

Alberta



Aboriginal Business Services

Guide Two:

What's the Right Business for Me?

Aboriginal Albertans
in Business Series

Canada

Alberta
Government

THE BUSINESSLINK
Alberta's Business Information Service

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Foreword

The **Aboriginal Albertans in Business Series** was developed by *The Business Link* to meet the unique needs of Aboriginal business people. While the business principles covered are universal, the resources included are targeted to the needs of this community.

Guide One: **Is Running a Business for Me?** provides information to help you decide whether starting a business is a good choice for you. In Guide Two: **What's the Right Business for Me?** we provide information about business trends and business sectors that may be attractive to new business people, with contacts for more information.

The Business Link has enhanced its services to provide business information, advice and referral services to meet the needs of potential and existing Aboriginal business people in Alberta. Let *The Business Link* be your first stop for Aboriginal-specific business information in Alberta. Be sure to check out other guides in this series as well as other resources available to you.

Call us or visit our website at www.cbsc.org/alberta/absn.

How to contact us:

The Business Link Business Service Centre
Business Information Line: 1-800-272-9675

Edmonton: 100 – 10237 104 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1B1
Telephone: (780) 422-7722 Fax: (780) 422-0055

Calgary: 250 – 639 5 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0M9
Telephone: (403) 221-7800 Fax: (403) 221-7817

E-mail: buslink@cbsc.ic.gc.ca Website: www.cbsc.org/alberta

The Business Link is Alberta's primary business service centre, providing information and advice to Alberta's small business community. A member of the Canada Business network, *The Business Link* is a not-for-profit organization supported by the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta.

We hope **What's the Right Business for Me?** helps you as you consider getting into business in Alberta.



Introduction

What's the Right Business for Me? is intended to provide Aboriginal entrepreneurs with the information needed to find the right opportunity to develop a successful business in Alberta. Using the resources in this guide, you will learn about:

1. The steps involved in finding the right business opportunity for you
2. Business sectors most promising to new business
3. Business trends (home-based business, international trade, e-business)

The Alberta economy has positive potential for Aboriginal entrepreneurs—the key is finding the right business opportunity. We highlight sectors in this guide that may be most attractive to new entrepreneurs. Sectors requiring considerable capital and expertise or sectors that are already occupied by major competitors including energy, manufacturing and information technology are NOT included in this guide. However, if you have the right product at the right time, you can succeed in any sector.

We have featured a number of Aboriginal entrepreneurs throughout this guide, who offer their advice and guidance.

Robert Laboucane, Ripple Effects Ltd., Calgary

You have a greater chance of success if you can develop an entrepreneurial attitude: positive thinking. We become what we think about. We then control our thinking and choose to be a positive thinker. We then gain the confidence in ourselves to become successful business people. When you start your business, a clear, concise business plan is required. You have to know your product, know your market, and know your personal limitations. There is no such thing as competition. Competition becomes irrelevant if you have the right product and the right market — at the right time.

I. Finding Business Opportunities

Start with You

Before considering any of the sectors highlighted in this guide, we suggest you start with *you*. List the knowledge and skills you already have based on your experience and education. Not surprising, many successful businesses owe their success to an entrepreneur who knows the business BEFORE getting into business. Maybe you have worked for someone else in the retail, tourism or construction industry. Starting a business by doing something you know well will increase your chance for success. Take a close look at yourself!

Getting Started

To identify a viable business opportunity, consider these strategies:

- 1. Use existing opportunities**
Find a market that is not well served by current businesses. Learn from competitors. Their weakness may provide a business opportunity for you. Their success will tell you what you are up against.
- 2. Create a new opportunity**
You can create a new product that meets unmet market needs. For instance, Aboriginal tourism is doing well because tourists enjoy experiencing Aboriginal culture.
- 3. Re-invent a product or service**
It must be different than the old version but you can market it to a different group of people or a foreign market. For example, can camping be combined with Aboriginal tourism to encourage more tourists to camp?

Research Phase

To find promising opportunities, try this approach:

- 1. Do your homework**
Research a number of business ideas before settling on the one with the most promise. Use all available resources (including those provided in this guide) to get as much information about the industry and the market you identify as promising.
- 2. Confirm there is a market for your business**
Are there customers who will pay for your product or service? Identify and assess the number of potential customers in your market area. Many economic development offices, including *The Business Link* can help you find this information.
- 3. Ask for help**
The Business Link and other resources provided in the following sections of this guide can help you avoid mistakes others have made and build a business more likely to succeed.



II. Business Sectors

Aboriginal businesses in Alberta work in many business sectors. However, most new Aboriginal businesses are small businesses. In this section, we highlight sectors where you may get started with limited or less capital than other industry sectors. Note that all businesses require varying degrees of investment.

These opportunities are presented in alphabetical order for ease of reference only. Current industry status and industry outlook are two critical aspects you should consider in any industry sector. Candid comments about the potential benefits and risks of investing your time and money in any sector are provided to help you make realistic decisions about your business venture.

A. AGRICULTURE

Current Industry Status

Alberta's agriculture sector (crop production, livestock production, mixed farming and support services for agriculture) is an important contributor to the Alberta economy. It is the oldest sector of the economy (after trapping and fur trade), deeply rooted in Alberta's history and culture. Through use of technology and innovation, Alberta has developed one of the world's most productive agricultural economies.

Fast Facts:

