

Prairie Wood Design Awards and Dinner
November 7, 2011
Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton
Honourable Jeff Johnson
Check against delivery

Thank you, Brady, for that kind introduction, and for inviting me to be part of this event. I want to pass on greetings and congratulations to all of tonight's award nominees and recipients from our new Premier, Alison Redford, and my colleagues in the Legislature. I know Premier Redford shares my passion for designing and building the highest quality public facilities.

As Minister of Infrastructure, I have two main priorities for our public buildings:
The first is to deliver safe, innovative and cost effective public infrastructure; the second priority is to deliver sustainable public infrastructure;

Innovation, sustainability, and safety...you know, I think I've come to the right awards ceremony!

Buildings and Communities

Like all of you, I see opportunity and potential everywhere I look. And because of your collective skills – as the experts who instinctively know how empty space can become something functional and tangible. As architects, and as members of the engineered wood industry, you have an understanding and an appreciation for our

provincial culture and landscape. This is an important part of the talent you bring when designing these facilities.

Not only do you design and build facilities that look good, and that are aesthetically pleasing...But you design buildings that are a real focal point of their communities.

As an MLA from a rural community, I understand firsthand the role our schools, hospitals, visitor centres, and other buildings play. They're not just workspaces. They're not only buildings you drop off your kids at in the mornings. They're not simply the place you visit when you're sick. Our public buildings should inspire students. They should facilitate a sense of healing for the sick. Indeed, our public buildings reflect a sense of who we are, both as individual communities and as a province. And they should bring communities together.

It is your ability to tap into that sense of who we are that allows us to create buildings that are real centrepieces of our communities. Of course, we know that the Prairie Wood Design Awards recognizes your innovative use of wood. To me, this kind of ceremony underscores our shared responsibility in delivering high quality infrastructure. The choice of wood is a sustainable and renewable resource. The energy embodied in wood remains available for subsequent re-use or recycling. Wood also has character. It provides a real sense of warmth, due to its textures and colors. This is why today's hospital designs often incorporate wood in public spaces, like lobbies and atriums.

Conclusion

Tonight's awards recognize innovation, sustainability, and excellence. Our government embraces these same values when delivering infrastructure.

Again, on behalf of Premier Redford and the provincial government, I would like to congratulate all of this evening's award nominees and recipients.

We wish you continued success, and I look forward to our continued work delivering public buildings that provide the warmth, safety, and innovation that make them truly inspired centres of our communities.

Thank you.