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Headline Article:

Axia says rural Albertans risk losing internet services July 1

Vanessa Hrvatin | Updated: June 22, 2018



August 16 2016. Art Price, CEO of AXIA, (Wil Andruschak/Calgary Herald)

Axia, the company currently contracted to run Alberta's SuperNet service, says it may no longer be able to provide service after July 1.

Parts of the network are leased to Axia by the provincial government. Its contract expires June 30, and if it isn't renewed, the company would no longer be able to provide service. According to Axia CEO Art Price, there's still no word whether the company will remain as the contractor, and he worries that internet access could be interrupted.

"We're saying to our customers that as outrageous as this is, we're all in the same box, because at this point, we don't have the right to continue to offer services," he said.

Because the contract is still to be negotiated, the province was unable to provide detailed comment. However, it's assuring Albertans that regardless of which company gets the new contract, service will not be interrupted.

“As we’re currently finalizing a new SuperNet contract, we can’t go into the details, but we want to be clear: there will not be any outages to SuperNet service as this process unfolds,” said Service Alberta spokesperson Cheryl Tkalcic in an emailed statement.

“Throughout our planning for the contract, we have worked hard to ensure Albertans continue to have access to the internet services their schools, hospitals and families rely on.”

[Read More.](#)

SouthGrow Editor's Note: SouthGrow has received assurances from our friends in the ministry of Economic Development & Trade that no service disruptions will occur. They have promised to let us know as soon as there is more information available.

Weekly Economic Briefing

From the Alberta Ministry of Economic Development & Trade
Week of June 18, 2018

Indicators Updated this Week

RETAIL TRADE



Alberta's retail trade value increased by 2.2% in April 2018 compared to April 2017, to \$6.79 billion. Nationally, retail sales increased by 1.6% over the same time frame. In Alberta, sales at gasoline stations (+16.5%) and of building materials (+11.3%) saw the largest increases.

WHOLESALE TRADE



In April 2018, the value of Alberta wholesale sales increased by 6.8% to \$6.78 billion compared to April 2017. Nationally, wholesale trade increased 4.3% over the same time period.

CPI



On a year-over-year basis, Albertans paid 2.6% more in May 2018 for the goods and services that comprise the Consumer Price Index (CPI) than in the same month a year ago, higher than the national average rise in CPI of 2.2%. Energy prices increased the most in Alberta (+20.6%), while household operations and furnishings (-0.4%) was the only product category to see a decline.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE



In April 2018 there were 56,320 people receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in Alberta, a decrease of 3,040 people (-5.1%) from the previous month and 22,670 people (-28.7%) compared with April 2017. Nationally, Employment Insurance beneficiaries decreased 18.1% year-over-year.

NATURAL GAS PRICE



The price of natural gas in April 2018 was CDN\$1.26 per gigajoule, down 46.2% from April 2017.

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
May 2018	Unemployment <i>yr/yr</i>	6.2%	-1.6%	June 2018
June 18-22, 2018	WTI Oil Price <i>wk/wk</i>	\$69.26	+6.5%	June 22, 2018 Closing
Apr 2018	Retail Trade <i>yr/yr</i>	\$6.8B	+2.2%	June 2018

Looking Ahead

Mon 25	Tue 26	Wed 27	Thu 28	Fri 29
			Indicator Releases: Job Vacancies, Average Weekly Earnings	

Things You Need To Know

From the SouthGrow Office

Meet the SouthGrow Team

With the recent changes to our board structure, and the election of a 5-person executive, we thought it appropriate to introduce you to the core team that will be helping SouthGrow move forward with our new plan.

Jim Willett | Chairperson

My name is Jim Willett and I am a member of the Village Council in Coutts where I also serve as Deputy Mayor.

I became a member of the SouthGrow Management Board back in February of this year. I am also a director on the board of Community Futures Chinook where I sit on the Investment Review Committee. I was a journeyman tradesman in industrial instrumentation and control and

spent over 25 years in mining maintenance supervision. Prior to moving to Coutts in late 2013, my wife, Cindy Clarke, and I, were private business-people in Edmonton. I chose to retire in the SouthGrow region because it felt like home, the people are friendly, and there is tremendous potential for future growth.

