

Northern Alberta Mayors and Reeves Caucus Luncheon

Edmonton, Alberta

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Check against delivery

Strong communities foster a neighbourly spirit – they are places where you fix things, even if you didn't break them, where you can ask for help when you need it and where you offer help when you can.

Strong communities have deep roots and their citizens stand by their members through thick and thin.

The Premier told me to make it my priority to support the development and long-term sustainability of Alberta's municipalities.

He believes that strong municipalities are a key ingredient to strong communities.

This philosophy shapes my ministry in everything we do.

But you as leaders have an important role to play.

Everyone in this room shares a responsibility to do what it takes to build strong, sustainable communities because they are the building blocks of a strong Alberta.

The challenges facing Alberta's municipalities are complex.

I have spoken with you about this before.

In fact I saw many of you just last month at AUMA.

We need to be innovative to find solutions that keep us strong.

We need to find solutions that work – and we need to work together, because the actions we take will be our legacy.

You have before you a rare opportunity to take responsibility for the long-term viability of your communities.

I think we all know that working in small, isolated communities is no longer working.

In fact, one thing is for certain – you are going to need to build partnerships like never before.

If you look at some major provincial initiatives currently under way you'll see why.

The recent economic boom in Alberta highlighted the need for a plan to manage growth but not stop it.

There was an opportunity for national -- even global leadership -- on sustainable resource management.

So the Government of Alberta developed the Draft Land-use Framework.

A strategic blueprint for all levels of government and Albertans to guide the decisions we make today to help shape the Alberta of tomorrow.

The Land Use Framework is an excellent example of what can be achieved when you put individual interests aside, and work together.

It allows municipalities to retain their authority but encourages them to align their decisions with provincial policy to benefit all Albertans.

Another challenge recently faced by municipalities was how to manage the impacts of development on air, land, water and biodiversity.

We looked beyond municipal boundaries and found a solution at the regional level.

The cumulative effects approach allows us to tailor development in our province to the unique capacity of each region and environment.

One final example of a solution that has worked is the Capital Region Board.

By working together, they are coming up with solutions and ideas they never could have accomplished on their own.

By pooling their resources and talent, they are making their ideas a reality that all Albertans will benefit from.

The resounding theme of these solutions is the importance of partnerships.

The need to put your individual interests aside to work together for the benefit of all.

Great communities don't happen by accident.

They are the result of civic leadership thinking boldly about building for the future.

I will leave you with one final thought:

Think of a way to address your common challenges that will allow you to leave as your legacy, a significant and lasting impact on the self reliance of your municipalities.