

## NEW POLICY

Sponsor: Lloydminster

## INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

# Importance of Alberta's membership in Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Alliance

The Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Alliance is a coalition of governments, communities and economic development regions advocating the creation of a north-south transportation trade corridor extending from the U.S. Gulf Coast north through Alberta.

The Province of Alberta and three regional economic development alliances in eastern Alberta – Palliser Economic Partnership, Battle River Alliance for Economic Development, and Northeast Alberta Information HUB – are members of the Ports-to-Plain Alliance.

A significant thrust of the three regional economic development alliances is the development of an eastern Alberta transportation corridor. The economic development groups represent 100 eastern Alberta communities which share similarities in economies, agriculture and tourism. These communities are looking for opportunities for trade, partnerships and synergies that will complement, diversify and expand opportunities for the entire north-south corridor.

A key element for establishing a north-south trade corridor through "North America's agriculture and energy heartland" is the Wild Horse Port of Entry, located south of Medicine Hat at the Alberta-Montana border. The Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Alliance wants to the Canadian and American governments to expand their border facilities to provide 24-hour commercial and traveller services.

Alberta's main goals for participation in the Ports-to-Plains Alliance are to:

- i. Establish rural trade development opportunities, business and community growth;
- ii. Establish the Wild Horse Canada/U.S. border crossing as a 24-hour a day crossing; and
- iii. Enhance awareness and business development, trade, investment, tourism and partnerships between Alberta communities and U.S. colleagues.

The eastern Alberta regional economic development alliances' ambition to see the creation of a corridor from the U.S. border north to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo complements Alberta's three main goals, although some of the alliances' objectives go beyond those goals and focus on the corridor solely within a provincial context.

These objectives are the following:

- i. An assessment of the potential to expand the use of the corridor for:
  - a. Moving products within Alberta, as well as to and from the U.S.;
  - b. Serving Alberta, other Canadian and U.S. tourists; and
  - c. Attracting investment for existing and new businesses.
- ii. Development of a plan for the corridor that will effectively support increased traffic volumes, as well as increased business activity and investment in both existing and new businesses in eastern Alberta.
- iii. Creation of a sustainable organization to implement the corridor plan.
- iv. Definition of initial activities for the corridor plan to be undertaken by the organization.

The main routes in the eastern Alberta corridor are Highways 41, 36 and 63, with links to the Edmonton-Calgary corridor to the west, as well as links east to Saskatchewan.

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**The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:**

1. Endorse and support the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor Alliance initiative and encourage the Province of Alberta to commit to an ongoing membership in the alliance.
2. Advocate for a commercial 24-hour port of entry at Wild Horse.
3. Officially recognize that an eastern Alberta transportation corridor will assist in growth in that part of the province and balance the economy by utilizing the capacity that exists in eastern Alberta communities.

<b><u>Voting result</u></b>		
<i>Carried</i>	<i>Defeated</i>	<i>Referred to Board</i>