

CHALLENGE
NORTH 2009
Lead the Way



CONFERENCE
PROCEEDINGS

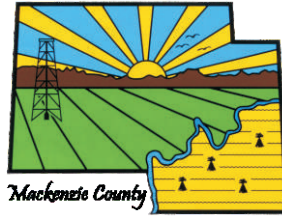
Transitions for a Dynamic Region

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APRIL 22 - 24, 2009

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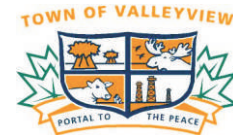
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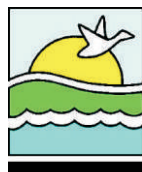
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

Robin Campbell, MLA
West Yellowhead Constituency

June 2009

Message from the Chair

I am pleased to present you with a copy of the Conference Proceedings for the *2009 Challenge North Conference*.

On behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council, I wish to thank each delegate who attended our conference for your contribution to its success.

We commend the City of Cold Lake and the Cold Lake Energy Centre for their commitment to this event by welcoming us to their community and hosting our delegates in their new multi-purpose recreational facility. The successful partnership between the City, Portage College and other stakeholders serves as an example of how communities benefit when collaboration occurs. Our thanks go to the many local businesses, hotels, organizations and sponsors from across the north whose generous contributions enabled us to host this successful event. We truly appreciate your support.

We acknowledge the contribution of each participant who considered the presentations by our expert speakers and worked through the scenarios, during your discussions of the future of Northern Alberta. Your responses are being integrated into the Northern Alberta Development Council's three year work plan.

The discussions and networking that took place at the conference provided an opportunity for northern stakeholders to take ownership of the priorities raised and move them forward. It is important to remember that the conference was the start of a strategic conversation that we hope will continue, and advance the north.

We trust that you will find this report useful as you continue to Lead the Way in your respective communities, and as we transition through these uncertain times and collectively build a dynamic northern region.

Robin Campbell
MLA for West Yellowhead
Chair, Northern Alberta Development Council

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) hosted its tri-annual Challenge North Conference in Cold Lake, Alberta from April 22 to 24, 2009. Challenge North Conferences bring together community leaders, industry, service providers and governments across Northern Alberta, as well as other regions, to develop and share strategic priorities vital to Northern Alberta's future. There were over 230 participants at the conference.

Keynote presentations were made by experts on the volatile economic situation, the merging of economic, social, demographic, technological, and environmental factors which are changing the north, the value of scenarios in understanding the future, and the challenges facing northern communities during times of economic growth or decline.

Three streams: Governance; Community and Culture; and Economy and Environment were presented as concurrent sessions. They were explored using six themes:

- Re-tooling Communities for the 21st Century
- Sustainability Planning
- Planning for Populations
- Exploring Opportunities for Northern and Rural Community Sustainability through Education, Health, and Community Development Policy
- Perspectives on Policy
- Opportunities for Balancing Energy and the Environment

Challenge North 2009 was privileged to welcome Premier Ed Stelmach to the conference. In his speech to the delegates, Premier Stelmach outlined how responsible spending and investment in public infrastructure are part of Alberta's plan to emerge from the economic downturn. He also spoke about the environment, promoting Alberta and its products, and outlined the challenges and opportunities facing the province, and the important role of northern Alberta in meeting these challenges and realizing these opportunities.

For the first time at a Challenge North Conference, a scenario process was used during the working groups to enrich discussion and elevate the conversation on the future of the north. Two scenarios were used: Firing on All Cylinders; and Diverging Paths are scenarios with positives, and positives and negatives respectively. The focal question of the scenarios was: Looking ahead to 2015, how can Northerners build a strong northern economy, protect the northern environment and provide northerners with a high quality of life?

The majority of delegate responses to the Challenge North 2009 scenarios touched on the following topics:

- Support for municipal networking, leadership, knowledge, collaboration and communication
- Municipal funding formulas
- Multi-sector-interdisciplinary networking participation and action
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Energy
- Housing
- Health
- Infrastructure

A panel discussion and question and answer session with Ministers and MLAs closed the conference. For the panel discussion, four delegates shared their observations on the conference proceedings and some of their personal ideas on how northern Alberta can be a leader in the province, especially through the economic downturn. The panel's comments also gave delegates an opportunity to reflect on what they had heard throughout the conference, and what discussions and actions they might take back to their own communities.

The NADC hopes that delegates will work on solutions to the issues they identified. As well, the NADC is integrating the priorities brought forward during the conference into its business plan, to actively address many of the issues identified.

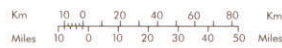
The NADC will provide yearly updates on its progress between the 2009 Challenge North conference and the next Challenge North conference in 2012.

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NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA



Produced by Resource Data Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
Base map provided by Spatial Data Warehouse
February 1999

THE NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a regional development council with a focus on northern development. The NADC acts as a catalyst to identify, prioritize and analyze northern issues and opportunities.

The ten member Council consists of nine public members and is chaired by a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The Council reports through the Chair to the Minister of Alberta Finance and Enterprise.

The NADC works to advance the development of the northern economy through regional initiatives in partnership with the private sector, Aboriginal groups, community-based organizations and other northern jurisdictions and government agencies.

The NADC Mandate

- **Identify priority northern development opportunities and issues**
The NADC consults with Northern Albertans, northern communities, and other regional stakeholders to identify their development priorities.
- **Promote opportunities and address barriers to the North's development**
The NADC is working on initiatives related to transportation, tourism, human resources, infrastructure, value-added agriculture and Aboriginal participation in the economy.
- **Increase northern skill levels**
The NADC sponsors bursary programs for post-secondary students and encourages students to complete high school and pursue further education.

TRI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The NADC hosted its tri-annual Challenge North Conference in Cold Lake, Alberta from April 22 to 24, 2009. This event brought together community leaders, industry, service providers and governments from across Northern Alberta and other jurisdictions to share and develop strategic priorities vital to Northern Alberta's future. There were over 230 participants at the conference.

The first day of the conference included the conference opening, keynote presentations in the morning, and scenario discussions and working groups in the afternoon, followed by a reception hosted by the City of Cold Lake. The second day included concurrent sessions followed by continued scenario discussions in the working groups. It also featured a keynote luncheon address by Alberta's Premier, the Honourable Ed Stelmach, and an evening banquet with performances by the Kehewin Native Dancers and the Poitras Family. The conference concluded on the third day, with a panel of conference participants reflecting on the event, and a question and answer session with Cabinet Ministers and MLAs.

Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead and the Chair of the NADC, reviewed highlights from the three days and gave closing remarks.

CONFERENCE AND REPORT PREPARATION METHODS

Facilitation & Data Collection

During all three days of the conference, NADC staff and Council members, together with staff from Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, acted as facilitators and designated note takers. Facilitators led all the working group sessions. Notes collected from the note takers and facilitators provided details for the presentations, discussions, conclusions and recommendations found within this report. The data has been organized by theme to improve readability.

2009-2010

Hon. Iris Evans
Minister of Finance and Enterprise
MLA for Sherwood Park

Robin Campbell, Chair
MLA for West Yellowhead

Williard Strebchuk
Vice Chair
Whitecourt

Brian Allen
Grimshaw

Sharon Anderson
Gift Lake

Iris Callioux
Peace River

Andre Harpe
Valhalla Centre

Dave Kirschner
Fort McMurray

Joseph Layton
Bonnyville

Andy Neigel
Athabasca

Pat O'Neill
St. Paul

CONFERENCE OPENING

Opening the conference, NADC's Executive Director, Dan Dibbelt, welcomed all attendees to the conference and highlighted NADC projects and accomplishments since the last Challenge North Conference held in High Level in 2006. Some of the highlighted projects included:

- The Northern Highways Strategy
- A study on the economic contributions of the north to Alberta
- Shadow population study
- Housing in Northern Alberta discussion paper and workshops
- Youth initiatives
- Studies on the superiority of northern agriculture products
- Various tourism and health projects
- A new initiative to promote student entrepreneurship and high school completion

Mr. Dibbelt recognized the various organizations present who have partnered with the NADC to advance northern priorities. He called attention to the scenario planning process the NADC prepared for the working group sessions. He invited all participants to read over the two scenarios in the conference package and to seriously consider the scenarios as tools to identify and refine what they perceived as being the shared strategic priorities vital to Northern Alberta's future. Mr. Dibbelt noted that the scenario process may be a method of examining possible futures that participants could take back to their own communities.



NADC Chair and MLA for West Yellowhead, Robin Campbell, shared with delegates his pleasure in being in Cold Lake and the tribute that the Cold Lake Energy Centre is to its community and the surrounding area. The Chair acknowledged the attendance of the Premier and Minister Evans and recognized the Government of Alberta's commitment to the challenges of the region. Mr. Campbell left delegates with a message that he continues to take to his colleagues in the Legislature, "the future of Alberta is northern Alberta" and the NADC is doing a tremendous job of representing northern communities and bringing forward not only the challenges, but also the opportunities.

Aboriginal Elder Ms Agnes Gendron of the Cold Lake First Nation welcomed delegates to the region. She opened with a prayer in her language followed by some words encouraging participants to consider the importance of being mindful of the environment and being thankful for the bountiful resources available in the north.

Following the opening prayer Ms Genia Leskiw, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, welcomed participants to her community. Ms Leskiw indicated that the north needs strong municipalities, and strong connections between communities. She encouraged delegates to share ideas and solutions. Mr. Craig Copeland, Mayor of Cold Lake, also welcomed delegates to the City of Cold Lake and emphasized the diversity of the Cold Lake area. The City is home to the largest airforce base in Canada, a booming oilsands industry and a successful First Nations business community. Mayor Copeland encouraged delegates to return to the region and take advantage of the many tourism opportunities that exist, in particular fishing and other activities available at the lake.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Keynote presentations focussed on: the volatile economic situation; the merging of economic, social, technological, and environmental factors which are changing the north; the potential of using scenarios to understand the future; and the challenges facing small northern communities during times of economic growth or decline. The presentations set the stage for the conference, and for the working group sessions.

ECONOMY IN 2009: NOW WHAT?



Todd Hirsch is a Senior Economist with ATB Financial. He appears regularly as an economic commentator on CBC radio, various TV programs, and in the press. He contributes a monthly column to the Globe & Mail, and writes regularly for Policy Options magazine, Alberta Venture, and other local and national publications.

Overview

Given the very volatile economic situation that has rocked the global economy over the past several months, what can Northerners expect in 2009 and beyond? How will financial systems in the US, Europe and Asia cope with new realities? Will Canada come through this unscathed? What about our economy here at home in Alberta? Todd Hirsch explored what are likely to be the main economic stories of the year, and how Northerners can all prepare to navigate through what may be a difficult year. Mr. Hirsch's presentation focused on what he expected would emerge from the economic situation that has rocked the global economy in late 2008. Mr. Hirsch gave his thoughts on how financial systems in the United States, Europe and Asia would cope with new financial realities and compared how Canada would deal with these same realities. To conclude his presentation Mr. Hirsch gave an overview of Alberta's economy and predicted what might be the main economic stories of the coming year and what Albertans should expect.

Presentation

Mr. Hirsch highlighted his Alberta roots and indicated his regret for not taking the opportunity to experience northern Alberta more often. He thanked the NADC for inviting him to the conference as a keynote speaker and joked that the Council had taken a serious gamble by inviting him, an economist, to provide 'economic intelligence' which some may regard as an oxymoron. Mr. Hirsch indicated that his presentation would provide a look at the wider global economy that has been defined by rapid economic decline, and cited by the International Monetary Fund as being "the worst recession in 60 years in developed nations."

Mr. Hirsch initially focused on the European Union (EU), being the first non-North American region affected by the economic downturn, and pointed out that through 2007 the region was 'growing nicely' when economic difficulties began to arise in mid-2008. Mr. Hirsch attributed this prompt slowdown to the financial crisis that originated across the Atlantic in the United States. He indicated that within a 12 to 18 month period, the EU nations would begin to witness the opening signs of recovery with slower improvement being felt in Ireland and Spain, where both nations had faced serious housing crises and deflated prices.

Moving his focus eastward, Mr. Hirsch noted that China, which saw stellar 10-12% GDP growth during the late 1990s, was in no way immune to the global economic downturn having experienced a 6% drop to GDP growth by the end of 2008. Mr. Hirsch highlighted that China was not alone and that the rest of Asia, particularly India as another rising economic power, was also feeling the economic slowdown. He noted with sympathy that Japan had not had a break after just coming out of a 10 year recession.

Calling attention to the west, Mr. Hirsch outlined the economic situation in North America and particularly the United States' role in the global economic downturn. He cited that since December 2007 the United States had been in 17 months of economic recession marking it as the longest economic recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Delegates were left with a positive outlook, with Mr. Hirsch foreseeing the credit markets eventually opening, signalling a rebound for the beleaguered US economy.

Moving to the Canadian economy, Mr. Hirsch noted that the initial reactions by some Canadian economists, that our country's economy had during the early stages of the current economic crisis 'decoupled' from the US, was proven wrong by the fall of 2008. During this period he noted that the Canadian economy was also plunged into a recession, experiencing a contraction of 3%, deep job losses, and rising unemployment that was quickly catching up to the US. With this, Mr. Hirsch concluded that the Canadian economy was in fact not lucky enough to be immune from the plunging US economy.

Mr. Hirsch cautioned those brazen enough to believe that Alberta would be isolated from the global economy. As with the rest of Canada, this proved to be wishful thinking with the Alberta economy contracting as crude oil and natural gas prices were 'falling off the cliff'. A return of the housing market and the unfortunate impact of extreme weather would be the most likely reasons for commodity prices to rise and send Alberta's economy into a boom once again.

Mr. Hirsch described the current economic situation as seeing low and stable inflation and low borrowing and mortgage rates. These rates are at an all time low since 1992. He believes that this recession is more manageable than previous ones for Albertans because of a balanced labour market unlike before where Alberta was suffering from a labour shortage with 3% unemployment. He also suggested that the current 5.5% unemployment is considered healthy and full employment.

When asked what would characterize the economic forecast of coming years, Mr. Hirsch closed with the following four possible scenarios, with the last being the most likely:

1. A sharp downturn followed by a sharp rebound up
2. A downturn followed by a soft upturn in 2009, another downturn and then by another upturn by 2010
3. A sharp decrease and then a flat line as Japan experienced in the 1990s
4. A sharp drop followed by a slow and steady recovery

To conclude, Mr. Hirsch outlined the current situation of the economy by looking to 'the bright side of things.' He suggested that the province of Alberta has the best opportunity for growth due to its resource based economy, making the recession less severe than elsewhere in Canada and the world.

MOBILIZING THE NORTH: EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT, TECHNO-SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Dr. Michael Mehta is the founding Principal of Richardson College for the Environment and Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Winnipeg. He specializes in environmental policy and has spent the past 20 years exploring the intersection of science and society. Dr. Mehta is the author and editor of five books on topics such as nanotechnology, nuclear safety, biotechnology, risk and regulation, and environmental issues. He is the co-founder of the Environmental Studies Association of Canada and is on numerous editorial boards and research management committees.

Overview

As many Canadians are beginning to appreciate, the North is at the cusp of a modern-day renaissance where several economic, social, technological and environmental factors are combining in unique ways. Unlike the South where the introduction of techno-social change occurred in a relatively unplanned way, the North has an opportunity to coordinate developments in a phased-in manner so as to maximize benefit to the communities in the region. Dr. Mehta focussed on how these various opportunities could be conceptualized. He also presented his thoughts on the best approaches for introducing new technologies so as to minimize social dislocation and environmental damage. He highlighted how sound strategic planning in the North requires a delicate balancing act between several competing values.

Presentation

Dr. Mehta spoke of the importance of a balance between economic, social, environmental and technological aspects during northern Alberta's rapid growth and expansion. He characterized the situation in northern Alberta as an economic renaissance; where communities now require the coordination and re-balancing of systems to find a sustainability "sweet spot". In Dr. Mehta's opinion, northern Alberta's current "sweet spot" is too small and not in the right place to be sustainable.

There are several issues coming with northern Alberta's increasing contribution to the Provincial GDP that make it a leader not only in Alberta, but in Canada. Dr. Mehta pointed out that northern Alberta's GDP alone is larger than some provinces and territories, but the region is still saddled with low quality of life ratings. He questioned why this is.

Dr. Mehta asserted that there are many complex and intertwined issues underlying northern Alberta's economic growth. Finding the balance between the core issues and capitalizing on social capital are the answers to improving northern Alberta's quality of life. According to Dr. Mehta key issues that need to be addressed are:

- Climate vs. energy
- The understanding of population trends
- The exclusion of Aboriginal populations
- The exclusion of shadow populations
- Decreases in health services
- Increases in criminal code violations
- Decreases in the number of skilled workers with higher levels of education
- Low levels of civic engagement

In previous sustainability models, the balance between economic, social and environmental issues has always been considered. Dr. Mehta proposed that adding an emphasis on technology and innovation to our social model is prudent and unavoidable for northern Alberta. He spoke of Alberta as being on the cusp of technological advances, and called it a leader in areas such as genomics, nanotechnology, and carbon capture and its management. But he pointed out that very little of the research is northern-focused or conducted in the north. He suggested that northerners be creative and lobby politicians to find and fund solutions to northern problems.

