



Ed
Stelmach
change that works
for Albertans

platform book

A MESSAGE FROM

PREMIER ED STELMACH

Alberta enjoys unprecedented opportunities. There's global demand for our resources, and we've succeeded in diversifying into many high technology and research based industries. We are the only debt-free jurisdiction in North America, with no sales tax and low personal taxes. There's no doubt our province is doing very well.

The prosperity and quality of life we enjoy today is thanks to the innovation, determination, and hard work of the people of this great province. These good things don't happen by accident.

But with all the benefits from growth, Albertans also feel the impact. A work-life balance is more difficult to achieve. We must make some changes.

Our plan is simple:

- **Building Our Quality of Life**
- **Creating and Protecting Our Opportunities**
- **Greening Our Growth**

In my first year as Premier, we have initiated new policies to address many of Alberta's pressing issues, but I know there is more to be done.

I believe the Progressive Conservative team of women and men will make the changes we need to ensure Alberta always remains the best place in the world to live, to work, and to raise a family. Please take a look at our plan. I hope we will be able to count on your support.

Ed Stelmach



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THE WORK SO FAR

Families and Health

- Increased child care subsidies; increased wages for child care staff; and funded the creation of additional child care spaces
- Started implementing a plan to attract and train health professionals
- Created 845 new training spaces in medicine
- Approved funding for new hospitals in Sherwood Park and Grande Prairie, the Edmonton Clinic and the South Calgary Health Campus
- Approved \$280 million for 832 continuing care beds to alleviate pressure in hospitals and meet the needs of an aging population

Education

- Undertook the single largest schools project in Canada to construct over 22,000 new K-12 student spaces in the next two years, opening 18 new schools in Edmonton and Calgary by September 2010
- Provided funding for the backlog of needed renovations to older schools across Alberta
- Reached an agreement to resolve the teachers' pension plan and prevent strikes for five years
- Developed a toolkit to help kids finish high school; and invested \$4.5 million to help students learn job skills while they attend school
- Created 1000 new spaces for post-secondary students in energy, environment and economy studies
- Created 6000 new apprenticeship seats

In just over one year, the Stelmach government has made many changes that work to improve the lives of Albertans.



Created 845 new training spaces in medicine.

Undertook the single largest schools project in Canada

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Crime

- Introduced an aggressive plan to get tough on criminals, reduce crime and make our communities safer by hiring more police and prosecutors, increasing treatment beds for alcoholism, drug addiction and mental illness, and supporting victims of crime and abuse

Housing

- Developed a plan to end homelessness in Alberta within ten years
- Created an immediate fund of \$285 million to invest in municipal housing projects, help tenants facing unaffordable rent, build and improve affordable housing, and support the homeless

Helping Others

- Increased funding to women's shelters and sexual assault centres
- Increased the tax credit for charitable donations
- Increased monthly benefits for AISH clients from \$1000 to \$1050 per month effective April 1, 2007 with a second increase of 3.6% effective January 1, 2008, bringing the monthly supplement to \$1088. The AISH program helps 36,000 disabled Albertans deal with the cost of living

Labour

- Launched a made-in-Alberta immigration strategy to deal with labour shortages
- Established a *Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Office* and increased the duration of permits

Introduced an aggressive plan to get tough on criminals, reduce crime and make our communities safer.



Developed a plan to end homelessness in Alberta within ten years.

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Environmental Stewardship

- Introduced *Alberta's New Climate Change Plan*—the only realistic and achievable greenhouse gas reduction plan in Canada with a target to reduce emissions by 200 megatons by 2050
- As part of this plan, Alberta became the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate greenhouse gas reductions by large industrial emitters
- Removed the cap on wind power to encourage the development of more renewable wind energy
- Initiated studies on the feasibility of carbon capture and storage as a means of disposing of carbon dioxide
- Provided grants to promote the bio-energy industry

