



West at a Glance

AUGUST 2017



WEST AT A GLANCE

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PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- **New Premier and cabinet sworn in** – On July 18, 2017, John Horgan was sworn in as the 36th Premier of BC. Premier Horgan's [new cabinet](#) is the first in BC's history to achieve gender parity with 10 women named to cabinet and one to minister of state. Ministerial portfolios highlight the government's intention to improve the quality of life and job opportunities within the province, including a Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, a Minister of State for Child Care, and a Minister for Social Development and Poverty Reduction. There were also a number of [changes to appointments](#) at the Deputy Minister level.
- **New BC government's first moves** – Mandate letters to each of the cabinet ministers in BC's new government were publicly released on July 24. Ministers have been instructed to deliver on three [key priorities](#) – "relief for families from rising costs and fees; better services for people, including healthcare and education; and good jobs and economic opportunities." The new government began addressing its key priorities with an announcement to [increase income and disability assistance](#) by \$100 a month, moving BC from having the lowest provincial assistance rate to the third highest. In addition, Premier Horgan announced [changes in leadership](#) within BC's crown corporations, including BC Hydro, BC Housing and the Insurance Corporation of BC.
- **Immigration to support BC's growing tech sector** – BC is prioritizing the applications of potential immigrants with skills and experience in the Information Technology (IT) sector. The province has been conducting [tech-only immigration draws](#) under the Provincial Nominee Program since May, reinforcing the government's commitment to support and grow BC's technology sector. The provincial nominee program allows provinces to nominate prospective immigrants with the qualifications they are targeting.

ALBERTA

- **Alberta announces new climate programs for Indigenous communities** – On June 29, the Government of Alberta announced the creation of [seven new programs](#) designed to help Indigenous communities invest in local renewal projects, conduct energy-efficiency audits and deliver skills training for jobs in a low-carbon environment. These programs were announced in Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan and will be funded by \$35 million of Carbon Tax revenue.
- **Alberta provides funding for Calgary LRT** – The province announced [\\$1.53 billion in funding](#) over eight years for the construction of the Calgary Green Line LRT, matching equal contributions from The City of Calgary and the federal government. The Green Line will traverse a 46km, north-south route through central Calgary to improve public transit access and connectivity by linking 28 stations, two existing LRT lines and three bus rapid transit lines. The new LRT line will be built in stages as funding becomes available, with construction of the first of three stages set to begin in 2019. The provincial government estimates that the Green Line will create 12,000 direct and 8,000 indirect jobs.
- **Province announces funding through Emissions Reduction Alberta** – Emissions Reduction Alberta (ERA) is funding 12 innovative [methane-reducing projects](#) as part of its Methane Challenge to detect, quantify and reduce methane emissions. Selected projects in the oil and gas, power generation, agriculture and forestry sectors will receive up to \$29.5 million funding. It is estimated that the combined projects, worth more than \$83 million, will reduce over 1.1 megatonnes (Mt) of methane by 2020 and 6.9 Mt by 2030, and create 60 jobs. ERA's [Oil Sands Innovation Challenge](#) is leveraging another \$50 million to provide \$100 million in funding for winning technologies that will allow oil sands operations to meet the greenhouse gas emissions limit by 2030.
- **Alberta funds projects through the Entrepreneurship Incubator Program** – The Government of Alberta has announced \$10 million in funding for entrepreneurial development through its two-year Alberta Entrepreneurship Incubator Program (AEIP). The Red Deer Downtown Business Association will [receive \\$600,000](#) to expand its Catapult Entrepreneurs Incubator. In addition, Startup Edmonton, TEC Edmonton, Northern Alberta Business Incubator (NABI) and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) will [receive \\$1.5 million](#) to provide a new suite of services for innovation based startups. The Apex Incubator in Medicine Hat and the Spark! Incubator in Grande Prairie have previously received funding from the AEIP.
- **Changes made to the Canada-Alberta Job Grant** – The Canada-Alberta Job Grant (CAJG) was recently improved to [expand access to training](#) and offer more ways for Alberta employers to train workers, as well as a \$5.5 million budget increase over 2016-17. Launched in 2014, the CAJG is an employer-driven training program delivered by



the Government of Alberta with funding from the federal government. Changes include covering 100 percent of training costs, up to \$15,000, for unemployed trainees, reimbursing a portion of travel costs for trainees coming from outside of Calgary or Edmonton and allowing sole proprietors to apply for training for their workers.