Dr. Mehta also pointed out that economic and environmental sides do not have to be in constant opposition. He added that Alberta has experienced some positive progress in relation to the environment but that research and innovation dollars for energy tend to follow the boom and bust cycle. He commented on the economic impacts of energy production (hydro, wind, etc) and how their introduction to a community or region can impact the surrounding social structure as well. Using innovative tools in technology can bring the environmental, economic and social spheres into balance.

In closing, Dr. Mehta spoke of how northern Alberta is in a perfect place to look at all the issues (in the model) to coordinate sensitive development of the region. He applauded the use of scenario development, as it offers a unique opportunity to look at the overlapping dimensions and review outcomes. He proposed that northerners visualize the interconnection of our competing values and interests and the possibility of maximizing the "sweet spot" in the scenario discussions. Dr. Mehta suggested some topics to explore could be:

- Growing population
- Sophisticated/skilled population
- Core values
- Rebranding opportunity
- Natural resources
- Well established social capital
- Need to maintain social safety net in hand with protection of planet

Dr. Mehta's final thoughts were that invaluable opportunities will present themselves in the north in the 21st century. Northern values and opportunities can and will be unique from those of the south and the north can decide that its social, cultural and environmental capital does not come at any cost.

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE



Rick Samotej is currently Superintendent (Supt.) of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and assigned to the post of District Commander, Eastern Alberta District, "K" Division. His other responsibilities include Emergency Response Team Commander, Adjudicator for dispute resolution for promotions and discharge and demotion boards, and from time to time, a Security Officer for V.I.P. security.

Presentation

Superintendent Samotej discussed the potential impacts of boom – bust economic cycles on community policing. He outlined his experiences as a young officer based in a NWT community. Initially there was little demand for policing services until mineral exploration increased within the region.

Residents had looked forward to the potential prosperity and economic benefits, however, along with increased prosperity came an overwhelming range of problems. There was a shift from what was acceptable behavior. He had to arrest people that he had previously socialized with and a rarely used jail became a revolving door for residents. There was increased alcoholism, family violence, assaults, theft, and soft drug use. Families began to break down and children began to suffer. Issues that were not initially police issues became police issues.

Supt. Samotej spoke of how the community was not prepared for a large scale economic expansion. The response of the community was fragmented and social problems persisted and band-aid solutions were tried and failed. He asked the audience if northerners are any better prepared today for rapid economic growth or decline. Both events can have negative impacts on unprepared communities. Economic downturns are also associated with increased stress, depression, suicide, alcoholism and assaults.

Northerners tend not to be prepared to address the social implications of a rising or falling economy and end up having to catch up after the fact. Developing safe communities is not just a policing issue. The north needs to work together. The hope is that quotes such as: “Did you know that one quarter of the cars on Alberta’s roads after 2 A.M. have at least one occupant that has been drinking?” and “Organized gangs are becoming common” will become less prevalent.

Supt. Samotej reviewed several examples of how programs can work including the cadet program in Hobbema. The organizers thought they might have fifty youth involved. The program now has more than 1,000. The cadet program has widespread community support and it provides youth a sense of belonging and achievement.

He concluded that to be successful in developing safe communities:

- Programs must be widely supported by the community, not individually based, to be effective and have continuity;
- Communities must ensure that they have programs for all youth, as well as for those at risk; and
- Communities must ensure that stakeholders are working together and there is accountability.

INTRODUCTION TO SCENARIOS



Arden Brummell and Greg MacGillivray are Managing Directors of Scenarios to Strategy Inc. (S2S), a consulting firm that helps organizations have important conversations by providing scenario planning, strategy and facilitation services. Mr. Brummell has over 30 years experience in strategic management, corporate development and academic research. His particular focus is on scenario planning facilitation to promote organizational learning and strategic business development. He participated on the original scenario

development team at Shell Canada and later became head of scenario and strategic studies. In 1995, Mr. Brummell established his own consulting company and in 1996, he founded Global Business Network Canada. Greg MacGillivray has over 20 years of energy-focused experience in the private and public sectors and has strong strategic and commercial expertise. After establishing S2S, Mr. MacGillivray worked with clients such as Suncor, the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, Emera Inc., Alberta Employment Immigration and Industry, the City of Calgary, Edmonton Airports, Industry Canada and Alberta Environment.

Both assisted the NADC in refining the scenarios used at Challenge North 2009 and in developing the discussion questions.

Presentation

A distinguishing feature of the 2009 Challenge North conference was the use of scenarios for the breakout session discussions. Before the start of the sessions, Arden Brummell and Greg MacGillivray of Scenarios to Strategy Inc. introduced delegates to the scenario process and the scenarios being used in the breakout sessions. Mr. Brummell noted that scenarios help individuals and organizations think broadly and make better, more informed, strategic decisions. This fits well with the intent of the breakout session discussions, where delegates would be invited to identify and come to a shared understanding of strategic priorities, as well as develop ideas on specific actions they themselves could undertake.

Mr. Brummell pointed out the dilemma of “even though we do not know the future, we are required to act.” He outlined the difference between forecasting (may not be accurate, based on consensus views, assumes tomorrow is similar to today) and scenarios (alternative stories about potential paths from the present to the future). Scenarios focus on key issues and uncertainties, which is valuable in identifying and evaluating strategic options. He illustrated this with a quote from Peter Drucker:

“Strategic planning does not deal with future decisions,
but with the futurity of present decisions.”

Next, Mr. MacGillivray outlined the scenario development process used by the NADC in preparation for the conference breakout sessions. In 2008 a survey and focus groups were completed with participants from a wide range of communities and sectors.

These helped identify the 'driving forces' that are important dimensions of change in northern Alberta (See Appendix A, Chart 1). He noted that some forces may result in outcomes that are somewhat predictable, while others are highly uncertain. Northerners may have influence on how some driving forces play out and little or no influence on others.

Of the driving forces, two forces were seen as having the highest impact and greatest uncertainty:

- **Direction**, which referred to the leadership and policies developed nationally, provincially and locally that affect northern Alberta, and ranged from **Adaptive** to **Aimless**.
- **Region**, ranging from **Dynamic** to **Declining**, and which referred to the degree that northerners are maximizing the environment, economy, and quality of life objectives of northern Alberta.

These two critical uncertainties were used to develop the scenario framework (See Appendix A, Chart 2), which then helped define distinctly different possible futures for northern Alberta. In collaboration with S2S and staff from Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, the NADC developed two scenarios, **Firing on All Cylinders** and **Diverging Paths**, which reflected possible futures for northern Alberta in 2015, and questions for the Challenge North breakout sessions. Mr. MacGillivray highlighted the key characteristics of each of these scenarios, captured in Table 1 below. The full scenarios are included in Appendix B.

Table 1: Comparison of Scenarios

Firing on All Cylinders	Diverging Paths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Successful region, one of the most competitive in the world</i> • <i>Protection of the environment</i> • <i>Traditional sectors doing well</i> • <i>Diversified economy has created stability</i> • <i>The importance of the north is recognized</i> • <i>Aboriginal people are an integral part</i> • <i>Adapting to global challenges</i> • <i>But more must be done</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stark opposites</i> • <i>Many parts of the economy are booming</i> • <i>Concerns about environment damage</i> • <i>Technological changes impact traditional industries</i> • <i>Stresses on communities are enormous</i> • <i>Services are suffering</i> • <i>Concern about quality of life</i> • <i>Could spiral out of control</i>

Mr. MacGillivray then discussed the focal question that would be posed to delegates: **Looking ahead to 2015, how can we build a strong northern economy, protect the northern environment and provide northerners with a high quality of life?** He highlighted the potential of using this process in individual communities and then reviewed the questions that would be used in the breakout sessions.



RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE CITY OF COLD LAKE

The City of Cold Lake hosted delegates and treated them to a traditional fish fry at the Cold Lake Golf and Winter Club on the 4-Wing Base. A showcase of innovative regional projects and partnerships were on display for delegates to discuss and share ideas on innovative projects currently underway in the north.

Delegates were invited to submit examples of projects in their communities that are Leading the Way in northern Alberta. The following are some examples delegates shared about community partnerships, tourism projects and a local educational program.

- North Face Canadian Death Race, hosted annually by the town of Grande Cache, is the largest adventure running race in Canada. The race is coupled with a festival that attracts throngs of tourist to the area each August long weekend.
- Built up from a very small group of individuals and now in its 9th year, the Lakeland Industry and Community Association (LICA) involves members from 6 community groups working together to meet the needs of all stakeholders within the Lakeland region.
- The Fallen Four Memorial Park in Mayerthorpe has produced an amazing tourism facility and has allowed visitors the opportunity to pay their respects and visit the town.
- Portage College has successfully implemented a Practical Nursing Program at their Cold Lake Campus. Their first class will graduate 25 certified LPNs, with 30 additional students starting this year.
- The Town of Athabasca successfully partnered with their County to build and operate a new multiplex facility.
- Travel Alberta, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Alberta Economic Development came together to produce and market Aboriginal tourism in 2003. Since then, they have developed over 90 products and experiences recorded in 3 regional booklets, with up to 100 more listed on the Travel Alberta website.



PREMIER'S SPEECH TO CHALLENGE NORTH 2009



Premier Ed Stelmach has a long record of public and community service. He has been a school trustee, chair of the Vegreville health unit board and member of the Archer Memorial Hospital and Lamont Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home boards. Honourable Stelmach was involved with the Andrew Co-op Association, Lamont District 4-H Council and Andrew 4-H Beef Club. In 1993 Mr. Stelmach entered provincial politics and was elected MLA in the Vegreville-Viking constituency. He has held

four cabinet posts, including Agriculture, Infrastructure, Transportation, and lastly International and Intergovernmental Relations. In 2006 he became Premier of Alberta.

In his speech, Honourable Ed Stelmach outlined how responsible spending and investment in public infrastructure are part of Alberta's plan to emerge from the economic downturn. He also spoke about the environment, promoting Alberta and its products, and outlined the challenges and opportunities facing the province, and the important role of northern Alberta in meeting these challenges and realizing these opportunities. The Premier focused on the many challenges we face that are province-wide. He praised the work and collaboration between ministries and partners to "tackle diverse issues like mountain pine beetle and physician recruitment and retention." The Premier stressed that "ad hoc planning is a luxury we can no longer afford" and discussed the need for "coordinated development to support the prosperity and quality of life we all strive for." The cumulative effects environmental management approach that the province is pioneering was highlighted, as it considers all the impacts of development across the region.

The Premier encouraged delegates to continue working together, collaborating with partners and the NADC and through innovation, secure future success for the region.

For the full text of Premier Stelmach's speech to delegates, visit www.premier.alberta.ca.

BANQUET

Delegates enjoyed an evening of live entertainment following an evening supper hosted by the Northern Alberta Development Council. Northern Alberta's Aboriginal heritage was shared through the storytelling and dance performance of the Kehewin Native Dance Theatre group. The performance included the Eagles Gift of the Dance and a sharing of oral histories of the various Pow Wow dances, including a vibrant display of the Men's Traditional, Women's Southern Traditional, Grass Dance and the dynamic contemporary Hoop Dance. Musical performances by two talented northern Alberta Métis fiddling artists, Cory and Kelsey Poitras, wrapped up the evening entertainment.



MINISTER EVANS' SPEECH TO CHALLENGE NORTH 2009



Iris Evans is Alberta's Minister of Finance and Enterprise. She has been MLA for Sherwood Park since 1997 and has held several portfolios during her 11 years with government, including Municipal Affairs, Children's Services, Health and Wellness and most recently Employment, Immigration and Industry.

Minister Evans opened her speech by thanking delegates for the welcome reception they gave to Premier Stelmach and the quality of the questions they asked. She noted that "The premier left the conference with a good feeling and a big smile." Minister Evans stressed the importance of hearing what people are thinking about. She encouraged the audience to be honest with comments and questions, and to let the government know exactly what issues they face.

Focusing next on the scenarios used in the conference, she noted that delegates would be reviewing scenarios where things go well, and where they do not. She urged delegates to really put themselves into these situations, and to consider policy and ways to solve the problems. "You have a chance to really think through how we move forward, to what vision and where we want to go". She acknowledged that scenarios are tough exercises, because it is so easy to see the barriers and our own inadequacies. But, she suggested that delegates as a group can come to a shared perspective.

Minister Evans commented that much of Alberta's wealth is generated in rural and northern Alberta. But it is not just about wealth. She noted that many people assume incorrectly that the north does not really care about the environment. Albertans, northern Albertans especially, care deeply about the environment.

She reinforced the notion that it is important to continue giving MLAs the very best possible advice by telling them how they can help strip away barriers. "We are not going to do it for you, you have to do what is right for yourselves. The solutions for northern Albertan challenges will come from northern Alberta. If we do not capture your vision right away, keep pushing us until we get it."

Building the north is going to require vision, and young people celebrating that vision. Minister Evans suggested delegates pass the knowledge they gained at the conference to children and others as a way to sow important seeds from this conference. She noted that politicians are here to help, but not in a way that smothers the vision. The real tools of a community lie within the people of the community themselves.

Minister Evans concluded with further encouragement to delegates to build scenarios as a way to meet the challenges and overcome barriers. "Remember, the answers are in your heart and in your soul and in your mind. Keep giving us the answers and just maybe we will get the questions right."

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Concurrent sessions allowed delegates to explore, in much greater depth, many of the issues brought forward by the keynote presenters. Three streams: Governance; Community and Culture; and Economy and Environment, were explored in concurrent sessions on six themes:

- Re-tooling Communities for the 21st Century
- Sustainability Planning
- Planning for Populations
- Exploring Opportunities for Northern and Rural Community Sustainability through Education, Health, and Community Development Policy
- Perspectives on Policy
- Opportunities for Balancing Energy and the Environment

Delegates were able to attend two of the sessions.

RE-TOOLING COMMUNITIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



Dr. Avi Friedman is a professor of Architecture and director of the Affordable Homes Program at the McGill University School of Architecture. He is known nationally and internationally for his housing innovation and in particular for the Grow Home and Next Home designs. He is the author of seven books on housing and a syndicated columnist for the CanWest Chain of daily newspapers. He is a practicing architect and the recipient of numerous awards including the Manning Innovation Award and the United Nations World Habitat Award. In the year 2000 he was selected by Wallpaper magazine as 1 of 10 people from around the world “most likely to change the way we live.”

Dr. Friedman pointed to recent socio-demographic, economic, environmental, and cultural transformations that have brought on the need to rethink community design and build to make communities sustainable. He noted that this is more essential in light of the current issues we face, including: waning of downtowns, depopulation, high housing costs and a lack of affordable options, aging population, difficulty attracting young families and climate change.

Issues in our economic system that reflect little appreciation for sustainability were questioned by Dr. Friedman. For example, why would Alberta buy beef from Argentina? He criticized a trend that communities have often built themselves away from each other and lack structure. While streets could be built to recognize multiple uses by cars, pedestrians and riders, many streets have been designed mostly for cars. According to Dr. Friedman, the result of such poor design is that it prevents bonding in small communities and walking short distances. In describing the importance of town centres, he said, as with every home “towns need living rooms” too. He noted his involvement with various northern communities (e.g. the villages of Nampa and St. Isidore in Northern Sunrise County) with community planning projects and how impressed he is with the geography and can-do spirit unique to Alberta communities.

To make communities sustainable, Dr. Friedman suggested key actions ranging from planning, housing and business expansion, and reduction of our environmental footprint. Engaging communities, he noted, is critical to this end. He urged communities to develop innovative ways to beautify and reinvigorate their downtowns, adding that this becomes crucial when box stores are present. Communities need to be a place where the young and old can live together.

With the problem of high housing cost in many of the northern communities, he suggested that communities should take action in expanding affordable housing to attract young people, new graduates and families who may not qualify for a high mortgage to buy a home. Also, this can attract young people interested in starting their businesses, who otherwise may be prevented by expensive housing. Dr. Friedman indicated that misconceptions that affordable housing is meant for poor people need to change, and that we have to make the cost of infrastructure cheaper, diversify housing designs (e.g., build homes with or without cabinets) if we want young people be homeowners. In illustrating what affordable housing may look like, Dr. Friedman referenced “The Grow Home” concept that he designed almost two decades ago. This design, which lends itself to adjustments to meet future changes in owner's life circumstances and space needs, as well as budget, has been built across North America, Europe and adapted for the developing world.

On the economic side of community development, he encouraged diversification of wealth generators by developing new and local enterprises and supporting business development for self sustained community prosperity. In achieving these, a well-connected transportation network system that also enables “workability” is paramount to economic prosperity, as people are able to easily access their needs. Dr. Friedman pointed to unexplored potential in rural communities such as farm tours to generate incomes for seniors living on their farms. Dr. Friedman suggested cultural activities that enrich community living (e.g., travel via RVs), and designs and activities that encourage a sense of community. He suggested lessening our impact on the environment, by using green energy sources and by being energy efficient. He also believed that any attempts to reduce emissions should support riding and walking.

