

## Table of Contents

<b>Advanced Education &amp; Technology</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Agriculture &amp; Food</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Children’s Services</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Education</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Employment, Immigration &amp; Industry</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Energy</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Environment</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Finance (including Pensions/Insurance)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Transportation</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>International, Intergovernmental &amp; Aboriginal Affairs</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Justice &amp; Attorney General</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Municipal Affairs &amp; Housing</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Seniors &amp; Community Supports</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Service Alberta</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Solicitor General &amp; Public Security</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Sustainable Resource Development</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Tourism, Parks, Recreation &amp; Culture</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>*Miscellaneous Government</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>*Election</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Columnists/Editorial &amp; Comment</b> .....	<b>28</b>

## Advanced Education & Technology

## Agriculture & Food

### **Alberta farmers warned about raft of new pipelines that will cross private property**

The Edmonton Journal

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: E3

Section: Business

Byline: Gordon Jaremko

Dateline: EDMONTON

Source: The Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - Farmers were warned Tuesday to expect a wave of pipeline construction across their land to connect new oilsands plants to export markets.

About \$23 billion in projects are planned over the next 12 to 15 years, said David MacInnis, president of the Canadian Energy Pipelines Association.

The new construction will about double industry's total investment in large, long-distance lines represented by CEPA, he told the Wild Rose Agricultural Producers.

The \$23-billion estimate primarily covers additions to oil routes and excludes less certain natural gas plans such as the proposed \$8-billion Mackenzie Valley pipeline, MacInnis added in an interview.

Canada's oil pipelines are almost full and all spare capacity will be gone by 2009, MacInnis said.

Construction is underway on additions to the country's main oil shipping systems, owned by Enbridge Inc. and Kinder Morgan Canada.

Both firms are seeking regulatory approvals and industry support for more projects, primarily to increase deliveries to the United States but also to load Alberta oil into tankers bound for Asia.

TransCanada Corp. is advancing plans to convert part of its international natural gas grid into an oil export line to Chicago, with a project called Keystone.

New oil routes proposed from Edmonton to the Pacific coast of British Columbia are expected to take longer to reach the construction stage, MacInnis said.

"The Canadian and U.S. markets are forecast to use everything Canada can produce," he said.

He called on the National Energy Board and Alberta's Energy Resources Conservation Board to help explain the compensation and environmental rights of private landowners affected by pipeline projects.

Both agencies publish manuals but leave the job of making arrangements for pipeline rights-of-way largely up to firms building the developments.

MacInnis urged rural property owners to make immediate reports of questionable conduct by contract land acquisition agents to the pipeline companies that hire them.

Landowners can also help themselves and improve relations with pipelines by banding together in surface rights associations, MacInnis agreed when questioned by members of the Alberta farm group.

While no major new conflicts surfaced, the farmers said changing agricultural equipment is increasing potential sources of conflict with pipelines.

Increasingly large harvesting machines and vehicles are so heavy that permission has to be sought for them to drive across buried pipelines.

Safety clearances take three to five days to obtain, and are sometimes only given after pipeline engineers visit spots farmers want to drive across to check on ground conditions and the size of the machines.

Work is underway with the NEB on pipeline crossing rules but a standardized safety code is difficult to devise due to widely varying factors such as machinery types and the operating pressures, steel wall thickness and ground cover of pipelines, MacInnis said.

**g Crop insurance will be changing across Alberta**

Cochrane Times

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 20

Section: News

As Cochrane-area farmers turn the page on another calendar year, AFSC expects many will be pleased to hear major changes to crop insurance are being unveiled for 2008.

"Over the last few years, farmers have been asking us to change the way their crop insurance coverage is calculated," says Chris Dyck, manager of program development for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), the provincial Crown corporation that administers crop insurance in Alberta.

"We've consulted with hundreds of farmers province-wide, and they tell us it's too complicated," he said. "One of their biggest complaints is that crop production on neighbouring farms affects how much insurance coverage they receive. Producers want crop insurance based only on what is produced on their own farm -- no one else's.

"We are now announcing a new program for 2008 that answers those concerns for annual crops."

Neighbours, yields will no longer affect coverage

The new program, called Individual Coverage, is quite simple, says Dyck. It takes a producer's average yields for each crop (over a five to 15-year period) and uses that to set their insurance coverage.

"If their yield has been 40 bu/acre for the last 15 years, we will give them coverage based on that number. We no longer factor in the yields of other farmers in their area."

The old system, called Indexed Coverage, was much more complicated, says Dyck. It compared a producer's crop yields to the average yields of farmers in their "Risk Area."

The province is divided into 22 Risk Areas, each spanning dozens of townships.

"So for example, if a farmer produced 10 per cent more than the average yield in their Risk Area, we gave them an index number of 1.1. We then used a complex formula to create a 'normal' long-term yield for each Risk Area and multiplied that number with each farmer's Index."

Old system confusing

"Most farmers find the old indexing system very confusing," explains Dyck. "Many feel it dragged their crop insurance coverage far below actual production levels on their farm. They argue that's because the 'normal' yield in their Risk Area averaged in farmers with poor crop yields."

Airdrie-area farmer Leonard Wright agrees.

"Some farmers pull down the average for the rest of us because farming is no longer their primary source of income. They aren't putting everything into their crop because it's not their livelihood anymore," said Wright.

He says those farmers typically received higher crop insurance coverage than they deserved under the old indexing system, because the yields of full-time farmers propped up the average yields in their Risk Area.

"Coverage should be based on our own production levels, whether they're good or bad," said Wright, who farms 1,200 acres of grain and runs a cow-calf operation.

87% of farmers want change

AFSC has heard similar comments while meeting with producers across the province. Dyck says 87 per cent of those farmers requested Individual Coverage because it links more directly to their own production.

AFSC expects coverage will increase slightly or stay the same on two-thirds of crops insured under Individual Coverage.

No coverage on any crop will drop more than five per cent or increase more than 15 per cent during the first year of transition to the new program, says Dyck.

Higher yields = higher coverage

Ultimately the new system gives producers more control over their own risk, says Risk Management Specialist Ted Darling, with Alberta Agriculture and Food.

"I think farmers will see this as a good move. By personalizing their coverage and making it more responsive to what each farm produces, it encourages producers to adopt the most advanced farming techniques to increase their yields.

They'll be motivated by the fact that higher yields now lead directly to higher coverage, says Darling.

"It can cut both ways, but we all want to be better than average and we want to be treated better than average."

That appeals to Wright who says rural land prices have been driven up by demand for acreages and commercial property in the Airdrie area.

Many producers can only rent land on a year-to-year basis, which often discourages them from making the investment necessary to boost production, explains Wright.

"Using our own yields to set crop insurance coverage will make us farm as productively as we can. If other farmers aren't as productive, it just means they won't enjoy as much coverage as me. That's fair."

Two important features of the old indexing system will remain under Individual Coverage: cushioning and trending.

"Farmers asked us to cushion their yields during natural disasters like drought and hail to reduce the impact on coverage levels," says Dyck.

