



# SouthGrow

Regional Initiative

Creating Opportunities in South-Central Alberta

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Your weekly economic newsletter | July 04, 2018

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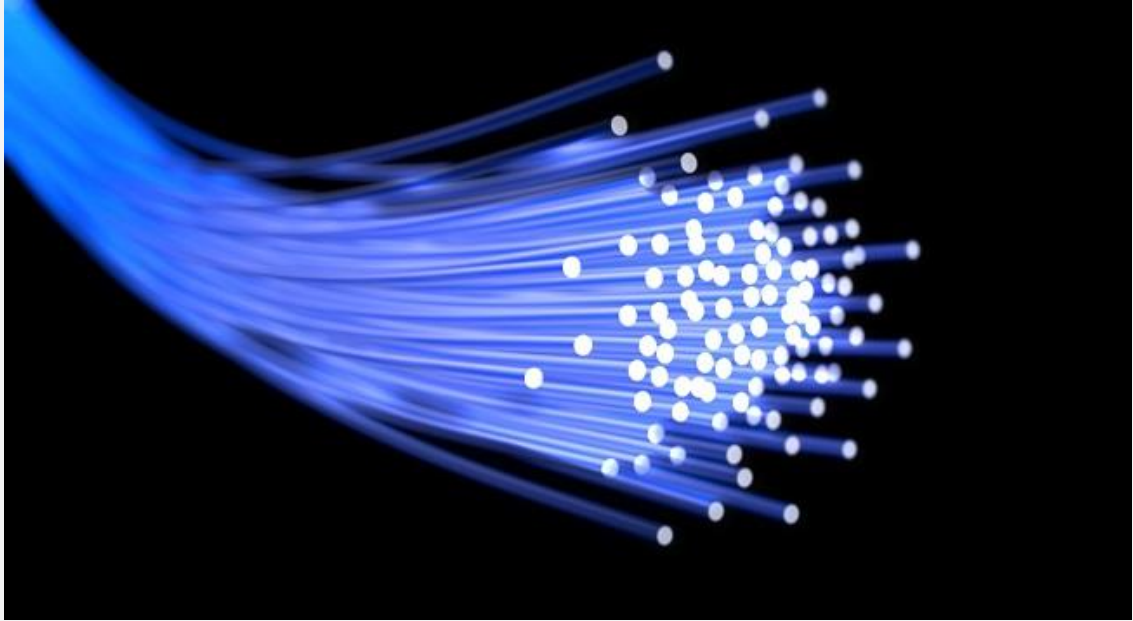


[Tweet](#)

*Headline Article:*

## **Alberta government confirms new SuperNet contract with Bell Canada**

Global News | Updated: June 22, 2018 | By Alannah Page



*Fibre-optic cable is often used for high-speed internet infrastructure. | File Photo*

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On Friday, the Alberta government announced that they would not be renewing their previous SuperNet contract with Axia NetMedia Corp and that they have confirmed a multi-year contract with Bell.

On Tuesday, Bell announced that, in addition to signing a contract with the provincial government, they will also buy the Alberta operations of Axia.

Axia was an Alberta-based fibre communications company that had been installing fibre optic internet services in rural Alberta for the past several years. It was a publically-traded company until it was acquired by Partners Group and turned private in 2016.

“We look forward to welcoming the Axia team to Bell as we integrate our operations to deliver the highest levels of service to Alberta’s SuperNet users,” Dan McKeen, Bell’s vice chair for Western Canada, said in a statement.

According to an emailed statement, Partners Group is a global investment group that plans on divesting all of Axia’s Canadian operations to Bell Canada to ensure an easy transition for SuperNet broadband users.

In a news release, Alberta government said the Alberta SuperNet is not the internet, but

actually a broadband network that connects to rural and urban communities. It was built to connect public institutions such as schools and hospitals to a broadband network. [Read more.](#)

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## Weekly Economic Briefing

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

### Indicators Updated this Week

#### Average Weekly Earnings

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In April 2018, average weekly earnings in Alberta were \$1,157, up 2.6% from the same period in 2017. Nationally, average weekly earnings were \$996 in April, up 2.6% from the same period last year. Alberta's April average wage of \$1,157 was well ahead of the next highest province, Newfoundland and Labrador, at \$1,031.