Dr. Friedman's last words pointed to the thought that all efforts at re-tooling communities should be driven by sustainability principles that seek to integrate economic, societal, cultural and environmental aspects into community building. Master planning with communities as active stakeholders is critical to establishing sustainable communities.

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING



Joanne McGill is the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's Provincial Coordinator of the Municipal Sustainability Planning Initiative. This position is responsible for the effective operation of the AUMA's Municipal Sustainability Planning (MSP) Initiative, Phase 4, by providing provincial support, direction and knowledge-sharing for Alberta municipalities that are developing Municipal Sustainability Plans.

Ms McGill provided an overview of AUMA's Municipal Sustainability Planning (MSP) model, which includes guides and tools that provide capacity support to communities in planning sustainably. In this MSP, sustainability is defined as “living in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. Unlike many models of sustainability, the MSP approach considers governance important, in addition to economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions, for achieving sustainability. The inclusion of governance was because community support, buy-in, champions and support from governments are indispensable. Also, the interdependence and balance of all five dimensions is what makes communities sustainable.

This MSP process is built on the premise of 'systems thinking' which holds that the component parts of a system are better understood in their relationship with each other and other systems, rather than in isolation. According to Ms McGill, the MSP is best described as strategic business planning that:

- Identifies short, medium, and long term actions for implementation
- Tracks and monitors progress
- Is reviewed and revised on an annual basis
- Provides guidance for the development or alignment of all municipal plans and documents

This process, she said, involves the process of back casting on the past, looking at today and establishing a vision and success indicators for the future. As well, it involves mobilizing support and resources for an action plan that would be implemented and monitored. Opportunities to strengthen social networks through community engagement are vital to this process.

The MSP seeks to enable coordinated planning to reduce contradictory policies and missed opportunities, to leverage maximum resources, and to enhance cost savings and financial resilience through governance excellence. It can guide other plans such as: community and municipal development, capital and economic development, and recreation plans. Ms McGill reported that several regions and individual communities are involved with the MSP, including the Grande Alberta Economic Region, Taber and area, Town of Swan Hills, City of Grande Prairie and area and the Town of Peace River.

According to Ms McGill, the great thing about the MSP as a tool is that it is adaptable to any community, geography and demographic. However, for the MSP to be effective several success ingredients may need to be followed, which include:

- Citizen engagement
- Effective governance through public participation
- Transparency and accountability
- Advancing projects that support common good of citizens
- Creating opportunities for developing capacity and leadership
- Patiently investing time in the MSP process

Next steps on the MSP include collaboration with participating communities to draw and share their experiences across the province, follow up with pilot MSP communities, and ongoing refinement of the MSP tool kit. The AUMA intends to continue to incorporate lessons into policy and to collaborate with projects, and further develop the MSP website.

Tania Sprong works with the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's Municipal Sustainability Initiative as the Community Coordinator for the Town of Taber, Town of Vauxhall and Village of Barnwell in Southern Alberta. Prior to joining AUMA, Ms Sprong was the lead for the sustainability process for the Town of Taber. Ms Sprong brings leadership and a collaborative approach to sustainability planning along with an unabashed enthusiasm for the ability of small towns.

Ms Sprong, offered insights into the Town of Taber's "Simple As Dirt" project, a new model for small rural urban centre sustainability which has seen considerable success. The Town of Taber felt they needed to reshuffle the MSP to fit their small population of approximately 7,600 and to recognize the importance of social infrastructure and networks for community development within their model. Research, social networks, government involvement, reaching out to allies and creativity has helped make their efforts to create a plan that works 'simple as dirt.' Within the 'Simple as Dirt' model, sustainability is perceived as complex, yet simple, where "dirt is a metaphor for how a community should be built... from the top down." Various layers in the model were adapted from the AUMA tool kit to fit all dimensions considered crucial for sustainability, which are:

'Simple as Dirt' Layers

- Social participation
- Population health
- Economic vitality
- Sustainable community design

AUMA's MSP Tool Kit Dimensions

- Social and governance
- Social, culture and economy
- Culture, economy and governance
- Environment and governance

Within the model, the population health layer encompasses recreation and leisure whereas economic vitality is hoped to be achieved through revitalizing their downtown.

Ms Sprong emphasized the importance of building social networks and being conscious of the order in which conversations occur. Existing social networks need to be identified and including them in the process will serve communities well. She encouraged building partnership with various municipalities, institutions and stakeholders.

Guiding the 'Simple As Dirt' model is Four Rs, which Ms Sprong described as:

- Research - find the needed format and data
- Reshuffle – find the good bits and use them
- Reuse – existing plans and documents (e.g. Strategic plans and MDPs)
- Reach out – find allies and engage them

She concluded by adding that, in the 'Simple As Dirt' process, respect for the values of small and remote towns, building social networks through coffee shop networks/meetings, and making time for one-on-one conversations to build trust are valuable. Further, she energetically encouraged creativity, the undertaking of small projects of mutual benefit to residents to break down turf protection and stimulate alliances, and as well, to take time to celebrate success. Ms Sprong challenged delegates to take leadership and not to be fearful of the process, since mistakes are part of the learning process, and that accountability is necessary for success.

PLANNING FOR POPULATIONS



Shawna Benson is the Communications Director for the County of Stettler. She has been involved with advocating for youth and rural communities on the National Rural Youth Network Council, the Alberta Rural Youth Council, the Rural Development Strategy Task Force, the Prime Minister Advisory Council for the New Deal for Cities and Communities. She has mentored many communities in the quest to involve youth.

Ms Benson provided an overview of millennial youth, focusing on their key characteristics and expectations, and how communities can successfully engage them. She indicated that today's youth are the largest generation to date, well-educated, nonjudgmental, socially connected and open minded. They are also technology savvy, achievement oriented, very passionate and confident and believe that the best ideas come from everyday. As well, they have a coddling syndrome.

Characterizing their expectations, the youth desire respect, honesty, great role models and flexibility (without excessive meeting protocols), as they are challenged and linked to collective causes with limited durations, accompanied by recognition after completion and fun.

Ms Benson indicated that engaging youth with so many expectations in the community or organizations will require:

- defined leadership
- clear expectations
- job descriptions with room for creativity and acting on their input
- an environment that promotes diversity – e.g., in age, race and gender
- changes to bureaucratic organizational structures to suit their non-traditional flexible outlook on life
- immediate response to their inquiries (using techno-savvy instruments)
- slow mentoring to leadership and ownership
- plenty of incentives (e.g., food, T-shirts, reference letters when needed)
- positive feedback in front of their peers
- fun events such as concerts, competitions and games



Jacquie Eales is the lead author of a chapter on age-friendly rural communities in a recently published book 'Rural Ageing: A good place to grow old?' edited by Dr. Norah Keating. She has a graduate degree in aging and has spent over 13 years managing the Research on Aging, Policies and Practice Centre in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta.

The face of rural communities is changing; older adults (age 65+) presently comprise 11% of the population in rural Alberta. Ms Eales presented on ways to engage seniors, in view of their potential contribution to community development. She indicated that the population of seniors 65+ is growing, with estimates of 1 in 5 individuals being a senior by 2030, and that this ratio is expected to be higher in rural communities. The majority (93%) of seniors live outside nursing homes and are generally busy, with some (26%) helping other seniors and babysitting. In detailing some of the assets of seniors, she cited their broad community networks, skills and time, and being a large support base to local businesses, community centres, non-for-profit organizations and churches.

Ms Eales illustrated many ways to better engage seniors in the community. For example, advertizing a range of opportunities, asking seniors what they can do, and allowing for flexibility due to their already busy lives, while assisting them in securing the resources to carry out tasks. More strategies in engaging seniors, particularly stoic seniors (reserved, independent, practical, typically with strong work ethics) were provided, including: offering short-term practical projects; advertizing people needing help with projects such as, pruning a tree or making a bird house., She also suggested the option to work beyond age 65. Ms Eales shared various ideas surrounding community events that seniors could be involved in, including: meals on wheels programs, Pioneer Days, art shows, fundraising, tourism booths, grandmothers tutoring native families, and food and music awards.

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NORTHERN AND RURAL COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY



Zane Hamm is a doctoral candidate in Education Policy Studies with a specialization in Adult Education. She has a BEd and MEd in International/Global Education Policy Studies from the University of Alberta. Her research interests include rural youth migration and mobility, intergenerational/intercultural learning, community health, and the interconnections between identity and land, food, and community.

Ms Hamm focused on her academic research including current issues of youth, the reasons for staying in their communities, and tools for retaining and engaging youth in rural communities. She also discussed the need to attract what she called “urbaners”, emphasizing depopulation and youth out-migration as features of rural communities. She noted that amongst the 15 to 24 age group, 55% are moving to urban areas. She cited inheritance and help for a family as the frequent reasons why people stay, adding that youth are likely to return if they feel they can make a difference and the ability exists to connect globally through the internet.

She suggested various strategies to curb the population loss of rural communities:

- increasing awareness of intergenerational assets through collective open dialogue between generations about the past and developing shared vision and actions
- exploring options with the youth for their future and connecting them to training, reciprocal mentorship and employment
- facilitating a collective understanding of the complexity of local issues
- assessing and monitoring an individual's own learning and responses to the local issues

To help rural communities keep their youth, Ms Hamm advised they showcase creative and artistic expressions, recognize and build diverse role models and celebrate successes. She also recommended involving youth in policy development. To engage youth in policy she suggested Civic Scenarios - which may involve dramatic representation of problems and solutions- , interviews between adults and youth, appreciative inquiry and story telling to map out achievements and unexplored potentials, and critical policy analysis to probe and identify underlying assumptions.

PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY



Mark Lisac is an author with over 35 years in media work in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and winner of the 2005 Wilfred Eggleston Award for Non-Fiction from the Alberta Writers Club. He is editor and publisher of *Insight into Government*, an independent weekly newsletter on government and politics in Alberta.

Mr. Lisac's presentation focussed on the environmental issues in the oil and gas sector and the roles of citizens and outsiders in fostering resource development that is environmentally friendly. He reported on the global community's strong influence in governing Alberta's resources, highlighting that Alberta has not only been responding very well to environmental concerns, but the impacts of global opinion have been underestimated.

There is concern that messages labelling Canada's oil as "dirty oil" could have serious consequences. Mr. Lisac stated that people become involved in environmental causes when it is an ethical concern, when it directly impacts them, and when they think they are able to make a difference. He warned that outsiders can influence changes; however, he encouraged northerners as insiders to take the lead and push governments to maximize environmental sustainability.



Heather Kennedy is Assistant Deputy Minister of the Alberta Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat. She is a metallurgical engineer, who has worked in engineering and management roles in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. Ms Kennedy started working at Suncor in 1996. She was appointed Vice President of Employee and Community Relations in July, 2003 and assumed the role of Vice President of Operational Excellence in March of 2007.

Heather Kennedy identified the efforts of Alberta's government and industry in addressing unwanted impacts from oil sands development, recognizing the benefits to the economy from the sector and the fact that this comes with some pain. She identified the challenges of achieving a sustainable balance between economic, social and environmental aspects, and the continued license from community and government if the oil sands sector passes the environmental and social responsibility test. With oil sands development still at inception, efforts towards environmental management are critical. This is also the rationale for the government's "Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands," released in February 2009, which aims to create an integrated approach for all levels of government, for industry, and for communities to address the economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities in the oil sands regions. The plan looks at a wide variety of aspects relating to the management of oil sands regions, and will, among other things, create vibrant communities with support for future growth; optimize economic growth and environmental stewardship through progressive reclamation; promote effective relationships between government and communities; and reconcile the interests of Aboriginal people and others; and enhance accountability.

Questions raised by delegates included the usefulness of a carbon credit, global determinants of the energy market for Alberta's oil, energy prospects for powering oil sands operations, and reconciling differing views on oil sands development. Ms Kennedy indicated that we need to determine the effectiveness of carbon credits over time; that the size of vacant US oil fields is not likely to impact Albertan's oil sands since long term contracts have been made and most refineries are tooled for

oil sands operations. Alternative energy sources and efficient uses of energy for oil sands operations are needed, as the use of gas becomes excessive. The increased public outcry on the dangers of the oil sector push industry and government to be better; and while actual oil sands development is somewhere between the portrayals seen by the public, it needs to be made more attractive to enhance community support.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BALANCING ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



***Bruce Carson** is the first Executive Director of the Canada School of Energy and Environment (CSEE). He comes to the position after more than two decades in politics. In his most recent role as Senior Policy Adviser to Prime Minister Harper, he has spent the last two and a half years working on policy in both the Energy and Environment portfolios.*

Central to Mr. Carson's presentation was Canada's environmental sustainability and the energy industry. Noting that the potential for permanence of the 'dirty oil' tag to Canada's oil can affect export revenue, Mr. Carson suggested it is all the more reason to get oil sands activity cleaner for all stakeholders. He reported that creating a balance of economy and environment may be challenging, but that Canada is far more advanced on climate change measures than the discussions between Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and US President Barak Obama in early 2009 point to. Mr. Carson also spoke to how investments in carbon capture and technology can help offset risks to the energy industry. Mr. Carson identified various projects underway, including smart east-to-west north-to-south electrical grids, efficient transmissions, Alberta's cap and trade, as well as the technology fund, which other jurisdictions are seeking to follow. He recommended further diversification and value-added activity.



***Brent Lakeman** is Manager of the Carbon and Energy Management Business Unit at the Alberta Research Council (ARC). Brent manages the ARC's programs targeted at storing CO₂ in deep geological formations and on developing technology alternatives for cleaner energy from fossil fuels. Prior to joining the ARC, Brent worked with Alberta Environment and Alberta Energy for over 13 years on energy-related air issues.*

Mr. Lakeman's presentation focused on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) and the opportunities and barriers it faces as a tool for environmental management. He also spoke to enhanced oil recovery (EOR). Mr. Lakeman noted that the benefits of geologic carbon sequestration are far reaching. CO₂ enhances oil, coal methane and gas recovery, and allows for deep disposal of carbon. CCS holds the potential for a greater role over the course of the next century.

Mr. Lakeman noted that Western Canada's sedimentary basin is quite suitable for carbon storage and emissions compared to other parts of the country. Industrial facilities are a prominent source of carbon emissions, and chemical, gas, ammonia plants, and oilsands upgrading are notable CO₂ opportunities. He also identified potential issues with CCS:

- Value-adding to CO₂ to improve its economics
- Supply of CO₂ outstripping the enhanced oil recovery market
- High costs of CO₂ capture and cost-sharing for pipeline infrastructure
- Responsibility for monitoring long term storage security and their liability
- Improving stakeholder and public confidence and acceptability

Further, he observed some oil sands industries withdrawing their participation in pilot projects, greater urgency in the US for greenhouse gas reductions, and global efforts to pilot CCS as a continental energy strategy.

Mr. Lakeman pointed to efforts of the Alberta government to encourage CCS through royalty relief and tax credits for pilot projects, and opportunities for trading offsets. Alberta is also requiring industries to demonstrate monitoring and learning from existing pilots (e.g., TransAlta Pioneer - Wabanum Area Storage Project, Heartland Area Redwater Project and Enbridge/EPCOR Alberta Saline Aquifer Project). The Government's \$2 billion commitment - the largest in the world - will accelerate development of CCS, and the necessary regulatory framework. CO₂ monitoring expectations and steps to address long term liability are under development.

Mr. Lakeman described CCS as a high cost greenhouse gas mitigation option. He concluded that the enhanced resource recovery from it is desirable, and that Alberta's approach in combining incentives and regulatory framework is key to stimulating initial CCS projects.

WORKING GROUP SCENARIO DISCUSSIONS

At the Challenge North Conference, participants were divided into small discussion groups made up of representatives from different geographic areas and sectors. They discussed the following questions in relation to one of the two scenarios about the possible future of northern Alberta, “Firing on all Cylinders” or “Diverging Paths”

1. *What is the key message that this scenario evokes?*
2. *What is one risk to be avoided, one challenge to be overcome and one opportunity to pursue in this scenario?*
3. *Knowing that none of us can entirely control or create the future, but that we can influence the future, what must be done to avoid risks, overcome challenges, and pursue opportunities?*
4. *What are the strategic priorities to strengthen the economy, environment, and quality of life that conference participants and the NADC should support?*
5. *What specific actions (who and what) can conference participants undertake to support those strategic priorities?*
6. *What key messages about the future of Northern Alberta do you want the NADC to bring to the Alberta Government?*

Participants identified risks, challenges and opportunities that were brought forward by the scenarios and considered preliminary responses to each. Participants then ranked their priority items. These items are listed as “Priority Responses.” Collectively, these responses fed the more important conversation around delegate identified strategic priorities and actions.

A summary prepared at the conference grouped the priorities under the following categories to begin developing action plans:

- Support municipal networking, leadership, knowledge, collaboration and communication
- Municipal funding formulas
- Multi-sector-interdisciplinary networking, participation and action
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Education
- Energy
- Housing
- Health
- Infrastructure

A full summary of scenario working groups is included in Appendix C.