"If you have a wreck and get a zero yield, we'll replace that zero with 70 per cent of your normal yield to keep your coverage levels stable."

Trending means AFSC will boost the older yields in a farmer's average yield records to account for advances in technology and new seed varieties.

#### Risk Area boundary lines

Producers who farm on two sides of a Risk Area boundary line are looking forward to Individual Coverage, says Dyck.

"Under indexing, some had fields in two different Risk Areas and ended up with two different coverage levels for the same crop. The difference could be 30 bu/acre of coverage on one field, and 40 bu/acre on another field. It all depended on the yields of other farmers in each Risk Area. With Individual Coverage, those boundary lines are no longer an issue."

Farmers who grow a new crop or buy crop insurance for the first time won't get Individual Coverage right away, adds Dyck.

"We don't have yield records for them yet, so we'll start by basing coverage on the normal yields in their township. Each year, we'll blend their new yield records into the formula until we have five years of their records on file. Then we'll set coverage using only their production numbers."

#### Producer meetings in new year

AFSC is putting the final touches on the new program and will post more information on its website at [www.afsc.ca](http://www.afsc.ca) this month.

AFSC staff will hold informal meetings about Individual Coverage for producers who request it once crop insurance renewal packages for 2008 are mailed out. Cochrane-area producers can sign up for a meeting by contacting their local AFSC office.

[jaremko@thejournal.canwest.com](mailto:jaremko@thejournal.canwest.com)

## Children's Services

### **Tarchuk vows to help solve child care shortage**

Banff Crag & Canyon

Tue 08 Jan 2008

Page: 6

Section: News

Byline: BY JUSTIN BRISBANE

Banff-Cochrane MLA Janis Tarchuk vowed to work with local groups to solve the child care shortage in the Bow Valley.

In a wide-ranging interview with The Crag, the Minister of Children's Services said the Ministry will help the communities implement new solutions for child care.

"We know we have a shortage. We have to help communities increase their capacity," Tarchuk said.

Tarchuk said the fastest way to fill the current child care gap is through the creation of more family day homes. Day homes allow individuals to open small child care operations in their homes, and Tarchuk said there have been applications to open 1,000 of such businesses across the province. Day homes are allowed to take care of up to six children at a time, and Tarchuk said she hopes to find 30 in the Bow Valley.

"So far we have found four in Canmore and two in Banff," Tarchuk said.

Philosophically, Tarchuk said providing parents with a choice of child care options has been the government's direction. Instead of creating a broad based child care system, Tarchuk said the government is offering a number of subsidies to parents and child care providers to allow communities to expand child care. Subsidies are available to families, operators and communities having trouble creating child care spaces.

"Every community deals with the needs differently," Tarchuk said.

Across the province, communities have chosen solutions such as building new facilities, partnering with schools or allowing private industry to create new child care spaces.

Tarchuk used the partnership between the Canmore Community Day Care and Wilderness Homes by Riverdale as an example of how the private sector can help the community address its child care needs.

She said the Banff Child Care Centre has been helped through lottery funds and has received its accreditation, which allows its staff to qualify for wage subsidies.

Tarchuk said that day care societies can qualify for the subsidies as long as they are run as not-for-profit operations, regardless if they have private partnerships.

Tarchuk said that the current shortage in child care spaces has more to do with staff shortages than facility problems. She said her ministry has launched a number of programs aimed at helping increase wages for child care workers, including signing bonuses and wage top-ups to the tune of an extra \$4 per hour.

"We have areas where it's not the facility, it's the lack of staff," Tarchuk said.

Tarchuk said a bursary program has been created for child care workers, who can qualify for \$10,000 to increase their training.

By offering bigger cash incentives to staff, the minister believes it will be easier for child care providers to retain workers.

Tarchuk said every community is addressing their child care needs differently across the province.

Tarchuk said the ministry is also attempting to tackle the lack of foster parents in the Bow Valley. Currently, there is only one foster parent in Banff and no foster parents in Canmore.

"There is a drive to push for more foster homes in Banff," Tarchuk said.

Tarchuk said compensation for foster parents in Alberta is pretty competitive when compared against other provinces.

Looking ahead to 2008, Tarchuk said building community capacity and greening growth will be two of the top priorities in the province and the platform the Conservatives will run on if an election is called this spring. She said she's proud of a number of the projects that she has supported in the riding, such as the completion of two new schools in Canmore, the final phase of the Nordic Centre construction and the creation of Glen Bow Ranch Park, which is designed to protect the wildlife corridor between Cochrane and Calgary.

## Education

### **Teachers seek an agreement**

Okotoks Western Wheel

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 4

Section: News

Byline: Bruce Campbell

Source: Okotoks Western Wheel

The Alberta Labour Relations Board has ruled a bargaining consortium of 12 school boards, including Foothills and Christ the Redeemer, cannot force their respective teachers to bargain as one unit.

In its decision of Dec. 20, the board stated the School Board Employers Bargaining Association (SBEBA), could negotiate with each of the division's teachers' negotiating teams one at a time -- with a separate agreement for each of the 12 boards.

The decision opens the door for both the Christ the Redeemer and Foothills divisions to have negotiations completed by the Jan. 31 deadline set by Alberta Education Minister Ron Liepert.

The deadline calls for all 62 boards and their teachers to ratify an agreement that would have the government take over the teachers' portion of paying for the unfunded liability of their pension plan (approximately 3.1 per cent of their salary). As well, teachers would receive a three per cent increase for 2007-08 and for the four following years salary increases would be based on the Alberta Average Weekly Earning Index, similar to MLAs.

Teachers would continue to pay into their pension plans.

The agreement would run until 2012.

Paul Lavery, president of the Christ the Redeemer ATA chapter, said the division's teachers negotiating team is expected to meet with representatives with SBEBA on Jan. 14 in Edmonton. A proposal is expected to be presented to teachers later this month.

"Usually, these types of negotiations are done over several days," Lavery said. "The Province will have a bargaining agent there to help with any problems."

He believes the labour board's decision that the teachers cannot be forced to negotiate as a unit is a correct one.

Lavery said it could create a situation in which the boards are looking for the lowest common denominator in negotiations while the teachers' negotiating team would be seeking the highest common denominator -- there would be little wiggle room for compromise.

He said the result would be "contract stripping" where some teachers would have to give up something in order for teachers from another division to gain something.

Foothills School Division teachers negotiation teams are scheduled to begin negotiations with SBEBA on Jan. 23, according to ATA chapter president Greg Poile.

"We will meet shortly thereafter on whether or not to ratify any proposal," Poile said.

Jim McLellan, Foothills superintendent of schools, said the salary negotiations are a "fait accompli."

However, there are other issues, such as benefits and professional development, that still have to be settled.

He said if need be, the board would call a special meeting in order to ratify an agreement before the Jan. 31 deadline.