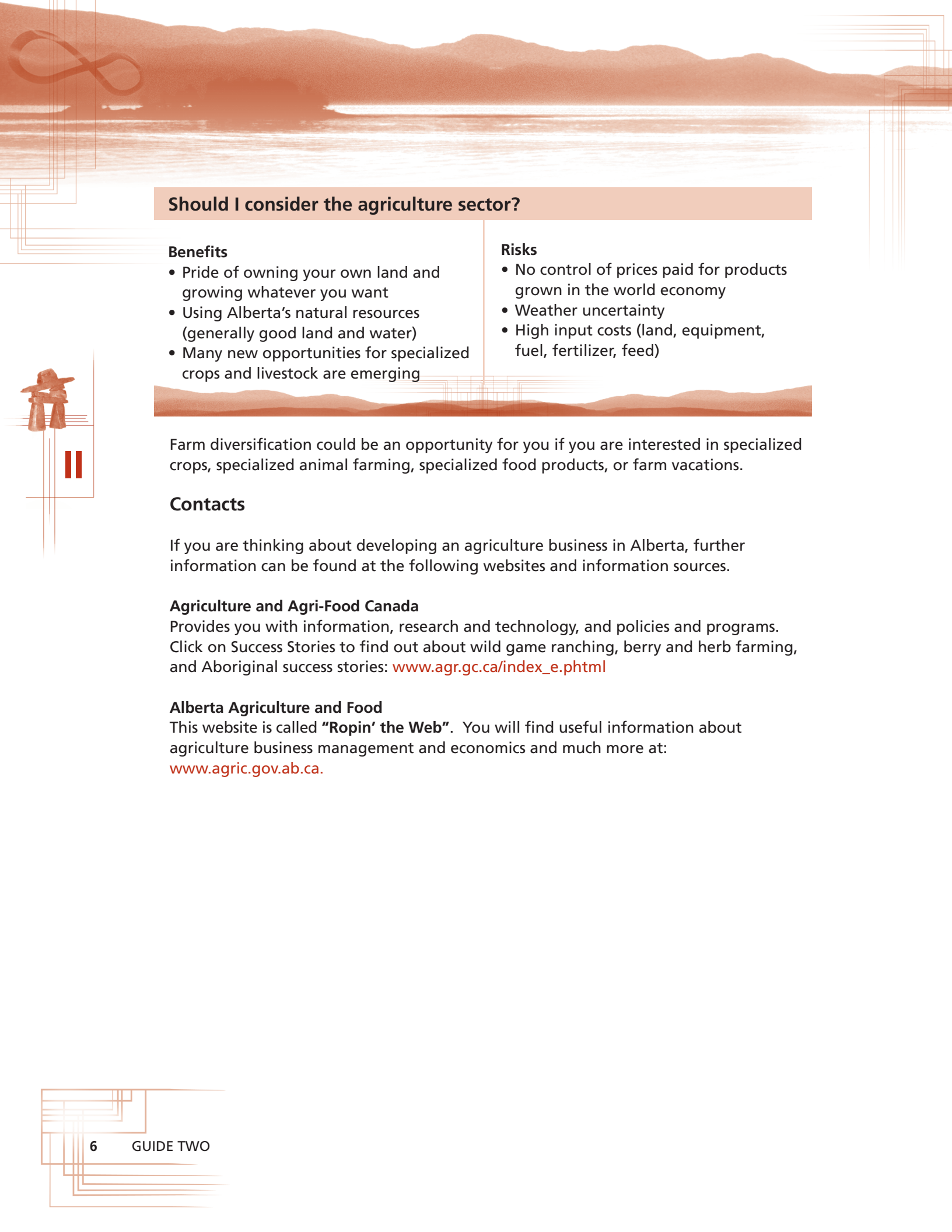
- Total Alberta farmland area is 52.1 million acres, with an average farm size of 970 acres.
- During the last decade, Alberta produced 28% of the nation's wheat crop, 34% of the canola, 44% of the barley, and 23% of the oats.
- In 2005, the agriculture and food processing industries employed 78,500 Albertans, with 56,200 in primary agriculture and 22,300 in food and beverage industries.
- In 2005, Alberta contributed 47.8% (\$3.1 billion) of total Canadian cattle and calf market receipts, and 14.1% (\$551.5) or hog receipts.

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Food

Industry Outlook

Worldwide demand for Alberta-produced food and other agricultural products will increase as populations grow. There is a growing market for clean, wholesome and safe farm products. Markets for new products including primary and secondary food products, extracted ingredients and non-food agricultural products for commercial and industrial uses are also expected to grow.

Alberta's huge agricultural land base and food processing sector will continue to support growth of value-added production. The industry continues to branch out into alternate crops and livestock.



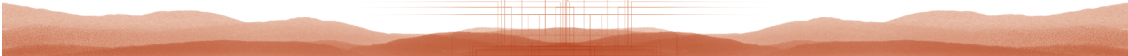
Should I consider the agriculture sector?

Benefits

- Pride of owning your own land and growing whatever you want
- Using Alberta's natural resources (generally good land and water)
- Many new opportunities for specialized crops and livestock are emerging

Risks

- No control of prices paid for products grown in the world economy
- Weather uncertainty
- High input costs (land, equipment, fuel, fertilizer, feed)



Farm diversification could be an opportunity for you if you are interested in specialized crops, specialized animal farming, specialized food products, or farm vacations.

Contacts

If you are thinking about developing an agriculture business in Alberta, further information can be found at the following websites and information sources.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Provides you with information, research and technology, and policies and programs. Click on Success Stories to find out about wild game ranching, berry and herb farming, and Aboriginal success stories: www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.phtml

Alberta Agriculture and Food

This website is called "Ropin' the Web". You will find useful information about agriculture business management and economics and much more at: www.agric.gov.ab.ca.



B. CONSTRUCTION

Current Industry Status

The construction industry covers activities in three areas—industrial construction (dams, highways and pipelines), commercial construction (high rise buildings, shops and malls), and residential construction (homes and apartment buildings). It is apparent that the construction industry is far reaching and unique opportunities for small businesses are attainable. According to Statistics Canada, total capital expenditures on new construction in Alberta will be \$58 billion in 2007, up from \$56 billion in 2006¹.

Construction is currently very active in Alberta. As of December 2006, major projects reached a record high of \$158 billion, which is up from \$123 billion the same time the previous year². Housing construction is strong throughout Alberta, especially in major centres. Specialized trades are needed in housing as it may take more than ten trades to complete one single house.

Fast Fact:

- The construction industry employs 159,700 people and is expected to grow on average 2.7% annually from 2005 to 2010.

Source: Alberta Employment, Immigration, and Industry

Industry Outlook

Alberta's construction industry is expected to grow in a variety of areas. Power plant and petrochemical developments are expected to proceed. More industrial construction is expected to support the expansion of wood products, food processing and pipeline industries.

Growth of infrastructure projects including road building and expansion of light rail transit systems is also expected. Strong growth in retail and wholesale activities will drive commercial construction including distribution infrastructure and warehousing. With this major industrial activity and likely continued migration of workers to Alberta, continued strength in residential construction is anticipated.

¹ Statistics Canada

² *Weekly Economic Highlight (February 16, 2007)* – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry

Should I consider the construction sector?

Benefits

- Starting small is feasible
- Construction is needed in every industry sector
- Labour may be found locally
- Local markets may already exist
- Employees are hired for each job

Risks

- Competition with major industry
- Start-up costs (equipment, vehicles)
- Dependant on the economy
- Labour costs high
- Labour shortages across the province
- Large insurance-related costs

Contacts

Edmonton Construction Association

10215 - 176 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1M1
Phone: 780-483-1130
Fax: 780-484-0299
E-mail: contact@edmca.com
Web: www.edmca.com

This association provides industry activity information and construction opportunities.

COOLNet Alberta

Web: www.coolnet.ab.ca

This organization can provide you with timely, convenient and cost-effective access to construction procurement opportunities.

Alberta Construction Association

18012-107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5S 2J5
Phone: 780-455-1122
Fax: 780-451-2152
E-mail: info@abconst.org
Web: www.abconst.org

This website provides a complete listing of topics that you need to know about the construction industry: forecasts, career opportunities, regulations, affiliated associations, etc. Helpful links to resource sites in your area are provided.