The following are highlights from the discussion groups:

Firing on all Cylinders: Adaptive Direction/Dynamic Region

Participants assigned to this scenario identified the following key priorities:

- There needs to be a balanced approach. Clear goals and objectives must be adaptive and in sync with all stakeholders. Social, health, quality of life governance, and spiritual and cultural needs must be addressed in addition to economic aspects of development. Development must be pursued in balance with environmental capacity and economic sustainability.
- Infrastructure including transportation; electric power; water treatment; multi-plex complexes; health and education; and communication facilities is a very high priority and must be developed at the beginning of development, not in hindsight. The importance of partnership, cost sharing and acceptable level of access to services is vital.
- There are economic opportunities based on our environmental, social and economic potential which can foster new research and initiatives in environmental technology and land use practices.
- Northern Albertans should work with other northern jurisdictions to lobby and develop policies appropriate for the northern regions. There needs to be more effective inter-provincial planning
- and collaboration in transportation and trade.
- Northern funding formulas must be developed to reflect the realities of the north.



Diverging Paths: Aimless Direction/ Dynamic Region

Participants assigned to discuss this scenario identified the following key priorities:

- There are concerns about the capacity of northern stakeholders to vision and plan.
- There needs to be a transformation of the way government services are provided, in an ever-changing environment, to be better prepared to address change. This includes greater emphasis on facilitating inter-municipal cooperation/collaboration to remove duplication and avoid unnecessary costs.
- Leadership through communities is a must. Strategic partnerships must be formed between governments, business, industry, communities and individuals to work together cooperatively to identify issues and solutions. This requires support for community facilitation and networking.
- Northerners need to think globally and there is concern that this is not happening. Greater effort must be made to learn what other regions are doing and apply best practices. Socio-economic ties with other northern jurisdictions should be promoted to champion infrastructure investment in order to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate more economical transportation of resources.
- The province has to take greater responsibility for leadership and facilitation to increase cooperation and balance. This includes: promoting a more balanced and diverse economy, taking the environment and quality of life for all citizens into account to promote stable, growing and healthy communities, and revising funding formulas and providing the expertise needed to empower communities.

Many key messages came out of the scenarios. One working group offered the following suggestion: “Act on our recommendations, demonstrate that action, report back to us.” The complete scenarios and working group discussions can be found in Appendix B and C respectively.

PRESENTATION AND PANEL DISCUSSION

Rural Alberta's Development Fund



Eva Urlacher is a board member with the Rural Alberta's Development Fund and lives in Cold Lake.

Eva Urlacher gave a brief overview of the Rural Alberta's Development Fund (RADF), created in 2006 to promote the prosperity of rural communities. RADF, a not-for-profit company, received \$100 million from the Government of Alberta to invest in community projects to stimulate rural economic growth. The fund is administered through a twelve member Board of Directors representing various parts of Alberta, including the northern areas of Grande Prairie, Cold Lake and Hinton.

Ms Urlacher noted the RADF provides funding to projects with potential for long term benefits, and supports leadership and community capacity building. As such it focuses on enhancing leadership, collaboration, and innovation. It has offered over \$50 million to over 50 projects as of April 2009. Examples of projects funded include:

- The Community Village in Grande Prairie
- Aboriginal community development projects
- Rural Integrated Community Clerkship Program for medical students

Projects supported have had a positive impact on the quality of life of rural residents. Ms Urlacher indicated that she is looking forward to new proposals for projects and to learning of what conference participants are working on in their communities.

Panel Discussion

A panel of four delegates gave their take on the conference proceedings, and some of their ideas on how northern Alberta can be a leader in the Province; especially through the economic downturn. The panel's comments also gave delegates an opportunity to reflect upon what they had heard throughout the conference and what discussions and actions they might take back to their own communities.

Gerald Cunningham, Elected President of Métis Settlements of Alberta

Mr. Cunningham felt the conference had been a great success in that it had brought people together to discuss northern Alberta and its current challenges and possible opportunities.

He was also quick to point out that Alberta is the only province in Canada with legislated Métis land and that the Métis Settlements are currently planning for effective governance and sustainability. He felt a strong connection between the conferences themes and his own people's planning.

During the conference Mr. Cunningham had the opportunity to speak with many delegates about the importance of culture and found that many of them share his concerns about the fading cultural component of the north. And although there was not a strong Aboriginal component at the conference, he was glad to see that northern specific issues were discussed, along with specific northern solutions.

Mr. Cunningham continued to speak of developing solutions to the challenges presented at the conference. He felt all stakeholders should be included in decision making and that northerners should make decisions with children's futures in mind.

Veronica Bliska, Reeve MD of Peace

Veronica Bliska spoke of the changing times and the importance of today's decision making for our future. She emphasized the importance of cooperation between jurisdictions and the importance of networking in northern communities. She commented that northerners all have the power and influence to lead the province.

Ms Bliska named distance as the biggest challenge faced by northerners and that northerners need new, innovative ideas to achieve new results. She noted that this conference was a prime opportunity to sell the top three priorities in our areas and keep pushing, because the Premier's attendance proved that the north has the government's ear.

John Broderick, CAO Town of Manning

Mr. Broderick felt that the scenario process brought out many ideas, engaged participants and allowed for everyone involved to be heard. His feeling was that the biggest challenge facing the north is the lack of population and services to the region. His suggestion was to increase regional services and ensure that centralization does not remove them from northern communities.

Mr. Broderick closed with thoughts about the conference attendance. He felt that perhaps it was under-attended and that some northern stakeholders missed out on a great opportunity to have their voices heard.

Michelle Bourdon, Affordable Housing, Cold Lake

Michelle Bourdon saw the conference as a good opportunity for the spirit of the north and our ability to push through difficult times. She felt the conference may generate very good options for the future and that the presentations were topically poised and fed pertinent information to delegates prior to the discussion groups. This led to great feedback in the groups and helped to make the scenario process extremely productive.

Ms Bourdon discussed the usefulness of planning and that if northerners are coordinated, they can face almost any challenge. She mentioned that northerners need support in plan implementation and meeting our infrastructure needs. Northern communities want to invest, grow, and be sustainable and northern residents need to make educated changes to funding models, adding a little risk, but also some creativity to see desired results. The pure potential that she sees in the north is very exciting.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH ALBERTA CABINET MINISTERS AND MLAs



NADC Chair Robin Campbell welcomed his colleagues to the conference. Opening comments were then made by Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress - Medicine Hat. Mr. Mitzel serves on the Pacific Northwest Economic Region and is Chair of the Montana-Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council. He spoke of the similar challenges facing the north and the south, with particular focus on access to trade corridors and trading opportunities. Mr. Mitzel noted that Alberta has been establishing an important complementary partnership with the United States and Mexico to help increase trade opportunities throughout the province. He also emphasized the use and development of those trade corridors not only as connectors to the south or to Prince Rupert, but as connectors between local communities.

The floor was open to all delegates to ask attending Ministers and MLAs questions about northern Alberta's development and future. This is a summary of questions and answers as understood by the note takers at the session.

Question – Iris Callioux, NADC Member and Mayor, Peace River

Will the province consider ending the current centralization of services and relocate them, or let them stay, in northern Alberta?

Answer – Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise; Honourable Hector Goudreau, Minister of Employment and Immigration

Communities need to make a positive business case for services that are important to their residents. There is no economic gain to closing rural medical services. It is the role of the local community to gain efficiency and let your MLA know how you plan to keep the services in use and efficient. The government wants to combine services. Individuals needing help should not be bounced around, they should be given service.

Question – Ernie Isley, Mayor, Bonnyville

What will happen to the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) next year?
What about compensation in relation to Bill 19?

Answer – Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs; Diana McQueen, MLA for Drayton Valley – Calmar

The Municipal Infrastructure Plan will come to an end this year, and funds from that will be incorporated into MSI. MSI will increase from \$400 million to \$1.2 billion. Our Premier has always been supportive of the municipalities. The MSI was offered to municipalities, not as an offset, but as a new project. This government has also made opportunities to borrow against a 10 year program for up to 70%. Interest can be used to offset some of the costs.

In relation to Bill 19, compensation will be included, to be fair to landowners. A time limit of 2 years has been set and once the plan has been developed, municipalities and landowners will be consulted. One big issue regarding transportation corridors, related to Section 2A has been amended and is currently before the committee.

Question – Dave Kirschner, NADC Member, Fort McMurray

What is the status of increasing the number of medical graduates and considering reserving 10% of seats for northern Alberta students (which is in proportion to the northern Alberta population)?

Answer – Honourable Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education & Technology

The province is ahead in its expansion plans, but the number of seats is limited by the number of preceptors available. Scope of practice should also be examined. In terms of proportionate seats, universities set the admission criteria. The clerkship program gets students into rural communities to experience rural life and get an understanding of the quality of life that can be offered in those communities.

Question – Colleen Schoeninger, Councillor, Bonnyville

Please explain the 2-tiered education system through 'Campus Alberta'.

Answer – Honourable Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education & Technology

If there is a demand in a certain area and the steward college cannot deliver, they can bring in instruction. This is all based on student demand through 'Campus Alberta'. Campus Alberta is not about the institution, it is about the student and the economy. If you have demand, institutions will come, because they are paid based on the number of students. If there is no demand, there are no resources. If there is a disagreement on the demand then the department can help. But you must go through the steward college first. Any institution delivering the specified program can come to your local campus.

Question – Gene Sobolewski, Councillor, Bonnyville

The Municipal Government Act confines us when seeking for different streams of revenue and does not allow us to think outside the box. The Environment Act, administered by Alberta Environment also places a large burden on municipalities regarding cost. Both of these Acts need revamping in order to help municipalities who are moving toward 21st century solutions, have legislation that is in the 21st century as well. Will the Province take a look and revamp these Acts?

Answer – Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs; Diana McQueen, MLA for Drayton Valley – Calmar

The province reviews and amends the Municipal Government Act on a regular basis and an overhaul is planned in the next 2 to 4 years. One of the focuses and direction will be to review Section 9 and talk about different types of taxation. The province will not grant municipalities taxation power, but other comments from municipalities were used to build the MSI and municipalities have been given back \$11 million. The province has encouraged municipalities to look at their solid waste disposal and consider the philosophy "too good to waste." Our goal should be to recycle 80 percent of our waste and dispose of 20 percent.

Question – Bill Neufeld, Councillor, Mackenzie County

Can we get the dollars to get things built at home? Northerners also need internet access to rural areas.

Answer - Honourable Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education & Technology; Honourable Heather Klimchuck, Minister of Service Alberta

There are different facilities, such as the Alberta Research Council, where money is available, but Northerners need a good business plan and proper trials. We encourage anyone with ideas to come and talk to us and we will try to build on your ideas.

We have met with all ministries that touch the supernet and we are working together to improve access. We are developing strategies and initiatives with key stakeholders. We need to leverage the supernet to use all technologies. This includes increasing broadband availability in schools. We are also receiving great support for the 'last mile' of the supernet.

Question – Carolyn Kolebaba, Councillor, Northern Sunrise County

Why were recommendations from the forestry committee not acted on in 2007? Why is the province not in rail?

Answer – Wayne Drysdale, MLA for Grande Prairie – Wapiti; Arno Doerksen, MLA for Strathmore – Brooks; Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise; Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead; Verlyn Olson, MLA for Wetaskiwin – Camrose; Jeff Johnson, MLA for Athabasca – Redwater

Recommendations were passed on to the Minister. Rail is important in the north and we are encouraged by our work with the NADC on this subject, but this is not only a provincial responsibility. We have seen improvements from CN in recent months. They are talking and are interested in a container depot in Grande Prairie. One of your responsibilities as communities is to forward your priorities through your organization as resolutions. Also recognize that this is a federal issue. We need letters and a call out to your Federal MPs. This is a great opportunity for small communities.

Comment – Everett McDonald, Reeve, County of Grande Prairie

We still need help to complete transportation projects and recognize the importance of connectivity. But I do recognize the efforts of our local MLA on this subject.

Question – Berry Heinen, Councillor, Peace River

Do you have any insight into solutions for our municipalities whose revenues do not keep up with expenditures?

Answer – Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs; Honourable Lloyd Snelgrove, President of the Treasury Board

MSI was brought forward as support for the municipalities. In the guidelines, we need to drop support with the declining economy. But projects that are affordable are to move forward. Another option is to cut spending.

Question – Agnes Gendron, Aboriginal Elder, Cold Lake

The Friendship Centers operate on a shoe string budget; we need help to continue offering services.

Answer – Verlyn Olson, MLA for Wetaskiwin – Camrose

Some programs to look at could be Community Spirit Program or Community Initiatives Program for funding any government work that relates to Aboriginal initiatives. There are two departments supporting and consulting with First Nations and Métis about action on reserves: Employment and Immigration and Aboriginal Relations. They are interested in seeing action and encourage stakeholders to provide input.

Question – Colleen McEntee, North Eastern Alberta Real Estate Board

Does the Province have any plans to deal with the disparity of oil revenues?

Answer – Honourable Lloyd Snelgrove, President of the Treasury Board; Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs

The Oil Sands Secretariat deals with cases on an individual basis. We look at Ft. McMurray as a separate issue. We are all in this together, but it is not going to be easy to tackle the current funding situation. The government can not support duplication or municipalities in competition.

Question – Denise White, Treasurer, Métis Settlements General Council

What do you deem as consulting with stakeholders in northern Alberta? Can you provide more information on the consultation for Bill 32.

Answer – Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise

Some consultation has been going on, then issues arose as to how we pay people, how people are selected, etc. No one here today is directly involved with Bill 32. We will take your question under advisement and Robin will take this question back to the legislature and we will get the appropriate response back to all who have attended this conference.

Question – Horace Patineau, Councilor, Wood Buffalo

Where are we on housing? What does sustainable housing mean to government?

Answer – Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs

The Premier has housing as a second portfolio. There are three or four times more applications coming in than money available. If you have any more questions about housing, contact your MLA for our three year plan.

Question – Craig Copeland, Mayor, Cold Lake

Why does the government not put 1% of profit back into communities like industry?

Answer – Honourable Lloyd Snelgrove, President of the Treasury Board

Funding from the government is much higher than 1% of royalties. If we funnel resource shares then natural gas would give greater revenues than oil.

Question – Devin O'Tully, Councilor, Bonnyville

Are there some concrete steps that the government can take to stop the erroneous thought that money will increase our quality of life?

Answer – Dave Quest, MLA for Strathcona

Almost everything that we fund is measurable. We need to stop talking about money, money, money all the time.

Question – Veronica Bliska, Reeve, MD of Peace

Can we have some insight into policies regarding the future of seniors?

Answer – Arno Doerksen, MLA for Strathmore – Brooks; Robin Campbell, MLA for West Yellowhead; Honourable Heather Klimchuck, Minister of Service Alberta; Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress - Medicine Hat

There are initiatives to support seniors, like Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs and home support. Various departments should work together to address these issues and to provide a continuum of care. Through the NADC, we are looking at getting medical services to seniors and vice versa. We should be looking to include these technologies in our continuing care lines. There are also examples of auxiliary groups that get together and take people to appointments.

CONFERENCE CLOSING REMARKS

Cold Lake MLA Genia Leskiw thanked all the delegates for attending Challenge North and for visiting her constituency. She was excited to hear the resounding message of how great it is to live in the north. She pointed out that all constituencies have challenges, but urged conference participants to look for home-made solutions in our communities and with our neighbours. She thanked her colleagues for their attendance and spoke of what a great honour it was to have them in her riding and to witness their commitment to the north. She ended by commending Robin Campbell and the Northern Alberta Development Council on the success of the conference. She was happy to say that “the north is in good hands” with the NADC.

Aboriginal Elder Ms Agnes Gendron highlighted the fact that the Challenge North Conference opened on Earth Day 2009. This was very fitting, since the environment and nature are an integral part of the way of life in the north. She closed the conference with a prayer which focused on our love for the north and a challenge to be mindful of the environment when considering the future of the north, both for ourselves and for future generations. The need to ensure that water supplies remain sustainable was a key sentiment. Ms Gendron ended with some words from her father, "if things get bad, you can always fall back on the land."

Robin Campbell concluded the conference with thanks for everyone involved in the planning, preparation and execution of the event. He expressed his appreciation to the delegates for their candid comments, and their passion and commitment to the North. He reminded delegates to work alongside each other in their communities as leaders in the north.

NEXT STEPS

The majority of delegate responses to the Challenge North 2009 scenarios touched on the following topics:

- Support for municipal networking, leadership, knowledge, collaboration and communication
- Municipal funding formulas
- Multi-sector-interdisciplinary networking participation and action
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Education
- Energy
- Housing
- Health
- Infrastructure

The NADC hopes that delegates will work on solutions to the issues they identified. As well, the NADC is integrating the priorities brought forward during the conference into its business plan, to actively address many of the issues identified. The NADC will provide yearly updates on its progress between the 2009 Challenge North Conference and the next Challenge North Conference in 2012.

Scenario Process Development

The following provides background information about the scenarios, includes the scenario descriptions in their entirety, and summarizes the Working Group discussions that took place at Challenge North. The information is presented in detail, to enable readers to develop a good understanding of scenarios so they may consider the process as a useful tool in planning for their own community or organization.