When the position of SouthGrow Board Chairperson became available, I felt that I had something to offer, and I am looking forward to everything the next year has in store.



Ron Lagemaat | Vice-Chairperson

I was born and raised in Lethbridge, obtaining my BSc degree from the U of L. While my career took me away from Southern Alberta for a few years, my family and I decided to live in Coalhurst upon returning to the area. I am currently a Councillor for the Town of Coalhurst serving my 4th term in office. I am also a small business owner in Lethbridge operating Right Choice Realty Inc, an independent Real Estate Brokerage serving Lethbridge and Area since October 2017. I am returning to SouthGrow, after having been Chairperson in the past, with an enthusiastic view towards municipal collaboration in economic development and prosperity for our region.



Eric Burns | Director

I am a councillor for the Village of Warner.

What peaked my interest in SouthGrow was the EV network project. I have had a 15 year history of working in renewable energy, specifically solar panels deployments, and I have helped to bring solar to the Village of Warner to

power our municipal buildings. Also 5 residential houses including my own will have solar generated power in the coming months.

I believe serving with SouthGrow is the best way for me to contribute back to Alberta for what this province has given me. I believe Southgrow will help southern Alberta drive the economy for all of Alberta.



Laurie Lyckman | Director

I was born and raised in Carmangay and married my husband, Randy, forty-two years ago. We have four daughters and ten grandchildren. We live on the Lyckman homestead which was started in 1907. One of our daughters has come home with her family to continue with our cow and calf operation. We also do custom haying along with our own hay.

I have been very involved in my community since I was young. I received the first Carmangay Lions Award and the Provincial Award for Volunteerism for my community leadership and volunteer work in 2016. I worked at the Peter Dawson Lodge in Vulcan for over twenty years as Director of Resident Care and loved my job so much I never worked a day in my life. I was elected to the Council of the County of Vulcan in the last election and I have truly enjoyed people I have met and all that I have been able to help with on our council.

I'm looking forward to being on the SouthGrow Board & helping bring more to Southern Alberta which I have always called God's country because it is so beautiful.



Gerry Selk | Director

I was born and raised in Southern Alberta (in Milk River) and aside from 6 years in Edmonton at the beginning of my career, I have lived (in Cardston) and worked in Southern Alberta my whole life.

I can safely say this area is a big part of who I am. I married my wonderful wife, Barbara Johnson, almost 35 years ago and we have 3 children all married and on their own, as well as 3 amazing grandsons. I spent 32 years working for the Canada Border Services Agency and retired from there two and a half years ago. I previously sat on Cardston Town Council from 2001-2007. I was somewhat familiar with Southgrow back then but when I made my return to council last fall Mayor Maggie Kronen, knowing of my passion for Economic Development, insisted that I attend the planning sessions that resulted in our Strategic Plan. She paved my way into SouthGrow and I am grateful to her and for this opportunity to serve on the board.



Peter Casurella | Executive Director

My name is Peter Casurella. I was born and raised in Didsbury, Alberta, where I attended a rural school, and lived and breathed the rural Alberta lifestyle till I moved to the big City of Lethbridge to attend University. Lethbridge quickly became my home and won over my heart, and over the intervening years Southern Alberta has taken over a big chunk of my heart. I met my beautiful wife here, and now we are raising a small family together.

The SouthGrow Region has so much promise, so many opportunities, and can play such a big role on the world stage. Our communities form a hub of technological and agricultural innovation with a deep well of experience and talent to draw from. We are backed by one of the most vibrant economies in the world, fueled by massive natural resources and environmental advantages, and have economic opportunities unrolling in front of us that speak directly to our strengths.



It is my honor to be able to play a key role in helping our region seize these opportunities so that all of our communities can enjoy a high quality of life together.

Vern Steinborn | Outreach Officer

My name is Vern Steinborn, I am a plumber, gasfitter and utility operator by trades and have been working in these trade from 1975 to 2016 in the southern Alberta area.