SASKATCHEWAN

- **Saskatchewan launches Innovation Incentive** – On June 30, 2017, the government of Saskatchewan proclaimed the [Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive \(SCII\) Act](#). The SCII is the first “patent box” style incentive in North America, and will reduce the provincial, corporate income tax rate for eligible corporations on taxable income earned from the commercialization of qualifying intellectual property (IP). Eligible IP includes patents, plant breeders’ rights, trade secrets and copyright material. The SCII will enable corporations to reduce their income tax for a period of ten years, with an additional 5-year extension available if the majority of the related research and development takes place in Saskatchewan.
- **SaskPower issues a request for proposals on a wind power project** – On July 6, 2017, SaskPower moved forward on the competitive process to acquire an additional 200 megawatts of wind generation capacity by inviting eight independent power producers to submit proposals by May 25, 2018. SaskPower, a Crown-owned utility, has committed to increasing the province’s share of renewable energy generation from 25 per cent to 50 per cent by 2030. Increasing the share of renewable energy in the province’s electricity system has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to roughly 40 per cent below 2005 levels.

MANITOBA

- **Province of Manitoba requesting proposals for Social Impact Bonds** – The government of Manitoba has posted a request for proposals for the [development of their first Social Impact Bond \(SIB\)](#) which will fund provincial social programs. SIBs encourage the private sector and community groups to partner with government to deliver programs designed by experts and front-line service organizations. The government sets a specific outcome to achieve in collaboration with service providers, secures private investment and then repays the investors if the service provider meets the project’s outcome. The participation of Indigenous businesses has been encouraged.
- **Manitoba facilitates propane shipments to Churchill** – The Manitoba government has [committed \\$6 million](#) to ensure that the community of Churchill will have sufficient propane to heat their homes and businesses throughout the winter. The funding will allow provider Stittco Energy to proceed with finalizing logistics for shipment and storage in order to supply Churchill with propane. This allotment of propane should support the town and area residents until at least June 2018. The shipment includes 110 shipment containers of propane, totaling 2.2 million litres, shipped by sealift from a port in Quebec in early fall.



NEWS AND OPINION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Petronas will not proceed with Pacific NorthWest LNG megaproject** – Malaysian state-owned energy company Petronas and its partners have [decided not to proceed](#) with the \$36-billion Pacific NorthWest (PNW) LNG project near Prince Rupert, BC. Anuar Taib, Chairman of the PNW LNG Board, attributed the decision to “prolonged depressed prices and shifts in the energy industry.”
- **BC wildfires cause disruptions in the province's resource and tourism industries** – More than 375 wildfires have plagued homes and business in BC, forcing 37,000 people to evacuate and putting thousands more on alert. The fires have affected [key resource and tourism industries](#), including multiple mining and forestry operations. Slack lumber production has led to a boost in prices, which is helping to offset the U.S. duties on Canadian softwood.
- **International Artificial Intelligence lab coming to Edmonton** – Artificial intelligence (AI) company Deep Mind, a London-based AI research division of Google, announced it will open its first [research lab](#) outside of the United Kingdom in Edmonton. The lab will collaborate closely with University of Alberta and, particularly, with three professors who are considered world leaders in AI.
- **Indigenous participation on the Trans Mountain pipeline project** – A [joint program](#) between Women Building Futures and the Trans Mountain Expansion Project will train twelve Alberta indigenous women to work on the \$7.4-billion pipeline project. The eight-week program will provide training in basic carpentry, welding and safety. An [Indigenous Advisory and Monitoring Committee](#) has been established for the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, backed by \$64.7 million in funding from the Government of Canada, to allow Indigenous groups to participate in and monitor the project's construction.
- **Federal funding for Heritage Park in Calgary** – WD announced an investment of \$40,000 through the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program towards the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta – Régionale de Calgary to build a [Francophone pavilion in Heritage Park](#). The pavilion's design is based on sugar shacks from the turn of the century, where maple tree sap was boiled down and prepared into maple syrup. The practice of boiling sap down into syrup was taught to Francophone settlers by Indigenous people. As such, the pavilion celebrates French Canadian and Métis cultures, while promoting the French language in the Calgary region.
- **Provinces join the Canadian Agricultural Partnership** – On July 21, 2017, the federal, provincial and territorial governments reached an agreement on a [new agricultural policy framework](#). The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) is a five year federal-provincial-territorial funding agreement and \$3 billion investment that will govern agricultural risk management programs including Crop Insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest, and support a number of strategic initiatives in: science, research, and innovation; markets and trade; environmental sustainability and climate change; value-added agriculture and agri-food processing; and public trust.
- **Husky Energy investing in carbon capture** – Husky Energy is investing in a new [carbon capture and storage \(CCS\) pilot plant](#) near Maidstone, Saskatchewan. The plant will use Inventys' second-generation CCS technology, developed in Burnaby, BC, to capture 30 tonnes of carbon dioxide per day for enhanced oil recovery.
- **Saskatchewan innovator demonstrates driverless tractor at farm show** – A [driverless tractor](#), invented by the owner of Saskatchewan-based Seed Master, was showcased at the Ag in Motion trade show outside of Saskatoon on July 19, 2017. Developers anticipate that the driverless tractor could reduce fuel, labour, GHG emissions and capital equipment costs by 20 percent.
- **Comm Stream to Connect Northern Communities** - Winnipeg company Comm Stream is installing infrastructure to [provide high-speed internet](#) to 17,000 residents in 2,000 homes in remote, northern Manitoba communities.
- **Liberstream Technologies is Industry Go-To** – Two of the four largest aircraft engine manufactures in the world, along with other unnamed clients, have adopted Winnipeg-based Liberstream Technologies' [video tech for engine maintenance](#). The technology allows for efficient engine repair, maintenance planning and decision making to maximize operable aircraft hours.
- **Brandon University Economic Impact Study** – A study conducted by Brandon University found the annual [economic impact](#) of the school to be over \$417 million. Additionally, for every dollar invested by the province, the university generated \$11 in economic impacts. The university has 3,000 students, 400 employees and is responsible for the creation of 927 jobs across Manitoba.



KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

| |  British Columbia |  Alberta |  Saskatchewan |  Manitoba |  Canada | Last Update |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| Gross Domestic Product | | | | | | |
| Real GDP ¹ (2007 \$billions, forecast) | \$224 | \$298 | \$60 | \$57 | \$1,716 | 2017 |
| % ch. from year earlier | 2.5% | 3.3% | 2.5% | 2.1% | 2.3% | |
| Labour Market | | | | | | |
| Employment (SA, thousands) | 2,481 | 2,284 | 568 | 649 | 18,422 | Jul-17 |
| Change from previous month | -5.1 | -14.4 | -0.4 | 4.8 | 10.9 | |
| % ch. from previous month | -0.2% | -0.6% | -0.1% | 0.7% | 0.1% | |
| % ch. from year earlier | 3.6% | 1.5% | -0.2% | 2.1% | 2.1% | |
| Unemployment Rate (SA,%) | 5.3% | 7.8% | 6.6% | 5.0% | 6.3% | Jul-17 |
| percentage points from previous month | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.1 | -0.3 | -0.2 | |
| percentage points from year earlier | -0.3 | -0.8 | 0.3 | -1.3 | -0.7 | |
| Regular EI beneficiaries (SA) | 50,910 | 71,950 | 18,760 | 14,990 | 525,250 | May-17 |
| Change from previous month | -1850 | -5,550 | -50 | -190 | -12,760 | |
| % ch. from previous month | -3.5% | -7.2% | -0.3% | -1.3% | -2.4% | |
| % ch. from previous year | -5.1% | -11.1% | 11.9% | -2.1% | -4.9% | |
| Average weekly earnings | \$939.99 | \$1,120.19 | \$1,004.59 | \$915.20 | \$972.41 | May-17 |
| Change from previous year | \$22.51 | \$18.68 | \$19.97 | \$27.79 | \$18.92 | |
| Prices | | | | | | |
| CPI (y/y) | 1.7% | 0.4% | 0.5% | 0.2% | 1.0% | Jun-17 |
| CPI (y/y) previous month | 1.9% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 1.0% | 1.3% | May-17 |
| Consumers and Business | | | | | | |
| Retail Sales (SA, \$millions) | \$7,003 | \$6,812 | \$1,658 | \$1,696 | \$48,905 | May-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | 2.6% | 1.6% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.6% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 9.9% | 9.0% | 4.7% | 6.2% | 7.3% | |
| Manufacturing Sales (SA, \$millions) | \$4,067 | \$6,089 | \$1,256 | \$1,465 | \$54,593 | May-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | 1.8% | 1.3% | -0.3% | 0.3% | 1.1% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 8.2% | 18.4% | 8.9% | 4.8% | 8.7% | |
| Building Permits (SA, \$millions) | \$1,311 | \$1,087 | \$205 | \$319 | \$8,062 | Jun-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | 2.5% | -8.0% | 21.7% | 40.4% | 2.5% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 28.5% | 9.7% | -10.3% | 64.5% | 22.5% | |
| Housing Starts (SAAR, thousands) | 48 | 34 | 6 | 5 | 222 | Jul-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | 17.6% | 8.1% | 6.1% | -26.4% | 4.4% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 20.0% | 30.9% | -5.2% | -34.0% | 13.6% | |
| International Trade | | | | | | |
| Merchandise Exports (\$millions) | \$3,750 | \$8,169 | \$2,181 | \$1,219 | \$43,794 | Jun-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | -2.8% | -8.4% | -17.0% | -3.5% | -4.1% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 27.1% | 31.1% | 7.4% | 11.5% | 13.6% | |
| Merchandise Imports (\$millions) | \$4,554 | \$2,576 | \$1,076 | \$1,906 | \$50,969 | Jun-17 |
| % ch. from previous month | -0.7% | 3.3% | 7.9% | -2.6% | 0.2% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 9.1% | 25.0% | 44.3% | 9.5% | 10.0% | |
| Demographics | | | | | | |
| Population (estimate) | 4,789,221 | 4,291,980 | 1,161,365 | 1,332,629 | 36,591,241 | Q2 2017 |
| % ch. from previous year | 1.3% | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.6% | 1.2% | |
| Largest Cities (CMAs) | Vancouver (2,548,740) Victoria* (370,899) | Calgary (1,469,341) Edmonton* (1,392,594) | Saskatoon (315,150) Regina* (247,224) | Winnipeg* (811,874) | | 2016 |

