



# CREATING OPPORTUNITES

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*Headline Article:*

## **Minister Brian Mason visits Lethbridge**

On Monday, May 28th, Minister of Transportation, Brian Mason, came through town on a listening tour to talk all things Transportation. SouthGrow attended a meeting with the Minister alongside a number of our members to discuss projects that are important to the region or of particular concern. Mason listen as representatives from the MD of Taber and Lethbridge County talked about the challenges they are facing with bridge repair and replacement, as well as water infrastructure. Cardston was present and was able to confer with the Minister about their hopes for the Caraway border crossing. The Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce and the Highway 3 Twinning Association discussed the economic

importance of our trade corridors to the economic well-being of the province. Finally, SouthGrow presented on the time-sensitive need for a decision from the Province regarding funding for the Southern Alberta Electric Vehicle Network.

The Southern Alberta Regional Electric Vehicle Network is a partnership between the Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance, the SouthGrow Regional Initiative, the City of Calgary, the City of Medicine Hat, and the City of Lethbridge. This project plans to deploy 19 or 20 Phase 3 fast charging stations across Southern Alberta in order to make electric vehicle travel in the south fully viable. Right now the initiative has almost half the money we need in order to break ground, and we can have assets in the ground by November of this year if we are able to secure matching funds from the Province. The other funding comes from both the Federal government, and contributions by the members.

The Minister took extensive notes throughout the meeting and listened attentively to each presentation. With such a large primary production base with a relatively small population, transportation infrastructure is a fundamental concern and we were grateful to be able to let our voices be heard on issues that matter to the region.



MLA Maria Fitzpatrick, Chris Spearman, and Minister Brian Mason. Photo from [Lethbridge News Now](#)

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# **Weekly Economic Briefing**

**From the Ministry of Economic Development & Trade**

Week of May 21, 2018

**Indicators Updated this Week**

# WEEKLY ECONOMIC BRIEFING

## Indicators Updated this Week

### PRODUCTIVITY

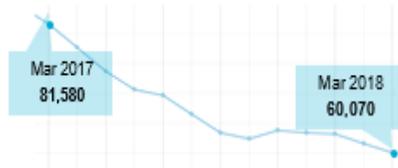
**+3.2%**  
**\$71.9**  
 (\$/hour)



According to Statistics Canada's latest productivity database, Alberta has the highest **labour** productivity level in the country. In 2017, **labour** productivity in Alberta's business sector was \$71.90 per hour, up 3.2% from 2016 and 40.7% higher than the Canadian average of \$51.10 per hour.

### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**-26.4%**  
**60,070**  
 (recipients)



In March 2018 there were 60,070 people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in Alberta, a decrease of 21,510 people (-26.4%) compared with March 2017. Nationally, Employment Insurance beneficiaries decreased 14.0% year-over-year.

### WHOLESALE TRADE

**+5.6%**  
**\$6.7B**



In March 2018, the value of Alberta wholesale sales increased by 5.6% to \$6.74 billion compared to March 2017. Nationally, wholesale trade increased 4.9% over the same time period.

### WCS OIL PRICES

**+9.9%**  
**\$40.47**  
 (\$US/bbl)

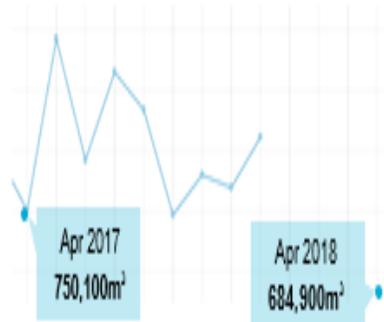


The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) price of oil, often a world reference price quoted in the media, averaged US\$66.25 a barrel in April 2018, 29.7% higher than it was a year earlier. Western Canada Select (WCS), the price obtained for many Alberta producers for oil, averaged US\$40.47 a barrel in April 2018, 9.9% higher than it was a year earlier. The differential of WTI over WCS was US\$25.78 in April 2018.

## LUMBER PRODUCTION

-8.7%

684,900m<sup>3</sup>



Lumber production in Alberta decreased 8.7% between February 2017 and February 2018 to 684,900 cubic metres. Lumber shipments in Alberta decreased 17.8% to 596,900 cubic metres during the same time period. Nationally, shipments were down 4.7% year over year in February.

## MLS SALES VALUE

-12.4%

\$1.9B



The dollar volume of homes sold in Alberta through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) decreased 12.4% to \$1.94 billion in April 2018 compared to the same time period a year earlier. Nationally, total sales values were down 23.7%, with Ontario posting the largest decrease (-35.4%). Alberta's sales value of \$1.94 billion in April 2018 represented 8.5% of the Canadian total. Prince Edward Island saw the largest year over year increase in sales volume, increasing 45.5% to \$42 million. In Alberta, Calgary (-23.0%), Medicine Hat (-22.4%), Lethbridge (-5.4%), and Edmonton (-4.9%) saw declines. All other areas experienced increases, particularly in Grande Prairie (+24.7%) and Fort McMurray (+21.7%).