## **Employment, Immigration & Industry**

### **Energy**

#### **Gas producers await fate of Alaska pipeline; West At Risk**

National Post

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: FP5

Section: Financial Post

Byline: Jon Harding

Dateline: CALGARY

Source: Financial Post

CALGARY - Almost half the natural-gas pipeline capacity leaving Alberta today for markets across the continent could sit empty by 2018 unless an Alaska pipeline gets built and connects to the Alberta hub, says a new study by the Canadian Energy Research Institute.

Gas producers in the West would face higher tolls, further eroding the economics of West-ern Canada's high-cost natural-gas industry, and pipeline companies would be left operating inefficient pipelines, said the study's author, Peter Howard.

"All things being equal, if the flows in the pipelines continued to decline then at some point in time it would be a concern for the pipeline companies, and for the producers indirectly," said Mr. Howard, a senior research director with the Calgary-based energy research group.

However, Mr. Howard said such a scenario would likely have little impact on consumers in Ontario, California and other end points of the five main pipeline fingers that leave Alberta. Demand for gas at those points would end up being met by sources from out-side Western Canada, he said.

The five pipeline systems leaving Alberta today, the largest of which is owned by TransCanada Corp., have a daily export capacity of 14.98 billion cubic feet. Their average utilization in 2005 was 83% but CERI's study says utilization could decline to 74% by 2012 and to 58% by 2018.

Unused takeaway capacity would increase from 2.5 billion cubic feet in 2005 to 3.5 billion in 2012 and to almost 7 billion cubic feet a day by 2018, Mr. Howard said.

New gas supplies from coal-bed methane development, liquefied natural-gas imports from the British Columbia coast and even the Mackenzie Gas Project from Canada's Arctic will not be enough to offset declines in Western Canada's conventional production.

As well, CERI predicts demand for natural gas within Alberta from the oilsands industry could rise from one billion cubic feet a day today to 6 billion cubic feet a day, compounding the dearth of gas available for export.

The Alaska pipeline, a US\$26-billion project that TransCanada Corp. hopes to build and whose plan was endorsed last week by the Alaska government, would move between 4.5 billion cubic feet and 6 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day between Alaska's North Slope and Boundary Lake, Alta., where it would feed into the existing Alberta system.

The CERI study makes a strong case that the most efficient and least expensive way for Alaska North Slope's 35 trillion cubic feet of stranded gas to reach markets across North America is through Alberta and beyond within TransCanada's system.

The CERI study says transporting Alaska gas beyond Alberta to Chicago through TransCanada's existing systems would require about \$1.8-billion worth of new pipe and compression and the average transportation tariff would be \$1.30 per thousand cubic feet.

It projected that moving Alaska gas to Chicago through Alberta and beyond on the Alliance system--a TransCanada competitor -- would require an almost \$14-billion investment and the combined average tariff would be \$1.61 per thousand cubic foot.

## Environment

### **Pollutant clunkers put Alberta in a bind**

The Calgary Herald

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: A5

Section: News

Byline: Tony Seskus

Source: Calgary Herald

A new study blaming a minority of cars and trucks for causing the majority of pollution on Alberta roads is fuelling more debate over what the province should do about getting old clunkers off the road.

The report, commissioned by the Clean Air Strategic Alliance, measured the emissions of 66,002 light-duty vehicles and found 20 per cent of those cars and trucks were responsible for 80 per cent of the emissions for four smog-making pollutants.

The pollutants include hydrocarbons, smoke, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide.

"This study supports the accelerated removal or repair of those gross-emitting vehicles," said Gerry Ertel, co-chair of the project team for CASA, a group of government, industry and non-governmental organizations focusing on air quality.

"Typically, a gross-emitting vehicle is an older vehicle simply because the emissions control system does degrade over time."

The report found less than two per cent of the vehicles built since 1996 were rated as "gross emitters" -- those cars and trucks that release more than five times the pollutants they did when they were new. The study results been forwarded to Alberta Environment.

CASA identified a handful of options for the government to consider, including laws that prevent tampering with pollution-control devices and incentives for sending the worst, smog-producing vehicles to the scrap yard.

The group also floated the idea of a hotline for pollution-spewing vehicles. Using emissions-sensing devices that flag badly polluting vehicles was also noted -- a tactic employed in U.S. cities where drivers must maintain efficiency standards.

"We are looking forward to reviewing options to address emissions around older vehicles," Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner said in a statement Tuesday.

Ertel said CASA wasn't singling out any particular strategy, adding the province may look at others.

tseskus@theherald.canwest.com

**Honesty missing in Canada's green policy; Governments loathe to tell Canadians the truth: If we want to cut emissions, we must accept either a carbon tax or a mandatory cap**

The Edmonton Journal

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: A11

Section: Ideas

Byline: Mark Jaccard

Source: Freelance

Perhaps climate policy is not a uniquely challenging policy arena, but it sure seemed that way as I followed the reactions, through the media, to this week's report of Canada's national roundtable on the environment and the economy - an advisory panel to the federal government.

The panelists and staff of the roundtable worked hard to reduce a complex report to a single, simple message, even getting help from professional writers to ensure clear communication.

Yet, depending on their media source, Canadians could have reached diametrically opposite views on what the report actually said. (While I am a member of the roundtable, the views expressed here are my own. To read the report, go to [www.nrtee-trnee.org](http://www.nrtee-trnee.org).)

The simple message of the report? Our climate policies have failed for two decades and will continue to fail if they allow free emissions of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere. If today, or in 10 years, I can buy a backyard patio heater, and not have to pay anything for some of the emissions during its production, distribution or operation, Canadian greenhouse gas emissions will continue to rise.

To fall, emissions have to be constrained by prices (like a carbon tax) or regulations (like a cap and trade system), but even these latter involve a cost on my emissions.

Because most of our politicians and many media commentators have not had the courage to tell Canadians this inconvenient truth, we continue on a policy path that is bound to fail. The roundtable's report does not indicate that its members, many from the corporate sector, suddenly love taxes and regulations. But it does indicate that its members believe in telling Canadians the truth: If we want to address the climate risk as part of a global success story, we cannot leave the atmosphere as a free dumping ground.

What policies will not work? After Jean Chretien signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, he committed Canadians to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions while also promising that there would be no carbon taxes (read, no charge on the atmosphere). Instead, he intensified the existing subsidy and information policy approach that had already failed for a decade, starting with Brian Mulroney's Green Plan of 1990. Our politicians have continued with this failing approach for another decade.

Subsidies will not work because, by leaving the atmosphere free, they can never keep up with the marketing of new emitting devices, like backyard patio heaters. Experts and policy advisers around the world agree on this.

What policies are essential? A carbon tax starts as a small, but gradually rising tax on fossil fuels like natural gas and gasoline. The money is used to reduce other taxes.

So politicians should be now discussing with Canadians which taxes they would most like to see decreased. Economists agree that a carbon tax is more economically efficient than regulations, so politicians who oppose carbon taxes should also be explaining to Canadians why they oppose economic growth.

