondary to post-secondary education. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **announced** funding for the Aboriginal Careers Bursaries, a component of the Aboriginal Health Strategy. The bursary allows 53 Aboriginal students from across the province to further their studies in health related fields. (Health and Wellness)
- **introduced** a new alternative funding plan to provide increased flexibility for academic physicians in the province's two medical schools. The plans will allow for over 190 academic physicians to increase the quality of time spent teaching, caring for patients, or on research and are expected to help attract and retain medical specialists. (Health and Wellness and Learning)
- **announced** Alberta's Commission on Learning public consultation plan that will give all Albertans an opportunity to share their views and their ideas on the future of education in the province. (Learning)
- **launched** the Energy and Utilities Board *Kidzone* interactive Web site designed for children from ages nine to 12 to learn more about sour gas safety, energy conservation and the oil and gas industry in Alberta. (Energy)
- **developed** the Red Earth Creek and Atikameg Petroleum and Employment Training programs to help 40 Aboriginal adults prepare for careers in the petroleum industry. (Energy)
- **approved** new funding for plant, operating and maintenance funding for Kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) schools and began a benchmarking study to establish an actual required level of plant, operating and maintenance funding for K-12 schools. (Infrastructure)
- **targeted** more than \$1.5 million in provincial funding over three years for 31 family literacy programs across the province. (Learning)
- **released** diploma exams and provincial achievement tests results, showing that students continue to perform well on exams and meet provincial curriculum standards. (Learning)
- **shared** timely "Back to School" information with parents, students and teachers through a Web-based information kit. (Learning)
- **opened** the first phase of the Pierce Estate Park Interpretive Wetland with the City of Calgary, BP Canada Energy Co. and Ducks Unlimited Canada. This is part of the educational "classroom" with the Bow Habitat Station at the Sam Livingston Fish Hatchery. (Sustainable Resource Development)

- **released** the revised edition of *It's About Time to Choose a Post-Secondary Education Program*, which provides information to help Albertans plan and advance their careers. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **held** Walk the Talk Day in September and is the highlight of Alberta Transportation's Walk the Talk About Back to School Safety Program. Alberta Transportation and its partners teach children about traffic safety tips, safe ways to bicycle, skateboard and in-line skate, and school bus safety. (Transportation)

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:

- **donated** \$50,000 to the Feed for 4-H campaign to help raise money to purchase and distribute hay or collect hay donations for rural youth raising animals for their 4-H projects. (Agriculture, Food & Rural Development)
- **named** John Mould as the Alberta Children's Advocate for a two-year term. The Children's Advocate is mandated under the *Child Welfare Act* to advise the Minister on issues related to child welfare service delivery, to investigate concerns and to represent the rights of children receiving child welfare services. (Children's Services)
- **launched** Mentoring Works in conjunction with six Edmonton mentoring organizations, Children's Services, AADAC, and the Alberta Mental Health Board. The goal of the campaign is to add 300 new mentors in the Edmonton health region by March 31, 2003. (Children's Services)
- **signed** a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the RCMP and the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. The agreement is the first of its kind between the three organizations. The MOU is designed to promote improved communication between the three organizations so victims of family violence will receive timely support and improved access to services. (Children's Services)
- **provided** a draft report from the *Expert Panel on Intensive Early Intervention for Children with Autism* to the Minister. A thorough review of the recommendations will be done in conjunction with Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Learning; ministries that are partners in the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative. (Children's Services)
- **initiated** a review of Child and Family Services Authorities boundaries to ensure that service delivery is efficient and supportive of the new Alberta Response Model (ARM). The ARM is designed to assist children and families through improved access to community resources to avoid the need for more formal child protection interventions whenever possible. (Children's Services)
- **signed** reciprocal agreements that ensure valid court orders for children or spousal support can be enforced for anyone living in; the Slovak Republic, Czech Republic and the Republic of Poland as well as the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Island. (Justice and Attorney General)
- **provided** approximately \$13 million through housing grant programs to support low-income families, seniors, people with special needs and the homeless. (Seniors)