Overview of the Scenario Development Process

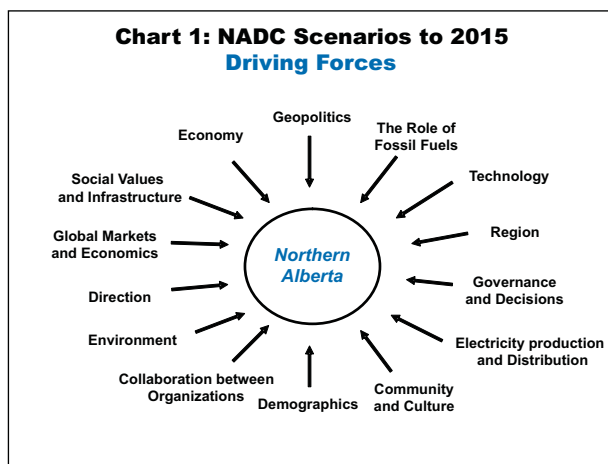
During 2008, the NADC conducted a survey and held focus groups in Lac La Biche, Valleyview, and High Level with participants invited from a wide range of communities and sectors to determine the challenges the north could face in 2015. The NADC then, in collaboration with staff from Alberta Culture and Community Spirit and Scenarios 2 Strategies Inc., developed scenarios and questions that Challenge North 2009 participants were asked to consider. The questions were intended to focus working group sessions on identifying and refining shared strategic priorities vital to Northern Alberta's future.

What are Scenarios?¹

Scenarios are short stories about possible futures. They are creative and plausible variations based on clues from today's reality. The many factors that influence our future are complex and uncertain, and scenarios provide a way to structure these uncertainties. Scenarios provide a context for strategic conversations and for strategy and policy development. They also lead to shared understanding and commitment to action.

A Few Driving Forces

Many forces are significant to northern Alberta and will shape the future. Each of these driving forces represents an important dimension of change. Some of these may shape outcomes that are somewhat predictable, while others are highly uncertain. Northerners may have a degree of influence on how some driving forces play out, and little or no influence on others. The driving forces are as follows:



Critical Uncertainties

Of the driving forces, two were identified as having the highest impact and greatest uncertainty. These two critical uncertainties were then used to develop the scenario framework, which helped define distinctly different possible futures for northern Alberta.

The two critical uncertainties shaping the future of northern Alberta to 2015 were described as follows:

Direction: Adaptive Direction and **Aimless Direction** refer to the leadership and policies developed nationally, provincially and locally that affect northern Alberta. In the scenarios, this is reflected in the descriptions of governance, community, demographics and quality of life. **Adaptive Direction** is the ability to change and take advantage of opportunities provided by an evolving environment. **Aimless Direction** is the opposite: an inability to change and take advantage of those opportunities.

¹ The information on scenarios is based on www.scenarios2strategy.com and www.gbn.com.

Region: Dynamic Region and Declining Region refer to the degree that northerners are maximizing the environment, economy, and quality of life objectives of northern Alberta. It refers to the geographic region of northern Alberta and its physical assets, not-for-profits and people. In the scenarios, this is highlighted through references to global impacts, environment and economy, and technology and infrastructure. **Dynamic Region** refers to the energy and self-motivation that makes northern Albertans and the region successful. **Declining Region** refers to a region and people that is waning and past its prime.

Scenario Framework

The critical uncertainties were represented as continuums or dimensions forming axes as shown below. The critical uncertainties provided a logical framework for developing different scenarios. Each quadrant represents a unique combination of outcomes of the two. Two scenarios were created from them and were used for the Working Group discussions at the 2009 Challenge North Conference. The two scenarios, Firing on All Cylinders and Diverging Paths, reflected possible futures for northern Alberta looking out to 2015.

Summary of Key Scenario Characteristics

As delegates read the scenarios, they were asked to keep in mind that:

1. It is impossible to cover every possible detail of every possible future that may evolve.
2. The scenarios describe two different futures. They are not predictions nor have probabilities been attached. Delegates are encouraged to consider each of the scenarios as equally likely and not choose a favourite.
3. Ultimately, the real value of the scenarios is not what is written, but in insights gained from analyzing the risks, challenges, and opportunities surfaced by each scenario. Put another way, the scenarios themselves, while important, are not nearly as important as the strategic conversation they evoke.

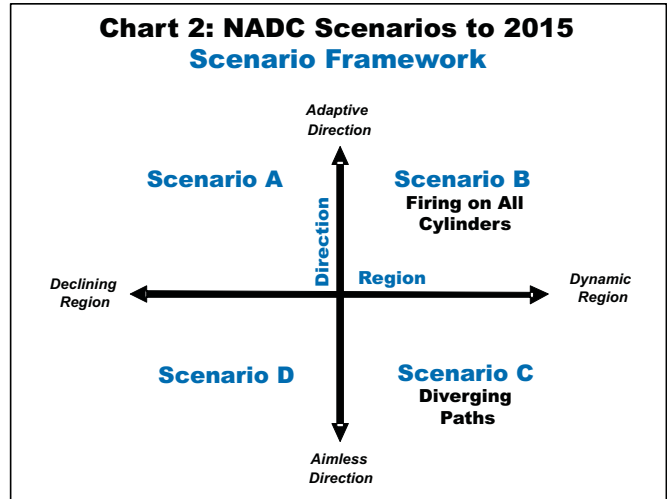
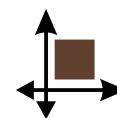


Table 1: Comparison of Scenarios

Firing on All Cylinders	Diverging Paths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful region, one of the most competitive in the world • Protection of the environment • Traditional sectors doing well • Diversified economy has created stability • The importance of the north is recognized • Aboriginal people are an integral part • Adapting to global challenges • But more must be done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stark opposites • Many parts of the economy are booming • Concerns about environment damage • Technological changes impact traditional industries • Stresses on communities are enormous • Services are suffering • Concern about quality of life • Could spiral out of control

FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS ADAPTIVE DIRECTION/ DYNAMIC REGION

*Northern Alberta... 2015*

The region is very successful and one of the most competitive in the world. Alberta is recognized for its protection of the environment while balancing economic and social needs. The economy is doing well with its traditional sectors of agriculture, forestry, oil and gas; and successful measures to diversify the economy have also created stability. Small businesses are successful in leveraging local value-added opportunities. Communities are managing change, not just surviving it. Albertans recognize the importance of the north to the province. Aboriginal peoples are an integral part of the dynamic development of the region. In recent years, Alberta has been able to rapidly adapt to changing global economic challenges and opportunities, though there is a sense of unease that more must be done to ensure continued prosperity.

Blog from northern Alberta

*Hey, just wanted to update you on our plans. We've decided to build a new house. There is so much economic activity in the region – I know I'll have lots of opportunities to grow this business idea I have. Our community is really growing, seems like new people are moving in all the time and the area council is actively working on some great business plans. You know how much I love the outdoors; well there is plenty of nature around here and lots of organized activities to get involved with. It really feels like home here – come visit us!
P.S. We're expecting a new addition to the family!*

Global, Economy

After all these years, northern Alberta continues to be the strong engine that drives Alberta's economy. It has adapted, and recovered from the downturn and financial turmoil of 2008. It is insulated from the economic and financial stresses that still plague other areas of the world. Energy is still an important economic driver. Growth rates have decreased, but are positive. Despite energy price volatility, the economy has been stable. Small businesses and tourism operators are successful in leveraging local value-added opportunities and Aboriginal communities have turned some good prospects into successful new ventures. In recent years, Alberta has been able to rapidly adapt to changing global economic challenges and opportunities, though there is a sense of unease that more must be done to ensure continued prosperity. Watching the world stage provides motivation that keeps northern Albertans adaptive. A key issue is climate change.

The effects of climate change are diverse (e.g., the 2012-14 drought in southern Alberta and 2006-08 pine beetle infestations in the north). These effects are leading to increased environmental lobbying. Public expectations are that the economy remains vital, but that environmental impact is minimal. With ongoing development of leading-edge environmental technologies, local and world concerns about environmental impacts are being addressed, though many challenges remain. Carbon production is being offset by Alberta's forestry and agricultural industries.

Technology, Infrastructure

The Alberta government and industry are supporting creativity and innovation. This is evident in the expansion of educational and research opportunities in the region. Existing infrastructure is meeting the demands being placed on it. An example of innovation is the commercialization of bio-fuel production capacity in Alberta using beetle-affected pine and other sources to produce energy in the form of electricity, ethanol, bio-diesel, methane, and heat.

Governance

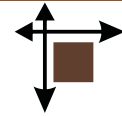
Shared governance models among governments, companies, communities, individuals, and not-for-profits are working well and there is increased public confidence in government. Communities are leading with provincial government support. Alberta's provincial and municipal governments have fostered improvements in health, education and social service delivery and are seen as adaptive to emerging needs.

Community, Demographics, Quality of life

Aboriginal peoples are increasingly participating in the workforce, economy, and education. The face of northern communities has changed, with more Canadian and international newcomers as well as mobile workers choosing to become permanent residents. Although costs are increasing, the demand for a wide range of housing is being met. A range of innovative models is being used to provide health and social services where and when they are needed. People are taking pride in their communities and are building them through volunteerism. Expectations have increased for not-for-profit organizations, but so have their funding levels and financial and volunteer support of these organizations.

Expansion of educational programs means that local populations are accessing more high-end employment opportunities in the region. Specialized education and training programs are drawing international attention and learners to the region and many students are opting to stay. Greater diversity and acceptance are also leading to increased arts and culture, which is adding to the overall quality of life in northern Alberta.

DIVERGING PATHS AIMLESS DIRECTION/ DYNAMIC REGION



Northern Alberta... 2015

The current state of northern Alberta is full of stark opposites. Many parts of the economy are booming and the economic future looks bright in the near term. Opportunities abound for entrepreneurial spirits wanting to build on their dreams. Serious concern about significant long-term environmental damage looms ever more strongly and technological changes could have serious economic impacts on traditional industries. Alberta's industries are maturing and may be susceptible to competition from more innovative jurisdictions. The stresses on some communities and residents are enormous and services just can't keep up with the growing demand. While the squeaky wheels are getting some grease, many areas and services are suffering and causing residents to wonder about what happened to their quality of life. They fear that the diverging paths of northern Alberta will cause it to spiral out of control.

Letter from northern Alberta

There are a lot of opportunities here, but since I put my back out moving that rig, I haven't been doing much. I feel for these kids who are making the same mistake I did, dropping out of school for a good paying-job. It certainly limits your options later – trust me I know. There's lots of jobs out there (I haven't been able to find a plumber lately), but they all needed more schooling than I have. Lots of time to worry about the environment though. We are either flooding or in a drought. Could be a natural occurrence, could be something else. Some feel the good times will never end, but I'm concerned.

Global, Economy

Despite energy price volatility, northern Alberta's economy has been strong. World demand for energy has not abated and alternate technologies have been slow to develop. This has created opportunities and a push toward cleaner technology. Some communities have seized this opportunity to create new ventures. Market prices have recovered from past lows and are stable due to consistent demand. Despite ongoing criticisms of so-called dirty oil, North American demand for oil from the oil sands has until recently still been strong. Construction of some oil sands projects is delayed because of uncertainty combined with increased construction costs resulting from continuing construction in India and China.

There continues to be a strong demand for natural gas, though conventional gas production has declined and methane gas production has not been developed in northern Alberta. Grain and canola markets are strong, but input costs are so high that this sector is very vulnerable if more crop failures occur. Several regions have been declared disaster regions because of the drought that began in 2013 and there has been little snowfall this year. However, southern Alberta and Saskatchewan are having an even worse drought. Forestry, having temporarily adjusted to the pine beetle infestation through alternate pulp production processes, is now starting to feel global pressure from South American and Asian production of pulp and paper. For pine-based mills, there will be a shortage of wood as the outbreak runs its course. Experiments with hybridization of poplar are meeting notable success, but harvestable woodlots are still years away.

Technology, Infrastructure

Industry has been the lead in infrastructure development, expanding options where profitable. Local value-added agricultural initiatives have helped diversify the region's economy. Some ventures have failed, but new technology in the use of algae to synthetically produce oil has recently become commercially viable. Although it has the carbon resources needed, it is not clear to what extent northern Alberta will be part of this rapidly developing production. It could be a two-edged sword, both making oil sands obsolete, but also providing carbon capture and carbon products opportunities.

Limitations in northern infrastructure (rail, road, and air) affect the transportation of goods to market as well as access to service centers, work sites, and tourism. Public pressure for improvements has been strong, but little has been accomplished. Communities and businesses are suffering from the limited access to markets.

Governance

Recent disclosures of environmental accidents have increased environmental lobbying and created a renewed public outcry for stricter measures. There is concern that implementing environmental and other policies could impact the economy. Finding the balance between environment and economy is difficult due to the risks involved. Implementing the wrong approach or policy could cause substantial economic and/or environmental damage.

Community, Demographics, Quality of life

Employment opportunities are plentiful, and salary levels are high in many areas of the north. It has been difficult to fill the demand for people and a lack of services and increased job pressures are taking their toll. A substantial number of Aboriginal residents are participating in the booming labour market, but low education completion and skill levels leaves others unable to take advantage of employment opportunities. The economic boom has increased the demand on our social infrastructure. High school drop out rates are high, with many young people leaving early to take on jobs. Full-time post-secondary enrolments numbers are low and colleges have terminated some programs, focussing more on short-term training requested by employers. This means that most students are leaving the region to complete a diploma or degree, and many are not returning. AADAC reports an increase in demand for addiction counselling and other agencies report increases in family violence, suicide rates and the number of stress related diseases. Baby boomers are becoming a major component of the population of seniors. They are becoming greatly concerned about the declining level of health care in the region as well as the lack of urban transit and other community services. The north has lost more health care providers and some hospitals anticipate that they may have to reduce services. The number of long-term care facilities has not kept up with the changing demographics and there is concern for the future.

The following provides a record of the working group discussions. Delegates were asked to consider the two scenarios, each depicting a possible future for northern Alberta in 2015, to discuss six questions and then to identify the three priority responses amongst those. The Priority Responses of each group are listed first, with any Additional Responses included after.

Where possible, the wording used in the groups was included, but similar thoughts have been grouped. Some topics arose repeatedly in response to the questions and, to honour the discussions, the repetitions have been included though perhaps shortened.

The views expressed in this Appendix are those of delegates of the Challenge North 2009 conference in response to the scenarios and the discussion questions, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NADC or the Government of Alberta.

FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS ADAPTIVE DIRECTION/ DYNAMIC REGION

The 'Firing on All Cylinders' scenario gave a picture of northern Alberta in 2015 as a very successful region with a healthy and diversified economy and adaptive communities. Read the full scenario on page 26.

Question 1: What is the key message that this scenario evokes?

Priority Responses

Many of the key messages concerning the Firing on all Cylinders scenario centered on the need for cooperation and collaboration. Participants indicated that planning and involvement of all sectors and stakeholders is needed to bring about success. This includes communication between the 'grassroots' and government, urban and rural. Cooperation leads to opportunity and success for all, and is the foundation of a prosperous and vibrant region that people want to live and work in.

As the north moves forward on a well planned course, technology, research and other sectors develop. Delegates mentioned that success breeds confidence, optimism and a desire to move ahead. A positive image of community and the north are also the products of success.

Success, and the changes that come with it, have to be managed so that the outcomes increase benefits for the region with no negative impacts. This development must be sustainable and use environmentally sustainable practices. Areas of concern include the social aspects of success such as population growth and with it the need for services and facilities.

Sustainable development moves forward on the foundation that has been laid at the beginning. Delegates indicated that infrastructure, as part of the foundation, has to be addressed at the very start of development.

Additional Responses

Delegates see the Firing on All Cylinders scenario of a region of growth, stability and balance as not just a Utopian dream. "This is possible, we can make it happen, it may be idealistic but it is achievable," were some of the thoughts that came out of the discussions. Delegates mentioned that adaptation is very beneficial to this new future; it brings about success in overcoming challenges and helps adapt to the global economy.

Planning plays a key role in this new vision. A viable operational funding formula is implemented and investment in infrastructure in the North occurs prior to resource extraction. Roads are maintained and upgraded; there are no 'pothole scenarios'. Development of all types is focused and aligned, moving ahead like cogs in a wheel. The Land Use Framework has become a tool for sustainable development and environmental issues are being resolved.

Planning and cooperation have brought about a time of growth, and there are opportunities and choices for people in all environments. Well paying jobs allow people to live and prosper, and as northerners develop the tools and skills to succeed, more opportunities are created. The region is capitalizing on northern resources and assets, using technology, creativity and innovation. Tomorrow's young adults are working in jobs that are not currently (2009) created.

Quality of life in northern Alberta in 2015 has always been part of the overall development plan. Healthcare meets the needs of the region, mental health and services for families are available and accessible. There is progress in many areas including housing. Everyone is considered, no one is falling through the cracks. Those with low skills, who live in poverty or are unemployed, have access to the programs they need to overcome these challenges. People are satisfied and happy; they are giving back and taking part in their communities. The north is "The kind of world I want to live in and leave for those coming after me."

The economy is diversified and no longer reliant on oil, gas and lumber. The north is a strong driver of the province in areas economic, social and environmental. Northern urban municipalities are sustainable and dynamic. Community capacity building is an attribute of the north. Councils are doing their job and doing it well. There is a continuation of services that develop along with the region.