### News Highlights

- New centre aims to capture CO<sub>2</sub> and monetize the emissions. [Read more](#)
- DBRS: Alberta credit rating unchanged as economy improves. [Read more](#)
- Alberta's strengthening economy helps ATB Financial post record-setting earnings. [Read more](#)

- Oilsands tailings pond approval terms shortened for former Shell facilities. [Read more](#)
- B.C. files constitutional challenge of Alberta's fuel restriction law. [Read more](#)
- Court throws out Trans Mountain pipeline challenge from City of Vancouver and Squamish Nation. [Read more](#)
- B.C. sues Alberta over turn-off-the-taps legislation. [Read more](#)
- OPEC threatens to turn on the spigots as oil price briefly hits highest point since 2014. [Read more](#)
- Process 'doesn't make sense,' says pot company about Edmonton's business licence lottery. [Read more](#)
- Mayor's state of the city address calls on local investors to help build new economy. [Read more](#)
- National Energy Board approves the one pipeline that Alberta's government opposes. [Read more](#)
- Quirky work: Terrariums a growth business for couple with passion for plants. [Read more](#)
- CP Rail talks set to resume in Calgary after unions reject railway offer. [Read more](#)
- ATB: Alberta's economy is improving, just not at whiplash pace. [Read more](#)
- Alberta becomes 1st province to allow wireless electricity control in new homes. [Read more](#)
- Alberta sees sales gain in restaurants and bars in March. [Read more](#)

## Major Projects

- MEG proceeding with \$275M oilsands expansion. [Read more](#)
- Trailcon breaks ground on new Edmonton facility. [Read more](#)
- Oil sands innovation get \$70M infusion. [Read more](#)
- YW Calgary launches funding campaign to complete new hub (\$60M) 'built for women, by women'. [Read more](#)
- City of Camrose Council approves \$17.2M aquatic centre project. [Read more](#)
- Parkland County to rebuild Entwistle Pool and Community Hub for \$9.3M. [Read more](#)
- Springbank dam project delayed 10 months. [Read more](#)

## Earnings Reports

- TD Bank – Q2 2018 net income of **\$2.92B**, up from \$2.50B last year. [Read more](#)
- RBC – Q2 2018 net income of **\$3.1B**, up from \$2.72B last year. [Read more](#)
- ATB – Q3 2018 net income of **\$93.9M**, down from \$219.8M last year. [Read more](#)
- CIBC – Q2 2018 net income of **\$1.3B**, up from \$1.1B last year. [Read more](#)

## Key Economic Indicators

Period	Indicator	Latest Update	Change	Last Updated
2017	GDP <i>yr/yr</i>	\$304.7B	+4.9%	May 2018
Q1 2018	Population <i>yr/yr</i>	4.3M	+1.4%	March 2018
Apr 2018	Unemployment <i>yr/yr</i>	6.7%	-1.2%	May 2018
May 21-25, 2018	WTI Oil Price <i>wk/wk</i> <small>ww ww</small>	\$67.44	-5.4%	May 25, 2018 <small>Closing</small>
Mar 2018	Retail Trade <i>yr/yr</i>	\$6.8B	+2.5%	May 2018

## Looking Ahead

Mon 28	Tue 29	Wed 30	Thu 31	Fri 01
			Indicator Releases: Average Weekly Earnings, Job Vacancies	

# Things You Need to Know

From the SouthGrow Office



## SouthGrow Board Changes

On June 14th at our Annual General Meeting, representatives from SouthGrow Communities will be able to vote on a special resolution to alter our Board structure. SouthGrow is currently overseen by a 10 person management board that meets monthly and oversees the operations of the staff. In response to feedback from our membership, the board is proposing a transition in structure that would allow more ongoing engagement by all members, and put the talents of a small, committed Executive to work for the region.

[You can Review the Notice of Special Resolution Here](#)

If you represent your community, have you considered letting your name stand for election to this Executive? Contact the SouthGrow Office if you would like to get more engaged with Regional Initiatives by serving on this body.