- **approved** 64 applications for funding under the Home Adaptation Program, for a total of \$305,000. The grant, for either \$2,500 or \$5,000 depending on income, assists homeowners or tenants in completing modifications to improve access and mobility within their residences. (Seniors)
- **approved** approximately 3,400 applications from lower-income seniors under the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program for a total of \$6.45 million. The average amount per benefit was \$2,000. (Seniors)
- **paid** approximately \$39.2 million to 125,000 seniors under the Alberta Seniors Benefit Program. Average monthly cash benefit was \$101 per senior. (Seniors)
- **hosted** the 2002 Seniors Services Workshop, a provincial conference that provides seniors service providers with current information available to seniors. Over 200 people participated from across the province. (Seniors)
- **released** the seniors' centres study report entitled: *Current and Future Roles and Needs of Seniors' Centres*. It explains the current roles of seniors' centres in Alberta and examines the future responsibilities and the sustainability of these facilities in communities. (Seniors)
- **released** updated versions of the following information resources for seniors: *Programs and Services for Seniors* booklet, *Directory of Seniors' Organizations in Alberta* and *Quick Facts: Programs for Seniors in Alberta*. (Seniors)
- **processed** over 2,700 new applications under the Alberta Seniors Benefit Program. (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 lead the country in economic growth in 2002-2003 and various government ministries are involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that trend continues.

In this Quarter, the government:

- **contributed** \$200,000 to the Hay West baling project in order to further aid Alberta's livestock producers. (Agriculture, Food & Rural Development)
- **announced** the \$324 million Farm Income Assistance Program in order to help Alberta's agricultural producers, suffering the driest conditions in 133 years, and paid out more than \$19 million to more than 5,000 Alberta producers. (Agriculture, Food & Rural Development)
- **ensured** the continued sustainability of Alberta's agricultural sector with the province-wide Fusarium policy, which will significantly reduce the risk of Fusarium head blight affecting the province's cereal crops. (Agriculture, Food & Rural Development)
- **conducted** a mission led by the Premier and Economic Development Minister Mark Norris to officially open the Alberta-Mexico Office in Mexico City. The mission had over 30 Alberta organizations participate in events aimed at promoting trade and investment opportunities. The Premier met with a number of high-level political leaders, including President Vicente Fox. (Economic Development and International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **provided** strategic support for Premier Klein's participation in the Annual Premiers' Conference from July 31 to August 2. Priority discussion items included climate change, health care reform, post-secondary education, the fiscal imbalance and trade issues. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **organized** a mission led by Minister of Energy, Murray Smith, with a delegation comprised of 30 Alberta companies and over 90 registered participants to the World Petroleum Congress/Rio Expo 2002 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Minister Smith presented the Alberta Advantage to senior government and private sector officials involved in the oil and gas industry. (Economic Development and Energy)
- **partnered** with the Environmental Services Association of Alberta, and the Government of the Northwest Territories to present a full day business forum relative to the rapid expansion of resource development in the NWT. (Economic Development)
- **launched** the first-ever Alberta Investment Week from September 16 to 22. This event attracted top information technology firms and some of the most influential North American investors to Alberta. (Innovation and Science)

