

# oil sands sustainable development secretariat

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This E-bulletin has been sent to you and other oil sands stakeholders by the Government of Alberta's Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat to keep you up to date on the government's work in the oil sands regions of Alberta.

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# Progress Update

## Government acts in response to oil sands recommendations

*An update on the Government of Alberta's progress responding to the recommendations of the oil sands consultations and the work yet to be done.*

Over the past several months, the Alberta government's Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat has travelled thousands of kilometers to meet with stakeholders.

They have visited Bonnyville, Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, Calgary, Peace River, and Barrhead, and made presentations to groups like the Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Peace Oil Sands Synergy Group, to name just a few. It is part of the journey to reach their final destination — a long-term strategic plan to create responsible development that addresses the social, environmental and economic impacts of oil sands development.

The Secretariat is working with 16 government departments on the draft long-term strategic plan for Alberta's oil sands. It builds on the recommendations of the Radke Report — *Investing in our Future: Responding to the Rapid Growth of Oil Sands Development*, as well as the *Multistakeholder Committee Final Report* and the *Aboriginal Consultation Final Report*, and will be the basis of the government's new approach to managing this important resource.

Key objectives and outcomes of the strategic plan include:

- assisting in understanding and realizing the benefits of oil sands development for Alberta given that oil sands production is a significant driver of the economy;
- illustrating a provincial policy approach that manages oil sands resources through an

integrated and coordinated process across all levels of government and a broad base of stakeholders;

- utilizing and building upon relevant existing policies, programs and initiatives from various Government of Alberta departments with a focus on high growth areas and informing new policies, programs or initiatives where gaps are identified; and
- ensuring an effective, intergovernmental communication strategy is in place to inform and engage stakeholders and address local, national and international issues.

It is anticipated that the draft strategic plan will be completed by the fall of 2008. Following this, an implementation plan will be developed.

In addition to the draft plan, the Government of Alberta will continue to collaborate with stakeholders, including those from oil sands communities and non-government organizations and industry to reach their goals. Some initial achievements include:

- The Government of Alberta has invested almost \$1 billion to address gaps in infrastructure and government services in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.
- The Government of Alberta signed a historic agreement with First Nations, outlining a process for government-to-government relations.
- The Land-use Framework is in its final stages of development and creation of regional plans that encompass the three oil sands regions will begin shortly.

And the government has announced a Community Development Plan for Fort McMurray. With this announcement, the government has now responded to every recommendation of *Investing in our Future*. More information on the Community Development Plan is included on the following page.

# Community Development Plan

## Province begins development of two new communities in Fort McMurray *Partnerships key to providing housing and community facilities for 40,000 Albertans*

The province has started the process to develop two new communities for Fort McMurray, complete with new homes and community facilities.

The Alberta government is working with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and various local groups to develop serviced lots for residential, commercial and community uses in the northwest community of Parsons Creek and southeast Saline Creek Plateau. Once completed, the developments are intended to house approximately 40,000 people in thousands of new homes on 4000 acres of land. The communities will be complemented by schools, health clinics, recreational facilities, parks and other community services.

“This is a world-scale project that will benefit from the continued cooperation and participation of many stakeholders,” said Treasury Board President Lloyd Snelgrove. “A project of this magnitude is a significant undertaking with the end result creating neighbourhoods where people will have homes to raise their families and opportunities to contribute to their community and the province.”

The government is issuing a request for Expression of Interest for a world-scale public-private partnership as an innovative approach to provide a “master planned” community for Saline Creek Plateau. The government is seeking solutions that will generate reasonably priced, serviced lots for residential and commercial use and address the needs for essential community services as quickly and efficiently as possible. It will also look for community designs that are environmentally friendly with respect to land, water and energy use.

One of the key initiatives for the Parsons Creek

development is the creation of a community development board. The board will represent the Government of Alberta, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and various local stakeholders in managing construction in Parsons Creek. Under the proposed model the community will be developed in a traditional method, and revenue from the development will be used to reinvest in social needs for the community such as affordable housing.

