

Alberta Weekly Review

Thursday, September 28, 2017

Session Schedule & Activities

- Fall legislative session is scheduled to begin October 30.
- United Conservative Party (UCP) leadership vote on will be held on October 28.
- Alberta municipal elections will be held on Monday, October 16.

Government News and Announcements

Alberta's Amazon HQ2 Leadership Team Announced

This week Premier Rachel Notley announced the Amazon HQ2 Leadership Team to help fine tune both Edmonton and Calgary's bids for Amazon's call for proposals for a second North American headquarters, deemed HQ2. Amazon is currently based in Seattle, Washington. Amazon announced earlier this month its intention to open a second North American office spending \$5 billion and hiring as many as 50,000 employees.

According to Notley the team will focus on showing Alberta's high quality of life, low taxes, diverse and well educated workforce, extensive public infrastructure and world-class health care. The team is made up of business and academic leaders including University of Alberta President David Turpin and University of Calgary President Elizabeth Cannon and Alberta Innovates CEO Laura Kilcrease and overseen by Economic Development and Trade Minister Deron Bilous. The bidding process will continue until October 19 and a decision is expected next year.

Alberta Agricultural Society Annual Grant Delay

An annual grant program to Alberta Agricultural Societies of \$11.46 million was delayed until a cabinet decision this week that will allow the program to continue for 2017. The grant fund is normally given to the societies in late June. Most of the funds are given as a \$17,500 base operating grant for each society. Alberta has 284 rural agricultural societies which run local facilities and events including rodeo grounds, golf courses, local festivals and jamborees.

Finance Minister Joe Ceci said government is aiming to double its in-year saving and each ministry had to ensure they were spending in the right places. 2018 funding for the program has not yet been announced.

Alberta's Minimum Wage Increases October 1

This Sunday the next increase for Alberta's minimum wage will occur as it raises \$1.40 to \$13.60. It is the last increase before the October 1, 2018 \$15 minimum wage comes into effect. In 2015 Alberta's minimum wage was \$10.20 per hour. The Alberta Party called late last week for the province to keep the minimum wage at \$13.60 while the province creates a comprehensive poverty reduction plan and the UCP has called for a delay in the increase so the employment impact can be examined.

In North America Ontario, New York and California have all committed to a \$15 minimum wage goal but the transition is much slower than the target in Alberta. Research on the employment impacts has been divided.

Gender Parity on Agencies, Boards and Commissions

Hon. Stephanie McLean, Minister of Service Alberta announced today that the government's ongoing review of the province's more than 280 Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs) has resulted in 48% women appointees. To date the government has filled more than 700 positions and reduced or amalgamated 26 ABC's to streamline services and save \$33 million. Additionally, salaries and additional perks have been reduced.

In March 2015, prior to the current government's election women represented 25% of appointees.

Fall Energy Efficiency Campaign Announced

Hon. Shannon Phillips, Minister of Environment and Parks, announced a fall campaign run by Energy Efficiency Alberta in partnership with over 600 retailers around the province from September 28- October 29. During this period, in-store savings will be offered on numerous items including outdoor timers for block heaters and holiday lights.

This campaign follows the spring campaign which led to significant increases in energy-efficient items and saw Albertans purchase more than 4.3 million products that are expected to save more than 420,000 gigajoules of energy.

For more information on the program [click here](#)

Political News

Second UCP Leadership Forum to be held in Edmonton

The second of five UCP Leadership Forums will be held in Edmonton this evening featuring all four leadership candidates. The forum is sold out and was open only to UCP members. Labour relations and public service are expected to be on the agenda this evening.

UCP Membership Sale Cut Off

The cut off for membership sales in the United Conservative Party leadership race is Friday, September 29 at 5:00pm. Members will also be required to register to vote and provide proof of identity. Registration can be done online or with a paper form. Results of the vote will be announced shortly after the vote closes on October 28.

Municipal News

Capital Region Municipal Races

Several key municipal leaders in the Capital Region are not seeking re-election this fall, which will change the makeup of the Capital Region Board and future Edmonton Growth Management boards and could also impact several regional agreements the City of Edmonton has been working on. Examples include the regional transit commission, a commuter deal between St. Albert and Edmonton and the ongoing Edmonton International Airport Development which Edmonton, Leduc and Leduc County have been working on.

Four mayoral positions will change as incumbents are not seeking re-election in St. Albert, Leduc County, Beaumont and the City of Leduc. In Strathcona County, Mayor Roxanne Carr faces former Mayor Linda Osinchuk again. Carr beat Osinchuk in an upset in 2013 winning by 446 votes.

First Edmonton Mayoral Forum Has Low Attendance

The first of three City of Edmonton Mayor Forum was held on Tuesday at the Shaw Conference Centre featuring all thirteen mayoral candidates and 120 attendees. The forum on Tuesday was simply an introduction with no questions but the next two will run longer and allow for questions from the floor.

The second forum will be held on October 3 and the third on October 11th. For more information and dates for ward forums [click here](#)