

# BUDGET 2004

ON ROUTE  
ON COURSE



2004-2005 Quarterly Budget Report

**Q3** ACTIVITY REPORT

FEBRUARY 28, 2005

**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, workforce and workplaces, 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 this quarterly activity report is to show Albertans what activities the government undertook in the third quarter of this 2004-05 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 the government receives from Albertans. Through public consultations, surveys, letters, phone calls, and e-mails, Albertans tell government what's important to them and what concerns them. In the third quarter, Albertans had a say as government:

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- **participated** in the First Nations Chiefs Assembly, which provides a forum for Chiefs and Alberta ministers to discuss issues of mutual concern. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, AAND)
- **held** seven consultations across the province with crop and forage producers to collect input on existing and proposed pasture and hay programs. The information gathered was used in the development of new perennial programs. (Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, AFSC)
- **released** the results of the *It's Your Future* survey that asked Albertans what the government's priorities should be in a debt-free Alberta. Albertans ranked health and education as their top priorities. Close to 290,000 Albertans either mailed in or completed the survey online. (Finance)
- **implemented** the next steps to the province's automobile insurance reforms that took effect Oct. 1, 2004. The Automobile Insurance Rate Board was established and will regulate premium rates for basic coverage and monitor the premiums for optional coverage. In addition, a three-step dispute resolution process was set up to assist Alberta drivers who may have concerns with their automobile insurance premiums under the new system. (Finance)
- **responded** to the Supreme Court ruling on same sex marriage. The Minister of Justice, the Premier and Cabinet are working to protect the traditional definition of marriage in Alberta. There was unanimous agreement among government members to continue to use all legal and political means available. (Justice)
- **provided** advice and information on registries, landlord-tenant matters and consumer issues to more than 41,000 Albertans through the Government Services toll-free call centre. (Government Services)
- **assisted** more than 300 Albertans with concerns about retail electricity and natural gas service through the Utilities Consumer Advocate. (Government Services)
- **responded** to roughly 43,000 e-mail and telephone inquiries, through the Workplace Health & Safety and Employment Standards contact centres, from workers and employers seeking information about their workplace rights and obligations. (Human Resources and Employment, HRE)
- **accepted** all 26 recommendations of the MLA Committee on Strengthening Alberta's Role in Confederation. The recommendations were based on more than 700 submissions from Albertans. (International and Intergovernmental Relations, IIR)

- **conducted** a province-wide election to select four Senators-in-waiting. Premier Klein continued to press Prime Minister Martin to appoint these Senator-elects to fill the province's three current Senate vacancies. (IIR)
- **hosted** 1,000 people in Calgary and Edmonton at stakeholder sessions on the AISH review. Over 100 individuals and groups - AISH recipients and disability organizations - presented their ideas for changing the AISH program, their experiences of living on AISH or dealing with AISH clients. (Human Resources and Employment, HRE)
- **announced** government's intention to establish the Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council and requested nominations from the public and First Nations and Métis Organizations. The council will enable Alberta's aboriginal communities to become more involved and benefit from aboriginal tourism in Alberta. (Economic 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 third quarter, the government continued to focus on the health of Albertans as it:

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- **implemented** a new bursary program for medical students that will assist in recruiting physicians to northern Alberta. (AAND)
  - **participated** in the organization of the national Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference in Edmonton and sponsored the attendance of Aboriginal youth and community members to build momentum for suicide prevention. (AAND)
  - **developed** a new provincial breast screening program to encourage women 50 to 69 years of age to receive a mammogram every two years and reduce the Alberta breast cancer death rate by up to 30 per cent. (Health and Wellness)
  - **released** *Alberta's 2004 Report on Comparable Health Indicators*, showing Albertans have similar or slightly better health status compared with the Canadian average. (Health and Wellness)
  - **announced** nearly \$10 million in funding for three programs to improve the health and treatment of Albertans: a program to target diabetes by reducing social and physical barriers to making healthy choices; osteoporosis education and new treatment standards; and education for health care professionals to improve patient safety during childbirth. (Health and Wellness)
  - **launched** "Friends of the Emergency Room" pilot project in two hospital emergency rooms. Volunteers from St. John Ambulance will be on hand to offer non-medical help to patients such as directions and wait time information. (Health and Wellness)
  - **allocated** \$50 million for six rural health infrastructure initiatives as part of the Alberta government's \$700 million reinvestment in health care. This includes funding for projects at the Rimbey Hospital and Care Centre, the Edson Healthcare Centre, the Barrhead Healthcare Centre, the Lethbridge Regional Hospital, the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, and a new community health centre in Red Deer. (Infrastructure and Transportation)
  - **released** the *Guide to Services for Lower-Income Albertans*, a publication that makes it easier for lower-income people to learn about the programs that may help them - from looking for work and finding day care information to adapting a home for a wheelchair. (HRE)
  - **launched** the Centennial Salute for Sports and Recreation. The salute will pay tribute in 2005 to 100 individuals who have made outstanding contributions to sport, recreation or active living during the past century, and are role models for Alberta's youth and encourage an active lifestyle. (Community Development)