C. FORESTRY AND FOREST PRODUCTS

Current Industry Status

Alberta's forest products industry, including secondary industries, has been a major source of economic growth for Alberta over the past twenty years. However, it does experience ups and downs within the world economy. According to the Alberta Forest Products Association, the value of lumber, panelboard and pulp and paper shipments in 2005 was \$3.764 billion, down \$545.8 million from 2004, U.S. housing starts in September 2006 dropped 34 per cent year over year.

Fast Facts:

- 58% of Alberta is forested.
- Alberta allows 23.9 million cubic meters to be harvested.
- Alberta's forest industry generated almost \$8.4 billion annually and employs 54,000 people.
- Forestry is a primary industry in up to 50 communities in Alberta.
- Alberta's major employers in the forest industry include: Canfor Corporation (lumber), Weldwood of Canada Ltd. (lumber, bleached kraft pulp, treated wood), West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd. (lumber, medium density fibreboard, newsprint, chemi-thermomechanical pulp), and Weyerhaeuser Canada Ltd. (bleached kraft pulp, lumber, oriented strand board).

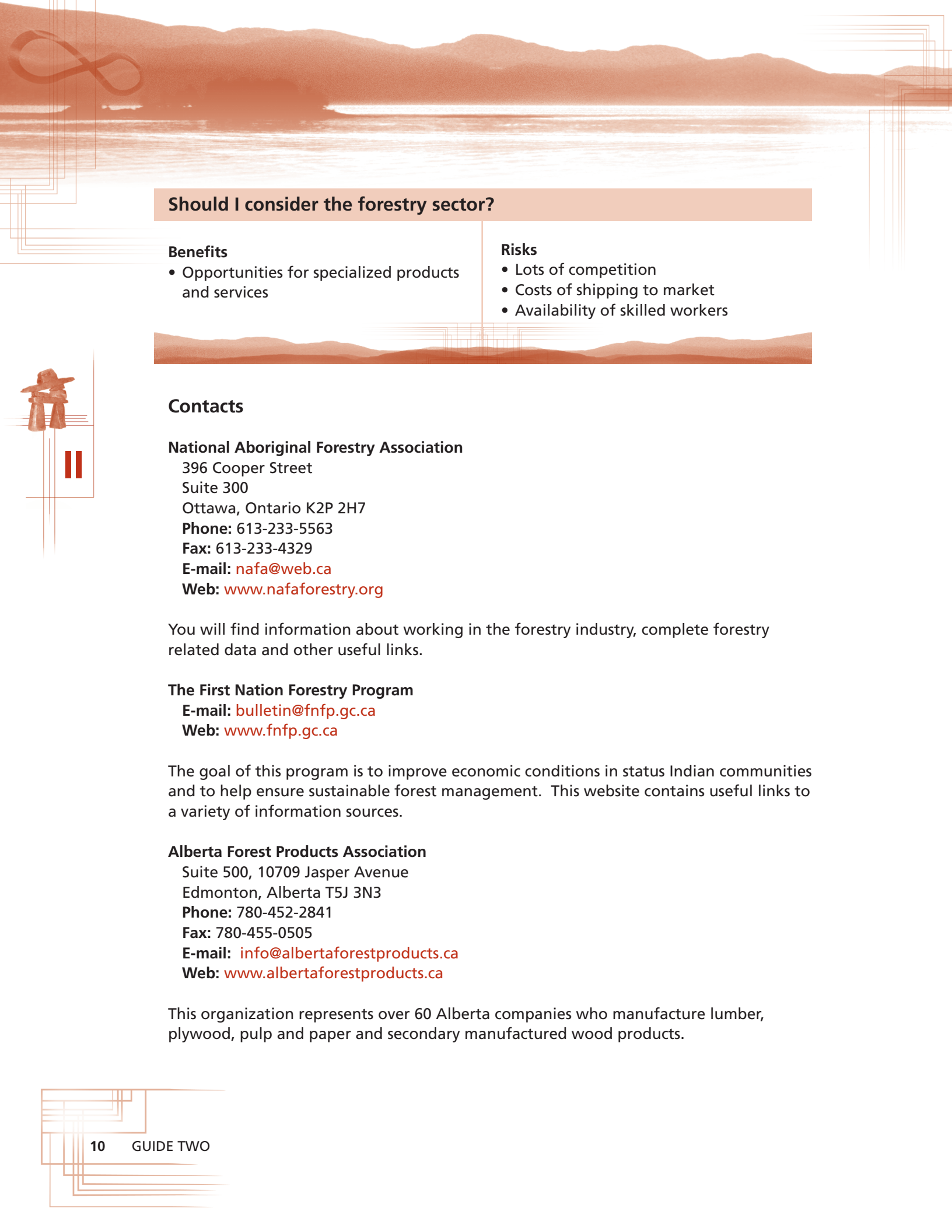
Source: Alberta Employment, Immigration, and Industry

Industry Outlook

Future growth in the forest products industry in Alberta will likely be in the value-added manufacturing sector. This includes log homes, garage packages, sheds, furniture manufacturing, specialized furniture, prefabricated homes and finished wood products. Alberta's Forestry and Logging with Support Activities industry is expected to grow on average 0.4% annually from 2005 to 2010³.

Many Alberta Aboriginal companies are entering into joint ventures with non-First Nations corporations in a wide variety of forestry-related projects. Business opportunities for Aboriginal businesses can be found in special forest products and services that fulfill a broad range of needs. Harvesting, land reclamation, surveying and the use of traditional knowledge are some examples of potential opportunities. Secondary manufacturing offers excellent opportunities for Aboriginal companies that can operate on smaller volumes of raw material.

³ *Industry Profiles – Forestry and Logging with Support Activities 2006 – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry*



Should I consider the forestry sector?

Benefits

- Opportunities for specialized products and services

Risks

- Lots of competition
- Costs of shipping to market
- Availability of skilled workers



Contacts

National Aboriginal Forestry Association

396 Cooper Street
Suite 300
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 2H7
Phone: 613-233-5563
Fax: 613-233-4329
E-mail: nafa@web.ca
Web: www.nafaforestry.org

You will find information about working in the forestry industry, complete forestry related data and other useful links.

The First Nation Forestry Program

E-mail: bulletin@fnfp.gc.ca
Web: www.fnfp.gc.ca

The goal of this program is to improve economic conditions in status Indian communities and to help ensure sustainable forest management. This website contains useful links to a variety of information sources.

Alberta Forest Products Association

Suite 500, 10709 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3N3
Phone: 780-452-2841
Fax: 780-455-0505
E-mail: info@albertaforestproducts.ca
Web: www.albertaforestproducts.ca

This organization represents over 60 Alberta companies who manufacture lumber, plywood, pulp and paper and secondary manufactured wood products.

D. RETAIL

Current Industry Status

The retail sector includes all direct sales to the consumer including food, beverage, drug products, shoes, clothing, household furniture and appliances, automobile sales and service, department store merchandise and more. In 2005, this sector employed about 211,900 in Alberta⁴. Retailers vary in size from mobile hot dog stands to big box grocery, home furnishings and home renovation stores.