- **organized** the Alberta-California Venture Channel conference to connect Alberta-based high-tech companies and investment experts from Silicon Valley who provide specialized mentoring, investment dollars and access to expanded markets. This is the first year a conference has been organized in Alberta. (Innovation and Science)
- **delivered** first quarter fiscal results for 2002-2003. A large surplus was offset by disaster assistance for drought, floods and forest fires. (Finance)
- **released** annual reports for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. These documents give Albertans a firsthand opportunity to evaluate the performance of all 23 government ministries and see how their tax dollars are working for them. (Finance)
- **assisted** visiting delegations from Finland, Taiwan, Singapore and Japan in their search for collaborative research and development opportunities with Alberta in the health care, advanced technology and information and communications technology sectors. (Innovation and Science)
- **co-located** Alberta Economic Development and Alberta Community Development film industry promotion and development activities into a new office called Alberta Film. (Economic Development)
- **promoted** pipeline opportunities and the Alberta Natural Gas Hub as the key to northern gas development at the International Pipeline Conference and Exposition in Calgary. (Energy)
- **worked** to standardize and explain line items on electricity bills, improve customer service policies and make billing more accurate through the Task Force on Electricity Billing Issues. (Energy)
- **partnered** with three western provinces and the federal government, to champion new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from hydrocarbon energy as well as sustain current fossil fuel reserves. Also, communicated the potential impacts of the Kyoto Protocol on Canada's energy industry and all Canadians. (Environment and Energy)
- **worked** with other Ministries to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the potential ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the federal government. This included a public awareness campaign and creation of an External Advisory Committee - chaired by former Premier Peter Lougheed. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **moved** towards 2002-2003 target of \$30 million in land sales with 25 surplus properties being sold or having unconditional offers for a total of \$15.3 million. (Infrastructure)
- **continued** to defend Alberta's forestry practices in response to the U.S. softwood lumber trade action. Alberta met with federal government officials in an attempt to resolve the dispute. Alberta also continued to participate in Canada's NAFTA and World Trade Organization challenges on the softwood lumber dispute. (International and Intergovernmental Relations and Sustainable Resource Development)
- **completed** a study showing that Alberta's exports have increased 340 per cent since free trade with the U.S. was introduced. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)
- **launched** the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project that will see a minimum of 180 Aboriginal people on the road to careers in the trades over the next five years. (Learning)
- **made** preparations to implement the NHL Players Tax. Professional hockey players in the National Hockey League will pay the tax when they play games within the province. These revenues will be used to provide grants to Alberta's NHL teams, recognizing the teams provide a tremendous benefit to the province. (Revenue)
- **updated** Albertans on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund's 1st Quarter performance. (Revenue)
- **released** the *Employers' Perspectives Research Project*, a major research project about Alberta employers' perspectives on human rights in the workplace. The study, considered to be the first of its kind in Canada, shows that Alberta employers believe respecting human rights is good for business and that employers want to learn more about the *Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act*. (Community Development)

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 new Service Alberta Web site and call center as a first step to make it easier for Albertans to obtain information, products and services for the province. Various ministries provided input and once fully developed and implemented, Service Alberta will make it possible to get many government services through just one phone call, one office visit, or one Web site, whatever route Albertans prefer. (Government Services, Revenue and Sustainable Resource Development)
- **partnered** with Alberta's 305 public libraries and Service Alberta to establish and integrate the libraries as Service Alberta Information Centres. Over the next three years librarians will be trained to navigate government Web sites and connect and direct Albertans from within their own communities to government information. (Community Development)
- **launched** a 3-D virtual reality on-line test site to explore the Provincial Museum of Alberta's collections and learn about the cultural and natural history of Alberta. (Community Development)
- **redeveloped** Web sites for Kananaskis Country and Dinosaur Provincial Park to improve access to information on these sites. A major revision to the Alberta Natural History Information Centre Web site has also been initiated. (Community Development)
- **supported** the University of Alberta's NanoFabrication facility with a \$3.1 million contribution for research infrastructure and equipment. This funding will expedite the production of microsystems and nano devices by reducing the time and cost it takes to commercialize the results of research and development. (Innovation and Science)
- **established** the Network of Emerging Wireless Technology (NEWT), in partnership with Industry Canada and TRILabs. NEWT is a world-class, state-of-the-art wireless test center that will be available to entrepreneurs across Western Canada and beyond to develop novel wireless applications and devices. (Innovation and Science)
- **renewed** the Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord, which provides the framework for the federal, provincial and territorial Geological Surveys to work together to provide earth science research and information about energy and mineral resources. (Energy)
- **consulted** with the energy industry on an economic, fiscal and regulatory framework for using carbon dioxide for enhanced petroleum recovery, as part of Alberta's Plan for Action on Climate Change. This involves determining what is needed to encourage use of carbon dioxide for resource development and to store it in geological formations. (Energy)