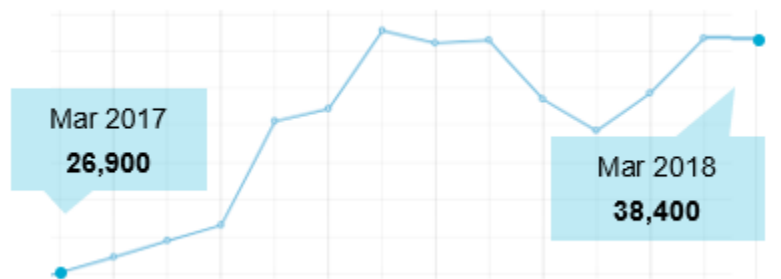


#### Job Vacancies

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In March 2018, the number of job vacancies in Alberta increased by 42.8% from the same month in 2017 to 38,400 vacancies. Over the same time frame, Canadian vacancies increased by 45.6% to 332,300.

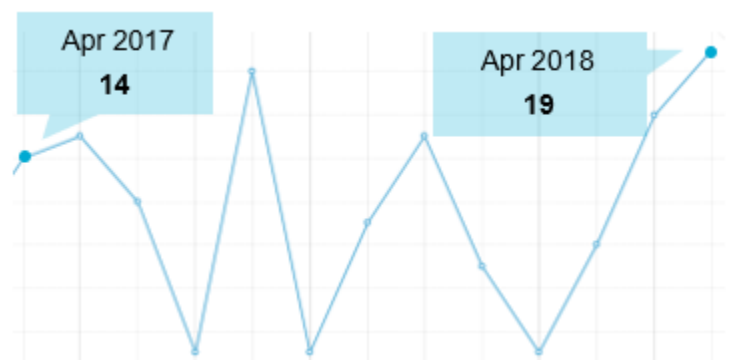
**+42.8%**  
**38,400**



### Bankruptcies

Alberta business bankruptcies increased 35.7% from 14 in April 2017 to 19 in April 2018. Nationally, business bankruptcies remained the same at 239. Consumer bankruptcies in Alberta decreased 0.5% from 407 in April 2017, to 405 in April 2018.

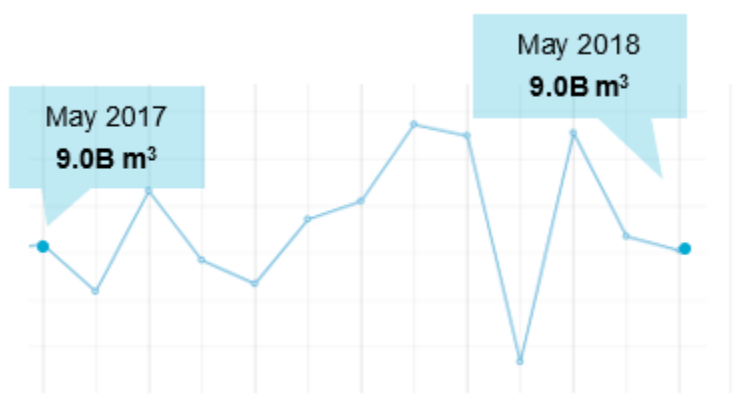
**+35.7%**  
**19**



### Natural Gas Production

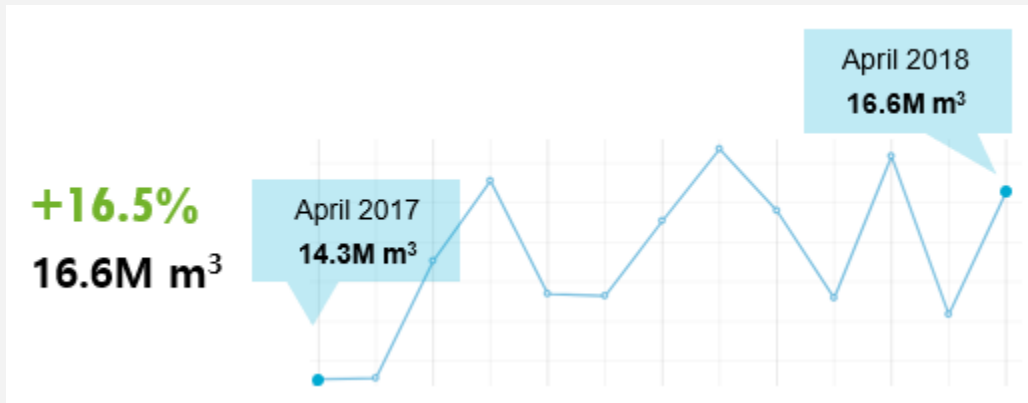
In May 2018, marketable natural gas production decreased by 0.3% compared to May 2017 to 9.0 billion cubic metres.