Fast Facts:

- Retail sales climbed 10.3% in 2004 and 12.2% in 2005 and growth is forecasted to be 13% in 2006.
- The retail trade industry is expected to grow on average 1.3% annually from 2005 to 2010.
- The retail sectors with the highest growth rates were gasoline service stations (+28.0%), motor and recreational dealers (+24.1%), and furniture, furnishings and electronic retailers (+18.1%).

Source: Alberta Employment, Immigration, and Industry

Industry Outlook

Information technology will continue to impact the retail sector. Retail will become more competitive with more direct selling and elimination of wholesale and middle-persons through delivery of goods directly from factory to consumer. There may be growth in non-store shopping options including the Internet, catalogue shopping and ordering by telephone.

Overall, there may be more specialized products and a rise in the number of small retail businesses. Alberta's growing population, together with a rise in real disposable income, will also strengthen the sector. Retail employment is expected to provide 7.8% of new jobs in Alberta between 2005 and 2010⁵.

Should I consider a business in retail?

Benefits

- Can start small
- Opportunity may be close to home
- Respond to familiar local markets
- More opportunities due to advanced technology

Risks

- Labour shortages, especially in the north
- Depending on product line, may be lots of competition
- Many financial institutions view retail as risky
- Costs of inventory
- Vulnerable to close competition

^{4,5} *Industry Profiles – Retail Trade – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry*



Contacts

E-commerce Overview Series - Retail Trade in Canada

Toll-free: 1-800-328-6189 (Canada)

Web: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/retra-comde.nsf/en/qn00132e.html>

At this website, you will get an overview of the Canadian Retail Industry, Internet information, electronic commerce for retailers and a retailer resources centre.

Retail Council of Canada

Toll-free: 1-888-373-8245

Alberta Toll-free: 1-888-481-2993

Web: www.retailcouncil.org

This organization advocates to various levels of government of behalf of Canadian retailers. It offers training and certification programs through the Canadian Retail Institute and publishes Canadian Retailer to keep members and the general public informed.

Retail Alberta

208, 14925-111 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta T5M 2P6

Phone: 780-453-1192 / 403-202-4017

Toll-free: 1-800-758-9840

Fax: 780-488-9965

Web: www.retailalberta.ca

E-mail: info@retailalberta.ca

Through membership, you have access to volume discounts and information resources typically only available to larger stores. This allows you to improve your business in ways that would be too expensive or difficult for you to do alone. Visit their website to find out more about the services and benefits they offer.



E. TOURISM

Current Industry Status

Alberta's tourism industry derives its strength from the province's magnificent scenery, service excellence, no provincial sales tax and strong marketing. Alberta offers safe, clean, breathtaking surroundings and many different tourism experiences, such as: outdoor adventures (mountain and scenic touring, camping, fishing and hunting, trail riding, ranch vacations, wildlife viewing) and welcoming cities, festivals and cultural events.

The tourism industry offers many products such as:

- Accommodation including hotel, motel and bed & breakfast operations
- Food & beverage
- Adventure tourism
- Campgrounds
- Guided hiking, camping, fishing and hunting
- Tour boats and canoeing tours
- Trail riding
- Ranch vacations
- Aboriginal community visits

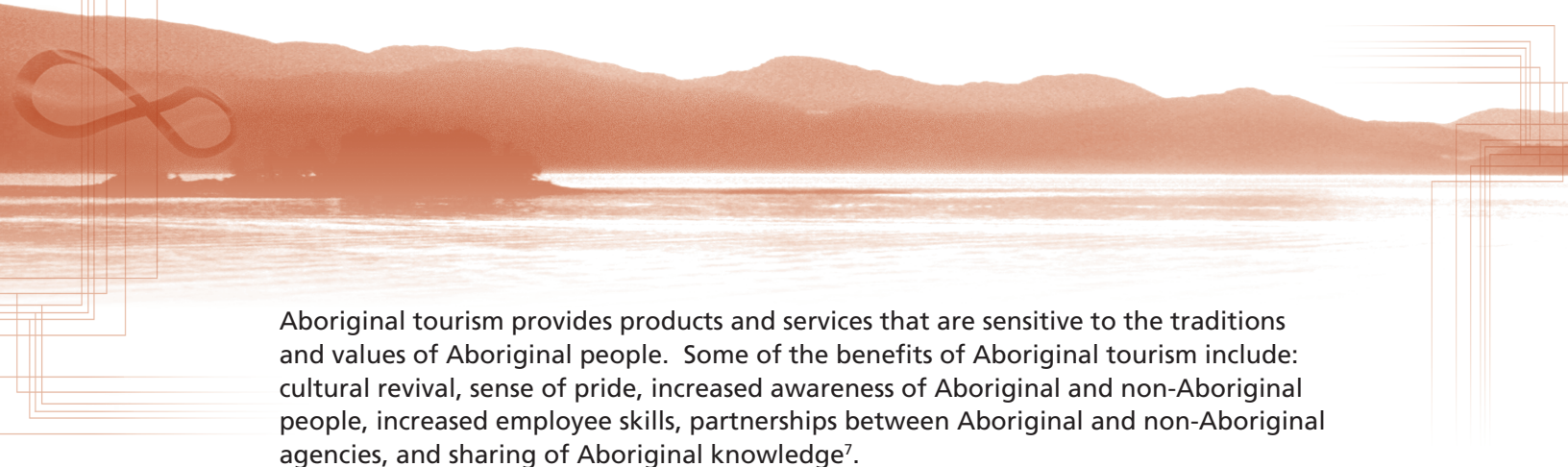
Fast Facts:

- Direct entry into Alberta by US residents in 2005 was 612,400, a decrease of 4.3% compared to 2004.
- In 2006, 5.2 million passengers enplaned and deplaned at the Edmonton International Airport. This represents an increase of 16% compared to 2005.
- In October 2006, 9.4 million passengers enplaned and deplaned at the Calgary International Airport. This represents an increase of 10% compared to the same period of time in 2005.
- Direct entries into Alberta by residents of countries other than the United States totaled 294,400, an increase of 7.7% compared to 2004.
- In 2005, Banff National Park saw 3,164,900 visitors, an increase of approximately 1% compared to the previous year.

Source: Alberta Employment, Immigration, and Industry

Aboriginal tourism generated about \$270 million in revenue in Canada in 1999. That revenue is forecasted to reach the \$1.9 billion mark by 2010. In 1999, Aboriginal tourism employed about 12,000 people in Canada⁶. More First Nations people, Metis, and Inuit are getting involved in the tourism industry sector and have created a niche, now called Aboriginal Tourism.