If our politicians don't care about economic growth, they could instead opt for a regulated cap with tradable permits. If the cap is absolute, and applies to all emissions in the economy, it can be almost as efficient and effective as carbon taxes.

Finally, we can regulate the carbon content of fuels and electricity or the technologies we allow to power our vehicles and furnish our buildings. This approach is more costly and requires more bureaucracy, which an honest politician would tell Canadians.

How would these policies affect Canadians? Shifting our economy to low- and zero-emission technologies is a multi-decade endeavour that starts with modest "atmosphere valuing signals" but assures people that the effort will be sustained and intensified. This gives people the necessary time to shift their technology choices when it makes sense for them.

A carbon tax will be modest in this decade, having little effect on the price of gasoline. But our children and grandchildren will feel the bite if they still insist on purchasing gasoline-guzzling vehicles even though low- and zero-emission alternatives will have been readily available for decades at reasonable costs -- plug-in hybrid vehicles and battery electric vehicles that recharge from the grid, ethanol and biofuel vehicles, and perhaps hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

The more one works in the area of climate policy -- seeing what has clearly failed in the past and what works with other environmental goals, like reducing acid emissions -- the more it is obvious that Canadians need politicians who are not afraid to give us the straight goods. So far, we do not have that.

Neither the federal Conservatives, nor the Liberals before them, have been willing to tell Canadians that if they want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, if they believe that markets are better than more bureaucracy, and if they also favour economic growth, then they should opt for market-based policy that values the atmosphere. No other approach will do this.

Unfortunately, the policy proposals of the Conservatives last year -- which were never implemented -- were not much improvement over those of the Liberals before them. They proposed to regulate industry (only by emission intensity rather than absolute level) and to exempt emissions from the rest of the economy. As a typical Canadian consumer, I would still be able to buy a backyard patio heater and treat the atmosphere like a free waste receptacle.

If our policies continue like this, we can be sure that Canadian emissions will continue to climb. That is the key message from the policy proposals of the roundtable.

Mark Jaccard is professor of resource and environmental management at Simon Fraser University.

His book, *Hot Air: Meeting Canada's Climate Change Challenge*, is co-authored with Jeffrey Simpson and Nic Rivers

## Finance (including Pensions/Insurance)

### **No end to naked numbers; Long list of provincial spending doesn't include explanations, taxpayers federation charges**

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 7

Section: News

Byline: BY JEREMY LOOME, LEGISLATURE BUREAU

Millions of dollars in grants to sports organizations, country clubs, hockey clubs, private companies and a fish farm all show the Alberta government is nickel and diming the public to death, says a spending watchdog.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation's Scott Hennig was reacting to the release of the government's 2007 Blue Books on Monday, a 1,000 page line-by-line account of all capital spending and operating grants.

The list, although online for the first time, is virtually useless to the public, said Hennig.

Unlike its federal counterpart, the government doesn't link the list to explanations of why spending was necessary.

If it did, the government may explain why it gave \$47,000 to a pond hockey association, one of 22 hockey clubs that got grants. It also gave grants to 35 different golf and country clubs, with all but a couple in rural Alberta.

If entertainment is your area, Hennig suggests, the public can ask why Alien Girl Films Ltd. needed \$250,000 of Alberta taxpayers' money, one of at least nine film companies that divided over \$1.2 million. Another 32 "production" companies spent millions more.

If their explanation seems fishy, Hennig would suggest asking why \$45,000 in public money went to a privately operated trout farm.

And those are just from the first half of the alphabetical listing's 'A' section. Nearly 70 grants went to unidentified numbered companies.

"I don't think the public has any clue as to how much the government spends and on what," said Hennig. "In fact, the number one question we get when the taxpayers federation is out and about the province is "where is all the money actually going?"

"And no one knows from reading the blue book, because it doesn't say. It either has a name or a numbered company, and a dollar figure, and that's it."

In one respect, the government may be harming its reputation by leaving those who read the blue book with the impression all the grants were direct handouts, he noted. In fact, many were probably an organization's share from a gambling-based fundraiser.

But according to Treasury Board spokesman Gerald Kastendieck, the lists represent a step forward.

"This is the first time we've posted online and we're working on collecting enough information to make it quarterly. Then we can see what more we can do from there," he said. "The other option people have is that they can call the department that issued the grants and speak to them directly, and they can tell them a little more."

Liberal critic Hugh MacDonald said if the public wants to know how the province can go through so much money, they should be able to find out without trolling through hundreds of pages.

"The government would be wise to look at how Peter Lougheed's government did it, because it provided the public with far more details on government expenditure than this lot," he said. "It's why we spend so much time using the access to information process to try to get details."

The Liberals requested the blue books go online two years ago and were told no, he said.

"The devil is in the details and we need the details. Because since Mr. Stelmach took over, spending has increased 16%. No amount of tax money is a small amount and whether it's a contract or a grant, taxpayers have a right to know all the details of not only the amount but why it was needed."

### **Province's lunch tab nearly \$2,000 a day; Government picked up check for more than \$700,000 in catering in 2006**

The Edmonton Journal

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: A1 / FRONT

Section: News

Byline: Darcy Henton

Dateline: EDMONTON

Source: The Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - The Alberta government spent more than \$700,000 -- or nearly \$2,000 per day -- in 2006 to provide sandwiches and treats for meetings involving its staff and often "stakeholders."

Alberta Environment had one of the largest appetites of all ministries, gobbling up more than \$82,000 worth of sandwiches, according to the public accounts of expenditures for the fiscal year.

A spokesman said the department orders food when "hosting meetings and staff meetings with stakeholders and the like."

Alberta Education spokesman Terrence Harding, whose department spent more than \$50,000 on catering, said it's a necessary expense.

One of the issues for Alberta Education is to build and maintain relationships with teachers and school board trustees and food is served at most gatherings because they are often held over the noon hour or after regular working hours, he said.

"We have to feed them or provide some kind of refreshments for them, and there's quite a number of meetings over the course of the year."

Since many "stakeholders" are from out of town, the government would be on the hook for their meals regardless, he said.

"It's a better use of time and resources to provide some kind of nourishment while they're here."

But Liberal critic Hugh MacDonald, who chairs the all-party public accounts committee, says the amount spent on lunches for bureaucrats looks bad when some schoolchildren go hungry.

"Certainly if we can afford that kind of money for lunch, I cannot understand why we're so reluctant to fund school lunch programs where they're needed," he said Tuesday. "I don't know how we can say no to school lunch programs when we see fit to spend that kind of money to feed ourselves."

Sheila Rich of Upper Crust Caterers says the provincial government and University of Alberta make up about two-thirds of her business, while private companies such as law and accounting offices and software companies make up the rest.

For the second straight year, the company she started 25 years ago garnered the most Alberta government business -- about \$145,000 in 2006 -- according to the public accounts.

Her biggest government customer was Alberta Environment, which spent \$36,000, but she delivered sandwiches to 21 different departments for meetings of between four and 25 people.