* Provincial Capital

¹ Real GDP at basic prices, forecast (Conference Board of Canada Provincial Outlook Executive Summary: Spring 2017)

SA - Seasonally adjusted

SAAR - Seasonally adjusted at annual rates

Sources: Statistics Canada and Conference Board of Canada



UPCOMING EVENTS

| Event | Description | Location | Date |
|---|---|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| BRITISH COLUMBIA | | | |
| Business Leaders Luncheon: Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities | The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce is hosting Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, to discuss how the federal government's infrastructure plan will benefit projects in the Greater Victoria region. | Victoria, BC | Aug. 1, 2017 |
| Business Excellence Series: FinTech | A conference organized by Business in Vancouver (BIV) to help SMEs make informed decisions in the FinTech landscape. | Vancouver, BC | September 12, 2017 |
| Inclusive Business Forum: Leveraging Opportunities to Innovate Human Capital | The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade will host its inaugural Inclusive Business Forum to assist local companies identify talent management strategies. | Vancouver, BC | September 21, 2017 |
| Canadian Mining in a Changing World | The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade is hosting Pierre Gratton, President and CEO of the Mining Association of Canada, to discuss opportunities for the growth of sustainable mining in BC and across Canada. | Vancouver, BC | Sep. 27, 2017 |
| Vancouver Island Economic Summit 2017 | The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance will host a forum for businesses and stakeholders in Nanaimo on how to champion Vancouver Island in the Global Marketplace. | Nanaimo, BC | Sep. 29, 2017 |
| 4th Annual Greater Vancouver Board of Trade Show | The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade Show offers networking opportunities for businesses and individuals, including speeches from industry leaders. | Vancouver, BC | Oct. 24, 2017 |
| ALBERTA | | | |
| National Gathering of Elders 2017 | The first national gathering of elders from all Indigenous groups of Canada. A chance for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to find common ground promoting environmental responsibility and cultural preservation. | Edmonton, AB | September 11-14, 2017 |
| Opportunities North | An Edmonton North Partnership event focused on creating and expanding economic opportunities and partnerships between northern and southern businesses and organizations. Topics will cover business, agriculture, education, tourism, transportation and healthcare. | Edmonton, AB | September 12-14, 2017 |
| EconoUS2017 - Innovation For Shared Prosperity | A workshop event organized by CCED to connect and inspire social innovators from across Canada who share a passion for creating inclusive community economic development. | Calgary, AB | September 13-15, 2017 |
| Health And Life Sciences Showcase | An event featuring educational seminars, pitch presentations, roundtables, vendors and BioAlberta's annual awards gala. | Edmonton, AB | September 20, 2017 |
| Banff Venture Forum | A showcase of hi-tech companies from across North America offering insight into key issues within the industry. A premium networking opportunity and a chance to learn from world-class professionals in the investment community. | Banff, AB | September 21-22, 2017 |