- **made** significant improvements in the way overpayments are recovered from clients of income support programs. The improvements ensure that clients are clearly and regularly informed of the status of their debt, and of their right to appeal the debt. The systems also reduce the likelihood of error in calculating debt, and responds in part to observations by the Ombudsman that improvements were required. (Human Resources and Employment)
- **initiated** discussions with school boards on improving energy efficiency. Also provided school energy audits for two Alberta school boards and started discussion with a third school board on an innovative approach to funding energy efficiency and renewal. (Infrastructure)
- **launched** *Milenet*, a secure extranet system that will make it easier and more efficient for Alberta's municipalities to report, gather and share information such as property assessments and fire statistics. (Municipal Affairs)
- **accepted** 22 out of 25 recommendations contained in the Financial Management Commission's report *Moving From Good to Great*. The recommendations will lead to a new fiscal framework for government that is designed to address volatility with non-renewable resource revenues, capital planning and strategic planning. (Finance)
- **completed** consolidation of holding of investment securities at a single custodian, improving operating efficiency and client reporting. (Revenue)
- **received** the Institute of Public Administration's gold award for innovative management. Alberta's youth justice committee program was presented with the award for its work in helping youth who commit crimes learn to be accountable to their communities. The program began in 1990 and there are now 97 youth justice committees throughout the province. (Solicitor General)
- **finalized** a Memorandum of Understanding with the Natural Resources Conservation board on the coordinated delivery of approvals for confined feeding operations. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **used** an innovative strategy to tender the paving contract for the Deerfoot Trail Extension south of Calgary. Bidders were asked to include estimates of maintenance costs over 25 years in addition to the construction costs. The bid with the lowest combination of construction and maintenance costs was chosen. (Transportation)

PRESERVATION

The following activities support the *Preservation* core business by ensuring 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 supported numerous initiatives that improved safety and helped build stronger communities. In the Second Quarter of 2002-2003, the Alberta government:

- **partnered** with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association to assess the condition of ice arenas, curling rinks, indoor and outdoor swimming pools in Alberta. (Community Development)
- **continued** to address Albertans' concern about sour gas production and improving the way sour gas is developed within the province, with the completion of 14 of the Energy and Utility Board's (EUB) Public Safety and Sour Gas Initiative's 78 recommendations. In addition, the Advisory Committee on Public Safety and Sour Gas released its *Evaluation of the EUB's Implementation Progress* on sour gas. (Energy)
- **implemented** a public contact program on the EUB's Web site, which gives the public better access to information about the initiatives under way to resolve sour gas issues. The public contact program also allows Albertans to participate more in sour gas development issues. (Energy)
- **developed** a partnership for emergency air monitoring with the City of Calgary. The partnership included building and co-operating a mobile emergency air-monitoring unit within southern Alberta. (Environment)
- **supported** numerous projects across the province through the Alberta Lottery Fund. Groups like the Calgary Rotary Club (Rotary Challenger Park - \$500,000), the Edmonton Police Foundation (Air One Helicopter - \$350,000) and the Edmonton Concert Hall Foundation (Davis Organ - \$125,000) used lottery funding to offer programs and projects to benefit Albertans. (Gaming)
- **issued** the first cheques under the new \$30 million Community Initiatives Program (CIP), helping volunteer-based groups enhance and enrich the lives of residents within their communities. So far this year, more than 40 communities across the province have benefited from CIP, which is funded through the Alberta Lottery Fund. (Gaming)
- **completed** 527 investigations related to consumer protection and recovered more than \$239,000 for Alberta consumers. (Government Services)
- **commemorated** the one-year anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks by holding a ceremony at the Alberta Legislature and providing commemorative books for Albertans to convey messages of condolences. (International and Intergovernmental Relations)