**-0.3%**  
**9.0B m<sup>3</sup>**



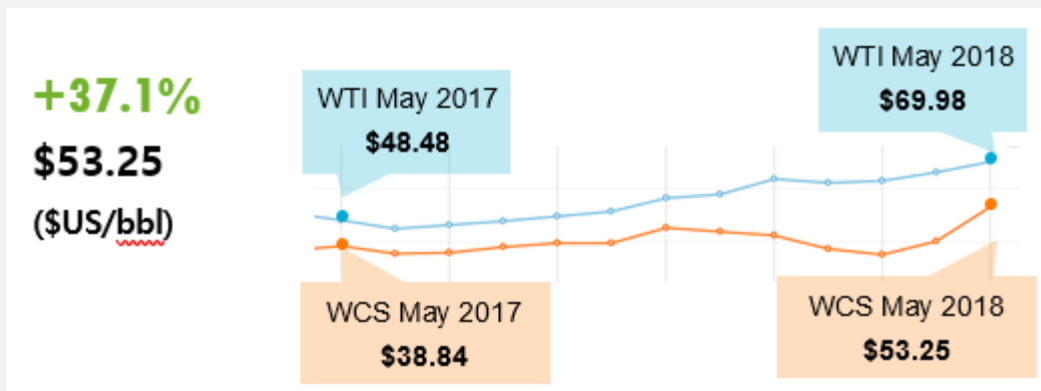
## Oil Production

Oil production in Alberta was 16.6 million cubic metres in May 2018, up 16.5% compared to May 2017. Non-conventional (or oil sands) production constituted 83.0% of all oil production in Alberta in May 2018. Production of non-conventional oil was up 16.9% while conventional oil production increased 14.6% on a year-over-year basis.



## WCS Oil Prices

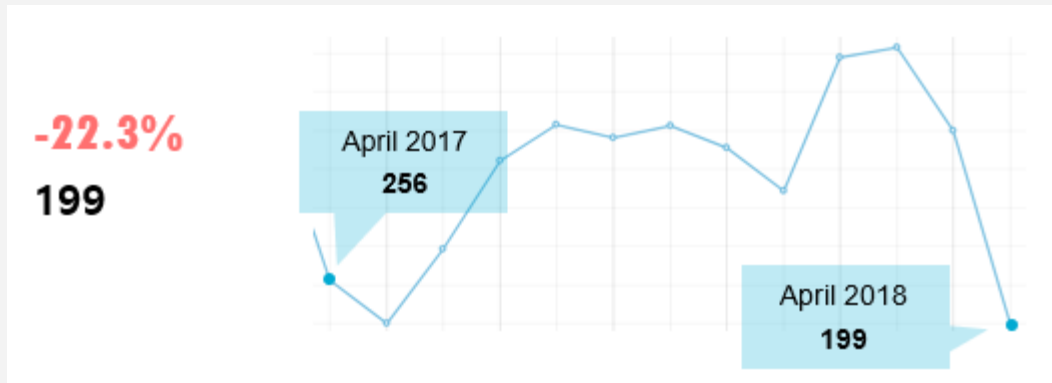
The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) price of oil, often a world reference price quoted in the media, averaged US\$69.98 a barrel in May 2018, 44.3% higher than it was a year earlier. Western Canada Select (WCS), the price obtained for many Alberta producers for oil, averaged US\$53.25 a barrel in May 2018, 37.1% higher than it was a year earlier. The differential of WTI over WCS narrowed to US\$16.73 in May 2018.



## Wells Drilled

The number of exploratory and development wells drilled in April 2018 decreased 22.3% from the same period a year ago, from 256 to 199. Development oil and bitumen

wells, which collectively made up 47.8% of wells drilled in April decreased 10.8% and 39.2% respectively; exploratory oil wells were the only type to grow, increasing 233%, from 3 to 10 compared to the same period last year.



### Motor Vehicle Sales

The number of new motor vehicles sold in Alberta decreased 4.8% between April 2017 and April 2018 to 22,417, while the number of motor vehicles sold in Canada decreased 2.2% over the same period. Sales of passenger vehicles decreased 23.6% year-over-year, while sales of trucks (including minivans, suvs, light and heavy trucks, vans and buses) increased 0.2%. In April 2018 trucks comprised 82.9% of all vehicle sales.



