

JANUARY 14, 2010 News : Report from the Legislature - Rural North

New cabinet team will ensure Alberta is stronger than ever

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach named his new cabinet team, which will focus on four goals that will bring Alberta out of the recession stronger than ever before.

"I have promised Albertans that we will be back in the black in three years and I have not wavered from that commitment," said Stelmach. "My new team will tackle Alberta's fiscal challenges with determination. We are in a strong fiscal position thanks to our financial planning and, together with my new cabinet team, we are going to take the necessary steps to ensure we emerge from this economic downturn even stronger than before."

Premier Stelmach said his new cabinet will be focused on ensuring Alberta has:

- the strongest financial position of all provinces coming out of the recession;
- the most innovative and competitive economy in North America, creating jobs and attracting investment in traditional and emerging sectors;
- the best performing public health care system in Canada; and
- the most advanced infrastructure built in North America.

"Alberta's future is bright, and our best days are yet to come," said Stelmach.

In addition to the new cabinet team, the Premier named a new Chair of Government Caucus.

"I'm pleased to announce Robin Campbell (West Yellowhead) will serve as the new Chair of Government Caucus and Government Whip, while Arno Doerksen (Strathmore-Brooks) will serve as Deputy Whip," said Stelmach.

The new Cabinet will be sworn in Friday, January 15 at 10 a.m. at Government House.

For more information on the new provincial Cabinet, visit www.Alberta.ca.

Nearly two million Albertans access Primary Care Networks

Primary Care Networks are playing a greater role in providing access to the health care system for Albertans. An annual statistical supplement shows Primary Care Networks grew by more than 15 per cent in 2008/2009 compared to the previous year and are serving more than 50 per cent of the

province's population.

These and other statistics are contained in the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Statistical Supplement 2008/2009, produced by Alberta Health and Wellness.

Statistics for 2008/09 contained in the report include:

- There were 30 Primary Care Networks in the province in 2008/2009, up from 26 the previous year; an increase of 15 per cent.
- A Primary Care Network is a network of doctors and other health professionals such as nurses, dietitians and pharmacists working together to provide primary health care to patients.
- There has been a 79.5 per cent increase in total expenditures for Primary Care Network delivered health services from 2007/2008. There has also been an approximately 16 per cent increase in the number of patients accessing the networks.
- Primary Care Networks now involve 1,761 doctors serving almost two million Albertans.
- The number of physicians in Alberta increased three per cent to 6,266 in 2008/2009. In 2007/2008, there were 6,058 physicians.

The complete Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Statistical Supplement 2008/2009 is available online at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/newsroom/pub-annual-reports.html>.

Nominations open for community crime prevention awards

Are there crime fighters in your community who deserve recognition? Nominate them for an Alberta Crime Prevention Award.

The Alberta government is seeking nominations for individuals or groups who have helped make communities safer by:

- demonstrating a commitment to addressing local crime issues;
- investing resources to support crime prevention strategies;
- partnering with community members; or
- implementing successful crime prevention programs.

Categories include youth, individuals, organizations, community groups, media organizations and police officers. Recipients of an Alberta Crime Prevention Award within the past two years are not eligible.

Recipients will be selected by a committee of representatives from Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security, community crime prevention agencies, and Alberta police agencies. A ceremony to

recognize the award recipients will be held on May 7 in Edmonton.

The deadline for the 2010 crime prevention award nominations is Feb. 19.

For more information about the awards and how to submit a nomination, visit <http://www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca/>. You can also call 780-415-1819. To call toll-free outside of Edmonton dial 310-0000.

Albertans encouraged to nominate outstanding teachers before February 5

Students, parents, teachers, principals and community members are encouraged to nominate a teacher or principal for their exceptional work with K-12 students in Alberta classrooms. Nominations for the *2010 Excellence in Teaching Awards* must be submitted to Alberta Education by Feb. 5.

English and French nomination packages, which include details of eligibility and selection criteria, are available at <http://www.education.alberta.ca/> by clicking on the 'Teachers' tab and then on 'Excellence in Teaching Awards'.

This year, 134 semi-finalists will be selected. Twenty of those semi-finalists will receive Provincial *Excellence in Teaching Awards*, and three will receive *SMARTer Kids Foundation Innovative Use of Technology Awards*. Award recipients will be formally honoured at a dinner and ceremony with the Minister of Education on May 29 in Calgary.

The *Excellence in Teaching Awards* have been celebrated since 1989. To date, 8,624 teachers have been nominated and 446 teachers have received awards. Last year, 365 teachers were nominated and 23 received awards.

Minister to promote Alberta interests at U.S. agricultural summit

Promoting Alberta's agricultural interests and participating in discussions on cross-border issues will be the Government of Alberta's focus at the Legislative Agricultural Chairs (LAC) Summit and the State Agricultural Rural Leaders Board meetings in Orlando, Florida Jan. 14-17.

The annual event brings together U.S. state legislative agriculture chairs and provincial ministers of agriculture to broaden understanding and cooperation between the U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions. This year's summit also includes the AgConnect Expo which showcases global agriculture innovation.

Lloyd Snelgrove, President of Alberta Treasury Board and Minister of Corporate Human Resources, will attend both the summit and board meetings, and take in AgConnect on behalf of Alberta. The first Canadian elected to the State Agricultural Rural Leaders Board, Minister Snelgrove will be finishing his second two-year term in 2010.

In addition to presentations, information sessions and panel discussions, the summit includes addresses by United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, and Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Gerry Ritz.

Advancing Alberta's agriculture interests at the summit will help to build a more competitive and successful provincial agriculture and food industry that contributes to Alberta's economy and enhances rural development.

The Government of Alberta has a clear plan for a strong economic recovery. The Way Forward will bring Alberta back into a surplus position in three years by trimming government spending; using cash reserves to protect key programs; continuing to invest in public infrastructure; and ensuring that our province's industries are competitive and continue to attract investment to provide jobs and prosperity.