North America’s Energy & Agricultural Heartland: Rural Revival for the Next Generation

Ports to Plains Annual Conference
October 1st, 2009 - Lubbock, Texas

Doug Cameron, Sr. Director, U.S. Trade & Investment
History of Western Development

Early Initiatives

- Railways opened Canadian west (U.S. threat)
- Tourism – railways & Rockies
- Rural beginnings - rich agricultural resource
- European base populate prairies
- Province in 1905 – full provincial rights
- Distances from Ottawa & Toronto
- Railway subsidies – economic consequences
- Oil in 1920’s – southern AB
2. Becoming Alberta 30’s – 60’s

- Agriculture services
- Relationship south begins to develop ...
- Leduc # 1, 1947 – big changes begin
- Rural support for the oil & gas sector
- Expansion of conventional industry
- Ancillary business services & opportunities
- Entrepreneurial
3. “Economic (?) Development”

- 1970’s - new government strong rural base
- Oil & gas era – dramatic expansion:
  - royalties, R & D, rural focus
- Decentralized services in Gov’t
- Defining economic development
- Emphasis on infrastructure – give business what it needs to be successful
- Quality of life - local needs & services
- Hospitals, recreation facilities, schools, highways, accessibility, parks etc.
- Support - local business development, community development
4. Last 2 decades - “Business Development”

- In Canada – Government responsibility / lead
- Market-based market responsive & apolitical
- Regional outlook – less community-based
- ‘Fanatical’ opposition to incentives - good
- Cooperation & alliances - globalization
- Facilitated vs. structured
- Government-led business input & policy advice
- Increasingly difficult for rural development focus on R&D, advanced tech...

“REDA’s”
5. Next steps

- Regional
- Local visioning, action & resources
- Strategies
- Labour issues – it’s not about creating jobs!
  - attraction, retention & training
- Planning – Land use framework (?)
- Transportation
- New infrastructure - education
- Less government (?)
- Strategic investments
Creating a strong voice for rural Alberta

Promoting economic development in rural communities

Building community capacity – key area

Improving access to health care

Expanding learning & skill development

Sustaining and enhancing the quality of rural

Opportunities for rural youth

Rural economies currently strong in much of AB; there’s business to do!
Opportunity

1. Alternative & other energy
   i. shale gas, coal bed methane, gas from coal, CCS
   ii. environment
   iii. AB conditions for solar, wind, biomass & related business development

2. Using technology creatively

3. Removing borders – relationships & alliances of SME’s

4. Agriculture – value-added smaller, locally owned

5. Defense – Big 3, U.V.S.

6. Infrastructure – community leadership (trans.)
Doug Cameron, Sr. Director, U.S. Trade & Investment International & Intergovernmental Relations
Government of Alberta

doug.cameron@gov.ab.ca
780-427-6702
Twitter: Alberta EcDevGuy