- **acknowledged** and honoured the 77 police and peace officers who have died in the line of duty in Alberta since 1876. The fourth annual Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day was held at the Alberta Legislature on September 29. The ceremony also recognized the families and friends of the fallen members. (Solicitor General)
- **announced** a disaster recovery program to help residents, small businesses and the municipality in the Edson area to recover from overland flooding due to heavy rainfall August 29. Municipal Affairs also continued to assist residents, small businesses, and municipalities in southern Alberta affected by overland flooding in June. Total costs for the 2002 southern Alberta Disaster Recovery Flood Program are expected to exceed \$15 million. (Municipal Affairs)
- **approved** a one-time grant of \$450,000 to help the province's seven largest municipalities access federal funding to purchase equipment that detects and protects against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats. The equipment will be housed in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and it will be available to other communities on a regional basis. (Municipal Affairs)
- **launched** Muniversity, a unique development program for municipal officials, in partnership with the University of Alberta, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. The program will provide municipal leaders with training in strategic thinking and outline the challenges facing municipal governments in Alberta. (Municipal Affairs)
- **approved** grants totaling \$13.3 million for municipalities under the Municipal Sponsorship Program, supporting projects that promote innovation, excellence and cooperation in municipal governments with populations of 20,000 or less. (Municipal Affairs)
- **assisted** Municipal Affairs in the development of a new provincial-municipal relations framework. (Revenue)
- **added** four new resources to the *If in Doubt, Check it Out* fraud awareness package for seniors, seniors service providers and seniors organizations. The new resources include information on home invasion prevention, travel club fraud, Internet security and identity theft. (Seniors)
- **began** working on the creation of an emergency warning system to help locate children who have been abducted. Known as *Amber Alert*, the initiative is a voluntary program between broadcasters and police services designed to send emergency warnings to the public immediately following an abduction. (Solicitor General and Municipal Affairs)
- **continued** to work with communities to develop and implement fire prevention plans to reduce the risk of wildfires. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **continued** to work on amendments to the *Forest and Prairie Protection Act* for the spring of 2003, to improve wildfire management in Alberta. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **announced** \$61.8 million worth of approved infrastructure projects in 27 communities 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 Second Quarter, the Alberta government:

- **collaborated** with Treaty 7 First Nations on the 125th commemoration of the signing of Treaty 7 in 1887. The commemoration included a sod turning of the \$18 million Siksika Blackfoot Crossing Interpretive Centre and Museum. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development)
- **reopened** the exhibit gallery at the Oil Sands Discovery Centre in Fort McMurray. This project, funded through a partnership between the Government of Alberta and a private capital fundraising campaign, updated the exhibits, information and technologies used to share and interpret the history and science of the oil sands industry to visitors from around the world. (Community Development)
- **continued** monitoring for the presence of mountain pine beetles, including collaborating with Banff National Park to develop management plans to prevent further spread of the forest pests. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **initiated** provincial recovery teams for the woodland caribou and grizzly bear. These teams include broad stakeholder representation and will produce comprehensive management and recovery plans for these two species. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **developed** and implemented a program to keep close watch for the West Nile Virus in Alberta. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **battled** approximately 490 wildfires in Alberta's Forest Protection Area. These include new fires and fires requiring action into the second quarter. These fires burned approximately 277,000 hectares. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **monitored** fire hazard conditions and issued fire bans to protect human life, communities and natural resources. (Sustainable Resource Development)
- **negotiated** a donation for one of the most substantial military badge collections to the Provincial Museum of Alberta. The estate of Mr. Cecil Robinson of Edmonton left a legacy of approximately 700 military cap badges spanning the period from the last half of the 19th century to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. (Community Development)
- **displayed** dinosaur skeletons from the Royal Tyrrell Museum at the Yamanashi Prefectural Science Centre in Kofu City, Japan. Net profits from the rental of these specimens, estimated at \$200,000, will help support the museum's program initiatives during the 2002-2003 fiscal year. (Community Development)

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