"I know a lot of people feel the money the government spends is excessive, but I make no judgment on that," Rich said. "I have a daughter who works for the government and she works pretty darn hard. I certainly don't see much waste."

While her menu offers a variety of gourmet dishes, Rich said the department officials she deals with are pretty cost-conscious, and she primarily provides basic sandwiches.

"I am pretty careful about taxpayers' money myself. They are conservative spenders," she said.

"As to whether anybody should have lunch on the taxpayers' money, that's not for me to decide. It's a free lunch, but I think it means they have to stay and work."

dhenton@thejournal.canwest.com

## LUNCH MONEY

Here are the caterers used most commonly by the provincial government:

- Upper Crust Caterers: \$144,867
- Sunterra Quality Food: \$129,116
- Mercers Fine Foods: \$84,621
- A Cappella Catering: \$79,756

- Quick Bite Catering: \$38,505

- Peppercorn Deli: \$32,356

Source: Government of Alberta

## Health & Wellness

### **Doorway smokers can breathe easier -- for now**

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 2

Section: News

Byline: BY DANIEL MACISAAC, SUN MEDIA

Edmonton's doorway smokers may have a little more breathing room before newly enacted legislation sees them slapped with \$250 fines for lighting up within five metres of public doorways, windows or air intakes.

The province's new Tobacco Reduction Act came into effect Jan. 1 partly in an effort to create a level playing field among the various, existing

municipal bylaws.

"It supersedes the bylaws," said Health and Wellness spokesman Sharon Haggerty. "The idea of this was to get away from the patchwork of municipal laws."

But Andy Weiler, a spokesman for the office of the Solicitor General and Public Security, which is responsible for enforcing the act, says some communities, including Edmonton, must first apply to the province for authorization before they can levy the new fine.

"If they had municipal bylaw officers who were only authorized to enforce the old act, they can't enforce the new one," he said.

And Randy Kirillo, an Edmonton bylaw supervisor, confirms the city likely won't apply for that approval for several more months.

That doesn't let scofflaws off the hook, however.

"The people that can enforce the law right now are any provincially designated inspector or anybody that is a peace officer," said Edmonton police spokesman Karen Carlson.

That means cops can target scofflaws. However, Carlson stressed they're less likely to go after individual violators than businesses or residences they receive complaints about.

"I haven't heard of any charges to date," she said. "A lot of it's going to be about voluntary compliance with a lot of warnings given out.

"Everybody's still learning about this new legislation."

## Infrastructure & Transportation

### **City halts LRT work; Archeologist called in after human remains unearthed**

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 4

Section: News

Byline: BY ANDREW HANON, SUN MEDIA

Native activists breathed a sigh of relief after the city halted construction on a controversial stretch of the south LRT extension until an archeologist can be hired to supervise the work.

City hall announced the move yesterday, four days after human remains were discovered by excavation crews working near 111 Street and 43 Avenue.

"I'm so glad to hear that," said Joyce Bruneau, a band councillor with the Papaschase First Nation, which claims the area as its historical land and fears the remains might belong to one of their ancestors.

"Because there may be other bodies around, they should be very careful when they're excavating," said Bruneau.

Originally, city officials claimed the remains were "historical," and said there was no reason to halt work.

But yesterday, transit projects manager Wayne Mandryk said they are "erring on the side of caution," so that, should any further remains be discovered, they will be handled with dignity. Regardless of the ancestry of these remains, the city is respectful of the history and meaning of the area."

The remains are still being studied by the medical examiner and the provincial government.

Sources have told Sun Media that early indications suggest the body was buried sometime between 1890 and 1920, at least a few years after most of the Papaschase people were removed from the land and their reserve sold off to private interests.

The Papaschase First Nation occupied a large portion of southwest Edmonton, but descendents claim the federal government forced the band to dissolve through a series of manoeuvres beginning in 1880, mostly by making them members of other bands with reserves of their own.

Next month, descendents of the Papaschase will be before the Supreme Court of Canada, fighting for compensation and a new reserve somewhere outside the city.

Bruneau said geneological studies show that there are upwards of 5,000 direct descendents of the band.

At this point, the only part of the LRT extension to be under the archeologist's scrutiny will be the stretch from Whitemud Drive south to Harry Ainlay High School, Mandryk said. The rest of the project won't be affected.

Crews will be careful not to remove any more earth than necessary, and the first six feet of excavation will be closely monitored by an archeologist, he said.

The archeologist is expected to be onsite within a few day

### **A moving concern**

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 2

Section: News

Byline: BY FRANK LANDRY, CITY HALL BUREAU

They're futuristic-looking and easy on the environment, but are Segway personal transporters legal to operate in the city?

The province says no, but the question still had a group of city councillors scratching their heads yesterday.

"We're seeing more and more of them on our roadways and sidewalks," said Coun. Karen Leibovici. "There's a question around whether they're legal or not, and it's not within our jurisdiction to determine that."

The Segway - a two-wheeled battery-powered vehicle that users stand on to operate - falls under the category of miniature vehicle, says a city report. Also in that same category are pocketbikes, golf carts and go-carts.

Under provincial legislation, those vehicles cannot be used on any roadway, sidewalk or boulevard in Alberta - they're only allowed on private property.

But with the array of specialized vehicles available, councillors argued figuring out which ones are legal can be confusing.

For example, Don MacDonald, the city's director of traffic control, said "mobility aids" like motorized wheelchairs and electric scooters that people can sit on are permitted on sidewalks.

Coun. Ed Gibbons, who has had back problems, said the only way he could go door to door during the 2004 municipal election campaign was using a Segway.

In the final days of the race, he was told by police it was illegal, but he wasn't ticketed.

During the most recent campaign, he bought a three-wheeled Zappy electric scooter to get around his ward. The device looks like a large tricycle that users stand on.

Again, it turns out using the scooter on public sidewalks was illegal because of a technicality - it didn't have a seat.

Gibbons said he's concerned seniors don't know what devices they can and can't use.

Jerry Bellikka, spokesman for Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, said his department hasn't been asked to revisit restrictions around the use of miniature vehicles.

FRANK.LANDRY@SUNMEDIA.CA

### **Vehicles low polluters, but too many on roads**

The Edmonton Journal

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: B4

Section: Cityplus

Byline: Hanneke Brooymans

Dateline: EDMONTON

Source: The Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - Albertans now drive cleaner, less-polluting vehicles than nine years ago, but there are more of them, a new study says.

The Clean Air Strategic Alliance set up roadside detectors in the fall of 2006 in Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer and Canmore to measure smog-forming contaminants emitted by vehicles.

The detectors sniffed out levels of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and smoke, also known as particulate matter.

Results showed that cars outfitted with newer pollution-control devices generally emit less than they did in 1998, the last time the study was done. But these gains are being partially offset by an increased number of cars and trucks crammed on the road, says the study commissioned by the alliance, a partnership of government, industry and non-governmental organizations.

Alberta Environment is working with a cross-ministry group to respond to the report's findings. Options being reviewed include laws that prevent tampering with pollution-control devices and incentives to scrap the vehicles that pollute the most.