“Developing this land is the first step in creating new communities that Albertans can call home, and where they can raise their families,” said Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Yvonne Fritz. “I especially look forward to the affordable housing that will be built here, and all of the services and amenities that will form part of a vibrant Fort McMurray.”

The development of these communities responds to the Radke Report, *Investing In Our Future: Responding to the Rapid Growth of Oil Sands Development* and will form part of the long-term strategic plan for the oil sands being developed by the province.

Additional information about the community development board and project details will be available as the work unfolds. Construction is currently anticipated to be completed in phases with the first housing expected to be available in 2010.

See the full news release and backgrounder at: [www.oilsands.alberta.ca](http://www.oilsands.alberta.ca)

## First Nations and Métis Agreements

### New agreements formalize relations between Alberta government, Alberta First Nations and Métis people

Premier Ed Stelmach, Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and the Grand Chiefs and Vice Chiefs of Treaty 6, 7 and 8 have signed a historic Protocol Agreement on Government to Government Relations between Alberta First Nations and the Government of Alberta.

This protocol furthers Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework (APF) which envisioned that the Government of Alberta will work with First Nations on a government-to-government basis. The APF also provides that Alberta will work with First Nations through mutually negotiated and signed agreements, protocols, memoranda and understandings. These provisions recognize the importance to First Nations leaders of establishing relations directly with elected provincial representatives.

The Protocol Agreement provides a commitment that Grand Chiefs will meet with the Premier once a year, and twice a year with Ministers responsible for consultation with First Nations regarding land and resource development. It also creates the possibility of other Ministers agreeing to similar meetings and processes.

This agreement provides an overall provincial policy approach to First Nations relations and represents all 47 First Nations - more than 100,000 people across Alberta. Previous agreements, including those signed in 1993 and 1995, did not represent all First Nations in Alberta.

Another new agreement aims to increase economic and social well-being of Métis people.

The Government of Alberta and the Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) have signed a new seven-year agreement to work together towards enhancing the economic and community well-being of Alberta's Métis people.

Highlights of this new Framework Agreement include a commitment for the government and MNAA to work together on:

- developing individual and community readiness to participate in economic opportunities;
- improving Métis education, employment and training;
- strengthening multi-department coordination within the provincial government to address Métis needs;
- improving meaningful input for Métis into public policy development; and

- improving Métis access to provincial services including health and education.

To help fulfill the agreement, the province will provide \$1.5 million to the MNAA in 2008-09. Both of the agreements listed above respond to several recommendations regarding building relationships from the *Aboriginal Consultation Final Report* produced as part of oil sands consultations last year. Work on many of the other recommendations from this report is also in progress.

Links to the full news releases can be found at: [www.aboriginal.alberta.ca](http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca)

## Draft Land-use Framework

### Framework charts new direction for planning and decision-making in Alberta

The Alberta government has released a draft framework to improve land-use planning and decision-making in Alberta following 18 months of consultation with stakeholders and the public.

The Draft Land-use Framework is a significant step forward in the evolution of land-use planning in Alberta," said Ted Morton, Sustainable Resource Development Minister. "The purpose of the framework is to manage growth-not stop it. It promotes responsible growth, a future with plentiful opportunities and a healthy environment."

The Northeast Alberta Regional Plan, which encompasses portions of the Athabasca and Cold Lake oil sands regions, is one of four immediate planning priorities. Development of the plan begins this fall. A Regional Advisory Council consisting of representatives of a range of interests in the region, including provincial and municipal governments, industry, non-government groups and Aboriginal communities, will provide advice to the Government of Alberta as it develops the plan.

This regional plan, as well as several others, will assist in implementing the direction contained within the long-term strategic plan for the oil sands.

More information can be found at: [www.landuse.alberta.ca](http://www.landuse.alberta.ca)