SouthGrow was looking to fill a position of an outreach officer for the promotion of the On Farm Energy Management Program, which is now called the Farm Energy and Agri-Processing Program, along with the Farm Solar PV Program. I applied and was accepted for this position, My area covers from Ponaka County south, covering a total of 25 counties. So, I represent the producers helping them to understand what is available within these programs to receive funding and why it is beneficial for them to want to change to an energy savings way of doing business. Not only is it beneficial for the carbon footprint but also reduces their total cost of production.



I chose to do this because I could see the benefits of energy efficiency for not only producers but to all Albertans.

Keenan Geib | Marketing & IT Coordinator, Intern

My name is Keenan Geib and I am a university co-op student currently filling the role of Marketing & IT Coordinator at the SouthGrow Regional Initiative.

In November 2017, with one year left in my combined degree program, majoring in economics and political science, I was accepted into the Co-op Work Term Program at the University of Lethbridge. I was with the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce as a Research Analyst from January to April of this year and I have had the pleasure of working at SouthGrow since the beginning of May. I was hired by SouthGrow primarily to help SouthGrow update IT systems, as well as integrate new technology into service offerings. My expertise is in the areas of economic policy and data analysis, and I have been tasked with designing and building several projects that aim to improve the services SouthGrow uses. However, I also have a few other responsibilities (one of which includes creating and distributing this newsletter - enjoy!).



Working and learning at SouthGrow has been an amazing experience and I look forward continuing on into the future.

SGRI Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021

Building on Firm Foundations

The new Strategic Plan for the SouthGrow Regional Initiative has been drafted and approved by the membership. Building on the solid foundations laid over the past few years of hard work, this plan has been built to leverage the good relationships, growing resources, and increasing opportunities available to us to make a deeper economic impact. It is an ambitious plan, in that it will only succeed with the engagement and support of a motivated membership that believes in, and supports, the work ahead. However, when we succeed it will be the success of everyone involved from all of our communities, and we will all share together the fruits of that victory. [Download the full Strategic Plan here.](#)



Stories That We're Following

From the SouthGrow Office

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

[South Korea suspends wheat and flour sales from Canada over GMO plants found in Alberta.](#)

CBC News | June 18, 2018

South Korea has joined Japan in suspending trade in Canadian wheat following the discovery of a small number of genetically modified plants in southern Alberta. It's standard protocol in both countries to temporarily close markets in such cases, Global Affairs spokesman Jesse Wilson said Monday.

[Alberta's population trends - Part 2: Interprovincial migration](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team | June 20, 2018

One of the features of the national economy is the chance for Canadians to live anywhere in the country where they find work. Economists call this "labour mobility" — and while Alberta has typically been the recipient of interprovincial migration, it does experience occasional periods of net outflow. The graph ...

[Ag Group Calling on Government to Support Better Access to Markets](#)

DrumhellerOnline | Jun. 21, 2018 | Cory Knutt

The Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA) is calling all Parliamentarians to support better access to world markets as continued trade uncertainty threatens Canadian jobs and long-term prosperity. The group held an end-of-session press conference Thursday on Parliament Hill ...

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

[Solar companies may exit Ontario for Alberta after Doug Ford kills rebate program.](#)

CBC News | June 21, 2018 | Anis Heydari

The solar energy industry could be moving more investment to Alberta as changes loom to Ontario's green energy programs, according to many attending the Solar Canada 2018 conference in Calgary. Incoming Ontario premier Doug Ford is eliminating that province's GreenON program ...

[Alberta First Nations man looks to bring tourists to reserves with teepee camps](#)

CTV News | June 26, 2018

An Alberta First Nations man is looking to bring a series of cross-cultural camps that would bring tourists and generate income on First Nations reserves across the country. Riel Houle, from the Piikani First Nation in southern Alberta, is the owner of Pale Horse Tipi Camp, which he bills as a chance for guests ...

[Canopy's \\$500 million raise means debt financing may be on the horizon for cannabis companies.](#)

Calgary Herald | June 21, 2018 | Mark Rendell

On Wednesday, Canopy Growth Corp. closed a \$500 million convertible debenture offering, of which \$200 million was taken by Fortune 500 alcohol seller Constellation Brands Inc. The financing, notable for its size and the involvement of Constellation — which is already a 14 per cent shareholder of Canopy ...