## 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 third quarter, the provincial government honoured its commitment to education and lifelong learning as it:

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- **funded** more than 100 projects under its Northern LINKS Program with the goal of assisting northern Alberta students in making the transition from secondary to post-secondary education. (AAND)
- **launched** the Youth Apprenticeship Project (YAP) in three northern Alberta communities. Through this project, junior high students in High Prairie, Lac La Biche and Wabasca/Desmarais will have access to work experience placements, apprenticeship positions, and mentorship or job-shadowing opportunities offered by local businesses. (Advanced Education, AAND)
- **announced** the designation of rig technician as the newest trade in Alberta, which will create a training standard throughout industry, improve safety and ensure industry training keeps pace with advances in technology. (Advanced Education)
- **awarded** 50 of Alberta's high school apprentices with Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) Scholarships valued at \$1,000 each. The scholarships recognize the hard work and commitment of these students and encourage them to continue their apprenticeship training after high school. (Advanced Education)
- **expanded** two initiatives to attract more medical students to rural family medicine. An expanded bursary program will pay 100 per cent of medical school tuition for 10 students if each student makes a return-in-service commitment to five years of practice in rural Alberta. The second initiative will see 10 new residency positions created in smaller rural centres. (Advanced Education, Health and Wellness)
- **awarded** 169 apprentices with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarships. Apprentices each received a scholarship valued at \$1,000 in recognition of their hard work and commitment to their trade. (Advanced Education)
- **released**, with Alberta Human Resources and Employment, the "Integrating Skilled Immigrants into the Alberta Economy" report. This report identifies the importance of skilled immigrants to the Alberta economy, provides a strategic framework for action, and reports on recent achievements and next steps to enabling skilled immigrants to contribute their skills to the Alberta economy. (Advanced Education, HRE)
- **received** the Yves Landry Foundation Program of the Year Award for 2004 in recognition of the contributions of Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training in forging a link between business, education and government, and promoting technological education and skills training in order to meet industry's future demands for skilled tradespeople. (Advanced Education)
- **opened** the Archbishop Oscar Romero Catholic School in Edmonton. The Alberta government contributed more than \$13.7 million to this new school facility. Current enrolment is 400 Grades 10 and 11 students with a potential of 674 future student places. (Infrastructure and Transportation)
- **responded** to almost 35,000 inquiries (phone calls and emails) at the Student Funding Contact Centre, and provided information relating to careers and career planning to approximately 4,300 individuals through the Career Information Hotline. (HRE)