### Key Economic Indicators

Period	Indicator	Latest Update	Change	Last Updated
2017	GDP yr/yr	\$304.7B	+4.9%	May 2018
Q1 2018	Population yr/yr	4.3M	+1.4%	March 2018
May 2018	Unemployment yr/yr	6.2%	-1.6%	June 2018
June 25-29, 2018	WTI Oil Price wk/wk	\$74.26	+7.2%	June 29, 2018
Apr 2018	Retail Trade yr/yr	\$6.8B	+2.2%	June 2018

## Looking Ahead

Mon 02	Tue 03	Wed 04	Thu 05	Fri 06
				<b>Indicator Releases:</b> Unemployment Rates, Employment, Merchandise Exports

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## Things You Need To Know

*From the SouthGrow Office*



**Applications open for Local Food Council (until July 12)**

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The provincial government is looking for members to represent Alberta's billion-dollar local food industry. Applications are now open for Alberta's first ever Local Food Council. The aim of the council will be to provide recommendations on provincial programs, pilot projects or initiatives to support the continued growth and sustainability of Alberta's local food sector. The council members will represent a broad section from Alberta's local food sector across the province, including small producers and processors and those with specialized and academic knowledge and would report to the minister within the year. Members will be selected from a public recruitment process which is now open on the Alberta public agency board opportunities [website](#). Stakeholders with an interest or knowledge of the local food sector are encouraged to apply. Applications close July 12. [Read more.](#)

## Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership



### Community-in-Focus: Milk River Solar Project

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Project: **5 Megawatt Solar Farm**

Estimated Annual Generation: **7,200,000 kwh's per year**

Stage: **Under Development**

Proponent: **Medicine Line Renewables Ltd.**

Medicine Line Renewables, an Alberta-based solar energy developer, plans on leaving the site as pasture (with only a small graveled parking area at the north end), graze the existing crested wheat grass with sheep and will have very limited concrete work (only three transformer pads).

Where available, the company has engaged local suppliers and contractors from the region, including Trace Associates, Martin Geomatic, casual labour from Taber, Solar



Plantation's Lethbridge-based affiliate Solar Optix, and others. They plan to continue employing local consultants, contractors and labour as appropriate. [Read more.](#)



# Statistics Canada

## Statistics on Cannabis in Canada now available online

As recreational cannabis legalization approaches, data on cannabis production, distribution and consumption were made available by Statistics Canada on the Cannabis Stats Hub. Launched on January 25, 2018, the platform presents information on cannabis industry in the country since 1961. [Resource link.](#)



**Taber is one of six finalists from across Canada for the Coors Banquet 'One Horse Town'**

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Taber is one of six finalists from across Canada for the Coors Banquet 'One Horse Town'. We are the only town in Alberta that is a finalist, so hoping to reach out to all our in the area to support us by sharing this on social media/facebook/twitter etc. [Website link.](#)

Voting is now open and you can vote once per day (per device) from now until July 15th. The event provides 1500 tickets to people within the Town and then an additional 1500 tickets for people outside the Town, so this would be an awesome event to bring to Southern Alberta that we can all enjoy. It will feature country music stars Dallas Smith, Tim Kicks and Kira Isabella.



### **Alberta Environment & Parks Annual Report 2017-2018 Now Available**

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The annual report of the ministry of Environment and Parks contains the minister's accountability statement, the audited consolidated financial statements of the ministry and a comparison of actual performance results to desired results as set out in the ministry business plan, which was published as part of the previous year's budget. The report also includes financial statements for the entities making up the ministry and for which the minister is responsible. [Read more & download report.](#)



## Agriculture Entrepreneur in Residence (AgENT) Program

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We are looking for industry partners to bring our students real-world challenges and act as mentors as they work to find innovative solutions.

Lethbridge College student-entrepreneurs are ready and eager to find solutions to the challenges you are facing in your business or industry.

As an industry partner in AgENT, you will guide student-entrepreneurs as they innovate and problem solve. The student-entrepreneurs will work under your mentorship throughout the academic year.

At the end of the year, the student-entrepreneurs will participate in a competition, where they will pitch their solutions in a quest to win prizes and see their solutions funded. [Learn more & sign-up.](#)

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## Stories We're Following

*From the SouthGrow Office*

### Government Affairs

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[Medicine Hat moves to next phase of energy growth strategy](#)

Medicine Hat News | June 22, 2018 | By Collin Gallant

The City of Medicine Hat's petroleum division will move to a second, more focused phase of production growth strategy this year, while returning to a traditional oil play and seeking out acquisitions that make economic sense.

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### **Final list of Canadian retaliatory tariffs taking effect against Trump on July 1**

Global News | June 29, 2018 | By Amanda Connolly

Speaking just moments ago in Hamilton at the Stelco steel factory, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland said the government had finalized the list of American goods targeted by the retaliatory tariffs, based on consultations with Canadians and industry over recent weeks, and has made a couple of changes.

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### **Japan still trusts Canadian wheat system, say officials**

Alberta Express | July 3, 2018

Relationships still matter when it comes to trade, and Alberta officials say those will ... to glyphosate had been found in a ditch in southern Alberta last summer.