Here's a by the numbers look at what the study showed:

- 66,002: Number of light-duty vehicles from which emissions were measured during the study.
- 4 out of 5: Proportion of vehicles that were 10 years old or newer.
- 20 per cent: Percentage of vehicles that accounted for 80 per cent of emissions.
- More than 30 per cent: Percentage of vehicles which had no measurable exhaust emissions.

- 5: Number of times more emissions put out by a vehicle considered a "high emitter" compared to when it was new.
- 5: Percentage of vehicles considered "high emitters" for releasing the highest level of one or more of the pollutants studied.
- 60: Percentage of carbon monoxide contributed by these high emitters.
- 31: Percentage of hydrocarbon contributed by high emitters.
- 26: Percentage of nitrogen oxide contributed by high emitters.
- 7: Percentage of particulate matter contributed by high emitters.
- 75 per cent: Fraction of all vehicles surveyed with only one occupant.
- Up to 50 per cent: Per cent more fuel used by a poorly maintained vehicle compared to a vehicle that is serviced regularly.
- Up to three per cent: Per cent more fuel used when tires are underinflated.

hbrooymans@thejournal.canwest.com

## **International, Intergovernmental & Aboriginal Affairs**

### **2M endowment fund will assist dozens of Métis students at MacEwan**

The Edmonton Journal

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: B2

Section: Cityplus

Byline: Keith Gerein

Dateline: EDMONTON

Source: The Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - Grant MacEwan College has established a \$2-million endowment fund that will provide financial help to dozens of Métis students each year.

The Métis Nation of Alberta provided the initial \$1 million for the endowment, which is being matched by a grant from the provincial government's Access to the Future fund.

This year, interest earned by the endowment will distribute about \$40,000 in awards, but that will eventually be increased to \$100,000.

Full-time students pursuing undergraduate degrees will be eligible for yearly awards of between \$3,000 and \$4,000, while those in certificate and diploma programs can receive \$1,500 to \$2,000 annually -- so long as they maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.3 out of four.

Brandon Parenteau, 23, a MacEwan student from Fishing Lake, said the program's biggest impact will be on young men and women who believe they can't afford to attend college.

"For a lot of Métis students, this is maybe the little push they need to go into a post-secondary program," said Parenteau, who is in his second year of a bachelor of commerce degree.

"Maybe they are on the fence about it, and here's an award that could get them to say 'Why not?' "

Audrey Poitras, president of the Métis Nation of Alberta, said MacEwan is the first post-secondary school to partner with them on establishing such a program.

"I think the endowment will have a great impact," Poitras said. "We all know that being a student at any time is very difficult, and especially today. A lot of our students come in from out of town and a lot already have families, so this will be very helpful."

About 150 Métis students are enrolled at MacEwan, with the numbers expected to increase in the years ahead.

Poitras said her organization hopes to create similar awards programs at other Alberta schools.

kgerein@thejournal.canwest.com

## **Justice & Attorney General**

## **Municipal Affairs & Housing**

**Calgary housing prices come back to earth; Rate of price increase slowed from double digits to 5 per cent in last quarter, bucking the trend in the rest of Canada**

The Globe and Mail

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: B3

Section: Report On Business: Canadian

Byline: Lori McLeod

Source: REAL ESTATE REPORTER

The sky isn't about to fall on Calgary home owners, although what used to be the country's hottest housing market is poised for an uncharacteristically average year in 2008.

The price of a detached bungalow in Calgary rose 5.2 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2007 from the same quarter the year before. That compared with double-digit gains in the previous eight quarters, according to data released yesterday by Royal LePage Real Estate Services.

"People deal in relatives, and when the relative rate of price appreciation over the course of two years moves from 50 per cent to 5 per cent it feels like the market's in decline," said Phil Soper, chief executive officer of Royal LePage.

Calgary's slowdown bucked the trend in much of the rest of Canada, where house prices blasted at warp speed through what is usually a holiday breather.

The national average price of a detached bungalow increased by 11.6 per cent to \$337,555 from \$302,497 the year before. The price of an average two-storey property rose 11.3 per cent to \$399,738, and a condo unit 11.7 per cent to \$240,395.

More modest gains all around should be the norm in 2008, Mr. Soper said.

However the slowdown is being felt sharply by some sellers in Calgary, where for two years price increases have blown the doors off the national average.

"People have gotten so used to their house appreciating 2 per cent every darned month, it's taking a while for reality to set in. There's still lots of money, there's still lots of confidence, but there are also a lot of people out there who think they've got more house than they do," said Jim Sparrow, a real estate agent with Calgary-based Keller Williams Platinum Realty.

The average price of a two-storey home dropped 3 per cent from the third-quarter peak of \$476,711 to \$461,811 in the last three months of the year, the report said. That's still up 47 per cent in two years. Calgary's highest year-over-year house price gain was in the third quarter of 2006, when the average price of a detached bungalow rose by 56.5 per cent to \$395,067.

The market started to cool in the fall, in part because of a glut of supply, Mr. Sparrow said.

"A lot of people here started speculating. They basically flooded the market and were asking prices ... that were not supported by the market," he said.

Another blow came in late October when Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach announced a plan to dramatically increase royalty revenues paid by energy firms.

Immediately after the announcement there was a sharp drop in purchases in the \$750,000 to \$1-million range, Mr. Sparrow said.

Things started to pick up in November, and there are lots of buyers back in the market now, he added. Clients who list their homes just slightly above market value are having no trouble selling, he added.

Mr. Soper said he expects Calgary could shift back to above-average house price gains in 2009 if the price of oil stays strong.

## **Seniors & Community Supports**

## Service Alberta

### **Bureaucrat got some big bucks**

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 7

Section: News

Byline: BY JEREMY LOOME, EDMONTON SUN

A former Alberta bureaucrat being investigated for conflict of interest by the auditor general pocketed \$1.35 million in provincial pay over the last four years, newly released government documents show.

Kellan Fluckiger, who was hired by Alberta Energy for his expertise in handling deregulation, resigned last October.

It came after opposition politicians questioned whether he should be advocating a new power line between Wabamun and Calgary when his wife was the vice-president of AltaLink, the company that was trying to build the line.

Previously, he'd been an official with California's electrical regulator during its turbulent deregulation period.

The opposition Liberals say the government should explain why Fluckiger was worth \$354,000 in the last year of his contract, given that he contributed to the unpopular - and vastly rewritten - Bill 46.

It effectively split Alberta's energy and utilities board into two bodies but its critics fear the bill will also stifle public debate over new energy projects.

"The government isn't sending Albertans a very good message about accountability and priorities," said Liberal critic Hugh MacDonald. "Just recently, they attempted to reduce the auditor general's budget by \$20,000. In the same fiscal year, they handed out a six-figure contract to the architect of a democratically damaging piece of legislation."

But a spokesman for Alberta Energy noted that adding up four years of anyone's salary will make it look large.