Infrastructure

- Provided \$11.3 billion over ten years to municipalities so they can plan in advance to manage growth by building roads, transit, housing and other infrastructure
- Delivered a 20-year strategic plan to catch up on high priority infrastructure projects, and to provide Albertans with the confidence that needed health, education and post-secondary facilities and transportation systems will anticipate future growth
- Our plan will commit an average of \$6 billion a year to build, maintain and repair the schools, hospitals, highways, urban transit, universities, colleges, parks, and seniors care facilities that our growing population needs

Rural Development

- As part of a \$100 million plan, provided \$18.2 million so far to 21 rural development projects that contribute to the growth and prosperity of rural Alberta—including initiatives such as medical internships in rural Alberta and stewardship of wildlife lands

Alberta became the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate greenhouse gas reductions by large industrial emitters.



Delivered a 20-year strategic plan to catch up on high priority infrastructure projects.

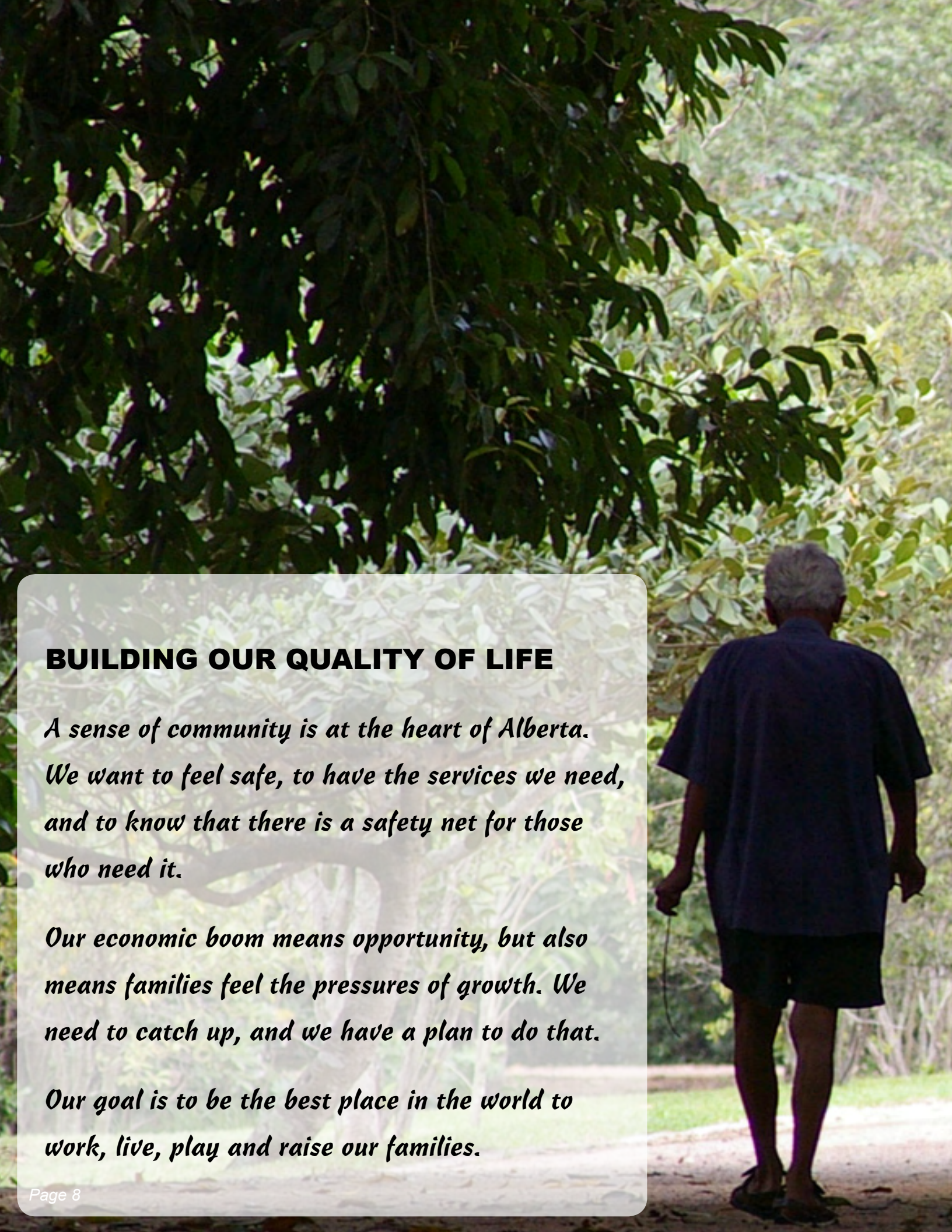
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Long Term Prosperity