There has been an expansion of education programs and the development of a university in the north. "We are now educating our children at home and retaining our families".

Question 2: What is one risk to be avoided, one challenge to be overcome and one opportunity to pursue in this scenario?

Priority Responses

Risks

Good times can lead to complacency and a false sense of security.

Unsustainable development with uncontrolled expansion and environmental damage are risks. There is a need to avoid focusing on economic benefits while ignoring social and cultural needs.

The higher end employment opportunities in specific regions or industries can result in recruitment from outside the region while the populations of other parts of the north are left behind.

Challenges

An initial challenge for the north is to have all of the stakeholders agree on priorities. Stakeholders and decision makers need to be informed on an ongoing basis so that the right decisions can be made as the region moves ahead.

Strong leadership must be informed, set a clear direction and think long term on development to achieve a balance between environment, economy and quality of life.

The efficient distribution of funds and resources as well as the development of infrastructure and services are challenges that need to be met 'the sooner the better.'

Education, training and skill development for a changing society and work force are a necessity. Northerners have to be part of this development. As the region moves forward, unemployment across the north needs to drop.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to pursue development in balance with environmental capacity and economic sustainability. Training opportunities and education levels can progress alongside with development.

Northern Albertans have the opportunity to work together toward common goals and to develop a region which considers all aspects of community well being, including health and spiritual wellness. It is an opportunity to create the communities we want, to embrace diversity in our communities and the ability to help others work for a better future. Northerners have the opportunity to work together to inform our citizens about how they can be prepared and move toward a bright future. It is development grounded in wellness, brought back into daily lives.

The north can gain more control of the revenue stream, with funding going to where it is needed to continue development without sacrificing one area for another. An example that was given was, "If only 2% of the Athabasca, Peace and Cold Lake oil sands royalties came to the communities it would help municipalities overcome the limitations of relying solely on property tax for revenue."

Additional Responses

Risks

Complacency was already mentioned as a priority risk, but working groups offered thoughts on its many forms either as a problem that hinders the very start of development or when everything seems to be on track:

- overconfidence in good times that all ventures will succeed all of the time, which can then lead to overspending and excessive debt loads
- minds closed to new ideas and a controlling environment that hinders growth and innovation
- a fear of failure and resistance to change
- apathy in elections.

Delegates expressed concern about rapid, unplanned growth and boom-bust situations. This has happened in the past, where big companies and big projects create a "boom" and then the economy changes or the project ends and things go "bust." The boom-bust mentality, dependence on oil, and too much rapid growth result in a lack of balance that can have disastrous consequences for a region.

With the focus on economic growth there is a risk of creating an imbalance in the environmental, social and basic infrastructure needs of communities. This affects the quality of life in the north. Pressures on the social infrastructure include services, schools, transportation, health, and education. Economic growth also has repercussions for the social structure, as new residents come into communities and existing residents move to other areas to secure employment. This can result in ignorance of cultural differences in communities. Social exclusion is another potential danger. People, such as seniors and the impoverished, can fall through the cracks and be socially excluded in a booming economy, as can young people who are less educated and who have lost their identity. An increase in food bank users is an indicator of economic and socially excluded populations.

Challenges

Delegates identified human capital issues as challenges that need to be overcome. This includes: the shortage of educated, skilled and trained workers as well as employee retention. It was mentioned that, "We educate our people then they leave the community. This is a double edged sword."

At the same time, northern communities will have to deal with a variety of challenges to meet the needs of their growing populations, such as: keeping up with demands of the public, debt and an unfair tax regime, and a lack of community and leisure facilities. There will need to be a balancing of local needs and wants, as well as considerations for different cultures, i.e. long term residents and new residents. Avoiding the urbanization of rural Alberta and the destruction of community identity are challenges as are the need to reduce crime rates and substance abuse.

Delegates stated that government needs to look at what it focuses on in economic development. There has been a reliance on oil and gas as the economic engine of Alberta. A one-resource region has limited development potential. Delegates further suggested that there is a need for cooperation between different levels of government to address the social and cultural needs of communities. The challenge is to have government and industry working together to provide funding for community wellness.

Challenges related to the environment and its protection include: the possible imbalance between economic growth and the environment, climate change and other environmental impacts. "We need to make sure the environment is protected and managed as an asset so it will be here for future residents to enjoy and use."

Overcoming complacency and all the associated risks (as identified above) is a challenge that needs to be considered. Being unwilling to try a different approach or listen to other points of view, tunnel vision, and lack of awareness and involvement can all result from this.

Opportunities

The opportunities identified in the working groups reflect the risks and challenges mentioned above and illustrate areas where government and communities can show leadership and overcome obstacles. Delegates suggested a range of specific opportunities:

- Environmental innovation and technology, to deal with climate change, decrease waste
- A sharing of what has been done to get where the north is now and how northern communities have dealt with critical issues to help others
- Finding other ideas that will sustain the positive community
- New leadership and succession training

Delegates see an opportunity to develop home grown businesses and the people in the north. It was suggested we tap into our young people and "grow our own," so that we do not lose them to other jurisdictions or neglect developing their potential. Tapping into the Aboriginal labour force was seen as another opportunity, and it was noted that Métis residents have made progress in many areas including jobs and housing. There is an opportunity to develop educational programs, to pursue more training, postsecondary and degree programs in the north. Today's children are going to be working at jobs that have not yet been created.

Question 3: Knowing that none of us can entirely control or create the future, but that we can influence the future, what must be done to avoid risks, overcome challenges, and pursue opportunities?

Priority Responses

Risks

Delegates felt that many risks could be avoided by planning and setting clear goals that are adaptive and in sync with all stakeholders. Planning needs to focus on economic aspects of development as well as social and cultural needs. All aspects of sustainable development must be considered. We also need to prepare contingency plans for the unexpected events whether they are economic, environmental or social.

Public trust with government must to be restored in order to maintain political stability. There needs to be engagement with the people and leadership for the people.

Challenges

There is a need for a diversified economy that is not dependent on only two commodities, lumber and oil. This diversity is what creates jobs for the future.

Increased education and employment opportunities will keep young people in the north. Health and quality of life need to be part of development in order to make the north a place where people want to live and work.

Infrastructure needs to be developed in the beginning, not as afterthought. The distance from markets needs to be addressed. Funding for this development can be obtained through new tax, royalty and funding structures that promote growth without sacrificing services. Costs in bringing about this scenario need to be shared with corporate Canada.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to pursue development that is balanced with environmental capacity and economic sustainability. Development and education can progress together to better educate and provide more training opportunities for northerners.

Working together for a common goal will help to address many challenges. Part of this common goal is to develop a region with consideration for community wellbeing, health and spiritual wellness.

Northerners have an opportunity to benefit from much of the research going outside the region. In addition to this, research and development can be conducted in the north with the results being used in the development of the north.

Responses

Risks

Planning and preparation are needed to deal with many of the risks that are associated with development and success. Because the north is a vast and diverse region, this planning must incorporate input from many different stakeholders. Concerns and ideas that were mentioned were: a legal system that can deal with increased crime, a health care system that can function and deliver services in the changing environment and a sustainable resource/environment plan to deal with the increased demands on resources.

Challenges

Like risks, challenges and the methods to address these need to be considered when the planning begins. Planners and leaders also need to be ready to deal with the unforeseen challenges that may arise along the way.

Delegates mentioned the following as items that need to be considered when planning: the complexities of a global market, the development of sustainable industries and communities, avoidance of complacency in all its forms, consideration of the nature of the northern population as well as methods to address the need for a skilled labour force.

Opportunities

We can be ready to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise by embracing change and new ideas.

There is the opportunity to keep our youth in the north by expanding on postsecondary facilities and programs. In addition to this, the use of bursaries, return service incentives and initiatives that provide practical experience can be used to attract and retain skilled professionals and workers.

Northerners have the opportunity to take action from a place of strength as opposed to crisis management. More of the wealth that is generated in the north can be kept in the north through new funding mechanisms and the development a Northern Heritage Trust Fund. We can help others who are not as prosperous by spreading the success around.

We can use the knowledge of northerners in areas such as alternative forms of medicine, and capitalize on the knowledge of northern Aboriginals.

General points not specified as risks, challenges or opportunities

Planning should be an 'open' process where new ideas can be gathered. This means a willingness to listen and respect others' opinions. Plans should be long range and, once the overall vision is developed, tasks need to be broken into smaller more manageable parts. Northerners need to continue to plan for the future, using a strategic Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat analysis.

Government has to keep what's good for everyone in mind. Look at what northerners have, in our society and province. This includes talented people and young adults ready to take part in what the province and economy have to offer. It also includes the many things grown and manufactured. It was mentioned that northerners can value add in many areas, from agriculture and food to wood and bitumen. Northerners need support for research and innovation. Alberta and the north can lead, maintain and influence globally if given the opportunity.

Question 4: What are the strategic priorities to strengthen the economy, environment, and quality of life that conference participants and the NADC should support?

Priority Responses

The delegates listed infrastructure development as a high priority. This encompassed communication infrastructure (Alberta SuperNet, long-distance, computer access), transportation corridors (developed with rail and highway links for trade), access to the power grid, addressing water issues, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

Delegates also indicated the need for balance in and between: social, cultural, economic, environmental, spiritual, and governance factors. Possible cost-sharing and cooperative initiatives could help communities develop multi-use complexes and provide a wide array of services. Economy, environment (for instance, develop and use green initiatives) and quality of life have to be part of the community planning and implementation process.

Finally, northern funding formulas need to reflect the unique situation of northern Alberta. There should be consideration for location and the stage of development of communities when providing funds for infrastructure. Resource extraction takes a toll on the roads and facilities that are needed to service the additional seasonal workers and transportation requirements and the north's participation in the global market. One working group felt we need to "get rid of the federal government's delay tactics" in order to make funding more accessible and consistent.

Responses

Economy

Participants identified several areas of concern for consideration in the first stages of economic development. In general, northern Alberta needs to decentralize and diversify its economy and keep wealth in the region. Businesses should be encouraged to look at options and opportunities from all sources, not simply oil and gas. Opportunities should be explored and expanded locally, including greater uses of innovation and advanced technology.

Education, specifically post-secondary opportunities in the north, need to expand and grow. The availability and transferability of university level programming for northern students needs to improve. Whether this requires an expansion of bursary programming (similar to what the NADC offers), an increase in apprenticeship opportunities, or training the most sought after professionals locally (i.e. medical professionals), the north needs to find ways to meet its own recruitment and retention goals. One example could be by directly supporting students who want to study and live in the north.

It is important to expand the labour base by increasing the participation of Aboriginal groups in our local economies. Improving the accessibility to post-secondary education for Aboriginal youth would be a key step towards creating business in Aboriginal communities in the north. There is also still a need for improvements in the Aboriginal consultation process to advance development, whether economic or in resource management to increase Aboriginal participation in emerging northern ventures.

For any initiative in the northern economy to flourish, there is a need to work together, to share ideas and resources.

Cooperation can occur across the region and involve many different communities, groups and organizations. By building relationships and promoting the north through common initiatives, delegates felt we could ensure that the northern economy will be sustainable and strong over the long-term.

Environment

Environmental leadership and responsible use and development of resources should be under northern control. One working group summed up a common feeling: "Do not exploit our resources and take them out of our northern communities." The north should be making decisions (after thorough consultation) to determine where and how resources are harvested, and where and how revenues are returned back into the northern community. This includes water as a resource. The ability to harness and distribute water is lacking in the north and some communities are without access to a clean water source.

Apart from resource management, northern Albertans have the same responsibility as all Canadians to be more environmentally friendly in our everyday lives (i.e. walk to work, car pool). It is important for us to understand that environmental care is critical and needs to be considered in all decisions that we make as a region.

Quality of Life

Improving the quality of life of northern residents involves many factors. Civic engagement and community participation are key factors to developing a comfortable culture within our communities. All regions of the north need to develop means for all culture and faiths to be displayed, accepted and celebrated.

Quality health and recreational services for youth and seniors alike can foster an environment where aging citizens or students with special needs maintain a high quality of life. Seniors who wish to remain in the north or youth with learning disabilities and their families need support from their community and government to enable them to live productively in the north.

Crime prevention and effective law enforcement are also keys to high quality of life. Providing crime prevention programming for local youth and ensuring that laws are enforced with strict consequences would provide communities with a greater feeling of safety and security.

There needs to be a balance between quality of life, business needs, and the environment. This includes: taking care of the environment, having a community focus, ensuring you keep people (including Aboriginal groups) involved and engaged. Residents of the north need to encourage each other to be involved and engaged in our communities.

Question 5: What specific actions (who and what) can conference participants undertake to support those strategic priorities?

Actions that involve everybody

Northern citizens need to use positive communication when talking about the north and be more involved in their local communities. Local businesses should be involved in responsible planning of our future along with the municipalities. Business owners should strive to provide northern consumers with competitive services and potentially add to the local real estate market.

As municipalities engage in cooperative planning with the business community, they can build partnerships and network outside of their individual councils. Accessing all available grants for infrastructure, communications and health will enhance quality of life.

Actions that involve Government of Alberta

The Government of Alberta should support and encourage civic engagement and provide SuperNet access for all. The government should review revenue distribution and fair share policy to provide northern jurisdictions with the opportunity to accrue all the services necessary to maintain high quality of life (i.e. transportation and trade, recruitment and retention of medical professionals).

The government needs to increase the funding for the NADC. The NADC should be connected to both the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities and the Rural Re-Hab Initiative and be governed under an Alberta Minister of Northern Development.

Actions that involve the NADC

By creating a task force for municipalities, the NADC could enable them to work together more readily to determine priorities and assist with policy recommendations and development at the provincial level.

The NADC can assist in the sharing and dissemination of information and communication between community agencies, the

various levels of government and Aboriginal communities. They can assist municipalities in attracting and developing small business and entrepreneurs. This can be done by helping initiate changes and adaptation to regulations and legislation (i.e. tax structures) to allow small businesses to exist and grow in smaller communities. The NADC should consider the creation of a new position that assists stakeholders in locating and applying for grants and other forms of funding.

The NADC should share the information that has been gathered from the Challenge North conference and any further information (i.e. actions, news releases) with conference participants, the AUMA and the AAMDC. The Council needs to produce an executive summary for MLA Robin Campbell to bring to Legislature.

General consensus is that NADC is the north's representative body, and participants need to provide greater support and more recognition to the NADC.

Actions that can be made at the Inter-Governmental level

The coordination of plans between governmental agencies would create a meaningful engagement process from top to bottom and between public and government. Northern business should be considered during the planning process and government agencies could provide the framework for research and development with a greater focus on value added products. By providing more grant dollars for infrastructure projects, a fair-share program could be more effective. A fund transfer model that takes into consideration geography and topography and a framework for reporting and requesting funds would enable local government to determine merit before detailed engineering work is done.

The bottom line is that government has to recognize that some municipalities are unable to provide even a third of the funds necessary to fulfill their budgetary obligations. Governments need to allow grant stacking for all federal and provincial grants and open funding doors to First Nation and Métis Settlements.

Question 6: What key messages about the future of Northern Alberta do you want the NADC to bring to the Alberta government?

Priority Responses

The province has to give municipalities a larger toolbox and ways to access and leverage funds. Points off income tax and royalties and the ability to levy a sales or business tax are all ways that municipalities could create more predictable and sustainable funding. Population based programs are ineffective in the north and cause budgetary and regulatory headaches.

The promotion of community partnerships for northern infrastructure projects is a priority. Broadband communication and roadway development (an east-west and north-south connector) are necessary for northern education and skill development and trade.

The NADC needs to improve the north's ability to access the ear of government. Due to geography, most input to the government from the north is on a formal, not social level, and often after decisions are already made. Although northern MLAs are doing a good job, their constituents need more than elected officials to get access to government.

Responses

Quality of Life

Delegates have indicated that quality of life and balance are essential. This will only be realized through competent leadership which undertakes long range planning and plays a role in implementation in all areas: education, healthcare, infrastructure, justice, and environment.

Funding

Per capita funding for infrastructure does not work for the north. There needs to be a dependable and sustainable funding formula in place to ensure the north recovers infrastructure and maintenance costs at local levels.

Leadership Planning

The province needs to realize that northern Alberta represents an entire region outside of Edmonton. A northern Minister (from the north, for the north) or the NADC reporting directly to the premier with the same priority and funding as AAMDC and AUMA would serve the best interest of residents of the north. Any new northern Ministries should not be combined with Aboriginal Affairs as northerners deal with separate issues. The north needs to function between geographic areas that span political borders and boundaries and develop a balanced and cooperative regional model.

Environment

The north needs to proactively manage distribution systems that are accessible within the local basin (i.e. the Grimshaw Aquifer) and ensure safe drinking water is available in all communities with water management and distribution systems. The north can work with the environment and climate to our advantage and add value to our food production capability and quality of food.

The importance of northern Alberta in the development and growth of the province is the key message that the Province needs to hear. There needs to be strategic provincial investment in the north in the areas of education, infrastructure (transportation - rail, roads, and runways) health care and social needs.