## Upcoming SouthGrow Event: Learning from the Netherlands: Waste Management & Bio-Energy

We welcome Maarten den Ouden, Trade Officer from the Consulate General of the Netherlands who will talk about the challenges facing agricultural regions in the Netherlands during the 1990s and outline the steps taken to drive improved sustainability and create a successful economic model. Mr. den Ouden will share examples of regional strategies and resulting successes, failures and lessons learned. A question and answer session will be followed by a light lunch and networking opportunity. [Learn more & register here.](#)



## Open letter to municipalities from AUMA President Barry Morishita

Founded in 1905, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association represents more than 260 of Alberta's urban municipalities, including cities, towns, villages, summer villages and specialized municipalities. Our goal is to develop a strong partnership between all three levels of government through a shared vision, with long-term planning that facilitates social and economic growth, a strategic and stable funding matrix for capital projects, vital emergency and social services, and implementation and coordination in the delivery of services to ensure the long-term sustainability of Alberta's municipalities. [Link to open letter.](#)



### **Green Power Available from New Solar Project in SouthGrow Region**

We at SouthGrow are excited to help spread the word that a new five-megawatt solar installation outside of Milk River has been scheduled for completion by Summer 2019. The owners are looking for potential customers to sell the energy produced by the facility. If you are interested or would just like some more information, check out details and contact information in the link. [Learn more.](#)

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### **Open House: Highway 3 – Sentinel to Pincher Station Functional Planning Study – Upgrading & Twinning**

There are two open houses scheduled:

[Crowsnest Sports Complex](#) | June 7, 2018: 4:00 – 8:00 pm

[Livingstone School](#) | June 9, 2018: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

The current phase of the Functional Planning Study (FPS) for the upgrading and twinning of Highway 3 from Sentinel to Pincher Station will build on earlier planning studies, address local road networks, new environmental policies now in effect, and incorporates feedback from stakeholders and the public from engagement sessions

... [Learn more.](#)

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## Community and Regional Economic Support Program

# (CARES)

### CARES Program

On April 9th, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Deron Bilous, announced the 62 recipients of the latest Community and Regional Economic Support program (CARES).

What's more, he also announced that the program will be extended for at least two more intakes. These intakes will be in June 2018 and October 2018 respectively. So get your people together and start planning for your next impactful economic development project now. [Learn more.](#)

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# Stories That We're Following

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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### [Alberta premier responds to Ottawa's pending pipeline purchase](#)

CBC

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley is holding a news conference in response to the federal government's announcement it will purchase the Trans Mountain Pipeline.

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### [Municipal tax rates determined](#)

Westwind Weekly

Magrath, Raymond and Stirling have passed their tax bylaws for 2016. The Town of Magrath passed their tax bylaw for the 2016 budget at town council meeting ...

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**Establishment of world's largest continuous boreal protected area in Alberta is welcomed progress**

Pembina Institute

"Protecting landscapes from industrial activity is an essential element of responsible oilsands and oil and gas development. In addition, we are encouraged to see the Government of Alberta ...

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**County tax notices in the mail**

Lethbridge Herald

Property tax notices are in the mail, and Lethbridge County residents are being ... Payment may also be made at the county office, or by using the drop-off box ...

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**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

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**Alberta seeing fewer EI claimants**

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

Alberta recorded the fastest year-over-year decline in employment insurance beneficiaries of all the provinces in March. Compared to the same month ...

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**Construction prices stabilizing in Alberta**

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

Alberta's urban landscape is changing. Over the past few years, massive office towers, arenas, music centres and public libraries have transformed the look ...

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**Klassen: Feeder market undergoes minor recovery**

Alberta Express

Southern Alberta buying interest once again stretched across the Prairies, setting the price structure with limited orders coming from Eastern Canada and U.S. ...

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**Seeding's Starting to Wrap Up**

DrumhellerOnline

The report adds, in Southern Alberta, most cereals are in the six-leaf unfolded stage of growth, and there's is still standing water in some low spots, due to runoff.

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**SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

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### [Albertans second highest spenders in the country at restaurant and bars](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

With the warm summer-like weather lately, restaurant patios across the province have been packed. Restaurateurs and pub owners are welcoming ...

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### [Voluntary Evacuations in Southern Alberta as Wildfire Burns](#)

The Weather Channel

A voluntary evacuation is in place for areas west of Highway 762, between Highway 22 and 178 Avenue West because of a wildfire.

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### ['We've opened the door': Reconciliation Bridge ceremony brings Indigenous and settler communities together](#)

Calgary Herald

The ceremony began with traditional Indigenous prayers, the sound of drums, and a walk across the bridge which spans the Bow River near where it meets the Elbow River ...

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### [Southern Alberta bear boom prompts warning to fence off bee hives ...](#)

CBC

As black bear and grizzly bear activity increases in some parts of southern and central Alberta, the province is working to get more landowners ...

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### [AUMA Board appoints new CEO](#)

AUMA

After serving as Interim Chief Executive Officer since August 24, 2017, the AUMA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Dan Rude has accepted the permanent ...

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### [RCMP claim upper hand in fight against rural crime](#)

Calgary Sun

A new Mountie-led initiative is already working to make rural Alberta safer. Six police officers, a crime analyst and a clerk have led the RCMP's Southern Alberta ...