Jason Chance also noted that Fluckiger was hired for specific expertise after a North America-wide search.

"His contract involved not only providing that expertise but also filling the role of a senior government official for the province," he said. "As such, the contract was deemed appropriate."

## Solicitor General & Public Security

## Sustainable Resource Development

## Tourism, Parks, Recreation & Culture

### \*Miscellaneous Government

### \*Election

#### Law firm says blogger stole Stelmach's personality

The Edmonton Sun

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: 7

Section: News

Byline: BY JEREMY LOOME, EDMONTON SUN

Daveberta is used to Conservatives being ticked at him, but the Edmonton blogger - real name, Dave Cournoyer - never expected a legal threat from the premier.

But that's what Cournoyer is facing after he registered the web domain name EdStelmach.ca last year.

A 24-year-old university student, Cournoyer has been accused in a letter from a Calgary law firm representing Stelmach of misappropriating the premier's personality for his own gain.

"If Ed Stelmach is missing a personality, then I don't know where it is, but I sure don't have it," Cournoyer joked. "I think it's a little drastic and heavy-handed and it says a lot to me that their first reaction was to hire a high-priced lawyer to go after me."

A phone call might have sufficed, said Cournoyer. He isn't planning on changing his approach on his blog, which is quite critical of the province.

"I've never tried to hide my biases or opinions, nor should any Albertan," he said.

"I might not be the most popular guy in some circles, but that's politics."

Jim Campbell, with the Alberta Progressive Conservatives, said the case is a simple matter of protecting the premier's rights, although he conceded it was a mistake not to register the name. Cournoyer snagged it four months after Stelmach's November, 2006 selection as the party's new leader and Premier Ralph Klein's replacement.

**Stelmach threatens to sue blogger; Lawyers demand university student give up claim to edstelmach.ca**

The Edmonton Journal  
Wed 09 Jan 2008  
Page: B1 / FRONT  
Section: Cityplus  
Byline: Archie McLean, with files from Jason Markusoff  
Dateline: EDMONTON  
Source: The Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - Premier Ed Stelmach is threatening to sue an Edmonton student over his use of the domain name edstelmach.ca.

The site forwards visitors to a Wikipedia entry for Harry Strom, the Social Credit premier who presided over the dying days of Alberta's last political dynasty.

Dave Cournoyer, a 24-year-old University of Alberta student who blogs under the name Daveberta, received a letter from Stelmach's lawyers in December.

The letter alleges that Cournoyer registered the domain name "in bad faith" and that Stelmach's "personality, image and name had been interfered with." It goes on to say that Cournoyer must return any money he received from the Google ads on his site. Cournoyer said the letter's arrival was "surreal."

"I never thought that Ed Stelmach -- honest Ed, the nice guy -- that his first reaction would be to sue a university student over a domain name that his staff failed to register."

"I'm not sure where Ed Stelmach's personality is, but I certainly didn't take it," Cournoyer said.

Cournoyer said he made about \$70 on the ads and joked that it likely cost Stelmach more to have the letter written. He said the premier should have approached him first without resorting to legal threats.

Jim Campbell, the executive director of the PC Party, said Stelmach is simply doing what any citizen would do in a similar situation to protect his identity.

"You or I would be concerned if somebody appropriated our name and used it in the public domain," Campbell said.

The government will not be footing the bill for Stelmach's legal costs, but Campbell would not say who would pay.

The legality of Cournoyer's move is murky. Domain registration is a civil matter in Canada and the governing authority is the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA).

"There are a number of conditions under that CIRA policy in which this thing could be changed," said Tom Keenan, a University of Calgary professor specializing in research looking into the social implications of technology.

Keenan said if someone makes a complaint, a judicial type of inquiry takes place to discern the validity of the complaint.

"Stelmach probably, underline probably, has basis for complaint particularly if the guy acted in bad faith; i.e. wanted to tarnish his reputation," Keenan said.

In 2000, former deputy prime minister Anne McLellan won a case against a Calgarian who registered "annemclellan.com," though the case has come under criticism since. Cournoyer registered edstelmach.ca for \$14 on April 2, 2007, about four months after Stelmach became premier and nearly a year after he started his campaign for the provincial Tory leadership.

Cournoyer's blog is one of the most popular political websites in the province. It is unabashedly partisan and Cournoyer worked as the Alberta Liberal Party's communications co-ordinator from May to December of last year. Kieran LeBlanc, the party's executive director, said she was aware Cournoyer owned the domain, but the party had nothing to do with it.

When web surfers go to edstelmach.ca, it used to take them to Cournoyer's site, but now it ships them to Strom's Wikipedia entry.

Strom, a farmer like Stelmach, was premier for the last three years of the 36-year Social Credit dynasty. He inherited a big majority from his predecessor, but was toppled by Peter Lougheed's Tories in 1971. Liberals often compare the two men; Cournoyer says the comparison is fitting.

"I don't think Strom would have thought to register his domain name, either."

As news of Daveberta's plight trickled in, visitors to his website flooded it with comments. Most praised Cournoyer for fighting a Daveberta vs. Goliath battle, but others said he is cybersquatting, and should be forced to give the name to its rightful owner.

Either way, Cournoyer wrote on his blog that he plans to take on the premier. "As a born and bred Albertan, I don't take well to threats from politicians."

[amclean@thejournal.canwest.com](mailto:amclean@thejournal.canwest.com)

### **Right-wing parties to join forces; Alberta Alliance, Wild Rose Party eye merger**

Okotoks Western Wheel

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: B21

Section: News

Byline: Don Patterson

Source: Okotoks Western Wheel

Premier Ed Stelmach's Progressive Conservatives may get a run for their money in the next election with a proposal to merge to smaller Alberta conservative parties.

The Alberta Alliance and the fledgling Wild Rose Party have agreed to join forces, with the leaders of both parties saying they will give Alberta Conservatives who stayed home during the last election an option when it comes time to cast their ballots.

"It was very evident to us in the last election that there were over 200,000 disgruntled conservatives that didn't have a place to put their votes and they stayed home," said Alberta Alliance Party leader Paul Hinman.

Under the proposal, Alberta Alliance members will vote to agree to the merger, adopt the Wild Rose bylaws, allow Wild Rose members to exchange memberships and see the party take the new name Wild Rose Alliance. The Alliance party membership will vote on the issue on Jan. 19.

Hinman, who is also MLA for the Cardston-Taber-Warner constituency, will be the initial leader of the party.

He said the party's focus will be on fiscal conservative issues that would look at lowering taxes, democratic reform and reducing the provincial bureaucracy.

"Our policies are virtually the same in the two parties. We need to have a fiscally responsible government," said Hinman.

He said the party would seek democratic reform initiatives, including creating recall legislation, citizen's initiatives and setting fixed election dates.

"We want a democratic government that's accountable to the people," Hinman added.

He anticipates a spring vote, predicting Premier Stelmach could call an election as soon as Feb. 5.

The Wild Rose Party was formed in 2007. However, party president Rob James said it was felt the two groups would have more success at the ballot box under the same banner.