- **furthered** Alberta's Commission on Learning recommendation to reduce class sizes by expanding the Class Size Survey to include all subjects, and developed an online tool to support school jurisdictions in the collection and reporting of class size data to Albertans. (Education)
- **held** consultations with stakeholders to further develop implementation plans for the Daily Physical Activity initiative in response to recommendations from Alberta's Commission on Learning. (Education)
- **announced** Alberta's results from the 2003 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which demonstrate the continued high level of achievement by the province's students. PISA results inform the continuous improvement of Alberta's education system and offer valid comparisons of the provincial curriculum against national and international standards. (Education)
- **launched** the 2005 Excellence in Teaching Awards. This program offers an opportunity for Albertans to recognize the many outstanding teachers and principals in our Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning system. (Education)
- **provided** all publicly funded schools with Microsoft Office software and licensing to enhance teaching and learning, as well as support more efficient administration at the school and jurisdiction level, saving Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 sector approximately \$5.6 million. (Education)
- **advanced** the field of e-learning by co-hosting the 8th Annual Online Learning Symposium. The conference, which drew more than 900 educators and technology experts, showcased successful education initiatives and provided a forum for exchanging creative ideas to enhance teaching and learning. (Education)
- **released** the report on the School Council Effectiveness Study, which identifies effective strategies used by councils so they may learn from each other's successes, and offers recommendations to improve school council effectiveness. (Education)
- **furthered** education delivery knowledge by sharing with the education community and all Albertans, effective practices learned from the latest round of Alberta Initiative for School Improvement projects. (Education)
- **encouraged** Alberta school children to think about the role that science and technology play in their everyday lives during Science and Technology Week, Oct. 8 to 17. The week recognizes and embraces the achievements of Alberta's science and technology communities, and promotes the role that science and technology play in contributing to the quality of life we enjoy in Alberta. (Innovation and Science)
- **engaged** students in the arts in 115 schools across Alberta by providing actual artists to lead art activities. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Artists & Education Grant Program provided \$375,000 to support this program. (Community Development)
- **told** the story of Alberta to a record-setting number of visitors at the Provincial Museum of Alberta during a free-of-charge weekend. (Community Development)
- **celebrated** Waste Reduction Week Oct. 18 to 24, 2004. Numerous events and activities were held across the province to encourage waste reduction, including hazardous and electronic waste round-ups, book swaps, sports equipment collections, and waste-free potluck lunches. (Environment)
- **introduced** a program entitled "Reduce Your Wasteline Challenge." Approximately 1,000 Grade 4 students in 44 classes across Alberta were challenged to investigate their school's waste and take action to reduce the amount going to the landfill. (Environment)
- **supported** The Energy Education Forum by actively working to identify opportunities for including energy-related elements in the new Alberta Public School curriculum. (Energy)



## 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:

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- **enhanced** participation in sport for under-represented groups (e.g., girls, women, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities) by providing \$48,000 in grants to provincial sport and recreation associations for programs involving these groups. (Community Development)
- **increased** services for families when the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* came into force Nov. 1, 2004. The legislation increases services to families before they reach crisis, more quickly establishes permanent homes for children in government care and strengthens the involvement of First Nations, Métis and other aboriginal communities in planning for their children. (Children's Services)
- **released** a report outlining key areas for action arising from the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying. The roundtable report *Finding Solutions Together* outlines five key areas for action: social change; provincial leadership; a collaborative, co-ordinated community response; services and supports; and accountability. (Children's Services)
- **began accepting** applications for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund. The fund was developed in response to the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying and is designed to help communities as they take action on family violence and bullying. A total of \$2 million will be distributed through the Community Incentive Fund. (Children's Services)
- **released** an in-depth review of the province's adoption website. The review confirms the effectiveness of the site in recruiting adoptive families and finding permanent homes for children. (Children's Services)
- **celebrated** the contributions made by 3,500 foster families in Alberta during Foster Family Week, Oct. 17 to 23. (Children's Services)
- **provided** premium-free health benefits to over 64,881 children in low-income families through the Alberta Child Health Benefit and to 1,778 individuals and families through the Alberta Adult Health Benefit. (HRE)
- **provided** approximately \$6.9 million in grants to support the housing needs of low-income families, seniors and people with special needs. (Seniors)
- **provided** approximately \$57.8 million to almost 143,000 seniors under the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. Average monthly cash benefit was \$121 per senior. (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 be a leader in economic growth in 2004-05 and various government ministries are involved in a number of initiatives to ensure that trend continues. In this quarter, the government:

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- **participated** in the Northern Development Ministers Conference 2004. (AAND)
- **approved** \$10.1 million in loans through the Project Investor Financing Program for two new beef slaughter facility projects, which will increase slaughter capacity in Alberta by 202,000 head per year. These projects will also see \$63.9 million in investment in the province. (AFSC)
- **worked** with AFRD and Community Future Development Corporations to facilitate the distribution of agriculture business training program information (Tilling the Soil of Opportunity) to support the agriculture industry. (AFSC)
- **released** the 2004-05 Second Quarter Update for the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. The Fund's net income for the six months ended September 30, 2004 amounted to \$498 million. The Fund is still forecast to earn \$954 million this year up from the budget forecast of \$647 million. (Finance)
- **reported** Alberta's continued positive fiscal position with the release of the 2004-05 Second Quarter Fiscal Report that shows total revenue is \$28.6 billion leaving a projected surplus of \$4.1 billion. Of that, \$3.7 billion will be used to pay off the remaining accumulated debt. (Finance)
- **increased** the personal income tax credit amounts in line with the cost of living for the 2005 tax year. The basic personal, spousal, and eligible dependent amounts will rise by 1.3 per cent. Indexing credit amounts to inflation helps keep Albertans with lower incomes from moving on to the tax rolls. (Finance)
- **approved** a new casino for the City of Edmonton. The new traditional casino, approved by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, will create over 300 new jobs and reduce the waitlist for charities by four months. Revenues from the casino are expected to generate \$15.4 million for charities and an additional \$29.4 million for the Alberta Lottery Fund each year. (Gaming)
- **increased** protection for landlords and tenants under amended legislation that became law on Nov. 1, 2004. Under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, there is a stronger balance between the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. (Government Services)
- **sold** 28 properties, which had been declared surplus to government requirements, for a total value of \$14.8 million. (Infrastructure & Transportation)
- **completed** 22 purchases worth \$12.1 million in support of government programs primarily in the Transportation and Utility Corridors for the extension of the ring roads in Edmonton and Calgary. (Infrastructure and Transportation)

- **approved** \$27 million for 45 projects in 10 companies under the Beef Product and Market Development Program to assist the livestock industry process and market meat products from livestock older than 30 months. (AFRD)
- **authorized** \$45.4 million in final payments and \$108.2 million in 2004 advances for producers under the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization Program. (AFRD)
- **issued** 621 payments for a total of \$5.2 million to producers participating in the Canada-Alberta 2004 Calf Set Aside Program. The program provides \$200 per head to encourage delaying the finishing of these animals to slaughter weight. (AFRD)
- **issued** 742 payments for veterinarians and producers for a total of \$484,695 under the Canada-Alberta BSE Surveillance Program. (AFRD)
- **introduced** two new pasture insurance programs for 2005. Alberta leads the country with its comprehensive insurance for perennial crops. (AFRD)
- **announced** \$8 million in short and long-term provincial support for Alberta's sheep, goat, deer, elk, reindeer and bison producers. (AFRD)
- **partnered** with several First Nations for training and employment in such industries as heavy equipment, oilsands/petroleum, carpenters and construction. (HRE)
- **won** a challenge under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) that increases opportunities to access the Ontario market for dairy alternative products. The Ontario market is worth \$226 million per year. (IIR)
- **announced** former cabinet minister Murray Smith will head the new Alberta Office in Washington, D.C. The office will advance Alberta's energy and agricultural interests with U.S. decision makers. (IIR)
- **continued** to press the U.S. to open its border to live Canadian cattle. The efforts paid off as the U.S. announced it will open the border in 2005. (IIR, AFRD)
- **strengthened** business relationships at the joint 2004 Canada-U.S. foresters' conference. This Edmonton event profiled leading-edge forest management practices to an international audience and generated over \$3 million in economic benefits. (Sustainable Resource Development, SRD)
- **supported** artists working in film and video, the literary arts, performing arts, and visual arts by providing more than \$4 million in grants. (Community Development)
- **assisted** communities, provincial sports associations and local organizations with the hosting of western Canadian, national, and international sporting events in Alberta. (Community Development)
- **achieved** a new record for mineral rights bonuses collected in a year; over \$1.023 billion was collected in 2004 helping deliver the priority programs, such as health and education. On a yearly basis, the province holds an average of 24 mineral rights auctions and issues approximately 8,000 petroleum and natural gas agreements. (Energy)
- **issued** a natural gas rebate of \$2.50 per gigajoule (GJ) for November and a rebate of \$1.50 per gigajoule (GJ) for December. Rebates are provided to residential, commercial and eligible industrial consumers. (Energy)
- **implemented** the gas-over-bitumen royalty adjustment mechanism to address the impact to gas producers as a result of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board gas well shut-in orders. This new mechanism provides a fair and equitable solution to balance the interests of competing resource development activities. (Energy)
- **handled** effective implementation of the transmission development policy and Transmission Regulation which provides guidance on how new transmission infrastructure will be developed in coming years in Alberta. This will ensure Albertans continue to receive reliable and efficient transmission service. (Energy)
- **attracted** Center Partners, a division of WPP Group plc. and a world-scale communications company, to establish its first Canadian operation in Calgary in October 2004. The outsourcing contact centre is expected to employ 300 people by the end of 2005. (Economic Development)