- Adjusted the amount of royalties that the oil and gas sector will pay Albertans when oil and gas prices are high because Albertans own the resources
- Committed to increasing the bitumen (oilsands) to be upgraded in Alberta
- Adopted the recommendations of the *Technology Commercialization Task Force*
- Implemented the *Ethane Extraction Policy* to ensure more natural gas is processed into petrochemicals here in Alberta

Provided \$18.2 million so far to 21 rural development projects that contribute to the growth and prosperity of rural Alberta.

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A photograph of a person with grey hair, wearing a dark blue short-sleeved shirt and dark shorts, walking away from the camera on a dirt path. The path is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

BUILDING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

A sense of community is at the heart of Alberta. We want to feel safe, to have the services we need, and to know that there is a safety net for those who need it.

Our economic boom means opportunity, but also means families feel the pressures of growth. We need to catch up, and we have a plan to do that.

Our goal is to be the best place in the world to work, live, play and raise our families.

Our Plan

Health Care

Waiting lists and delays in seeing a health care professional are due to labour shortages in the health services field. In addition to steps already taken, we will:

- Create 225 new physician training spaces over the next four years
- Increase the number of annual Registered Nurse graduates from 1,650 to 2,000 by spring 2012, an increase of 350 new RNs per year
- Increase the number of annual Licensed Practical Nurse graduates from 780 to 1,000 annually by 2012, an increase of 220 new LPNs per year
- Recruit qualified foreign-trained health care workers
- Pilot *Health Care High Schools* in Calgary and Edmonton to help students prepare for a health services career
- Build world class facilities that attract high caliber researchers, practitioners, technicians and nurses from around the world

Families

The Alberta Health Care Premium is a burden on families, small businesses, municipalities and self-employed Albertans. We will:

- Phase out the *Alberta Health Care Premium*, saving individuals \$528/year and families \$1056/year

Recruit and train more nurses and doctors.



Phase out the Alberta Health Care Premium, saving individuals \$528/year and families \$1056/year.

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Caring for our families is so important, but getting more and more expensive. Government can't and shouldn't carry the full cost, but can help. We will:

- Support the creation of 14,000 new child care spaces by 2011 and another 4,000 spaces by 2016 to meet the projected needs of Alberta families
- Help families caring for dependent members by increasing the tax credit by \$5,000 (from \$4,355 to \$9,355) for caregiver, infirm dependent and disability supplements; and by \$5,000 (from \$7,466 to \$12,466) for the disability amount
- Increase the income threshold for caregiver amounts by \$5,000 (from \$19,229 to \$24,229) and for infirm dependent credits (from \$10,535 to \$15,535) so that more families can receive the assistance
- Increase the family employment tax credit for low income families and single parents with children by 10%; and increase the income level at which families qualify for the credit by \$5,000. This means that families with an income of \$31,392 or less will receive \$639 (one child), \$1219 (two children), \$1569 (three children) or \$1685 (four or more children) to help with child care costs
- Help family support agencies deal with labour shortages by working with them on recruitment and retention plans

K-12 Education

Alberta's most valuable resource is people. And our future prosperity depends on having the best possible education system. An Ed Stelmach government will:

- Add 12,190 new elementary school spaces by building 18 new schools in Edmonton and Calgary in the next two years
- Add more than 10,000 new middle and high school spaces by using innovative financing approaches to accelerate school construction
- Implement strategies to improve high school completion rates

Support the creation of 14,000 new child care spaces by 2011 and another 4,000 spaces by 2016.



Add 12,190 elementary school spaces and 10,000 new middle and high schools spaces.

