

February 9, 2010

## Alberta Chambers of Commerce appreciates stability in budget

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) welcomes the Stelmach government's measured approach to Budget 2010.

"It's a consistent budget to what we saw last year," says Ken Kobly, ACC's president and CEO. "It shows government is in fact paying attention to what the economy is doing and trying to strike the right balance with spending controls over operating spending. The government also recognizes the need to stimulate the economy through capital spending, which is necessary for when we come out of this economic downturn."

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce is a federation of 124 chambers, which collectively represent 22,000 businesses. With Alberta business providing vital economic stability for communities during the recession, ACC has been seeking funding stability for municipalities as a key to a quick and sustained economic recovery. As such, Kobly is pleased the Stelmach government plans to honour its commitment to the Municipal Sustainability Initiative, albeit over a slightly longer period than initially planned.

He is also pleased the government has retained its commitment to invest in infrastructure, as the \$7 billion in capital spending will ensure Alberta enjoys positive growth when the economy heats up again.

"It makes good sense to build when construction costs are much more reasonable than they are during a period of rapid growth," says Kobly. "It will also place business in a position to harness opportunities that will benefit the whole province."

That the spending controls put in place last year are continuing is another positive measure. Kobly points out the 4.2-per-cent budget increase falls in line with the sum of inflation and population growth, which is a formula ACC has long recommended.

"To be clear, five departments had increases, the largest being health care at 16 per cent, but the balance of the departments saw decreases," says Kobly. "It shows they are evaluating where they are spending the dollars and ensuring they are spending in high priority areas."

- 30 -

For further information, please contact:

Ken Kobly, President and CEO  
Alberta Chambers of Commerce  
780.975.1659