- **sponsored** the Remediation Technologies Symposium from Oct. 13 to 15, 2004, which promoted environmental product services available from Alberta companies. The forum attracted close to 300 industry professionals from across Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. AED facilitated several incoming missions and delegations in support of the event. (Economic Development)
- **received** recognition for the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) alliance as a rural economic development best practice at the National Rural Conference held Oct. 21 to 23, 2004. The conference, attended by 350 delegates from across Canada, identified the alliance as an innovative way to facilitate rural economic development. (Economic Development)
- **hosted** the Mexican Undersecretary responsible for Development and Environmental Regulation from Oct. 28 to 30, 2004. The visit allowed Alberta agencies and companies to demonstrate the environmental capabilities of Alberta organizations. (Economic Development)
- **released** the official *2005 Alberta Vacation Guide*, a special centennial edition that includes historic cameos, archival photos, community profiles, itineraries, and detailed maps to promote travel within and to Alberta. (Economic 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:

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- **celebrated** the one-year anniversary in November of the Gaming Information for Charitable Groups (GAIN) program in November. Since GAIN was introduced, over 8,400 individuals have learned more about the responsibilities and requirements of a gaming licence and to be more accountable for their charitable gaming activities. (Gaming)
- **launched** a mediation pilot project in Edmonton and Lethbridge to help people resolve disputes. The project will encourage interest-based mediation by offering information to parties in litigation about mediation and other dispute resolution options. It will also establish a list of qualified mediators. (Justice)
- **gathered, compiled and posted** results of the Oct. 18, 2004 municipal elections on the department's website. (Municipal Affairs)
- **announced and presented** the 2004 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence to the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary, Strathcona County and Sturgeon County, and the Village of Vilna. These awards, presented annually, recognize local innovation and achievement in municipal governance, operations and services. (Municipal Affairs)
- **began** construction of a \$21-million Agrivalue Processing Business Incubator in Leduc, the first food processing business incubator of its kind in the country that assists emerging agriculture entrepreneurs to launch new value-added food products. (AAFRD)
- **outfitted** 72 snowplow trucks along Highway 2 between Edmonton and Calgary with the Automated Vehicle Location System. This system has GPS capabilities, digital cellular wireless communication and sensors connected to the various pieces of the snowplow equipment. (Infrastructure and Transportation)
- **invested** \$350,000 in the Magnetic Resonance Diagnostic Centre (MRDC) at the University of Alberta. The centre, the only one of its kind in North America, could potentially save the country's health care system millions of dollars through a simple, cost effective diagnostic test and will allow physicians to diagnose disease more quickly, monitor the health status of patients in hospitals and clinics, monitor drug effectiveness and determine drug compliance. (Innovation and Science)
- **awarded** over \$5 million funding support to five projects in the Innovation Program Service Excellence stream. These projects are diverse in nature and involve various government departments and partners. This support will accelerate improvements to government service delivery and foster overall service excellence for Albertans. (Innovation and Science)
- **continued** construction of Alberta SuperNet. As of Dec. 30, 2004, construction to 392 of 402 communities in the Extended Area Network and 15 of 27 communities in the Base Area Network was completed. Several hundred customers are now using the network with numbers increasing throughout 2005. (Restructuring and Government Efficiency)