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Post Secondary Education

We know that the most important barriers to a post-secondary education are affordability, available spaces, and accessible housing. We will:

- Extend the commitment to limit annual tuition increases to the rate of inflation, saving a current four-year undergraduate student more than \$3800
- Provide post-secondary institutions with an additional \$136 million over the next three years to make up for lower tuition revenue
- Expand the number of spaces in post-secondary facilities
- Assist with affordable housing and student residences, including making public land available for housing
- Lower the interest rate on student loans to prime (from prime plus 2.5%)
- Help students cope with the cost of living by increasing student loan living allowances, increasing student loan limits, and continuing to enhance student finance programs

Affordable Housing and Homelessness

A roof over our heads is a fundamental necessity, but our boom has resulted in more demand than supply. We need to catch up. We will:

- Support the new *Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness* to ensure that within ten years, all Albertans facing homelessness will have access to safe and affordable housing or shelter
- Develop over 11,000 units of affordable housing over the next five years including funds allocated to municipal housing projects
- Continue to fund programs to help tenants faced with unaffordable rents
- Limit rent increases to once per year

Limit tuition increases, lower the rate on student loans, increase living allowances and loan limits, and assist with student housing.



Develop over 11,000 units of affordable housing.

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Crime

We want to feel safe in our communities, but crime related to drugs, child exploitation and gangs hurts all Albertans. We will:

Target criminals

- Assist municipalities to hire more police officers
- Support recruitment and retention of existing police officers by addressing working conditions and safety issues
- Get tougher on repeat offenders, the 15% who commit 60% of the crimes
- Coordinate a Western Provinces initiative to target gangs and organized crime
- Give police the tools to swiftly deal with known drug houses
- Speed up the process by hiring more prosecutors and provincial judges
- Increase the number of Drug Treatment and Mental Health specialized courts
- Adopt a *Safe Neighbourhoods Act* to expand the powers of municipalities to tackle crime and improve safety in their communities

Protect our children

- Broaden police tools to catch criminals who exploit children through the internet
- Protect children from drug and sexual exploitation in and around schools with toughened penalties

Help those who need help

- Get to some of the root causes of crime by increasing access to treatment for drug addictions and mental health services

Get tougher on repeat offenders, the 15% who commit 60% of the crimes.



Broaden police tools to catch criminals who exploit children through the internet.

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- Address family violence and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Give more support to front line agencies that provide shelter and protection for victims, and that support abused children, spouses and elders

Seniors

It's just good sense to help seniors live in their own homes and communities as long as possible and to have the facilities to help them remain active. We will:

- Extend the freeze on the education portion of seniors' property taxes so that those taxes remain at 2004 levels, helping seniors remain in their own homes
- Make more public lands available for affordable housing for seniors
- Support affordable assisted living facilities in mature neighbourhoods so seniors can maintain their social networks
- Implement a plan for long-term care, acute care and palliative care including construction of modernized facilities

Disabled Albertans

Clients receiving income assistance often say they are proud to work and it gives them a higher sense of worth and self esteem when they are successful in the workforce. We will encourage that initiative for those who wish to do so. We will:

- Increase the amount that can be earned by AISH and Income Support recipients without affecting their benefits from \$1,000 to \$1,500 monthly

**Extend the freeze
on the education
portion of seniors'
property taxes.**



**Implement a plan
for long-term care,
acute care and
palliative care.**

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Charitable Giving

Albertans are proud to build their own communities through their volunteer work and charitable giving. An Ed Stelmach government will:

- Continue to encourage Albertans to make charitable donations through the highest tax credits in Canada
- Implement the *Community Spirit Program* to match a portion of Albertans' charitable giving to help local services
- Assist volunteer agencies with the task of providing security clearance for volunteers in the not-for-profit sector

Arts and Culture

In his first year as Premier, Ed Stelmach provided an additional \$9.1 million to fine arts and cultural foundations. Quality of life is more than low taxes and good services. Our children must experience the cultural and recreational wonders of Alberta. We will:

- Create a Premier's Advisory Council on Arts and Culture
- Provide \$10 million in new and stable funding to the arts
- Support the redevelopment of the Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton
- Support the expansion of the Telus World of Science in Calgary
- Support an Alberta bid for the National Portrait Gallery

**Match a portion
of Albertans'
charitable giving
to help local
services.**



**Provide \$10
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the arts.**

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A photograph of a group of young people, likely students, working at computers in a classroom or office setting. They are seated at long wooden tables, each with a computer monitor and keyboard. The people are focused on their work, with some looking at the screens and others typing. The room has a modern feel with orange chairs and multiple computer setups.

CREATING AND PROTECTING OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Alberta is often thought of as Canada's energy province. While true, Alberta's economy is diverse and expanding with new products and services—thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of Albertans.

With proper strategic investment and a supportive business climate, we can continue to diversify our economy and become leaders in areas such as clean energy technology, biofuels, medical technology, nanotechnology and environmental practices. A Stelmach government will continue to protect our business advantages, including low business and personal taxes.

Our Plan

Value-Added

Value-added means upgrading Alberta's raw resources into commercial products, and doing it here at home. We will:

- Introduce a 10% *Scientific Research and Experimental Development* tax credit
- Create the *Premier's Economic Strategy Council* to advise on long-term strategy for science, technology and innovation
- Strive to be a world leading destination for value-added commercial technology applications in alternative energy, agriculture, medical research, Information Communication Technology, nanotechnology, and life sciences
- Encourage the growth of venture capital in Alberta
- Ensure R&D funded by Alberta taxpayers is commercialized in Alberta

Clean Energy

This is an emerging industry in which Alberta can excel. We will:

- Increase investment in clean energy technologies and value-added energy technologies
- Establish an innovation and venture capital funding tool to incubate and accelerate emerging environmental technologies
- Ensure emissions regulations inspire new technologies that reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and sell this technology to countries like China and India

**Introduce a
10% Scientific
Research and
Experimental
Development tax
credit.**



**Ensure emissions
regulations inspire
new technologies
that reduce
carbon dioxide
emissions.**

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Labour Strategy

Alberta's boom means we need qualified workers. The Stelmach government will:

- Properly accredit immigrants in their professions or occupations
- Provide loans to upgrade immigrants' skills to achieve accreditation
- Recruit immigrants with the specific skills required in our labour market
- Speed up the process of getting foreign workers in place
- Implement an Aboriginal and Metis skills, training and labour force development strategy
- Provide incentives to bring more Albertans into the workplace including seniors, the disabled, and parents who need child care in order to work

Infrastructure

Alberta's population is growing and changing. The Stelmach government has already invested \$18 billion in a three-year plan to catch up with current building backlogs; and made a 10-year agreement with municipalities to provide another \$11.3 billion for municipal priorities such as transit, streets, wastewater and recreation. A 20-year strategic building plan will ensure that our growth and prosperity is sustainable over the long term. That plan will target:

- Schools
- Highways
- Health Facilities
- Housing
- Post-Secondary Institutions
- Community Facilities
- Water and Wastewater Management

Provide incentives to bring more Albertans into the workplace.



A 20-year strategic building plan will ensure that our growth and prosperity is sustainable over the long term.

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Small Business

Our low tax environment and labour force strategies will help small businesses thrive. However, small businesses face regulatory burdens. We will:

- Ensure that regulations achieve their purpose with a reasonable cost of compliance to both government and business
- Routinely examine all regulations, revising or eliminating those that are no longer relevant or effective
- Introduce a sunset clause on all new regulations to ensure they remain effective
- Make information on regulatory requirements more easily accessible
- Work with the federal government to reduce regulatory overlap

Agriculture and Rural Alberta

Agriculture and life in rural Alberta are closely linked. It's a way of life, and one we need to support in a changing world. We will:

- Continue to support the \$100 million *Rural Alberta Development Fund* which has so far provided funding to 21 rural development projects
- Continue to support the E-Campus initiative which provides on-line certificate, degree and diploma programs, because we know that students who learn close to home are more likely to make their careers there
- Diversify the agriculture industry into new markets and products, in conjunction with our value-added strategy, including our bioenergy industry (ethanol, bio-diesel, and bio-gas)
- Eliminate unnecessary regulation to reduce costs to the producer

Introduce a sunset clause on all new regulations to ensure they remain effective.