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### **Doug Ford to officially wind down green programs funded through cap-and-trade**

Financial Post | July 3, 2018

Ontario Premier Doug Ford says his government will officially begin winding down all green programs funded through the province's cap-and-trade system this week. In a statement released Tuesday, Ford says he has revoked the regulation that kept the carbon pricing system in place.

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### **Final open house held to discuss the future of Highway 3 around Taber**

Global News | June 29, 2018 | By Malika Karim

On Thursday, Taber residents gathered for the final open house regarding the proposed twinning of Highway 3. "The traffic from Taber going east to Medicine Hat, it's a two lane. Four lane going west, it's busy," said Taber resident Tony Machacek.

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## **Economic Affairs**

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### **Enbridge sells natural-gas assets to Brookfield group in \$4.3-billion deal**

The Globe & Mail | July 4, 2018 | By Jeff Lewis

Enbridge Inc. is shedding its Canadian natural-gas gathering and processing business in a

\$4.31-billion sale to Brookfield Infrastructure Partners LP as the pipeline giant seeks to cut debt and fund growth.

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### **Oil-Sands Outage Upends Global Oil Market, Overshadowing OPEC**

Bloomberg News | June 25, 2018 | By Robert Tuttle & Kevin Orland

The shutdown of a key oil-sands facility in Canada is flipping the global oil market on its head and slamming shares of producers that depend on the plant. Just as OPEC and allied producers agreed to pour more oil into global markets, a transformer ...

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### **Cannabis companies on hiring sprees, Edmonton recruiter says**

CBC News | June 28, 2018

With the legalization of recreational marijuana coming soon, cannabis-related companies across the country are on hiring sprees, says an Edmonton-based recruiter. The industry is buzzing, said Alison McMahon, founder and CEO of ...

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### **Canada's economy shows surprise strength with April GDP gain**

Bloomberg News | June 29, 2018 | Theophilos Argitis

Canada's economy showed unexpected strength in April with output edging higher on a sharp pick up in manufacturing and a rebounding real estate sector.

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### **Producers watching skies for signs of what to do with feed grains**

Western Producer | July 3, 2018 | By Terry Fries, Commodity News Service Canada

In southern Alberta, Calgary has had 104 mm of precipitation since April 1, Lethbridge 95 mm and Medicine Hat remains dry with 51 mm since April 1. South of ...

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### **Prairie wheat bids down with US futures**

Western Producer | July 3, 2018 | By Ashley Robinson, Commodity News Service Canada

Average prices ranged from about C\$216 per tonne in western Manitoba, to as high as C\$229 in southern Alberta. Northwestern Saskatchewan was an outlier, ...

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## **Social Affairs**

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### [University of Alberta receives \\$500,000 in connected vehicle research funding](#)

MobileSyrup | June 25, 2018 | By Sameer Chhabra

The University of Alberta has received approximately \$500,000 in funding for a connected vehicle privacy program. The funding is part of Transport Canada's newly announced 'Advance Connectivity and Automation in the Transportation System' program.

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### [Two boil water advisories issued by AHS in southern Alberta](#)

Lethbridge News Now | July 4, 2018

Two boil water advisories issued by AHS in southern Alberta ... to acceptable levels as required by Alberta Environment and Parks, and must ensure two sets of ...

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### [Southern Alberta Summer Games get going on Wednesday in Taber](#)

Lethbridge News Now | July 3, 2018

The Summer Games is an annual event that brings together athletes from all over Southern Alberta to compete in the sports they love. The games will offer ...

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### [Esplanade's newest exhibit explores hunting over the past 10000 years](#)

Medicine Hat News | July 3, 2018

"It's a look at hunting and wildlife conservation in southern Alberta," said museum technician and researcher Tom Hulit, who was the driving force behind the ...

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## **Big Ideas**

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### [Albertan industries will still face hardship despite new tariffs: expert](#)

StarMetro Calgary | July 1, 2018 | By Brennan Doherty

The effect of Canada's new retaliatory tariff is still uncertain, but a whole host of Albertan industries — from construction to beer brewing — will continue to face increased hardship thanks to Canada-U. S. trade friction.

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## **Upcoming Events**

*Hosted by SouthGrow & Our Partners*

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### **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](#)

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### **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](#)

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### **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](#)

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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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## Tech 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

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#### [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.

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#### [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

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#### [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 ...

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#### [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.



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### [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.

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### [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 ...

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## **Other Resources**

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### [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 ...

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### [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, ...

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### [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.

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### [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.

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### [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 ...

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

Contact the SouthGrow team!

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

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Canada

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