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## **BIG IDEAS**

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### [Keeping up with Alberta's growing population](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

ATB Financial's Economics Team has been emphasizing that even though Alberta's GDP started to grow again in 2017, and will continue to do so in 2018, the hangover created ...

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### [China Brief: China's relationship with Canada's West](#)

Canada West Foundation

We take a deep dive into Chinese investment in Canada, Minister MacAulay heads to China to sell Canadian ag, and the China-U.S. trade spat continues to simmer ...

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### [UNSTUCK: Recommendations for reforming Canada's regulatory process for energy projects](#)

Canada West Foundation

Canada's energy regulatory system is stuck - mired in delays, distrust and lack of clarity. New impact assessment legislation introduced in February 2018, Bill C-69, to overhaul ...

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# Upcoming Events

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## **May 29 | Lunch & Learn: NAFTA (Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce)**

As the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) renegotiations lurch from forced optimism to apprehension, small businesses in Canada need to face the possibility that the trade deal might collapse. But, now is not the time to panic. Join the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce for a discussion featuring Carlo Dade, Director of Trade & Investment Centre, Canada West Foundation. Carlo will discuss NAFTA and what businesses can do now to prepare. [Learn more.](#)

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## **May 30 | Learning from the Netherlands: Waste Management & Bio Energy (Economic Development Lethbridge & Partners)**

We welcome Maarten den Ouden, Trade Officer from the Consulate General of the Netherlands who will talk about the challenges facing agricultural regions in the Netherlands during the 1990s and outline the steps taken to drive improved sustainability and create a successful economic model. Mr. den Ouden will share examples of regional

strategies and resulting successes, failures and lessons learned. A question and answer session will be followed by a light lunch and networking opportunity. [Learn more.](#)

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### **June 6, 7 & 8 | INVENTURE\$ (Alberta Innovates)**

Guy Kawasaki and Arlene Dickinson have just been announced as the first two keynotes for Alberta Innovates new innovation experience, Inventure\$. This unconference, featuring 150 thought leaders, will converge on the Calgary Telus Convention Centre, June 6-8. The event brings together innovators, investors, and thought-leaders to discover and share new developments in innovation and experiential learning. It offers 16 tracks of programming that include clean energy, oil and gas, agriculture, forestry, bio-technology, construction, artificial intelligence and more. [Learn more.](#)

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### **June 7 | Getting your Agriculture and Food Products to Market: Trade & Logistics Workshop (Alberta Ag. & Forestry)**

Join experts who will provide you with:

- Connections to logistics and supply chain experts;
  - Valuable information on logistics, cargo services, freight forwarding and customs brokerage considerations related to exporting products;
  - Expertise and information on different modes of transportation including trucking, air, and rail;
  - Updates on the new Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific;
  - Partnership (CPTPP) and market access opportunities created;
  - Information on market development programs and services from multiple government agencies and departments; and
  - Information on the newly launched Canadian Agriculture Partnership grant program and learn more about application process and eligible activities. [Learn more.](#)
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### **June 14 | SouthGrow Annual General Meeting**

SouthGrow will be hosting our Annual General Meeting on June 14th. As our agency grows and pushes the boundaries on behalf of southern Albertans, we need to have approved

representatives there from all 24 of our member communities in order to vote on new initiatives and organizational structures that will be proposed. Dinner will be supplied. [Register here.](#)

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### **June 20 - 21 | Solar Canada 2018 Conference and Exposition**

Solar Canada is the place to make solar industry connections, learn how policy and regulatory markets are changing across Canada, and explore future solar opportunities. View the [full event schedule](#) to discover the informative speakers, sessions and networking opportunities that will help shape the future of Canada's solar industry. Be sure to also check out the [Solar Municipalities in Alberta](#) learning pod. Municipalities are eligible to receive 10% off registration using the **MCCAC10SC** discount code. [Click here](#) to learn more and register.

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### **September 26 | 2018 Alberta Climate Summit (Pembina Institute)**

The Alberta Climate Summit is the event for innovative thinking and knowledge sharing on energy and climate in Alberta. The event brings together 500+ thought leaders from industry, government, environmental NGOs, and community stakeholders to learn from success stories, identify opportunities and challenges, and explore solutions related to Alberta's clean energy future. The Climate Summit showcases successes underway in Alberta, informs and connects decisionmakers, and inspires participants to play an active role in Alberta's transition to a clean energy future. [Learn more.](#)

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# **Employment Opportunities**

[AUMA | Association of Urban Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[RMA | Rural Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[Government of Alberta](#)

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Questions? Suggestions? Need Help? Got a story we should share?

*Contact the SouthGrow team!*

[info@southgrow.com](mailto:info@southgrow.com) | [\(403\) 394-0615](tel:4033940615)

[Not on the list? Signup for this Newsletter](#)



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