

Infrastructure Partners Conference 2011
November 14, 2011
Edmonton EXPO Centre – Alberta Ballroom
Honourable Jeff Johnson
Minister of Infrastructure
Check against delivery

Thank you and good morning everyone.

On behalf of Premier Redford, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2011 Infrastructure Partners Conference. It's certainly easy to understand why over the next two days this is the place to be. I see some great seniors and speakers. The ambitious agenda offers a terrific opportunity to learn from, and talk to, many renowned experts on a number of current and cutting-edge infrastructure-related topics. And more importantly, to network with hundreds of industry partners— to that end you will see many colleagues.

I want to thank the team who put this conference together:

- Alberta Construction Association
- Consulting Architects of Alberta
- Consulting Engineers of Alberta
- Edmonton Construction Association, and
- Alberta Infrastructure.

You have done a spectacular job, creating a forum where leaders can gather to discuss, learn, explore, and share the latest and greatest about the building and infrastructure industry.

For me, the timing of this conference could not have been better.

As new Minister of Infrastructure, this forum provides me with a valuable opportunity to hear what's on your mind, and to share ideas on how we can continue to collaborate...so that together, we can find innovative ways to design and deliver the best infrastructure to Albertans.

Economy

Global fiscal challenges during the last few years have presented extreme difficulties in many parts of the world.

In Alberta, we have weathered the storm much better than most. And our economy remains driven by capital investment. Our government has remained focused on investing in infrastructure; investing in Alberta's future.

And so has the private sector. In fact, an August survey of Alberta's major capital projects showed: Nearly \$186 billion worth of projects are underway, recently completed, or proposed for the next two years.

These investments:

- create tens of thousands of jobs here in Alberta, for Albertans; growing our economy;
- keep skilled tradespeople here;
- help build a foundation for a stronger Alberta coming out of the recession;
- and are happening at a time when taxpayers and investors are getting excellent value for dollars.

Premier's Goal

Premier Redford has a simple goal for our government: to make our province better...for all of you and for our future generations.

The Premier plans to accomplish this goal with a number of steps including:

- enhancing our health care and education systems;
- creating more options for seniors' affordable and long-term care accommodations,
- developing safer, healthier communities; and

- building a cleaner, stronger energy industry.

Infrastructure's Role

Connecting these steps is a critical enabler...a common thread...a thread key to meeting the Premier's goal...and that thread, of course, is infrastructure. Investing in it. Building it. Delivering it. And doing it all...right.

By providing infrastructure that is the most modern, technically advanced, locally-tailored, environmentally healthy and sustainable...we are able to support the high-quality service, work, education, innovation or research that takes place within the walls of our schools, post-secondary institutions, hospitals and government buildings.

These are the facilities that have a direct and beneficial impact on Alberta's economy and on enhancing Albertans' quality of life today and tomorrow.

These are the facilities we must continue to deliver, expand or modernize to realize the Premier's and Alberta's goal of building a better province. And as a testament to this commitment...

Investing in Infrastructure

Over the next three years, Alberta is investing \$17.6 billion into public infrastructure within our communities. This is creating jobs locally and helping local businesses grow. Throughout Alberta today:

- over 40 health facility projects worth about \$5 billion are underway or have been recently completed,
- more than \$1 billion is being invested in 85 K to 12 school projects, and
- more than 90 post-secondary projects worth over \$3 billion are underway or recently completed.

These investments in local schools, hospitals, seniors facilities, and other public infrastructure are crucial for communities and businesses around the province.

When there is quality public infrastructure and programs in local communities, businesses can more easily attract employees and can invest, grow, and create jobs.

And private sector job creation is the major contributor to the quality of life all Albertans enjoy.

In June this year, 22,000 new jobs were created in Alberta, more than the entire United States — Unemployment in US is 5.1% vs. Canada at 7.3%.

Our province has continued to attract more and more Canadians and people from around the world to our province. So my encouragement to you today is to continue designing and constructing buildings with the entire community in mind.

The buildings we plan and construct are crucial for the future health and growth of Alberta's communities. And where we invest, we must remember that design excellence continues to evolve. We continue to strive to provide needed infrastructure in the most environmentally, operationally and economically sustainable manner. We will also need to look at non-traditional options and to be creative in how we fund, design and deliver Alberta's Infrastructure, and to balance new construction with opportunities to renovate or repurpose existing facilities...to provide buildings and spaces that adapt to other purposes and to changing technology and community needs.

Conclusion

Government's responsibility is to ensure that its projects:

- are well planned;
- meet community needs;
- are delivered in a timely, cost-effective and efficient manner; and
- take advantage of opportunities to ensure good value for taxpayers.

Striving to deliver what Albertans need is our first priority. But we can't do this alone. Which brings us back to today...to this moment...and why a forum like this conference is so beneficial.

It helps remind us that we are all in this together...that our end goal is the same—to design and build the best facilities we can...to meet the needs of our families, our fellow Albertans— to leave this province better than we found it.

Thank you all for coming and I look forward to working with you over the coming months and to strengthening our partnerships. My colleagues and I look forward to meeting you over the next two days.

Thank you for being here and enjoy the conference.