



PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE SELECTS MEDICINE HAT AS SITE OF 2012 CONFERENCE

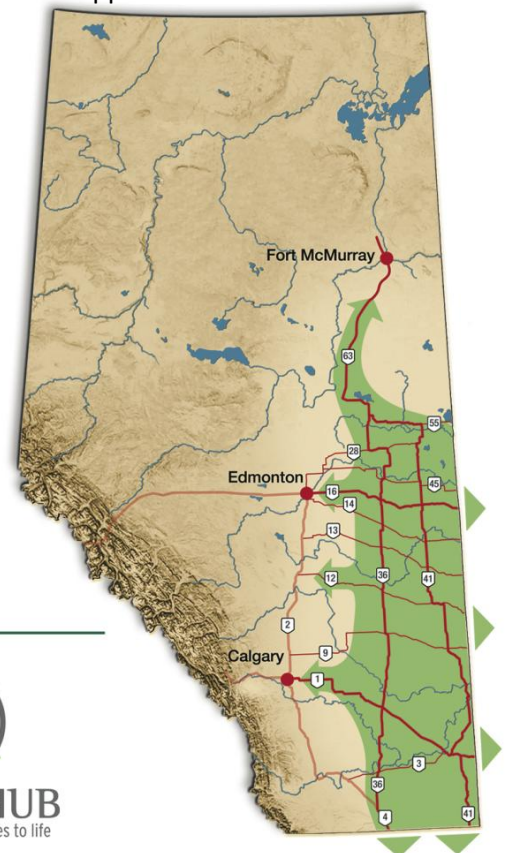
The **Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor** partners and the **City of Medicine Hat** are pleased to announce that the Ports-to-Plains Alliance headquartered in Lubbock, Texas has chosen Medicine Hat as the venue for its 2012 Conference and Annual General Meeting October 2-4, 2012.

MEDICINE HAT has been selected to host the **PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE Annual Conference October 2 – 4, 2012**. The Lubbock, Texas-based organization is a grassroots coalition of communities and businesses led by mayors, councilpersons and economic development officials from a ten-state, 2,300-plus mile transportation and economic development corridor between Mexico and Alberta, Canada. Members come from 10 U.S. states, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Mexico. **PORTS-TO-PLAINS** primary focus is advocating for infrastructure improvements needed to grow the agriculture and energy based economy along the corridor. Alberta is a member of the **PORTS-TO-PLAINS** and is represented on its Board by Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat.

“We are very excited to come to Medicine Hat and showcase the province, with a special focus on the **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR (EATC)**, for our members,” said **PORTS-TO-PLAINS** President Michael Reeves. “Alberta is the northern anchor of our coalition and has played an important role in our success. It’s great for all of our members to see the province first hand and learn about the opportunities for trade and economic growth.”

The **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR** is an initiative striving to position another economic corridor in the minds of businesses seeking to take advantage of more than \$125 billion of planned investment in Eastern Alberta, much of it in oil sands development.

Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat stated that “he is very pleased that the Board of the **PORTS-TO-PLAINS TRADE CORRIDOR ALLIANCE** has agreed to have Alberta host their 2012 AGM in Medicine Hat. The relationship we have built over the last 4 years has been a great benefit to both the province of Alberta and the 9 member States ranging from Mexico to Canada. With the combined advocacy, we are making great inroads into streamlining trade both ways across our common border. I look forward to showing the delegates that we really have a lot to offer.”



Reeves credits Mitzel for bringing the AGM to Medicine Hat. “Len Mitzel has been a tremendous champion for Alberta and especially the **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR**, and it is only appropriate to hold our AGM in his constituency. Because of his tenacious work our members as far away as Texas are great advocates for a 24-hour port of entry at **Wild Horse**, and improvements to **Highways 36 and 41**, because they know these issues impact the businesses in their communities,” said Reeves.

There are a number of initiatives being undertaken to strengthen Eastern Alberta. The City of Medicine Hat has been diligent in its efforts towards improving the status of operations at the **Wild Horse** border so “it is with great pleasure that I welcome the Ports to Plains Conference to our City in October 2012,” said Medicine Hat Mayor Norm Boucher. “Everyone in this city is excited about the possibility of a trade corridor and its economic development potential. It makes sense for Canada, Alberta and our partners in the U.S.A. Now, all efforts should be in making it happen!”

“Cypress County is also very pleased that this international conference will be held in Alberta. As Reeve, I learned a great deal when I attended the conference in Texas last fall by seeing firsthand how the local issues impact the big picture,” said Cypress County Reeve Darcy Geigle. “Having our international counterparts visit southeastern Alberta will help strengthen the importance and benefits of an eastern Alberta trade corridor. It will be very clear to conference attendees that Alberta is willing and able to drive this engine of economic prosperity.”

For the three eastern Alberta **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCES**, PEP, BRAED and HUB that have joined forces under the **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR** banner it’s a milestone and a very significant accomplishment. “This is fantastic news,” said Alan Hyland, Chair of Palliser Economic Partnership. “An event of this nature brings attention to the Palliser, BRAED and HUB regions and Eastern Alberta as a location for business and we will have the opportunity to showcase this to conference participants.” The conference has traditionally focused on transportation and energy, which are important issues to municipalities in Eastern Alberta. EATC partners are working collaboratively in promoting Eastern Alberta as the northern leg of the Ports to Plains Corridor and an alternative route to move goods between Alberta, the United States and Mexico.

Reaction to the conference announcement from the Chairs of BRAED and HUB was equally positive, “the Battle River Alliance for Economic Development is very proud to have played a part in attracting the Ports to Plains Annual Conference to Alberta- the first time it will be held outside of the U.S.,” said BRAED Chair Bud James. “This conference will provide significant opportunities for businesses and communities from BRAED, and all of the **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR** to promote trade and investment with their counterparts from the U.S. and Mexico.”

It is critical given our shared regional challenges and interests that we harness our energies to improve the economies of eastern Alberta municipalities and “I am truly pleased for Alberta HUB to be involved in this initiative and the economic prospects for our membership. The Ports to Plains Alliance is a great example of how major corridors like **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR** can foster economic opportunities for local businesses in the international market place” said Soren Odegard, Chair, Alberta HUB.

Michael Reeves said that in spite of the great geographical diversity of the **PORTS- TO- PLAINS ALLIANCE**, the members are strikingly similar. “Ports-to-Plains members are rural communities that rely on energy and agriculture, and understand that transportation is the backbone of our economy, and connectivity is just as important as congestion mitigation. Our communities face very similar challenges and recognize that by working together we are much stronger and more effective,” said Reeves.

The **PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE** staff is working with the **EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR** partners, the City of Medicine Hat and other local supporters to plan the conference and develop the agenda. Organizers expect about 150 – 200 people to attend.

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