| | | | |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| Aboriginal Business Match | ABM allows business connections to be made by eliminating geographic barriers, condensing time requirements and reducing costs. | Enoch, AB | September 25-27, 2017 |
| 2017 Alberta Climate Summit: Seizing Innovation And Opportunity In A Low-Carbon Economy | The event, hosted by the Pembina Institute, will bring together 500+ thought leaders from industry, government, environmental NGOs and community stakeholders to learn from success stories, identify opportunities and challenges, and explore solutions related to Alberta's clean energy future. | Calgary, AB | September 28, 2017 |
| Rural Alberta Innovation And Learning Commons | A learning commons focused on rural economic and community development attended by councilors, mayors, CAOs, EDOs, community development professionals and students from across the province. | Olds, AB | September 29 - October 1, 2017 |
| 2017 Canadian Inland Ports Conference | The event will investigate the economic and societal importance of existing inland ports and demonstrate the potential economic impact of these inland ports within their region and Canada. | Calgary, AB | October 4-5, 2017 |
| 2017 Calgary Energy Roundtable | This event brings together industry and government leaders to discuss Canada's energy future. | Calgary, AB | October 11, 2017 |
| Second Richard Marceau Energy Symposium | Hosted by the Bowman Centre for Sustainable Energy and Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada (PTAC) to move forward on nation-building sustainable energy projects. | Calgary, AB | October 11-12, 2017 |
| CERI 2017 Electricity Conference | This conference will discuss the opportunities and challenges of greening the Canadian electricity system. | Calgary, AB | October 16-17, 2017 |
| SASKATCHEWAN | | | |
| NSBA 3rd Annual Popcorn & Entrepreneurship Series | The North Saskatchewan Business Association will host their third annual event presented by EY Canada. The event titled "Changing the Pulse of the Province" will celebrate founder and CEO of AGT Foods & Ingredients Inc., Murad Al Katib, who won this year's EY World Entrepreneur of the Year award. | Saskatoon, SK | August 30, 2017 |
| EDCE Entrepreneurial Development Conference and Expo | The event offers insights and opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs. It includes over 20 sessions, workshops and presentations from top industry experts, an interactive small business expo, and 3 one-on-one networking events. | Saskatoon, SK | September 15-16, 2017 |
| MANITOBA | | | |
| International Downtown Association (IDA) 63rd Annual Conference and Tradeshow | Winnipeg will host the 63 rd Annual Conference themed "AuthentiCITY". The tradeshow will be the place for practitioners to study best practices, explore new ideas, network, and share solutions on transforming cities into healthy and vibrant urban places. | Winnipeg, MB | September 13-15, 2017 |
| Projectworld Business Analyst World Winnipeg | A unique industry-leading event that empowers Project Management and Business Analysis professionals with the skills to take their careers to the next level. The Workshops look deeper into Lean, Six Sigma, Agile Environments, Leadership and Essential Tools. | Winnipeg, MB | September 18-21, 2017 |
| Agricultural Bioscience International Conference | A premier global meeting promoting innovation in bioscience to ensure sustainable food, feed, fibre and fuel security as the climate changes. | Winnipeg, MB | September 25-28, 2017 |
| Global Forum 2017: Shaping the Future | The Global Forum is an independent, high profile, international, non-for-profit event dedicated to business | Winnipeg, MB | October 1-3, 2017 |



and policy issues affecting Digital Society. This is the first time in 25 years the forum will be held in Canada and will include more than 300 key policy-makers as well as public/private stakeholders from more than 30 countries.

**Southern Manitoba
Manufacturers' Summit**

This annual event provides a forum for Southern Manitoba manufacturers of all sizes and sub-sectors to explore a balanced approach to long-term social, environmental and economic objectives.

Manitoba

[October 26, 2017](#)

Western Economic Diversification Canada

The role of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is to improve the long-term economic competitiveness of Western Canada by supporting programs and services that enhance innovation, business development, and community economic development. In addition, the department undertakes policy, advocacy, and coordination activities in order to advance the interests of Western Canada in national economic decision-making.