"It's in the best interests of Alberta voters to have a single party that serves common views," he said.

James said a Wild Rose Alliance platform, and the focus of the party, would be fiscal conservatism - "not so socially conservative, but clearly fiscally conservative."

He said the new party would retain the grass roots connections and policies will be determined by its members. "Unlike most political parties where you have one or two people sitting in a room creating what the party is, this will be driven by the membership."

### **Stelmach threatens to sue over domain name**

National Post

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: A2

Section: News

Byline: James Cowan

Source: National Post

Ed Stelmach has threatened to sue over "misappropriation of his personality" after a blogger registered a Web site in the Alberta Premier's name.

Dave Cournoyer paid \$14 last April to register the domain name edstelmach.ca. After nine months of using the Web address to direct traffic to his own blog, daveberta.ca, the 24-year-old student received a letter from Mr. Stelmach's lawyer in early December, demanding he surrender the site.

"We are of the view that the Web site and the blog misappropriate Premier Stelmach's persona and we are writing to outline our client's position to hopefully resolve our client's claim without resorting to litigation," the letter states.

The lawyer's letter also alleges that Mr. Stelmach's "personality, image and name have been interfered with" and accuses Mr. Cournoyer of exploiting the Premier's good name to make money through advertising on the site.

Reached by cellphone yesterday, Mr. Cournoyer denied the accusations against him. "They're accusing me of misappropriating his personality -- I don't know where Ed Stelmach's personality is, but I certainly don't have it," the blogger said.

A former employee of the Alberta Liberal party, Mr. Cournoyer frequently uses his blog to criticize the Progressive Conservative Premier. But he denied it was inappropriate for him to claim the domain name and expressed surprise the address was even available.

"It's not like I pulled something quick and fast," he said. "I purchased the name four months after he became premier, probably eight to 10 months after he decided to run for the Tory leadership and about 13 years after he became a politician. His staff had plenty of time to register the name."

Jim Campbell, the Alberta PC party's executive director, said Mr. Stelmach's mistake doesn't excuse Mr. Cournoyer's actions. "This was an oversight on our part, but we still believe it's reasonable for the Premier --or any other private citizen -- to control how his or her name is used," he said. "Saying that the Premier or the party should have registered all possible domain names is tantamount to blaming the victim."

The letter sent to Mr. Cournoyer gave him until Dec. 21, 2007, to stop directing visitors to his blog through edstelmach.ca and transfer ownership of the domain name to the Premier.

Despite the deadline passing, Mr. Stelmach has not launched any further legal action. Mr. Cournoyer said he still intends to seek legal advice.

Visitors to edstelmach.ca are currently directed to a Wikipedia entry on Harry Strom, Alberta's last Social Credit premier. Domain names in Canada are controlled by the Canadian Internet Regulation Authority (CIRA), a non-profit corporation. David Hicks, a spokesman, said CIRA limits the use of trademarked names but addresses involving people's names are distributed on a "first come, first serve" basis.

"There is no real way to determine who the real 'Ed Stelmach' is. There could be dozens of people in Canada with that name and any of them could make a legitimate claim to that domain name," Mr. Hicks said.

jcowan@nationalpost.com

**Columnists/Editorial & Comment**

**Alberta's next election will be all about leadership**

The Calgary Herald

Wed 09 Jan 2008

Page: A14

Section: The Editorial Page

Byline: Barry Cooper

Column: Barry Cooper

Source: For The Calgary Herald

Bravery and honesty are individual virtues with quite different political consequences. That is why Machiavelli counselled a new prince to choose brave generals and honest accountants, not the other way around.

We don't have Renaissance princes anymore, but we still have the problem Machiavelli addressed. It has been a little more than a year that Alberta has been led by a nice, honest premier.

To question whether Ed Stelmach is an effective premier is not to wish for a dishonest thug but to wonder whether his personal virtues are also political ones.

This is not a theoretical but a practical and pragmatic issue. It will be resolved clearly enough at the next election, and that election will be about leadership.

The premier of Alberta is not just the leader of the party with the most seats in the legislature. He or she also has to ensure that Alberta has a role in leading the country.

Given our current prosperity and, more important, given the fact that for the past couple of decades Alberta has been the source of nearly all policy innovation in Canada, the second role is unavoidable and arguably more important than leading a provincial political party.

To get specific: policy leadership and innovation means, for example, showing how a blended public-private health-care program delivers equitable and better health care faster. It means restoring balance to federalism by pushing the Ottawa bureaucracy out of provincial jurisdictions.

Most important -- because this is where Alberta's leadership once really mattered -- it means returning to the low-tax, small-government regime of a decade ago.

Alberta was a light to the nation when it reduced the size of government. But things returned to the status quo during the later Ralph Klein years. Program spending is up 50 per cent in the past five years and 140 per cent over the past decade. That has become the new normal.

Today the government of Alberta spends more per capita than any province, including Quebec. This is not an argument that Alberta should follow Quebec's lead -- if they had the money, they would spend it too. It means that government consumption is too high everywhere.

The last thing we need is more bureaucrats, and yet that is the only productive outcome, for example, of grabbing more royalty money. The real effects, as Albertans are beginning to see, have been compared to Pierre Trudeau's despised NEP.

Ed Stelmach has either ignored the innovations demanded by genuine leadership or he has made matters worse. Today, Albertans have a premier that the rest of the country can ignore. For all his many faults, no one could say that of Klein.

Stelmach's leadership failure is no doubt why for the first time in living memory political movements aimed at undermining the government have been gaining enthusiastic traction from both the left and the right.

To get a hint of what the left has in store, check out the 10th anniversary issue of Alberta Views. Because policy innovation today is practically a monopoly of conservative thinking, the opinions in this slick magazine invariably reinforce the status quo. The implications of nearly every policy recommendation mean growing an already bloated government. The lefties forget that big government is the source of our grumpy discontent, not the cure.

Because of Conservative amnesia with respect to their own glory days, the Liberals are frisky.

Kevin Taft, the current leader, is probably the best reason Albertans have to vote Conservative. But if the polls continue to show softening support for Stelmach, Taft will be out the door in a flash and we can contemplate what a Dave Bronconnier government might look like.

All that Albertans outside Calgary need to know is that this is a mayor who presided over a city council that licensed cats.

In 1993, Klein headed off the challenge of another big-city mayor, Lawrence Decore. Back then the Conservatives had guts and brains enough to outflank Decore on the right. Does Stelmach have what it takes to pull off another Klein move?

On the innovative right, the brand new Wild Rose Party is planning, 10 days from now, to join up with the minuscule Alberta Alliance.

Their problem isn't policy but visibility. It is a long steep road to found a new party, as many Albertans discovered on the federal scene. But the prospect of more years of increased government consumption, uncontrolled bureaucratic growth, and dull, dull political leadership cannot make Albertans proud.

Where is our Machiavelli when we need him? Where is our new prince?

Barry Cooper, is a professor of political science at the University of Calgary.