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Chambers seek stability in Budget 2010



Ken Kobly

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC) hopes Budget 2010 will include the following initiatives when Finance Minister Ted Morton releases it on February 9:

Funding stability – Alberta businesses have provided economic stability for communities during this economic downturn, and ACC believes establishing a strong platform for business growth is the key to a quick and sustained economic recovery. To address community needs and prepare for renewed economic growth, the Alberta government must commit to the 10-year Municipal Sustainability Initiative by fulfilling its original funding pledge.

ACC also supports the government's plans for long-term investment in infrastructure, including its decision to raise infrastructure funds by reintroducing Alberta Capital Savings Bonds. ACC hopes this program will let the province proceed with key community projects. Decreasing infrastructure spending at this time would jeopardize our preparedness for our future economic recovery.

Spending controls – ACC was pleased Budget 2009 tied spending to the sum of inflation and population growth. Our federation strongly believes the government should adhere to this formula for all future budgets as the best way to control spending and counter political pressure during better economic periods.

Savings strategy – It's never too late to start saving; and implementing a savings strategy now will generate a stable, alternative revenue stream for future generations of Albertans. ACC recommends a two-pronged savings strategy that includes both budgeted and unbudgeted revenues. This plan recognizes the realities of fluctuating revenue streams and lets the government adapt to them, while at the same time making a firm commitment to saving.

Taxation – ACC is pleased with Premier Ed Stelmach's steadfast refusal to raise existing taxes or introduce new ones. As previously noted, businesses have provided vital stability to Alberta communities during this period of economic flux. Premier Stelmach clearly recognizes the value a healthy business sector offers to all Albertans. The chamber federation always believes that providing tax relief for individuals and businesses is the most effective economic stimulus a government can offer, and we trust the government will reduce taxes when the opportunity presents itself.

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