

## Alberta – The Province

August 2009

### THE PEOPLE

- About 3.6 million people live in Alberta today, the result of early and continuing immigration, people moving to Alberta from other parts of Canada.
- In the most recent census, one-quarter of Albertans described their heritage as Canadian, half claimed English, Scottish or Irish heritage, and the rest claimed heritage from around the world, including the
- Two-thirds of Albertans live in the metropolitan areas of Calgary and Edmonton.
- About one million people live in the smaller urban centres, small towns and hamlets, and in rural areas and remote communities.
- The province continues to attract about 82,000 new residents every year from elsewhere in Canada and from around the world.

### THE LAND

- The province stretches 1229 kilometres north of Montana from the 49th parallel and 663 kilometres east to west. It is the fourth-largest province in Canada, with an area of 661,231 square kilometres.
- Alberta covers a lot of landscape, with the Rocky Mountains stretching across the southwest, rolling short-grass prairie in the southeast, treed parkland and grasslands in the centre, and old growth forests in the north. The highest point is Mt. Columbia at 3,747 metres. The lowest point is 182 metres, where the Salt River crosses the province's northern border.
- Just 3 per cent of Alberta is covered by 600 lakes and 245 rivers. Except in the south, fresh water is abundant and the three largest lakes together cover 4,055 square miles.
- Over 12 per cent of the province is protected through a wide variety of provincial and federal parks, range lands and recreation areas.

### THE CLIMATE

- Sunny Alberta enjoys the most days of sunshine in Canada, at an average of 312 days per year.
- The landlocked province features low humidity and considerable seasonal and regional contrasts.
- Temperatures in January range from -8°C in the south to -24°C in the north, and in July from 20°C in the south to 16°C in the north.

### THE EMBLEMS

#### Flower:

Wild Rose, *Rosa acicularis*

#### Grass Emblem:

Rough Fescue, *Festuca scabrella*

#### Tree:

Lodgepole Pine, *Pinus contorta*

#### Mammal:

Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, *Ovis Canadensis*

#### Fish:

Bull Trout, *Salvelinus confluentus*

#### Bird:

Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*

#### Stone:

Petrified Wood

#### Proclaimed a Province:

September 1, 1905

# FACT sheet

## ***THE GOVERNMENT***

- The capital city is Edmonton.
- The head of government is the Premier.
- The Lieutenant Governor is the Queen's representative in Alberta.
- Alberta operates a multi-party political system. Elections must be held every five years, but government may call an election sooner; usually elections are held in three or four years.
- The party winning the most of 83 seats forms the government, and its leader becomes Premier.
- The Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta forms the current government.
- The party with the second-most seats becomes the Official Opposition. It provides an alternative opinion on government policies and actions.
- When the Legislature is in Session, a daily 50-minute Question Period allows the Opposition to ask questions on any topic on government policy or performance.
- Question Period often leads to lively debate and interesting news coverage. Currently, the Alberta Liberal Party is the Official Opposition, holding nine seats.
- The New Democratic Party holds two seats in the Alberta legislature and one person sits as an Independent member.

For more information on Alberta, visit [www.alberta.ca](http://www.alberta.ca)