⁶Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada



Aboriginal tourism provides products and services that are sensitive to the traditions and values of Aboriginal people. Some of the benefits of Aboriginal tourism include: cultural revival, sense of pride, increased awareness of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, increased employee skills, partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies, and sharing of Aboriginal knowledge⁷.

Industry Outlook

Through a number of initiatives, the province will invest \$43.3 million into tourism by 2006/2007⁸. Initiatives are underway to enhance:

- a. **tourism marketing**
- b. **tourism development and services**

Technology will continue to change the travel industry. More people will book trips through the Internet. Conventional travel agents may become more specialized (cruises, adventure products etc.). The travel booking business will likely continue to be very competitive. Tourism businesses will need to use more sophisticated approaches to packaging and promotions.

Should I consider a business in tourism?

Benefits

- Relatively low start-up costs
- Opportunity may be close to home
- Industry growing with increasing demand for unique experiences

Risks

- Seasonal demand
- Marketing challenge: connecting with potential customers (national, international) may be expensive
- Depending on product, may be a lot of competition
- There may be insurance and liability costs

There are many tourism development opportunities in Alberta. A listing of some of these, along with other useful information can be found on the Tourism Development Branch's website at:

<http://www.alberta-canada.com/statpub/tourismResearch/developmentOpportunities>.

⁷*Aboriginal Tourism: Business Planning Guide* - Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada, 2000

⁸*Alberta Tourism Quick Facts February 2007* - Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture



Contacts

Northern Alberta Development Council

Web: www.nadc.gov.ab.ca

At this website, you can find contact listings of different regions throughout Alberta. This council strives to advance northern development through regional initiatives and partnership with the private sector and community based organizations.

Aboriginal Adventure Tourism Integrated Training Program

Bow Valley College

332 - 6 Avenue S.E.

Calgary, Alberta T2G 4S6

Phone: 403-410-1400

Fax: 403-297-4887

E-mail: info@bowvalleycollege.ca

Web: www.bowvalleycollege.ca

If you think being part of this industry is for you, this ten-month program will provide you with credentials and expertise for success. The program offers academic upgrading and career and life skills to prepare you to work at an entry level in the adventure and tourism industry.

Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture - Tourism Development Branch

6th Floor, Commerce Place

10155 - 102 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L6

Phone: 780-422-1362

Toll-free: 1-800-252-3782

Fax: 780-427-0778

Web: www.alberta-canada.com/tourism/tourismdevelopment

This branch assists private sector tourism developers and operators by providing tourism business and financial information to assist with their business decision-making. They can also direct you to the appropriate business planning services, information



Travel Alberta

P.O. Box 2500

Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2Z4

Phone: 780-427-4321

Toll-free: 1-800-252-3782

Fax: 780-427-0867

E-mail: travelinfo@travelalberta.com

Web: www.travelalberta.com

This interactive website, complete with Alberta data, can help you assess the viability of your tourism product idea.

Darryl Lajeunesse, CD Media Studio Inc., Red Deer

As an entrepreneur, it's important to pursue a business prospect that you enjoy and truly believe in. If you're doing it just for money, then you may be setting yourself up for disappointment. You should have specific goals and objectives that are based on sound research but don't be afraid of innovation. You should have small objectives that lead to larger goals. One factor, overlooked by entrepreneurs, is the importance of having positive people around you. Have people around you that are honest and positive. That way you will remain motivated and grounded. Finally, it is important to understand that things rarely happen overnight. The saying "Rome wasn't built in a day" is very true when it comes to worthwhile pursuits.

Irma-Dene McCaul, Feather Mountain Workshop Ltd., Sundre

You should talk to everyone and anyone who is remotely related to the field you want to pursue. Networking is important and should not be limited to those silly conventions, which none of us seem to like. Networking happens in unexpected places — at the grocery store or with the person who fixed your phone. A balanced lifestyle is an important aspect and includes your emotional, physical, spiritual and mental well-being. Last, but not least, be passionate about what you want to pursue!

F. TRANSPORTATION

Current Industry Status

Transportation, including movement of goods within Alberta and beyond its borders to other provinces and countries, plays a big role in Alberta's economy.

Fast Facts:

- Of the \$66.72 billion in goods exported in 2004, over \$24 billion was moved out of Alberta by railways, trucks, marine, and airplanes.
- Transportation directly employed over 106,900 people in 2005.

Source: Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry

Industry Outlook

In future, the transportation sector will likely continue to consolidate into fewer, large firms. However, there will still be a good number of smaller firms, especially in the trucking industry, because of its relatively low start-up cost and ability to provide local services. The transportation and warehousing industry is expected to grow on average 2.0% annually from 2005 to 2010⁹.

Technology will change this industry with developments in truck design, brake-by-wire, weigh-in-motion and satellite communication system technology. These are becoming necessary in a world of just-in-time inventory and e-commerce. Efficient intermodal services also ensure competitive inland rail transportation costs to and from the west coast. Therefore, Alberta has developed an extremely modern infrastructure.

Should I consider a transportation business?

Benefits

- Ability to start small and operate locally with later expansion
- Specialty product and commodities provide new opportunities with regional markets

Risks

- Larger trucks are expensive to buy and maintain
- Fuel is expensive
- A lot of competition
- Shortage of qualified operators

Contact

For more information on the transportation industry call:

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation

Phone: 780-427-2731

Web: www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca


⁹*Industry Profiles – Transportation and Warehousing Industry 2006 – Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry*



G. OTHER SERVICES

This sector includes a diverse range of traditional and evolving services that can be delivered by small business. **Examples include:**

- building and park maintenance
- home maintenance and repair
- shopping and laundry services
- security services
- home, carpet, furnace and window cleaning
- house and pet sitting
- yard maintenance, landscaping and snow removal
- operating public facilities



As the population ages, more opportunities will emerge to meet the needs of this target market. Older people are more likely to need help to stay in their own homes. There may also be increased demand for “pamper me” services. People who want to relax and relieve stress may use services such as massage relaxation therapy, and personal fitness training. They may also use more traditional services like beauty salons, spas, and hairdressers. More people may become concerned about home security resulting in growth in security services including alarm systems, improved locking and bolting systems, window bars, and house sitting.

Should I consider starting a particular service?

Benefits

- Low start-up cost
- May work from home

Risks

- Competition will vary by product and region
- Potential market size for some services may be limited

III. Helpful Sources

A. BUSINESS INFORMATION

The Business Link Business Service Centre

Edmonton
100 - 10237 104 Street NW
T5J 1B1

Calgary
250 - 639 5 Avenue SW
T2P 0M9

Business Information Line:
1-800-272-9675 (Toll-free)
E-mail: buslink@cbpsc.ic.gc.ca
Web: www.cbpsc.org/alberta

Alberta Aboriginal Business Services
Web: www.cbpsc.org/alberta/absn

At *The Business Link*, Alberta's primary business service centre, you'll find a wealth of information on everything from start-up, regulatory requirements, financing and loan programs... to e-business, aboriginal business, exporting, importing and government programs and services. Just call toll-free or drop in to our downtown Edmonton or Calgary locations for one-on-one service — in confidence.

