

# LEADER

One vision; one voice

May 17, 2005

## NEW DEAL SIGNED

Was it the Chinese who said, "May you live in interesting times"?

Canadian politics these days is anything but dull....

Today British Columbians cast their votes for their provincial leader and yesterday in Edmonton the New Deal for Cities and Communities – the transfer of \$477 million in federal gas tax funding - was signed by three levels of government.

Joining Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan, and John Godfrey, Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities) in signing the agreement was the Alberta contingent of Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, Ed Stelmach Minister of International and Intergovernmental Affairs, Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Witnessing the signing of the agreement were Bob Hawkesworth, President of AUMA, Donald Johnson, President of AAMD&C, Mayor Stephen Mandel of Edmonton and Calgary Mayor, Dave Bronconnier and Métis Settlements General Council President Alden Armstrong.

The agreement is said to mark a new relationship among governments in Alberta.

"Today's agreement lays the groundwork for stronger cities and communities in Alberta by returning a portion of the federal gas tax dollars to local municipalities," said Dr. Oberg. "This funding will help build needed municipal infrastructure and I look forward to continuing to find long-term, stable funding solutions for municipalities."

"I am pleased the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of stable, long term funding to help municipalities deliver needed services to residents," said Minister Rob Renner.

Gas tax funds will support environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure to help ensure cleaner air, cleaner water and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Eligible project categories include public transit, water and wastewater management, solid waste, community energy systems and, in communities under 500,000, active transportation infrastructure (like bike lanes), local roads, bridges and tunnels that enhance sustainability outcomes. Funding can also be used to help municipalities build the capacity to plan more sustainable communities.

The Government of Canada's Budget 2005 commits \$5 billion for municipalities across Canada over five years in gas tax funds, ramping up to \$2 billion in year five and indefinitely thereafter.

The Government committed, in Budget 2005, to renewing the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund, the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund and the Border Infrastructure Fund.

The PM's External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities was formed with a mandate to define a 30-year vision for cities and communities in Canada. Jack Hayden, former AUMA President and Colin Jackson, President and CEO of EPCOR Centre are Alberta's representatives.

Perhaps it is a good thing that Prime Minister Martin put off the 'non-confidence' vote until this Thursday.

Another Chinese proverb comes to mind, "When you have musk, you will automatically have fragrance"

...oh and the Queen arrives in Canada today.....

**For further information:**

**Complete news release and \$\$ proposed for each Alberta municipality at:**

**[www.gov.ab.ca/acn](http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn)**

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