The province needs to act on our recommendations, to demonstrate that action, while keeping the 'balance' in mind at all times.

DIVERGING PATHS AIMLESS DIRECTION/ DYNAMIC REGION

Northern Alberta in 2015 as described in the Diverging Paths scenario is one of stark opposites. Many parts of the economy are booming, others are stagnant. As well many areas and services are suffering. There is a fear northern Alberta will spiral out of control. Read the full scenario on page 27.

Question 1: What is the key message that this scenario evokes?**Priority Responses**

Participants felt that Diverging Paths was not a 2015 scenario, but something that is current and that they are seeing now.

The key messages evoked among some delegates is that northern Alberta in this scenario lacks leadership, planning, and vision, suffers from a lack of focus, is disorganized and unstable. It is very reactive, and is in survival mode at the brink of potential crisis. Put another way, northern Alberta is all about uncertainty and anxiety.

Other delegates felt the key messages were that the north is on the cusp of a change, and that it is important to stay flexible. They noted that it is important to embrace the change that forward thinking can bring. In terms of creating a framework of broad objectives, delegates felt it is important to look at the old ideas, raise awareness about a range of possible solutions, and increase understanding of regional interconnections.

Delegates noted that the north needs to fulfill its legacy of national resources to take advantage of the future. There is a need to protect Aboriginal and other traditional land uses. There is also the important issue of dealing with the end of readily extractable oil, which will bring a change to lifestyles and an increased concern about environmental issues.

Some delegates believe that northern Alberta is disengaged from the knowledge economy. Industry fears one technology will develop to the detriment of the other. The solution they saw in this scenario is to encourage innovation, help people recognize their transferable skills, and help people with non-traditional experiences transfer to the marketplace. Finally, businesses need to find ways to diversify and value add, as well as develop ready made products easily transported to market.

Delegates saw a renewed importance in revisiting values and the creation of a culture where youth stay in the north. Another message was that social consequences are being ignored, and that social attitudes need to evolve to encompass more individual and community responsibility. There is also a need to help people become more adaptable to change.

Some delegates saw importance in building up higher education in northern communities, including e-learning options. They also recommended more programs for disability studies, more part time courses, and more options for degree accreditation.

Delegates saw health care and health issues as potential trouble down the road once needs increase and services are reduced.

Other delegates saw ignorance, complacency, the collapse of communities, and balancing short term vs. long term needs as potential risks. But they also saw opportunities in these challenges.

Additional Responses

Many delegates felt that, in this scenario, Alberta is too reactive. There is a perceived risk of losing out and there is a lot of talk about the future, but nobody is taking action. Alberta is so busy it is prone to making bad decisions. Some delegates felt that

the atmosphere is one of “survival of the fittest”, or that this proved the economy is cyclical. Some delegates suggested the economy is unorganized and unstable, and that resources are close to the end of their supply. They felt there is a need to look past oil and gas, to forestry and bio-fuels, and past natural resources into value-added opportunities and local processing, when considering the sustainability of northern Alberta.

Other delegates concluded that Northern Alberta's economy is still basically strong, and will remain strong. They noted, however, that without smarter ways of doing things, i.e. oil sands development, those areas may enter long term declines as attitudes change (for example, Ft. McMurray may suffer from attitudes toward “dirty oil”). Some also mentioned that oil companies are competing and dominating the labour market.

In this scenario, there is concern about the environment and resource conservation. Delegates felt a focus on water as a commodity and on water conservation will become increasingly important. Delegates saw placing a higher priority on environmental responsibility with governments taking a stronger approach to enforcing environmental regulations or decentralization to allow better local monitoring.

This scenario describes Aboriginal peoples as being economically, socially, and educationally disadvantaged. A key point is that quality of life needs to be more uniform across the north. Quality of life seems to take a back seat to the economy. Various other social concerns were identified: a lack of social structure support such as health, increased crime and policing costs, and a need to consider overhauling the judicial system. Reliance on a transient workforce means no local re-investment of wages, and no long population growth and also a disinterest in growth of the community.

This scenario also saw delegates point out that more needs to be done to ensure higher levels of education, and that more work is needed to ensure that education is affordable, and to help build more opportunities for young people in northern Alberta. They also expressed concern for K-12 level education. A diverse approach is needed.

The challenge in this scenario is to ensure that all people in area benefit, the north needs to work together and think regionally.

Question 2: What is one risk to be avoided, one challenge to be overcome and one opportunity to pursue in this scenario?

Priority Responses

Risks

In this scenario delegates felt that there is no responsibility for the future. Planning is short term, and tied to short political terms of office. The north is never ready for boom/bust in terms of financial preparedness. There is a risk of municipal bankruptcies.

The north is at risk because it relies too heavily on the energy industry.

Delegates felt that by 2015 in this scenario, the infrastructure to care for seniors would not be ready, representing a challenge for northern Alberta, but also an opportunity for a particular industry.

Challenges

The challenge is to ensure that northern Alberta grows and prospers together, and to unify all people – Aboriginal and all other groups and communities. This can be done through coordination and a proactive approach, by engaging people at the community level to generate community driven solutions.

There needs to be greater focus from government on the north, on the environment, and on social issues, as well as increased opportunity for community participation in developing policies.

Opportunities

In this scenario, there is an opportunity to demonstrate leadership, increase community engagement with all groups, to unify all people - Aboriginal and other communities. There is an opportunity to integrate social, economic and environmental concerns and enter into long term regional sustainability planning with meaningful community involvement. Delegates suggested the region research and implement new technology such as clean coal, and diversify into new and green products. Industry, government, and stakeholders in forestry, environment, and social services all need to work together to create a balanced approach recognizing the impacts of all contributing partners.

Rail service in northern Alberta needs to be upgraded so that the region can globally market and transport goods and

services. This will improve the steel and manufacturing industry in southern Alberta. With current high costs, exporting goods is not viable.

Delegates felt that it is important to make training available locally to keep people within communities.

Additional Responses

Risks

Delegates felt that it is a major risk to be dependent on one major resource. The north continues to primarily focus on oil and gas. Environmental concerns increase the risk of economic breakdown. Environmental policy enforcement is not emphasized and is insufficient in key areas like water conservation. Uneven environmental standards world-wide may leave the Alberta uncompetitive, while areas with strong environmental policies enjoy a competitive advantage.

Changing attitudes toward commodity consumption could also negatively affect northern Alberta. There is a risk that northern Albertans will not have access to emerging opportunities once the economy is back on track, ultimately resulting in family breakdowns, job losses and a decrease in the quality of life. Social upheaval could result from not dealing with social consequences of failing expectations.

New social problems may arise with economic good times. One example is young people who are working instead of completing high school. Another risk is a lack of planning around labour force issues, especially in more remote areas. Infrastructure planning often does not consider sustainability or maintenance issues, and reflects insufficient community involvement.

Taking a technological fix for problems that have alternative, and better, solutions is a risk. Some delegates also felt that the brain drain and drain of knowledge to other areas of the world are risks that cannot be ignored.

Delegates saw failing to look beyond the region as a risk. The future is unknown; as one group cautioned: "Don't think that it can't or won't happen."

Challenges

Delegates felt that in this scenario there is too much dependence on the government. To fix the problem, they saw a need for a culture shift. "When times are good, we want government to back off; when times are bad we want government to bail the north out". Other delegates felt that the government consultation processes need to be improved, to better engage and involve the community. Communities need to be actively involved in working together with industry, government, forestry, environment, and social services. Delegates saw challenges in the re-regulation of government and increasing regulations on reclamation.

Putting realistic planning in place is a challenge in this scenario. The destruction of the region and resources would necessitate communities to work and plan together. Some felt that communities were not taking responsibility, especially if problems were not affecting them immediately. There was also a fear of the unknown. Other challenges related to community resilience, community and citizen engagement and buy-in, "knowing when to let go," and moving from studying a problem to solving it. Some saw benefit in revitalizing the religious/spiritual infrastructure to bring new life into the community.

The present lack of economic diversification, some delegates noted, will lead to the 'Diverging Paths' scenario. They suggested moving toward sustainable development and alternative energies. Attitudes need to change to be more long-term, especially about environmental issues. Distance to export locations and transportation are also challenges.

Access to health care for an aging population and access to education for the youth in the north is a challenge. A related challenge is available jobs for those who, through their education, become qualified.

Opportunities

Keeping conversations going with elected officials is an opportunity delegates saw for northern Alberta. They also felt active community engagement, coupled with government support of community projects, would more effectively address social issues. Further benefits could come from collaboration between government, industry and community about the environment. Delegates saw an opportunity to find new ways of doing the "same old thing."

Some delegates suggested that the government hire staff to coordinate volunteers and non-profit funds. Considering aging demographics they saw an opportunity to better work with elders and seniors, especially in the areas of health and education. "We need to take care of our parents."

Delegates suggested a higher priority be placed on education, so it becomes more accessible, available, and less costly.

This could encourage youth to become educated in needed professions. Keeping the current skilled population in northern Alberta was also noted as an opportunity. Recreational activities that are attractive to professionals and improvements in the quality of life are needed.

Agriculture, forestry, and tourism are economic opportunities in the north, as are alternative energy, fuel pellets for forestry, cogeneration, and methane gas. Greenhouses and value added products are opportunities in agriculture. For import and export access, northern Alberta transportation networks are a must. "The opportunity to be global is there, the north just has to take advantage of it."

Question 3: Knowing that none of us can entirely control or create the future, but that we can influence the future, what must be done to avoid risks, overcome challenges, and pursue opportunities?

Priority Responses

Risks

To avoid risks, delegates suggested we draw on our ability to vision and plan. Promote a 'go away, learn and come back' culture amongst the youth and be attractive to non-Albertans to come here. Be global thinkers and give the opportunity to live in the region to everyone.

Challenges

Governments need to better enforce environmental policies. Transform the way government services react in an ever-changing environment. Build social support during busts but also during booms in order to be better prepared for future busts. Encourage people to get support services for employment needs. Take responsibility as a society and show leadership through community.

Opportunities

Use strategic longer-term planning (20 to 50 years). Remember that what is good for environment is not necessarily bad for economy. Form strategic partnerships between business, industry, and communities. Develop proper cost sharing of taxes or have northern business contribute to infrastructure in municipalities where employees live. Communities, individuals, agencies and governments need to work together cooperatively, to identify regional and community issues, and regional and community solutions, especially around social issues. Involve youth in northern communities through the educational system.

Additional Responses

Risks

Delegates suggested we let go of the status quo and draw on our ability to learn from past experiences as ways to avoid risks, though others cautioned that we have not been very good at the latter.

Northern Alberta needs to go out to world and promote how great the region is. The north is at risk of not being heard.

Take care of the growing senior population, and ensure their quality of life and care.

Challenges

Take action and engage the north in a visioning session. Develop an adaptable, realistic and balanced framework. Make education a priority over making money. Convince everyday Albertans that Aboriginal people also "want in."

Locate industry in northern Alberta rather than move water south through inter-basin transfers that will destroy the environment. People will move to water. Northern Alberta needs to be well prepared for an influx of people.

Increase regulations on reclamation and review other regulations to remove unnecessary red tape.

Opportunities

Take a "whole community, region, and government approach." Individuals need to ensure that they get more involved in their communities and province. Develop a collective regional vision amongst elected officials and lobby for it. Educate the community about regional issues to help them in making informed decisions and develop long term plans.

Ensure that more money from resource extraction stays in the community. Give communities more control over the funding that comes from the extraction of resources and from tourism. De-centralize authority and decision-making on local resource development projects to local governments.

Have industry contribute their health and wellness dollars to community recreation centers to generate more revenue to keep these facilities and their programs running and accessible. Bring programs such as medical services up to northern areas rather than keeping them in the south. Southerners could then travel north. Enable educators to be adaptable to the ever-changing society, environment, technology and job market.

Increase value added initiatives, with communities making presentations to potential developers. Give “perks” to developers and tax breaks to keep companies in the region. Have the government lead in opportunities and provide venture capital. Prepare for the next northern boom, which will occur because of water. Governments need to better enforce environmental policies and increase regulations on reclamation

Define who and what northern Alberta is: “How will we measure success?” “How will we know when we have made it?” “Do you want to and can you stay northerners if you are successful?”

Question 4: What are the strategic priorities to strengthen the economy, environment, and quality of life that conference participants and the NADC should support?

Priority Responses

Delegates identified a number of priorities, with NADC providing a coordinating role for some:

- NADC to support community facilitation and networking
- Bring together various interest groups to bring balance to discussion key issues
- NADC to set up a regional forum to facilitate inter-municipal collaboration to remove duplication and avoid costs
- NADC to lobby government to change formula for infrastructure development in north
- Enhance educational opportunities in northern Alberta, and identify the skills needed to encourage youth to train and stay in the north
- Improve attraction of professionals to increase quality of life and diversity
- Look at opening up borders to goods and especially services by improving the recognition of professional credentials and designations, to reduce the difficulties associated with recruiting from out of province
- Draw out leadership from all sectors, specifically to encourage programs that develop leadership
- Examine transportation and infrastructure, not just highways, and investigate the upgrading and impact of heavy traffic on gravel roads which will deal with the quality of life and safety concerns
- Develop a better rail system
- NADC to engage other agencies to collaboratively investigate the impact of sour gas lines, for example, and produce reliable information to forward to the public and build strong recommendations to the Province; less stove-piping amongst the NADC and allies
- Require more stringent air quality regulations, particularly regarding the effects on air quality as a result of gas wells, industry, and agriculture industry such as intensive livestock operations and corporate farms
- Investigate alternative methods of waste disposal
- Support healthy communities and provide safety nets to the vulnerable

Additional Responses

Delegates pointed to the importance of open and honest planning in setting strategic priorities when considering development. Planning must include all stakeholders, be realistic, and consider the location and stage of development of communities (for example regional facilities do not work well in many areas of the north). They pointed to the importance of actively consulting with communities or engaging them in a welcoming environment. They identified specific priorities related to the economy, environment and quality of life.

Economy

Alberta's success needs to be shared equitably. Economic diversification is a must and local initiatives need to be created and supported. Funding formulas need to be revisited and the Province needs to fairly share resources revenue with Municipal Districts, communities and Settlements. Delegates suggested removal of red tape related to business development as well as funding proposals, with the latter having resulted in rising project costs. Infrastructure, skilled staffing and other support need to be provided to small existing business. Transportation needs to be developed and enhanced. Get the message out about the vast distances and the issues and challenges that come with marketing and participating in the global market.

Environment

Delegates suggested 'Green' initiatives such as transportation and infrastructure corridors that keep the footprint to a minimum. It was noted that the northern environment is fragile and that it is important to consult with all stakeholders before

decisions are made. The water supply was identified as a valuable resource, though “we do not have the ability to distribute it.” It was also suggested that there needs to be effective support of the Land Use Framework and other initiatives and an improved perception of what industry is doing with the environment.

Quality of life

To enhance quality of life delegates identified assistance for not-for-profits infrastructure and partnerships and consistent and predictable funding as strategic priorities. They recommended enhanced educational infrastructure and the creation of a culture of higher education in communities. New types of affordable and local senior housing, care and services are required, as are solutions targeted to Aboriginal elders. An understanding is required of the distinction between First Nations, Métis (on Settlement and off) and Inuit, if Aboriginal people are to participate and be a part of the development of the North. First Nations have the consultation policy where the Métis Settlements do not.

NADC role

To strengthen the economy, environment, and quality of life delegates felt that support from NADC is crucial, and identified strategic priorities for the NADC to undertake. Some delegates suggested NADC bring together information on key environmental, industry and social issues to present in a comprehensive package to the public. The impacts and follow-up to incidents such as tanker spills could be disseminated by the NADC to better safeguard water. Other delegates suggested the NADC generate a list of green projects and initiatives on its website to showcase industry and community environmental successes, or offer small grants to highlight and promote green projects. The NADC could create networks/website with affinity groups, for instance the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, to get a broader perspective.

Delegates saw the need for 'bridge builders' to get people together, build community connections and establish political will. Delegates recommended that the NADC support initiatives such as Branding the Peace to promote northern Alberta products, as well as good projects in other regions, possibly using innovative methods and technology. The NADC could also, in conjunction with communities, facilitate a focus on planning for the future. Delegates recommended that the NADC work more closely with government, for example, to promote better knowledge of grants.

Question 5: What specific actions (who and what) can conference participants undertake to support those strategic priorities?

Delegates saw the need to continue to educate themselves on issues and to share best practices and interdisciplinary approaches at conferences such as these. They also suggested delegates maintain contact between organizations after the conference to keep up the energy. Encouragement is needed for an attitude shift from self-focus to collective community well-being and to build a common understanding of factors affecting all quality of life issues. As one group concluded “We should have an open mind and be less protectionist about sharing resources at the local level.”

Communities also need a good understanding of what already is in place for accurate planning and good policy development. Each individual organization needs to take the initiative to best collate information and inform its public and stakeholders, and the NADC. They also need to empower other community members, rather than do things for them.

A number of groups asked how the province's planning could fit in with community planning, and the varying community and regional needs. Agencies, councils and government officials could implement and integrate these into development or strategic plans. It was suggested the AUMA get a list of priorities to help municipalities create sustainability plans and that rural municipalities and towns work on infrastructure, for instance gravel roads.