The Business Link through its specialized Aboriginal Business Services, provides Aboriginal-specific business information through our products, website, personal service, library resources, and associate business centres to meet the needs of potential and existing Aboriginal business people in Alberta.

Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry

Web: www.alberta-canada.com
www.alberta-canada.com/statpub (Inventory Listings)

This site provides information about Alberta's economy. At this helpful website, you will find complete listings of planned, underway or completed construction projects in Alberta as well as current statistics, services and products.

AlbertaFirst.com

Web: www.albertafirst.com

By visiting this site, you will have easy access to detailed listings, statistics, profiles about key businesses, industry sectors, regions and communities throughout Alberta.



Native Investment & Trade Association

Toll-free: 1-800-337-7743

Web: www.native-invest-trade.com

They are dedicated to helping the Aboriginal community pursue self-reliance through economic development and entrepreneurship

Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO)

Suite 200, 10404 - 66 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5R6

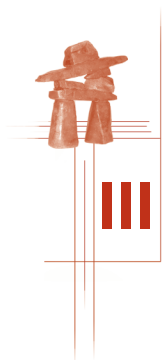
Phone: 780-990-0303

Toll-free: 1-800-463-9300

Fax: 780-429-7487

Email: cando@edo.ca

Web: www.edo.ca



You will find a number of resources in their bookstore on Aboriginal entrepreneurship, and Aboriginal economic development, the Journal on Aboriginal Economic Development, and Aboriginal Education Opportunities Manual.

CanadaOne

Web: www.canadaone.com

You will find a free small business magazine, a Canadian business directory, 700+ resources, a suite of free tools, and 600+ archived articles.

Business Start Up Assistant

Web: www.bsa.cbcs.org

This website, organized by topic and province, provides reliable information on market research, business name and structure, preparing a business plan, financing, taxation, hiring employees, doing business on the Internet.

Aboriginal Resource Net

Web: www.aboriginalresourcenet.com

Make sure you take advantage of the *Aboriginal Resources Guide*. You will get information on training, business plans, sources of funds, business environment and help with running your business.



AFSC Commercial

Room 100
J.G. O'Donoghue Building
7000-113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 5T6
Phone: 780-415-1216
Fax: 780-415-1218
Web: www.AFSC.ca

AFSC Commercial understands business. They provide financing solutions that make sense for Alberta's small business and agri-industry owners. Through their network of fifty five offices across the province, AFSC Commercial offers term and export financing, capital sourcing, leasing services as well as business consulting services.

National Aboriginal Capital Corporation Association

Suite 605, 75 Albert Street
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7
Phone: 613-688-0894
Fax: 613-688-0895
E-mail: office@nacca.net
Web: www.nacca.net

This association provides products and services to Aboriginal financial institutions and Aboriginal-focused organizations to promote growth of Aboriginal businesses.

B. INDUSTRY RESOURCES

Forest Industry Suppliers and Logging Association

Phone: 1-877-523-4722
Web: www.fisla.com

Member companies of this industry association provide a variety of goods and services (including logging) to the primary forest producers of lumber, pulp, paper, newsprint, veneer, plywood, oriented strand board, MDF, agri-fiber, and numerous other value added and secondary wood components.



Manning Forestry Research Fund

Box 83
Hotchkiss, Alberta T0H 2B0
Phone: 780-836-2096
Fax: 780-836-2096
E-mail: mfrfadm@telus.net
Web: www.mdfpresearch.ab.ca

This organization supports research to further our understanding of the boreal forest and sustainability of the social, cultural, and economic values in the Northwest boreal region of Alberta.



Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project

Suite 405 10707-100 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2W3
Toll-free: 1-866-408-1840

208, 9912A Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, Alberta
T9H 1S2
Phone: 780-791-3615

103-519 7 Street S
Lethbridge, Alberta
T1J 2G8
Phone: 403-327-5697

6011-1A Street SW
Calgary, Alberta
T2H 0G5
Phone: 403-258-2201

This project is an awareness program to increase Aboriginal participation in apprenticeship and to promote apprenticeship training in Aboriginal communities.

Alberta Building Trades Council

Centre 111, 11848 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 0E5
Phone: 780-421-9400
Fax: 780-421-9433

E-mail: info@albertabuildingtrades.com
Web: www.albertabuildingtrades.com

This organization represents unionized workers in the building and construction industries and works to secure long-term employment for its members in the safest, most trained and stable work environment.

Canadian Office of the Building & Construction Trades

#1902 – 130 Albert, Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5G4
Phone: 613-236-0653
Fax: 613-230-5138
E-mail: cdnoffice@buildingtrades.ca
Web: www.buildingtrades.ca

If you are a construction worker, this organization can help you to receive fair wages, benefits and job-site standards, and secure safe working conditions.



Merit Contractor Association

103, 13025 St. Albert Trail
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 5G4

Phone: 780-455-5999

Toll-free: 1-888-816-9991

Fax: 780-455-2109

E-mail: meritedm@meritalberta.com

Web: www.meritalberta.com

205, 2725 - 12 Street N.E.

Calgary, Alberta T2E 7J2

Phone: 403-291-9247

Toll-free: 1-877-637-2254

Fax: 780-291-4028

This association offers a voice for open-shop, non-union and merit-shop firms operating in the construction industry in Alberta. The MCA focuses on the human resource needs of contractors with special emphasis on benefit plans, training, retirement programs and placement of field construction workers.

Electrical Contractors Association of Alberta

11235 - 120 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5G 2X9

Phone: 780-451-2412

Toll-free: 1-800-252-9375

Web: www.ecaa.ab.ca

For information on the electrical industry, contact this association.

Pipe Line Contractors Association

Phone: 905-847-9383

Fax: 905-847-7824

E-mail: info@pipeline.ca

Web: www.pipeline.ca

This association was formed to represent contractors in labour relations matters and to offer training courses to develop Canadian workers in specialized pipeline construction skills.

Construction Labour Relations

904, 10050 - 112 Street

Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J1

Phone: 780-451-5444

Fax: 780-451-5447

Toll-free: 1-800-450-7204

Web: www.clra.org

Suite 207 2725-12 Street NE

Calgary, Alberta T2E 7J2

Phone: 403-250-7390

Fax: 403-250-5516

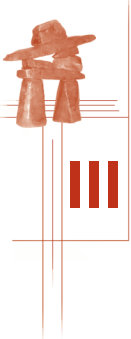
This organization provides collective bargaining services, collective agreement administration and grievance processing, administers labour relations and employment legislation, develops public policy, fosters construction best practices, and develops, delivers and administers employee training and development.