Diversify the agriculture industry into new markets and products, in conjunction with our value-added strategy.

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Forestry

Several factors have given the forest industry tremendous challenges, but we believe the industry is well positioned to recover and thrive. We will:

- Improve the forest industry's competitiveness by:
 - Determining ways to attract greater investment
 - Promoting innovation
 - Clearly defining roles and responsibilities for government and industry
 - Reevaluating current fees and cost structures
- Create more opportunities for the forest industry by developing value-added products in bioenergy and biofuels, and in carbon offsets

Create more opportunities for the forest industry by developing value-added products.

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GREENING OUR GROWTH

Albertans value the quality and beauty of our water, air, soil, wildlife and natural landscape. People who can live and work anywhere in the world will choose to live in a clean and beautiful environment. It is an asset for our tourism industries; and it is an opportunity to be leaders in growing environmental industries.

We believe in a vision that takes bold action to balance development with a strong environmental ethic to ensure that our natural heritage is passed on to future generations.

Our Plan

Water

In 2003, the Water for Life strategy was developed to get ahead of the increasing demands on the province's water supply. The Stelmach government is committed to the Water for Life plan. We will:

- Expand beyond conservation to water storage, connected use of ground and surface water, and water re-use
- Develop a long range plan to maintain and upgrade aging water treatment facilities
- Introduce incentives to industry to invest in research and in more efficient options for commercial water use

Land

More and more people are doing more and more things on the same pieces of land. We need to make the right choices now to reduce conflicts and protect our open spaces. We will

- Implement a *Land Use Framework* to look at the cumulative impact of activities, and integrate land management with air and water policies
- Sell surplus public land in urban areas, and use the funds to purchase non-urban lands for conservation and stewardship
- Renew our commitments to Alberta's provincial parks
- Help the *Capital Region River Valley Alliance* create the largest urban park in North America along the North Saskatchewan River
- Establish the Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park between Calgary and Cochrane

Expand beyond conservation to water storage, connected use of ground and surface water, and water re-use.



Sell surplus public land in urban areas, and use the funds to purchase non-urban lands for conservation and stewardship.

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- Protect Alberta's Eastern Slopes, giving priority to watershed and recreational uses

Air

Alberta is the first jurisdiction in North America to legislate greenhouse gas reductions. Our economic prosperity is closely tied to the energy industry, so we must focus on balanced growth and on becoming a recognized global leader in clean energy production. We can do that. We will:

- Establish an *Energy Efficiency Act* which will:
 - Provide incentives to homeowners and small businesses who renovate to utilize renewable energy sources; or who replace appliances with energy efficient models
 - Mandate efficiency standards in new home and commercial building codes
 - Provide standards and support for community projects that improve energy efficiency and use renewable energy
 - Mandate energy efficiency standards for government buildings
- Invest the \$155 million from the *Canada ecoTrust* program to fund clean energy projects and carbon capture and storage
- Reinvest the funds in the *Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund* to test and implement new technologies to reduce emissions
- Remove barriers and consider incentives to expand the use of renewable energy sources including wind power and new bio-energy products

**Protect Alberta's
Eastern Slopes,
giving priority to
watershed and
recreational uses.**



**Establish an
Energy Efficiency
Act.**

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Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

CCS is about capturing carbon dioxide that would normally go up the stack, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We will:

- Establish a team of scientists, industry and government to determine policies and regulations for the safe and effective use of carbon capture technology
- Propose incentives and tools to ensure Alberta industry maintains a leadership role in CCS
- Support research and demonstration projects on CO² capture and storage
- Explore opportunities to store carbon in agricultural soils (growing carbon)

CCS is about capturing carbon dioxide that would normally go up the stack.

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