Delegates saw benefit in having a vehicle to keep fragmented organizations working together in Northern Alberta. An Alberta-wide plan could be based on community plans but coordination and communication are needed. The NADC could help link regional plans to provincial plans through facilitation. Bring MLAs into planning to make sure communities are on track. Some straightforward advice was offered: look at facts, even for the hard topics; do your homework and invite constructive criticism.

Once strategic priorities are established, actions are needed to support these. We need to get the message outside of the region about the challenges of the north, as well as the opportunities and the positives. Delegates felt more messages from the north should be reflected in central messages from the government. One way to accomplish this is to “give northern messages to MLAs, give them something to talk about.” It was suggested communities lobby the government through MLAs to the minister.

Delegates suggested promoting effective implementation of existing programs that connect communities, industries and students to learning skills and developing professions, referring specifically to Employment and Immigration funding for training, which links businesses and persons looking for jobs.

While Question 5 asked delegates what actions they could undertake, there were some comments directed to the NADC. Some identified NADC as a representative body for the north, deserving of greater support and recognition from communities, and others offered some suggestions to help NADC and delegates follow up on the conference:

- Better promote what NADC offers
- Provide information and request organizations come together for reciprocal action
- Give all participants a document with the results of this conference so they can use it for speeches, press release, public service announcements
- Produce an executive summary for Robin Campbell to bring to Legislature
- Establish some kind of measure or a report card about what has been accomplished as a result of the work done at this conference

Question 6: What do you want the NADC to tell the Alberta government in terms of key messages about the future of the north?

Priority Responses

The NADC and MLAs need to support regional cost-sharing initiatives. Many communities in the north are not sustainable, and will not be sustainable without other sources of revenue. Promote a more balanced diverse economy, that takes the environment and quality of life for all citizens into account. Promote stable, growing and healthy communities.

The province has to take responsibility for leadership and facilitation to increase cooperation and balance. "It can't all be shoved off to the municipalities – if municipalities are responsible, resources must be given to them. The province cannot keep getting off scot free regarding municipal issues." Governments need to give better proportional attention to the north and northern issues.

Champion infrastructure for transportation, electricity, medical buildings, social and educational priorities in order to further development. Pay more attention to post secondary education in the north. Provide funds to bring in 'train the trainers' like Avi Friedman - train the people within the community to be professionals.

Promote socio-economic ties among Northern BC, Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan, to reduce our carbon foot print and facilitate more economical transportation of resources. Increase the use of rail transportation in Alberta and BC.

Policy has to be science-based and applied equally across all industries. This will increase public confidence. Promote and foster innovation and technology while maintaining all inclusive environmentally friendly approach; government needs to do so by listening, addressing roadblocks and working in partnership with citizens.

Government needs to protect and respect the resources of the land and protect the traditional way of life of our Aboriginal people and ensure sustainability.

Government needs to focus on water conservation: no selling of water to the United States.

The health system in the north needs to be improved, especially around recruitment and retention issues.

Additional Responses

The NADC, government, and communities need to acknowledge that the main resource of northern Alberta is its people. "We want to live in strong, vibrant communities. We want to educate youth in our communities, to create more industry and diversification here at home."

Social and other infrastructure

Government should become more proactive when it comes to development of infrastructure: Acknowledge the importance of northern Alberta's role in the development and growth of the province through strategic provincial investment in education, transportation infrastructure (rail, roads, runways), health care and social infrastructure.

Delegates commented that the NADC needs to work with MLAs to find a solution to social infrastructure. Another groupsuggested the province must make the hard, long-term decisions in a non-partisan fashion. It needs to look objectively at needs, and proof for those needs such as hospitals and schools. Consider alternative delivery methods due to the distance to visit medical specialist and access other services.

Northern solutions

The NADC should support networking forums at a northern and regional level to bring together sectors and different players; include northern Aboriginal communities in all processes. What works in the rest of Alberta does not necessarily work in the north; NADC needs to be an information broadcaster outlining that greater support to the north is good for the province. NADC also needs to encourage and pressure governments to settle the Lubicon land claim issue.

The NADC also needs to define the outcomes that it is working toward and better advertise what it is doing related to policies to protect the environment, respect the northern view, and encourage financial backing.

Balanced planning and development

Government leadership is required to achieve balance. The province must better coordinate and include communities more in policy development. At the same time, communities need to involve government in need-based planning from the bottom up.

Regulations are required to force cooperation and social, environmental, and economic balance. Growth should not take place until a growth plan has been identified for reclaiming the land post use. Government needs to lay out a regulatory framework to solve issues, communicate regulations and ensure they are applied equally to all. "Stop using buzz words and take action."

Environment

Northerners want to be leaders in keeping our environment sound. Delegates want to see a cleaner environment by enforcing the laws already in place, for instance, regulations on CO₂ need to be tightened and implemented. Government needs to explore renewable energy and distributed generation of electricity. It was also suggested we encourage going back to our roots in transportation, such as use of horses, in preparation for when our energy sources become depleted in the future.

The volume of water in northern Alberta is the envy of the world. Northerners need to proactively manage it so that distribution helps maintain the environment and there is safe drinking water in all communities. This also impacts another point of value to the region: our food production capability and quality of food.

Over 230 persons participated in the 2009 Challenge North conference. The following registrants gave permission for their names to be included in the delegate list:

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Arnold Aarts	Councillor	Town of High Prairie
Norm Adolphson	Mayor	Town of Valleyview
Gerard Aldridge	Executive Director	Northwest Corridor Development Corporation
Brian Allen	Council Member	Northern Alberta Development Council
Devon Almond	Senior Recruitment Officer	Athabasca University Calgary
Leo Alook	Councillor	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Cindy Amerongen	Vice President, External Relations	Keyano College
Randy Anderson	Community Liaison	Northern Lakes College
Pam Anderson	Councillor	Elizabeth Métis Settlement
Sheila Anderson	Marketing Coordinator	Alberta's Lakeland Destination Marketing Organization
Sharon Anderson	Council Member	Northern Alberta Development Council
Robert Annett	Board Member	NE Persons with Developmental Disabilities Board
Cynthia Arku	Senior Development Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Marcel C Auger	Councillor	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Glen Auger	Councillor	Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement
Thomas Auger	Deputy Reeve	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Mary Joan Aylward	Brand Manager	Branding the Peace Country Association
Leslie Ayre-Jaschke	Councillor	Town of Peace River
Marko Babic	Research Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Margaret Baird	Controller	Community Futures Grande Prairie & Region
Susan Bansgrove	Vice President Academic	Grande Prairie Regional College
Leanne Beaupre	Councillor	County of Grande Prairie No. 1
Donna Bedard	Executive Director	High Level Friendship Centre
Shawna Benson		County of Stettler No. 6
Mat Bergeron	Economic Development & Project Coordinator	Northern Sunrise County
Marvin Bjornstad	Director, St. Paul Region	Portage College
Wendy Blackman	Director	Cold Lake First Nations - Economic Development
Dave Blackmore	Executive Director	Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)
Veronica Bliska	Reeve	Municipal District of Peace No. 135
Karen Boros	Senior Lead, Recruitment	Alberta Health Services
Lisa Borowitz		ATB Financial
Michelle Bourdon	Project Coordinator	Cold Lake Affordable Housing Society
Peter Braun	Deputy Reeve	Mackenzie County
Steve Brazeau	Senior Exhibits Officer	Government of Canada Rural Exhibits Program
George Brightwell	Councillor	Municipal of Peace No. 135
John Brodrick	CAO	Town of Manning
George Brosseau	Director	Regional Alliance Development
Arden Brummell	Managing Director	Scenarios to Strategy Inc.
Pam Burdek	Administrative Assistant	Northern Alberta Development Council
Natalie Butler	Research Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Iris Callioux	Council Member	Northern Alberta Development Council
Robin Campbell	Chair	Northern Alberta Development Council
Darlene Cardinal	Councillor	Northern Sunrise County
Bruce Carson	Chief Executive Officer	Canada School of Energy and Environment
Brenda Carter	Councillor	Town of Valleyview
Jim Cheverie	Director of Public Works	Town of Bonnyville
Jerry Chomiak	REDI Chair	Regional Economic Development Initiative, NW AB
Albert Cooper	Peace Region Manager	Bruce Power Alberta
Craig Copeland	Mayor	City of Cold Lake
Cheri Courtorielle	Councillor	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Frank Creasey	Managing Director	Travel Alberta North
Gerald Cunningham	President	Métis Settlements General Council
Kamie Currie	Project Officer	Rural Alberta's Development Fund
Ray Darwent	Regional Advisor (AB)	Rural Secretariat, AAFC
Robert Deresh	LICA Chairman	Lakeland Industry & Community Association
Audrey DeWit	Manager of Programs and Coordination	Northern Alberta Development Council
Dan Dibbelt	Executive Director	Northern Alberta Development Council
Jack Dowhaluk	Councillor	County of Athabasca
Karen Doyle	Community Development Officer	Culture and Community Spirit
John Driedger	Councillor	Mackenzie County
Dicky Driedger	Councillor	Mackenzie County
Rick Dumont	Mayor	Town of High Prairie
Lorne Dustow	Addictions Worker	Fishing Lake Métis Settlement
Ed Dziengielewski	Councillor	Northern Sunrise County

DELEGATE LIST

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Jacquie Eales	Minister	University of Alberta
Iris Evans	Mayor	Finance & Enterprise
Carmen Ewing	Acting Manager	Village of Girouxville
Scott Finnerty	Councillor	Culture and Community Spirit
Wayne Forrester	Deputy Mayor	Town of High Prairie
Gordon Frentz	Director, Affordable Homes Program	Town of Grande Cache
Avi Friedman	Councillor	McGill University School of Architecture
Sandra Friesen	Councillor	Municipal District of Peace No. 135
Ed Froese	Director of Projects and Research	Mackenzie County
Allen Geary	Elder	Northern Alberta Development Council
Agnes Gendron		Cold Lake First Nation
Elmer Ghostkeeper	School Trustee	Bufalo Lake Métis Settlement
Peter Gilchrist	Chair	Northern Gateway Regional Division No. 10
Trevor Gladue	Project Officer	Northern Lakes College
Valerie Golka	Director	Rural Alberta's Development Fund
Cathy Goulet	Administrative Assistant	Finance and Enterprise
Tracy Goy	Executive Director, Community Relations	Northern Alberta Development Council
Carmen Haakstad	Community Development Officer	Grande Prairie Regional College
Robert Hagg	Community Development Officer	Culture and Community Spirit
Debra Hagman		Culture and Community Spirit
Zane Hamm	Environmental Team Lead	University of Alberta
Jennifer Haverhals	Corporate Planning and Community Initiatives	Imperial Oil Resources
Richard Hayward	Mayor	Child & Youth Services, Northwest
Bernadette Hebert	Deputy Mayor	Village of Nampa
Berry Heinen	Regional Director	Town of Peace River
Barbara Hendry	Electoral Area "D" Director	Alberta Employment and Immigration - Northwest Region
Wayne Hiebert	Senior Economist	Peace River Regional District
Todd Hirsch	Economic Development Officer	ATB Financial
Brian Holmberg	Senior Manager	Town of High Prairie
Robert Hornbrook	Board Chair	Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development
Walter Hrycauk	Project Manager	Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Michele Huszar	Councillor	Lakeland Centre for FASD
Don Irwin	Mayor	City of Fort St. John
Ernie Isley	Councillor	Town of Bonnyville
Georges Jadot	Community Consultant	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Janet Janvier	Councillor	EnCana Corporation
Gerald Johnson	Chief Administrative Officer	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Wendy Johnson	Assistant Deputy Minister	Town of Grimshaw
Heather Kennedy	Vice President Academic	Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat
Trent Keough	Chief Administrative Officer	Portage College
Christopher King	Council Member	Town of Beaverlodge
David Kirschner	Reeve	Northern Alberta Development Council
Agnes Knudsen	Councillor	Northern Sunrise County
Carolyn Kolebaba	Stakeholder Advisor	Northern Sunrise County
Cameron Kopansky	IT Specialist	EnCana Oil & Gas Partnership
Jack Kramer	Mayor	Northern Alberta Development Council
Louise Krewusik	Manager	Town of Grande Cache
Brent Lakeman	Councillor	Carbon & Energy Management Business Unit
Wanda Laurin		Town of Peace River
Duane Lay	EDAC Chair	City of Cold Lake
Bernard Lefebvre	MLA	City of Cold Lake
Genia Leskiw	Publisher	Bonnyville-Cold Lake
Mark Lisac	Managing Director	Insight to Government
Greg MacGillivray	Facilitator	Scenarios to Strategy Inc.
Miriam Mahnic	General Manager	Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
Phyllis Maki	Councillor	Community Futures Lakeland
Neil Martin	Administrative Assistant	Town of Peace River
Jan Mazurik	Councillor	Northern Alberta Development Council
Stephanie McDonald	Reeve	Town of Grimshaw
Everett McDonald	Provincial Coordinator MSP	County of Grande Prairie No. 1
Brenda McFadyen-Landry	Principal, Richardson	Grande Cache Coal
Joanne McGill	Chief Administrative Officer	Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
Michael Mehta	Manager Finance and Administration	College for the Environment, U of W
RA (Bob) Miles	Councillor	Northern Sunrise County
Kathy Miller		Northern Alberta Development Council
Geoff Milligan		Town of Peace River

Linda Mortenson		City of Cold Lake
Rick Moyse	Community Development Officer	Culture and Community Spirit
Kevin Nagoya	Chief Administrative Officer	City of Cold Lake
Roger Nason	Manager, Applied Research	Keyano College
Andy Neigel	Council Member	Northern Alberta Development Council
Christine Nelson	Councillor	Town of Athabasca
Bill Neufeld	Councillor	Mackenzie County
Bev New	President	Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 5
Heather Nickel		Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
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Darren Ottaway	Chief Administrative Officer	Town of Grande Cache
Doug Parrish	General Manager Public Services	City of Cold Lake
Walter Paszkowski	Economic Development Manager	County of Grande Prairie No. 1
Jeff Penney	Manager, Economic Development	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Kim Pinnock	Senior Development Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Kelvin Plain		City of Cold Lake
Ron Popek	Executive Director	Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development
Terri Potter	Community Development Officer	Culture and Community Spirit
Marianne Price	Administrative Coordinator	Alberta's Iron Horse Trail
Ajaz Quraishi	Director	Accounting Plus Ltd.
Susan Rathbone	Councillor	MD of Opportunity No. 17
Yvonne Rempel	Councillor	Town of Grande Cache
Roy Ripkens	Associate Superintendent	Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Brenda Robinson	Nurse Recruiter	Alberta Health Services-North Zone
Hubert Rodden	City Councillor	City of Cold Lake
Ken Rogers	Manager, Planning and Development	City of Cold Lake
Kris Rollheiser	Senior Development Officer	Northern Alberta Development Council
Ed Rondeau	Reeve	Municipal District Bonnyville No. 87
Tom Ross	Manager, Director of Infrastructure Planning	Oil Sands Secretariat, Alberta Treasury Board
Harold Ross	Vice Chairman	Lakeland Industry & Community Association
Rick Samotej	Superintendent	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Colleen Schoeninger	Councillor	Town of Bonnyville
Rick Siddle	Executive Director	Alberta Finance and Enterprise
Wally Sinclair	President	Lac La Biche Canadian Native Friendship Centre
Rick Sloan	Assistant Deputy Minister	Finance and Enterprise
Danny Smaiel	Trustee	Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Ruth Snyder		Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Gene Sobolewski	Councillor	Town of Bonnyville
Rod Soholt	Trustee	Northern Lights School Division No. 69
Tania Sprong	Regional Sustainability Coordinator	Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
Larry Stewart	Community Development Officer	Culture and Community Spirit
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Tim Stone	Reeve	Saddle Hills County
Williard Strebchuk	Council Member	Northern Alberta Development Council
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Tom Trifaux	EDAC Member	Economic Development Advisory Committee- Cold Lake
Marcel Ulliac	General Manager, Strategic Initiatives	Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
Eva Urlacher	Director	Rural Alberta's Development Fund
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Karilee Wadman	Administrative Assistant	Northern Alberta Development Council
Allen Wells	Vice President	Métis Settlements General Council
Larry White	Director of Tumbler Ridge	Peace River Regional District
Denise White	Treasurer	Métis Settlements General Council
Wilfred Willier	Councillor	Town of High Prairie
Don Wilson	Regional Marketing Consultant	Travel Alberta In-Province
Dan Wong	Alderman	City of Grande Prairie
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Daryl Yagos	Councillor	Woodlands County
Roy Yellowknee	Councillor	MD of Opportunity No. 17



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GETTING IN TOUCH...

Your input on northern development priorities is important. Contact our office or an NADC member for further information.

Peace River office:

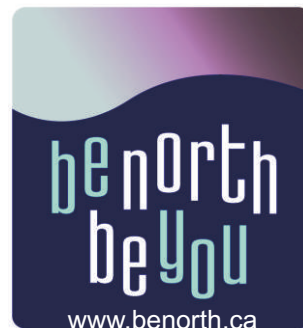
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