[WestJet Link officially takes flight, connecting Lethbridge with major hubs.](#)

Global News | June 21, 2018 | Quinn Campbell

Westjet Link has officially landed in Lethbridge. The airline said the added competition will be noticeable to travellers. "When the dust settles on this service in the next few months, what will be proven out is that we will have lowered airfares between 30 and 50 per cent and we will have stimulated market travel by ...

[Albertans turn increasingly to self-employment in recession's wake.](#)

CBC News | June 21, 2018 | Robson Fletcher

Rhonda Law sells small-batch, designer dog biscuits. They come in a variety of styles and prices. The "Chicken & Wooffles" pack includes seven biscuits and sells for \$12.50. For \$16, you can get a dozen "Lucky Dog Fortune Cookies" complete with personalized, paper messages for your pooch. She does ...

[EI numbers continue descent](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team | June 26, 2018

The number of employment insurance beneficiaries in Alberta has been on the decline for three consecutive months. April's total was a five per cent drop in claims over March and represented 3,040 people. According to Statistics Canada, the decline continued to be strongest in our cities. In Edmonton ...

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

[Millions of Alberta acres have resistant weeds](#)

Alberta Farmer Express | June 25, 2018 | Alberta Agriculture & Forestry

When it comes to herbicide resistance, producers should be looking for trouble. The ongoing spread of resistant weeds means producers should be actively scouting for it, said provincial crop specialist Harry Brook. "We now have glyphosate resistance in kochia in southern Alberta and it continues to spread," ...

[Successful year for Oldman Watershed Council](#)

Lethbridge Herald | June 19, 2018 | J.W. Schnarr

The Oldman Watershed Council recently held its annual general meeting at the Enmax Centre, with officials calling it a time to reflect and celebrate past success and look to the future. "Our greatest accomplishment is the thousands of people that we engage in our work," said Shannon Frank, OWC's ...

[Siksika flood evacuees still waiting for permanent housing](#)

CBC News | June 21, 2018 | Bryan Labby

A Siksika councillor says the 2013 flood had a devastating impact on evacuees, the community and even those who've been helping to rebuild homes and neighbourhoods — but perhaps even worse is that five years later 900 people are still waiting to get permanent housing.

[Indigenous employment up, but challenges remain](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team | June 25, 2018

To mark National Indigenous Peoples Day, The Owl is taking a look at labour market trends among Alberta's Indigenous population. As of 2017, there were 168,000 Indigenous people of working age (15 years and over) in our province, representing about five per cent of Alberta's total working age ...

BIG IDEAS

['The way of the future': Edmonton to embrace artificial intelligence for new traffic signals.](#)

Edmonton Journal | June 19, 2018 | Elise Stolte

On Tuesday, city officials committed to buying only smart signal-compliant infrastructure from here on in,

and they'll pitch several corridors to test the technology as a connected system in September. The signals adapt to traffic conditions in real time and, when deployed on a longer corridor, send messages to other ...

[Energy prices are volatile, but are they rising more quickly than general inflation?](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team | June 25, 2018

If there's one thing we all love to gripe about, it's the price of gas at the pump. Or, the power bill. Or, the natural gas bill. Energy is crucial to our daily lives, so energy prices matter. But are energy prices rising more quickly than overall prices? The heavy red line in the graph below shows movements in the ...

Upcoming Events

Hosted by SouthGrow & Our Partners

Jun. 28 | OHS Bill 30 Information Session

Host: [Taber Chamber of Commerce & Community Futures Chinook](#)

Time: [11:30 AM – 1:00 PM](#)

Location: [Luigi's Pizza | Taber](#)

Learn about the changes to the Occupational Health & Safety Act that came into effect June 1st, 2018. Bill 30 modernizes the Alberta OH&S Act to promote and maintain physical, psychological and social well-being of workers. This information session will guide you through these important regulatory changes and explain how to ensure your business is compliant with the new laws.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Jun. 29 | Permaculture Design Solutions Workshop

Host: [Sustainability Resources Ltd.](#)

Time: [10:00 AM – 4:00 PM](#)

Location: [Multicultural Heritage Centre | Edmonton](#)