- **participated** in the first "Sharing Solutions for Service Excellence Forum" hosted by the Government of British Columbia in October. This forum for senior government executives provides an opportunity to share best practices in the development and implementation of shared services in the public sector environment. The Government of Alberta will host the next forum in 2005 for Alberta, B.C. and Ontario delegates. (Restructuring and Government Efficiency)
- **awarded** the Government of Alberta's procurement card contract to the Bank of Montreal. Procurement cards are used by approved public servants for the purchase of government goods and services. The new card features improved electronic processing, increased security, an ability to track purchase trends for strategic buying purposes, and higher rebates to government based on usage. (Restructuring and Government Efficiency)
- **supplied** 200 surplus computers to Elections Alberta for the provincial election in November resulting in a significant cost savings. (Restructuring and Government Efficiency)
- **provided** applications for the Innovative Energy Technologies Program, which encourages industry development of new and innovative technologies to increase recoveries from existing reserves and encourage responsible development of new oil, natural gas and in situ oilsands reserves. The program is also designed to assist industry to find commercial technical solutions to the gas over bitumen issue that will allow efficient and orderly production of both resources. In total, this program could result in more than \$667 million of new investment in energy technologies. (Energy)
- **organized** the first annual Innovation Awards from Oct. 12 to 15, 2004, recognizing companies in Alberta's Peace Region that demonstrated outstanding achievements in adding value to their products. (Economic Development)

## **PRESERVATION**

The following activities support the *Preservation* core business to ensure 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 supports numerous initiatives that improve safety and build stronger communities. In the third quarter of 2004-05, the Alberta government:

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- **launched** the Alberta Server Intervention Program (ASIP) as the new mandatory training program for all liquor retailers and servers in Alberta. It's expected that ASIP will be a positive tool to help curb underage drinking, over-consumption and impaired driving. The Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission has committed \$1 million towards the development and implementation of the program over a three-year period. (Gaming)
- **issued** over 230 Community Facility Enhancement Program and Community Initiatives Program grants through the Alberta Lottery Fund. These grants support various projects throughout the province, including funding for facility upgrades (Fort McMurray's Pastew Place Detox Centre, \$75,000) and youth awareness programs (Alberta Youth Outreach Foundation, \$20,000). (Gaming)
- **completed** the Under 25 ID Policy Initiative Audit Report, which confirms the compliance rate for liquor licensees was 83 per cent in 2004. The Under 25 ID policy awareness campaign and audit reinforces the need for liquor licensees to ask for identification from anyone who appears under the age of 25 and attempts to purchase liquor. (Gaming)
- **granted** \$969,000 from the Alberta Lottery Fund to the Calgary HomeFront Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. The Society works to improve the community and justice system response to issues of domestic violence. (Gaming)
- **appointed** six new judges in December to address province-wide workload pressures related to child protection cases, as well as pressures in Calgary Provincial Court Criminal. (Justice)
- **approved** 170 grants totalling \$8.5 million under the Municipal Sponsorship Program, including \$1.1 million in bonuses to 54 intermunicipal partnerships. The program offers grants for projects promoting innovation, excellence and cooperation in improving municipal government, administration and services. (Municipal Affairs)
- **promoted** fire safety across the province through education programs including the annual Fire Prevention Week and holiday fire safety campaigns. (Municipal Affairs)
- **assisted** several southern Alberta fire departments organize and implement innovative fire testing, training and inspection activities at Ghost Lake dam. These activities included live fire suppression exercises and fire investigation training. (Municipal Affairs)

