

Alberta Weekly Review

Friday, June 29, 2018

Session Schedule & Activities

- 10 months until expected provincial election.
- Fall session of the legislature is scheduled to resume October 29, 2018.

Government News and Announcements

Alberta Fiscal Year End Final Report Released

Alberta's last fiscal year ended on March 31, 2018 and yesterday Finance Minister Joe Ceci released the report. Alberta's economy has continued to recover and in 2017-18 it grew by 4.9%, the highest in the country, and the provincial deficit was \$2.5 billion less than Budget 2017 predicted.

In 2017 the economy recovered about two-thirds of the losses experienced during the recession and Alberta added 90,000 full time jobs last year. By the end of December 2017 more than 2.3 million Albertan's were working, higher than pre-recession and Alberta's net debt to GDP ratio was 6% in 2017-18. However, deficit for the year was still \$8 billion and GDP levels are not expected to be where they were pre-recession until 2019.

New Rules for Farm Worker Protection Finalized

This week the government announced that the technical rules for healthy and safety for non-family farm and ranch workers have been finalized in consultation with the agricultural sector and will be implemented on December 1, 2018. The changes address workplace hazards, safety training and maintenance of equipment and are a result of the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act from 2016. The rules were created after consultation with industry stakeholders over the past two years.

The government will provide \$6 million over three years for a farm health and safety producer grant program that will provide up to \$10,000 per recipient to help farmers and ranchers with non-family workers implement the practices and producers required per the legislation.

Government Announces Child Intervention Action Plan

Hon. Danielle Larivee, Minister of Children's Services released an action plan this week to overhaul child interventions in the province. The action plan, titled *A Stronger, Safer Tomorrow*, focuses on ending separation of children from their communities and cultures. It comes in response to a March 2018 report by the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. All 26 recommendations from the panel's March report are addressed in the plan. In total 39 actions for implementation are put forward to take place by 2022 with 16 actions to be executed by April 2019.

In terms of funding, the government is immediately committing \$4.3 million. These funds will be used towards:

- The creation of an indigenous advisory body to help guide implementation in local communities;
- Additional supports for foster and kinship caregivers;
- Increased mental health and addiction services;
- Strengthened services for children with disabilities;
- Improved post-secondary opportunities for youth; and
- Equitable funding for First Nations and Métis child intervention services.

Alberta will also fully implement Jordan's Principle, the legal rule that ensures all children receive necessary services and supports regardless of jurisdiction.

Political News

United Conservative Party Nomination Update

This week in the southern Alberta constituency of Cardston-Siksika's nomination race, more than 3,426 ballots were cast with 34-year-old Joseph Schow winning 57% of the vote. Schow, now the nominated candidate, previously worked as the director of field operations for the Jason Kenney Leadership Team. He also worked with the Conservative Party as a campaign manager, and as a legislative assistant on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and for the United Conservative Caucus at the Legislature in Edmonton.

Meanwhile, in the central Alberta riding of Chestermere-Strathmore, the nomination race has become increasingly contentious between UCP Incumbent MLA Leela Aheer and one of her challengers, David Campbell, stemming from an incident at the June 14 AGM.

Aheer had sought a restraining order after she said she felt physically threatened by Campbell. She, along with UCP party officials allege that Campbell was inappropriately campaigning by wearing a campaign t-shirt. Campbell claims he was manhandled and physically removed by a party official and also said Aheer had campaign brochures at the meeting. Aheer discontinued the legal action the day before the application was due in court and Campbell is now seeking legal costs in the case.

Two other candidates are have filed with Elections Alberta to run in the nomination which closes today. The date for the vote has not yet been set.

Currently open nominations:

- Brooks-Medicine Hat
- Calgary-Foothills
- Athabasca- Barrhead- Westlock *incumbent MLA Glenn van Dijken
- Chestermere-Strathmore *incumbent MLA Leela Aheer

- Calgary-Buffalo

Nominated candidates:

- Airdrie East -Angela Pitt *incumbent
- Calgary-Edgemont - Prasad Panda-(acclaimed) * incumbent
- Calgary Hays - Ric McIver (acclaimed) *incumbent
- Calgary-Lougheed- Jason Kenney (acclaimed) *incumbent
- Calgary-West- Mike Ellis (acclaimed) *incumbent
- Cardston-Siksika – Joseph Schow
- Central Peace-Notley- Todd Loewen
- Cypress- Medicine Hat -Drew Barnes (acclaimed) *incumbent
- Edmonton-Gold Bar- David Dorward (acclaimed)
- Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville- Jackie Armstrong Homeniuk
- Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills -Nathan Cooper (acclaimed) * incumbent
- Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House- Sundre- Jason Nixon (acclaimed) * incumbent
- Strathcona-Sherwood Park -Nate Glubish- (acclaimed)
- Taber-Warner- Grant Hunter (acclaimed) * incumbent