Alberta Labour Relations Board

#503, 10808 - 99 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0G5
Phone: 780-427-8547
Fax: 780-422-0970
E-mail: alrbinfo@gov.ab.ca
Web: www3.gov.ab.ca/alrb

3rd Flr, Deerfoot Junction-Tower 3
1212 - 31 Avenue N.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2E 7S8
Phone: 403-297-4334
Fax: 403-297-5884
E-mail: alrbinfo@gov.ab.ca



The Alberta Labour Relations Board is the independent and impartial tribunal responsible for the day-to-day application and interpretation of Alberta's labour laws. The board actively encourages dispute resolution, employs officers for investigations and makes major policy decisions.

General Presidents' Maintenance Committee

Phone: 905-849-8415
Fax: 905-849-8154
E-mail: inquiries@gpmccanada.com
Web: www.gpmccanada.com

This committee works with industrial maintenance contracting firms, negotiating and administering multi-craft collective agreements, which cover maintenance work at many major resource and industrial facilities in Canada.

Ron E. Scott, Prairie Dog Productions Ltd., St. Albert

In starting a business, it's a good idea to start with something that you are very interested in. I'm a firm believer in doing what you like. If you enjoy what you are doing, it can help you through the difficult times. Also, it's important to have an idea of the climate of the industry before starting a business. You can do this by seeking the counsel of other people in the business or talking to people who have operated a business for several years. Try to remember that there will be similarities in most experiences and you can learn from this. The most important thing to remember is hard work and perseverance will pay off. Planning is critical for a healthy business.

IV. Business Trends

As business practices evolve, new and exciting business trends are emerging. In this section, home-based businesses, international trade and export, and e-business will be discussed. We will provide basic information and contact information. More information on each topic can be easily accessed at *The Business Link*.

A. HOME-BASED BUSINESS

Home-based business is growing in popularity. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages of a home-based business:

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal start-up costs• No additional rent• Savings on property taxes• Being your own boss• Setting your own work hours• No driving to and from work• Freedom to use your own ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time may be spent marketing your business• Less time with family during busy times• Stress related to making all the decisions• Isolation from the business world• More distractions at home

Be realistic in assessing the suitability of home-based business for you. Remember, not all small businesses can function from a residential location. You must consider zoning bylaws, getting along with neighbours, and planning your workspace.

Because a home-based business cannot rely on storefront signage to market products and service, you will need to work harder to attract customers. Promote your business and develop the right image through business cards, ads, letters, promotional literature, telephone interaction, websites and personal contact. Seek advice from professionals, already established home businesses, the local library, or a local business service provider. Here are some helpful websites:

- www.entrepreneur.com
- www.sbinfocanada.about.com

The Business Link has a number of home-based business resources available online, in the library, and in the information centre.

B. INTERNATIONAL TRADE & EXPORT

One-fifth of Canada's 20,000 Aboriginal entrepreneurs export their products and knowledge.¹⁰ Many Aboriginal entrepreneurs are taking advantage of a growing international market. Indigenous knowledge and expertise have been sought from international development agencies. Areas of Aboriginal know-how that have been exported to other countries include governance, dispute resolution, land management, community health and economic and business development.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Larger market• Increasing interest in unique Canadian Aboriginal products• Potentially less competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effort and cost to find international customers• Need to learn about export regulations and another countries' import regulations

If you wish to pursue international trade opportunities, first decide if you are market driven or product-service driven. In a market driven approach, you find out what the foreign market wants and strive to fill that need. In a product-service approach, you try to match your established product-service with a promising foreign country. Refer to the following resources to find out more about the world of international trade.

The Business Link is your entry port for export and import information, resources and referrals throughout Alberta. Visit *The Business Link's* website and click on Export or Import and you will find all you need to know on this subject. www.cbcs.org/alberta.

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Web: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca

On this website, you can find up-to-date information about Canadian Aboriginal Exporters who have successfully established their product or service.

ExportSource

Web: www.exportsource.ca

On this website, you can get information about preparing to export including researching countries and sectors, marketing and financing, getting your product or service to market, preventing and resolving problems, resulting in greater understanding of the global marketplace. If you visit this site, look for: Step-by-Step Guide to Exporting, Interactive Export Planner, Export Readiness Test, and Frequently Asked Questions.

Importsource

Web: www.importsource.ca

Your one-stop website for accessing information about importing. This website has resources to help new and experienced importers, everything from how to start to financing, regulations and procedures.

¹⁰Canadian Trade Review in *CanadExport*. Vol. 20, No. 12, July 2, 2002

InfoExport

Web: www.infoexport.gc.ca

Through this website, Canadian companies have access to over 600 sectoral market studies and country specific reports prepared by the Market Research Centre of the Trade Commissioner Service and by offices abroad. These reports will help you identify foreign opportunities.

C. E-BUSINESS

The Internet has completely transformed the way in which the world does business. E-business refers to the buying, selling, or exchanging of products, services, and information via computer networks, including the Internet. E-business should enhance your business processes, not replace them. Companies are finding that selling products online to customers or business partners, purchasing supplies on-line, or managing their supply chain through the web can help them meet evolving customer needs and compete more effectively.

E-business extends beyond the sale of products on the Internet to consumers, or business-to-consumer e-commerce. The value of Canadian business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce transactions is actually almost ten times greater than business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions. Business-to-business e-commerce refers to the sale of products and services between companies.

Now the Internet and the World Wide Web enable small and medium-sized companies the ability to compete more effectively. Here are just a few of the e-business applications available to companies: online sales, customer relationship management (CRM), e-procurement, e-marketing, supply chain management, enterprise resource planning, project management, and management.


Advantages

- Access to new markets
- Improved customer service
- Ability to serve evolving customer needs
- Reduced procurement costs
- Speed and accuracy of information exchange
- More level playing field for small businesses
- Canada is one of the most connected nations in the world
- Reduced inventory costs
- Faster time to market with new products
- Strengthened relationships with trading partners

Disadvantages

- Return on investment can be difficult to measure
- Need to recruit technologically savvy staff
- Integration of current business practices and e-business initiatives
- Concern over security and privacy issues
- Cost involved in implementing and maintaining e-business system
- Connectivity issue with international commerce
- Shipping and handling costs

IV



The Business Link's specialized e-business services help businesses become aware of what e-business is and help them understand the role it can play in their organization. Albertans can access a wide range of services including an award-winning library, personal service, e-business seminars, the Guest Advisor Program, and an information-packed website. Click on E-Business on *The Business Link's* website at www.cbsc.org/alberta.

Contacts

Electronic Commerce in Canada

Web: www.e-com.ic.gc.ca

If you are interested in E-commerce, visit this site. It has up-to-date news, research and statistics, success stories, resources and more!

Industry Canada

Web: www.strategis.ic.gc.ca/ebizenable

From opportunities to barriers, **ebiz.enable** has good information about e-business. If you want to learn more about e-business or want to start your own e-business, this site is for you.