- **worked** with Alberta's Métis Settlements on providing an emergency services technology diploma program for Métis students to promote enhanced fire/injury prevention in Métis communities and increase the employability of the participants. (Municipal Affairs)
- **completed** 422 investigations related to consumer protection and recovered more than \$74,000 for Alberta consumers. (Government Services)
- **issued** over 900 copies of the booklet *Electricity and Natural Gas Contracts: What you should know before you sign a retail energy contract*, requested by Alberta consumers. (Government Services)
- **opened** a new \$10-million interchange on Highway 1 in Medicine Hat that will improve safety and relieve traffic congestion. (Infrastructure & Transportation)
- **announced** a new \$50 million capital program to provide supportive living facilities for low- and moderate-income seniors in rural communities across the province. (Infrastructure and Transportation)
- **provided** \$14.8 million in grants to 56 Alberta communities to support municipal transportation, water and wastewater infrastructure through various municipal grant programs. (Infrastructure and Transportation)
- **amended** forest regulations to protect community mills and loggers from potential impacts of the softwood lumber trade dispute. (SRD)
- **piloted** a program at the Calgary Young Offender Centre that gives young people the opportunity to train and care for dogs from the Calgary Humane Society, while they in turn learn responsibility and empathy. (Solicitor General)
- **developed and distributed** new forms and procedures for the Victim Impact Statement (VIS) Program as outlined under Section 722(2) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. Victim Impact Statements can no longer be provided to the accused, Defence Counsel, or the Crown Prosecutor until after a finding of guilt. (Solicitor General)
- **partnered** with British Columbia correctional service in the continuing development of a pilot test of electronic monitoring of offenders in Alberta. (Solicitor General)
- **supported** a mentoring performance tour by Inuk singer Susan Aglukark to nine Alberta Aboriginal communities to encourage youth to talk about issues of concern, reach out to others for help and develop self-esteem and confidence. (Solicitor General)
- **continued** to work toward an enhanced form of civilian oversight of police. A proposal on a new form of civilian oversight was drafted and has been sent to those affected for review and comment. Once feedback is received amendments to legislation may be considered. (Solicitor General)
- **provided** \$2.9 million in funding for Project KARE, a special RCMP task force, working with the Edmonton Police Service, to investigate the deaths of several sex trade workers whose bodies were found in the Edmonton area. (Solicitor General)
- **distributed** \$10 million in centennial funding for municipalities to create meaningful local projects celebrating centennial, through the Centennial Municipal Per Capita grant program. (Community Development)
- **presented** the Stars of the Millennium Volunteer Award to six Alberta volunteers for their involvement with programs that improve the lives of others in their communities. (Community Development)
- **assisted** Acclaim Energy Trust as the company worked to stop the blowout of their oil well located two kilometres west of Edmonton. Public safety is the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board's number one priority. (Alberta Energy and Utilities Board)
- **provided** approximately \$4.1 million in funding to twenty-two facilities to support services provided for transitional housing, emergency shelters and the homeless and hard-to house, offering a total of 514 transitional beds and 1,610 emergency beds/mats. (Seniors)
- **provided** \$3 million in funding to the seven major urban municipalities to facilitate the immediate and preventative needs of the homeless population. (Seniors)



## 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 third quarter, the Alberta government:

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- **entered** into Interim Harvesting Agreements with the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Métis Settlements General Council to implement the Supreme Court decision in the Powley case in a manner that recognizes the constitutionally-protected rights of Alberta Métis while ensuring conservation of wildlife. (AAND)
- **completed** \$5.5-million renovations on the Lougheed House in Calgary. Built in 1891, this elegant building is a designated provincial and national historic site. (Infrastructure & Transportation)
- **completed** the *Beneficial Management Practices: Environmental Manual for Crop Producers in Alberta*. It outlines management practices that benefit the environment including cropping practices, storage, and wildlife habitat and includes information on developing community relations. (AFRD)
- **finalized** guidelines on leak detection and concrete manure liners for owners of confined feeding operations. These guidelines describe the technical requirements for new construction or the expansion of existing facilities. (SRD)
- **used** Global Positioning System surveys to achieve a better understanding of livestock behaviour in forest rangelands and its impact on wildlife habitat and forest growth. (SRD)
- **conducted** extensive ground surveys of potential mountain pine beetle infestations in the Bow Valley near Canmore with local forest industry volunteers and members of the public. (SRD)
- **launched** Phase One of the first provincial Electronics Recycling Program in Canada in October 2004. The program diverts computer equipment and televisions from landfills so the hazardous materials (lead and mercury) they contain can be properly managed and the reusable material (plastic, glass) can be recycled. (Environment)
- **enhanced** the Environmental Field Report for industry public lands applications to better address integrated land-use issues, such as sensitive wildlife habitat. (SRD)
- **recognized** Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park as the first provincial park in Alberta to become a Dark Sky Preserve. The designation will help to enhance visitors' appreciation of the park with the night sky as part of the natural, historical and cultural experience. (Community Development)
- **completed** the management plan for Evan Thomas Provincial Recreation Area in Kananaskis Country. The plan balances additional tourism development opportunities and appropriate management of the natural resources for the benefit of all Albertans. (Community Development)





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