Join Sustainability Resources and featured speakers from Spruce Permaculture as we explore ways to integrate plants back into our built environment and support local food economies. After the classroom

discussion we will plant future carbon sinks to support watershed initiatives in Parkland County! You will learn and work alongside our youth tree planters.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Sep. 26 | 2018 Alberta Climate Summit

Host: [Pembina Institute](#)

Time: [8:30 AM – 5:30 PM](#)

Location: [BMO Centre | Calgary](#)

The Alberta Climate Summit brings 500+ thought leaders from industry, government, environmental NGOs, and Indigenous and rural communities together to learn about global trends with implications in Alberta, hear diverse local success stories and explore the potential in Alberta's energy evolution. The full-day event showcases a range of perspectives, opportunities for Alberta, informs and connects decision makers, and inspires participants to play an active role in the province's energy future.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Sep. 26 - 28 | 2018 AUMA Convention & AMSC Trade Show

Host: [AUMA/AMCS](#)

Time: [7:00 AM - 4:00 PM](#)

Location: [Westerner Park | Red Deer](#)

Registration is now open for the 2018 AUMA Convention and AMSC Trade Show, which takes place from September 26-28 at the Westerner Park, in Red Deer! This year's convention will include dialogue sessions with provincial Ministers, and breakout session topics such as the opioid crisis, impact of autonomous vehicles, cyber security, municipal rights-of-way, what the upcoming provincial election means for municipalities, and more.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Oct. 3 | 2019 Economic Outlook

Host: [Calgary Economic Development & ATB](#)

Time: [10:15 AM – 1:30 PM](#)

Location: [Calgary TELUS Convention Centre](#)

Confidence in the economy is rising - how will this transform your business in 2019? Join us at the 2019 Economic Outlook and hear about current economic trends and forecasts in your industry to get an edge up on 2019 planning. Learn how local, provincial, national and international economic forecasts for next year may influence your business.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Employment Opportunities

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

[RMA | Rural Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[Government of Alberta](#)

Tech Tools For Your SouthGrow Team

At SouthGrow's main office, we are working hard to further improve our implementation of technology and data to improve our organization and service. Here's what we are using, as well as some other tools we think would help the businesses within our communities.

WHAT WE USE

[G Suite – Gmail, Docs, Drive, Calendar and More for Business](#)

Do your best work with Google's suite of intelligent apps (formerly Google Apps). Get business email, video conferencing, online storage and file sharing.

[Google Maps Platform - Geo-location APIs](#)

Choose Google Maps Platform to create immersive location experiences and make better business decisions with accurate real-time data & dynamic imagery

[Workplace by Facebook: A Work Collaboration Tool](#)

Workplace is already the place for teams to connect and collaborate. Now get even more productive with integrations. Connect to the apps and services you ...

[Economic Dashboard - Government of Alberta](#)

Welcome to the Alberta Economic Dashboard. The dashboard compiles the Alberta economy's most important indicators for businesses in one place.

[Trello](#)

Infinitely flexible. Incredibly easy to use. Great mobile apps. It's free. Trello keeps track of everything, from the big picture to the minute details.

[Wix.com: Free Website Builder | Create a Free Website](#)

Create a free website exactly the way you want. With Wix, you get the whole package - sophisticated website builder, complete customization, reliable web ...

OTHER RESOURCES

[Community \(Local\) Economic Development - Government of Alberta](#)

Tools and resources to help support local economic development. ... Alberta's communities need qualified workers and professionals to drive their local ...

[Fundingportal - Government Grants, Tax Credits ... - The Funding Portal](#)

Canada's bilingual one-window gateway to improve access to 7000+ sources of government funding and private financing for business, hospitals, universities, ...

[SAP Software & Solutions | Technology & Business Applications](#)

Get software and technology solutions from SAP, the leader in enterprise applications. Run simple with the best in cloud, analytics, mobile and IT solutions.

[xarvio Digital Farming Solutions](#)

xarvio™ Digital Farming Solutions makes you feel more confident, reduces your risks and gives you more security in all your plannings and decisions.

[Farmers Edge - Grow.More.Precisely.](#)

Empowering growers and ag professionals with data-driven solutions Farmers Edge is the best option for making data-driven decisions on the farm. We help ...

**Questions? Suggestions? Have a story
you would like us to share?**

Contact the SouthGrow team!

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



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