SourceCAN

Web: www.sourcecan.ca

SourceCAN is an entry point for small and medium-sized enterprises to access the global e-marketplace. It has thousands of business opportunities daily, virtual trade shows, e-catalogues and advanced web-based tools that support supply chain management, procurement and logistics.

Canadian E-Business Leadership Program

Web: www.eleadership.ca

This program recognizes the successful implementation of e-business, e-commerce and Internet technologies and techniques by Canadian organizations.

Techfiles.com

Web: www.techfiles.gov.ab.ca

Features listings of Alberta companies from various advanced technology sectors, including e-commerce, Internet, new media, and software/computing products.



IV

V. I'm Ready to Start—What Now?

A. WHAT BUSINESS STRUCTURE SHOULD I USE?

An early decision you need to make is the form of business you will use. The choices are proprietorship, partnership, and incorporation. Each type of business has pros and cons.

	Who	Pros	Cons
Sole Proprietor	Only you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any profits are yours• Easiest to set up• Not very expensive• Possible tax benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You carry all risks• Responsible for debts—bank can seize personal assets in case of default.
Partnership	You and someone else	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to set up• Very flexible• Partners contribute knowledge, energy and capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disagreements with partner = problems• Partners share responsibility for debts
Incorporation	You are separate from your business	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited liability to the shareholder• May reduce taxation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More expensive and complicated• More paperwork and regulations to be met


The Business Link has a number of informative resources on this topic in its library, on its website and in the information centre. You can call or visit *The Business Link* and talk to a trained Business Officer.

The *Guide for Canadian Small Business* is one source that can help you with this decision. Contact *The Business Link* for a copy of this guide or call Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-5525.



B. HELP WITH BUSINESS PLANNING

As previously mentioned, we strongly recommend that you build a business plan. A business plan is used by successful and/or prospective businesses to document business objectives and to propose how these objectives will be attained within a specific period of time. This written document describes who you are, what you plan to achieve, where your business will be located, when you expect to get under way, and how you will overcome the risks involved and provide the returns anticipated.



A business plan will provide information of your proposed venture to lenders, investors, and suppliers to demonstrate how you plan to use their money, and to establish a basis for credibility of your project. The sooner you develop your business plan, the better. It is important that you examine all the relevant factors now. Therefore, you will be able to anticipate any surprises after your business has opened its doors. This plan will be required if you apply for loans. It is also an essential management tool.

There are a lot of resources available to you that will help you complete your business plan, including the services and referrals offered by *The Business Link* and its **Alberta Aboriginal Business Service Network**. Visit www.cbsc.org/alberta to find the information you need.

Guide Five: Aboriginal Business Planning Workbook

This guide is part of the Aboriginal Albertans in Business series and provides a step-by-step approach to developing a business plan. Available from *The Business Link* or from its website at: www.cbsc.org/alberta/absn.

The Interactive Business Planner (IBP)

Web: www.cbsc.org/ibp

Assists you in creating a formal business plan. You can develop all sections of a business plan; including complete financials. The IBP also provides you with examples of completed business plans.

Planning for a Business

Web: www.cba.ca

The Canadian Bankers Association's site is dedicated to assisting entrepreneurs in getting started in small business.

Planning Your Business

Web: www.officedepot.com

Small Business Handbook offers a large series of downloadable business tools. The series includes financial spreadsheet templates, sample letters, contracts, forms and policies.



Center for Business Planning

Web: www.businessplans.org

offers dozens of sample plans and a very in-depth series of articles to assist you with all sections of your plan.

Open for Business: What you need to know before hiring an employee

has all you need to know about day-to-day activities of your new business. To get a copy, contact *The Business Link*.

C. FINANCING MY BUSINESS

You will likely need to borrow money to start and run your business. Your local bank, credit union, trust companies and other financial institutions can help you start your own business. Aboriginal agencies have been established and provide a range of business development products and services including developmental business loans to Aboriginal entrepreneurs throughout Alberta. Contact the following organizations to find out more about the services they provide:

Aboriginal Business Canada

Suite 725, 9700 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3

Phone: 780-495-2954

Fax: 780-495-4172

E-mail: abc-edmonton@ic.gc.ca

Web: www.abc-eac.ic.gc.ca

Indian Business Corporation

56, 2333-18 Avenue NE
Calgary, Alberta T2E 8T6

Phone: 403-291-5151

Toll-free: 1-800-387-4813

Fax: 403-291-0953

E-mail: iabc@telusplanet.net

Alberta Indian Investment Corporation

P.O. Box 180 Enoch, Alberta T7X 3Y3

Phone: 780-470-3600

Toll-free: 1-888-308-6789

Fax: 780-410-3605

E-mail: aiic@connect.ab.ca

Web: www.aiicbusiness.org

Settlement Investment Corporation

Suite 104-10335 172 Street
Centurion Building

Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1K9

Phone: 780-488-5656

Fax: 780-488-5811

Web: www.settlementinvestcorp.com

Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.

#302, 12308 - 111 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta T5M 2N4

Phone: 780-452-7951


Toll-free: 1-800-252-7963

Fax: 780-454-5997

E-mail: office@apeetogosan.ab.ca

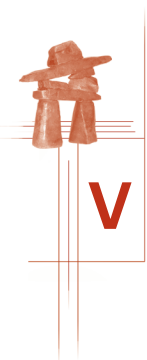
Web: www.apeetogosan.ab.ca

A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations in Alberta has a complete listing of Aboriginal organizations involved in business development. Call 780-427-1522 or www.aand.gov.ab.ca for their latest edition.




Getting Started in Small Business provides helpful information and acts as a starting point for you and your finances. To receive a copy of this publication, contact *The Business Link* or the Canadian Bankers Association 1-800-263-0231.

VI. Final Thoughts



Your chances of having a successful business can be improved if you position yourself and your business to make it. Consider the following advice before starting or expanding your business:

- **Find an area of business that gives you personal satisfaction.**
- **Learn about the industry you are entering. Be realistic about the amount of time, energy, and money you are willing to put into your business.**
- **Spend a lot of time developing your business plan. Get help with it.**
- **Lots of training is available to make sure you have the skills to manage your money.**
- **Build an effective marketing plan. Ask for help if you are not skilled in this essential business requirement.**
- **Great bosses are made not born. Training can help.**
- **Watching other good managers is a good approach too. It will make a wonderful difference to the success of your business.**
- **Do not get ahead of yourself. Examine all of the factors for and against expansion and build a long-range plan.**



For more information, contact:

The Business Link

Business Information Line: 1-800-272-9675

Edmonton: 100 – 10237 104 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1B1

Telephone: (780) 422-7722 Fax: (780) 422-0055

Calgary: 250 – 639 5 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0M9

Telephone: (403) 221-7800 Fax: (403) 221-7817

E-mail: buslink@cbsc.ic.gc.ca Website: www.cbsc.org/alberta

This document is available on: www.cbsc.org/alberta/absn